

—☉RESEARCH NOTE☉—

DEPENDENCY, HISTORY, AND SCHOLARSHIP:  
*An Interview with Professor Stanley J. Stein*

Stanley J. Stein, Walter Samuel Carpenter III Professor of Spanish Civilization and Culture and Professor of History, Emeritus, at Princeton University, is a lifelong Latin Americanist. Together with his late wife Barbara, herself an accomplished bibliographer and historian of the region, Professor Stein wrote several books and articles that put their stamp on methods of writing the social history of modern Latin America, specifically on the impact of colonialism and industrialism in Mexico and Brazil in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is fair to say that no one who studied Latin American history over the last 35 years would have failed to engage the slim, elegantly written synthesis, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America: Essays on Economic Dependence in Perspective* (1970). Recipients of grants and fellowships from the Social Science Research Council, the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, singly or together, the Steins were honored for their path-breaking studies with the CLAH Robertson and Bolton prizes, the Conference on Latin American History Distinguished Service Award (1991), and the American Historical Association Award for Scholarly Distinction (1996). A member for many years of various professional boards and committees, Professor Stein tirelessly has promoted the field of Latin America in the historical profession both at home and abroad, and much of his work has been translated by Latin American presses. After Barbara Stein died in December, 2005, he continued their joint project on eighteenth-century commerce between Spain and Mexico. A monumental study in four volumes that intertwines a study of trade under a decaying Spanish imperialism with a detailed examination of colonial merchants across the Atlantic, the final installment is nearing publication.

**Peloso:** *I'd like to begin by asking how you got into the field of Latin America, especially at a time when Latin America was not a major part of the university curriculum?*

**Stein:** When I was at Harvard, in 1941, as a graduate student, I was interested in Spanish and French language studies, and when the possibility arose of a fellowship to Brazil, I applied for it. Meantime there was also a course offered in Portuguese. As a result of that course I became interested in the movement of "Indianism" in Brazilian literature. That took me to Brazil in early 1942. I stayed there for about eight months. That's where I met [my wife], Barbara, in the spring of 1942. To make a long story short, we were married in 1943 before I went overseas. When I returned, she had finished her work in Washington, and she suspended further study of the abolition of slavery in Brazil. I decided that I didn't want to stay in languages any more. I was already interested in history, and so I started thinking about where I would go.

I was assigned to the Boston Navy Yard while I was awaiting demobilization, and of course, there was Harvard. I learned that Clarence Haring was teaching at Harvard and that he was one of the few leading people in the field of Spanish/Portuguese Studies at the time. I remember Barbara and I went to visit Haring in his office in Widener Library, and I told him of my interest in Latin American history. That was the beginning. Problem was, after a year and a half of graduate work in history, what was I going to do for a thesis? It seemed obvious that I would go to Brazil to do research in the field, so then the question was: what was I going to work on? I didn't want to do a study of slavery per se; I was interested in plantations. You know, the whole Brazilian problem, especially the problem of Brazilian cycles: sugar, tobacco, diamonds, gold, and coffee. So, I thought I'd do a study of the coffee plantations in the Paraíba Valley, which is where coffee really developed in the nineteenth century before it moved on to São Paulo and Paraná. Well, that's how I got interested in Brazil.

**Peloso:** *Was Haring enthusiastic about supporting your research idea?*

**Stein:** Mr. Haring had always had an interest in Brazil, which he must have developed out of his interest in Spain and American trade, navigation and the buccaneers. He had good contact in Brazil with a former student at Harvard. Haring also wrote about the history of the nineteenth-century Brazilian empire. It was an overview. He never claimed very much for it. But in short, he supported my research and was a wonderful mentor in the sense that he encouraged you to do what you wanted to do. I guess I knew what I wanted to do.

**Peloso:** *That's how you were able to get your dissertation research started?*

**Stein:** Well, I received a grant from the Social Science Research Council, then beginning its Joint Committee on Latin American Studies. The grant made it possible to go to Brazil with Barbara and our one child at the time. There are some interesting comments about that. Melville Herskovits had written a letter for me when I made my application. And then I had funding from Harvard, a Woodbury-Lowry Traveling Fellowship. In other words, the Social Science Research Council and the Harvard Woodbury-Lowry Fellowship made it possible for me to spend over a year in Brazil. Barbara returned home the following June, while I stayed there until November, 1949.

