

Committee for a National Science Foundation

The text of a statement prepared by the Committee for a National Science Foundation appeared in these columns last week (*Science*, 1946, 103, 11). The following list of names constituting the original signers is now available from the Committee, whose address is Room 170, Hotel Astor, New York City:

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ness" of these communities and their culture means "aboriginal," for it is very apparent from the material presented that the X-Cacal have a culture which represents, so far as its content is concerned, a considerable mixture of aboriginal and Spanish elements—a mixing and mingling of artifacts, action customs, and idea patterns which extends through almost every department of custom from subsistence systems to ceremonialism. And in the process of assimilating historically diverse traits to this mixed culture a certain reintegration and synthesis has apparently been at work, with the result that something new has been produced. In this process Maya influence has probably been greatest. An ancient Maya might find slightly more in common with a present-day X-Cacal member than would a Spaniard of the Fifteenth Century, but both the old Maya and the old Spaniard would discover in the modern culture of East Central Quintana Roo "a world they never knew."

Thus it is that the X-Cacal group does represent a folk culture of the present day which may be usefully contrasted with the modern urban way of life in Mérida and other Latin-American metropolises, but it is "primitive" primarily in the sense that the culture is still relatively homogeneous, still bound together by a universally accepted system of beliefs, still comparatively unspecialized and undiversified, rather than in the sense that it might be considered a survival into our time of ancient Maya culture.

Señor Villa does not attempt an overall summary along these lines nor does he give much explicit attention to processes of cultural blending and emergence as such, perhaps wisely contenting himself with setting down his data in a form which will be extremely useful for other students. Some readers may wish that he had provided at least one chapter of interpretation in terms of theoretical principles, for it is always helpful and stimulating for others to have the theoretical views and tentative conclusions of the man who collected the data. However, we have no reason to complain, for Señor Villa has provided us with a carefully collected and painstakingly documented body of data which should prove valuable not only for our understanding of the cultures of the Yucatecan peninsula, but also for analysis of all mixed or "Creole" cultures which, in one form or another, are characteristic of much of modern Latin America.

JOHN GILLIN

Duke University

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Department of Mathematics, New York University; I. M. Kolthoff, professor of chemistry, University of Minnesota; Gettrude Kornfeld, research chemist, Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York; Lawrence S. Kubie, psychiatrist, 7 East 81st Street, New York City.

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