**Peloso:** *Presumably you made some contacts down there at that time over a two year period.*

**Stein:** Not many but a few.

**Peloso:** *When you returned to the U.S., were you looking for a job at a university or were you interested in a position in the government? Were university positions available?*

**Stein:** The situation was lousy at this time. In 1950, there weren't many openings, and I recall that Bob Potash and I were both interviewed for an opening at the University of Florida in 1950. Nothing happened. I was getting desperate and Arthur Cole, the economic historian in the History Department at Harvard, who was also the Director of the Baker Library, was looking for someone to do a study of entrepreneurs in Brazil. Cole and Leland Jenks [author of *The Migration of British Capital to 1875* (1927) and *Our Cuban Colony: A Study in Sugar* (1928)] had set up the Research Center in Entrepreneurial History. The Center awarded grants for the study of entrepreneurship. They consulted Clarence Haring, and asked if he had a student willing to undertake raw research. Haring recommended me. We had two children, no job. It was really tough. So I was interviewed by Arthur Cole and Leland H. Jenks. That appointment tided me over, from 1951 to 1953. From my brief experience in Brazil, obviously the place to start was the first industry developed in Brazil, the textile industry. I had three years which gave me the time to write about the Brazilian cotton manufacture. Subsequently, Mr. Haring learned from Dana Munro, at Princeton, that the History Department here was looking for a Latin Americanist and he recommended me. I came here, was looked over, and I've been here since 1953.

**Peloso:** *The Brazilian Cotton Manufacture: Textile Enterprise in an Undeveloped Area, 1850-1950 (1957) is considered a classic in the Latin American history field. Was that work a secondary product of your dissertation research?*

**Stein:** Yes, because of the recognition of the role of the cotton manufacture in the beginning of Brazilian industrialization. Later, when I was looking at photographs

of the town of Vassouras that appeared in the earlier book, I noted one taken from a hill above the town, and I remember seeing a cotton mill in the background of the photo. But I was so intent on what I was doing that I paid no attention to it. It's rather curious. At any rate, it was the product of my work in Brazilian history, the recognition that this is how industrialization started, and of course I was influenced by that wonderful book by Caroline Ware [*The Early New England Cotton Manufacture; a Study in Industrial Beginnings* (1931)] on the cotton manufacture of New England. I remember it as a kind of bible for me.

**Peloso:** *At that time isn't it true that very few Latin Americanists were doing economic history?*

**Stein:** J. Fred Rippy was perhaps the best known of the few doing economic history.

**Peloso:** *You commented in the book that economic history was relatively neglected. What was the dominant theme in the field? What were others doing? Were they doing political or diplomatic history?*

**Stein:** That's a difficult one for me. One has blinders. You think in terms of only what you were interested in. I guess I had the general feeling that I edged my way into economic and social history. Let me put it that way.

**Peloso:** *This apparently was a transition into a different framework?*

**Stein:** Yes, back then I was keenly interested in something which I guess was supposedly novel, interdisciplinary history. How did I get interested in interdisciplinary history? I recall that it all started when Clarence Haring or Fred Merk, then chairman of the department, or both, suggested that I talk to Howard Cline, in Harvard's History Department, about my interest. Now Howard was very much interested in an interdisciplinary approach, in ethnohistory. He was a very early adept of this approach. He interested me in it through his course on Mexican history, a course that ended up serving as the foundation of his first book. I guess that was the incubus, so to speak, of my interest in interdisciplinary history. So it was logical that I moved toward the broad view of history. I can't say I was into an *Annales* School framework although a lot of us were interested in expanding the boundaries of our specialty. I became aware of the *Annales* School later, as a matter of fact.

**Peloso:** *Soon afterward, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, economic history really took hold in the field. What do you make of the developments in economic history after that time? How do you view what happened in economic history?*

**Stein:** Well, of course there was the influence of the new economic history, emphasis on the use of statistics and models. I just stuck with my own particular interest. By 1957 or 1958, I decided that I had to move on. The Brazilian projects were done and I asked myself if I wanted to stay in Brazilian history or shift into the history of another area of Latin America. That's when I got interested in Mexico. Which was the obvious place, because that's where interesting things were happening. In effect, I moved into social and economic history again, focusing on the topic that I've been working on, which resulted in the manuscript which has just gone off to the press, volume three of what Barbara and I researched.

**Peloso:** *We will come back to that project.* The Colonial Heritage of Latin America: Essays on Economic Dependence in Perspective (1970), *arguably became the most widely known book in the field.* Did you anticipate that this would be a text or guide for further research? What was your response to how widely this book was adopted in the classroom?

**Stein:** In the 60s, there was the notion of development, which grew out of the post war development, Latin America, [the Argentine economist] Raúl Prebisch; you can go through the whole phenomenon and I, like a lot of others, was very much influenced by this. Besides, if anyone had read into Brazilian history, you knew that there had been the dependence of Brazil on England and Portugal, and Portugal's dependence on England. The book, *British Preeminence in Brazil* [1933], by Allen K. Manchester, who taught at Duke, was very influential. He really laid out the notion of dependence, which transferred to Brazil after the independence of Brazil from Portugal, very clearly. I was influenced—dependence was nothing new to me at the time, but there were a number of others, including André Gunder Frank, who were then advancing the notion. So, this was in a sense the intellectual framework at the time. I had been in France and Spain with Barbara in 1965, working on this project with Barbara, and I came back at the end of the year. I received a letter from Sam Bailey at Rutgers, who was running a seminar for high school teachers, on Latin America. He asked me to give a few lectures to his seminar. I agreed; what I did was simply go over the lectures I'd been giving, what turned out to be *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America*. After I offered the manuscript to several presses, one day, young Sheldon Myer at Oxford University Press, came through. He asked if I had anything that he'd be interested in. I said here are these chapters, which have been rejected. Barbara worked at it and added her own sections to it. That's the origin of the *Colonial Heritage of Latin America*.

**Peloso:** *What did you think of the reception?*

**Stein:** The best report was from someone who wrote from Vietnam who said he was reading it in a stockade. There was also an award from New Jersey teachers for the best work in English for high school students. I liked that too.

**Peloso:** *It was elegantly written, and it made its point strongly.*

**Stein:** That really reflected the work that Barbara and I had started in 1958. When I received a Guggenheim and moved on to the new project, what I've been working on up to now, of which at this point we have three volumes, and I've just completed the fourth volume. At the moment, I'm in a post-partum syndrome. So, if you ask me about the reception . . . it was criticized, but that I expected. I had no idea what was going to happen; I still get royalties from it, after how many years? Not bad.

**Peloso:** *So, it became a Latin American best seller?*

**Stein:** Yes. There was a Spanish translation published in Mexico by Siglo Veintiuno. They made a pocketbook out of it. I don't know how many printings. For a little book of that sort . . .

**Peloso:** *Next came Latin America: A Guide to Economic History, 1830-1930 (1977).*

**Stein:** That's when the Social Science Research Council wanted a useful bibliography done and Bryce Wood [the Chairman of its Joint Committee on Latin American Studies] organized a meeting in Caracas. I was invited along with others. Out of that, they asked me to do it. I can't remember whether [Roberto] Cortés Conde [the Argentine economic historian] was there or not. But at any rate, Cortés Conde and I took it on.

**Peloso:** *Was it a difficult project to organize and carry out? You were working with a group of people. Cortés Conde was in Argentina. You were here. There were people from all over the U.S., Latin America and elsewhere working on that volume. Was it difficult to get them all going in the same direction?*

**Stein:** No, no problem. Cortés Conde came up once or twice, and we worked out the details. We had an assistant who copyedited and ensured it was in proper form. So, I didn't envision any major problems at all. Everybody was most cooperative. I don't recall anybody backing out. It just fell into place, at least as I recollect now; there were no problems.

**Peloso:** *It can be very difficult to do a multi-author, multinational work of any sort, and a detailed, annotated bibliographical guide such as that . . .*

**Stein:** No, everybody was most cooperative, and I think we held joint review sessions after the contributions were submitted. We must have had a meeting, maybe in 1969 or 1970 in Mexico, but there was never any problem that I recall. We had very good people: Enrique Florescano, Osvaldo Sunkel, Pablo Macera, Cortés Conde, Shane Hunt, and others.

**Peloso:** *Your other book on Brazil, Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900. The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society (1957), began as your dissertation and was a work in social history. Can you comment on how it felt to do a work of local history in a plantation society?*

**Stein:** It was fun, but it was difficult because I had no transportation. We moved to a small town, which was known to attract vacationers in really hot weather, and the food was okay. We lived in a *pensão*. We were lucky because I came armed with letters of introduction. Barbara and I arrived in *Río* in June and from June to September, 1948, we worked in the National Library. I went thru the card catalog there, always trying to figure out exactly what I was going to do. Then we consulted the census of 1872 and carefully examined it.

That was when we had our idea of what we were going to do. We decided, well, we couldn't write a history of coffee in the whole valley. It's impossible. Looking at the census, we decided that we would seek a community in the valley that would be representative. Would it have documentary material? Could we get access to it? Barbara had been to Vassouras once before, so I decided I would look into Vassouras. At that time Carlos Lacerda was writing for the *Correio da Manhã*. He wrote on the election of 1948 in the U.S. He was obviously a bright, intelligent, personality . . . and I knew he came from Vassouras, from columns that he had written. One day, I called him up and said, I'm interested in working in Vassouras, and may I see you? He said, sure, come. So, I visited his apartment in *Río*. He grasped immediately what I was getting at, and at that very moment typed a letter which he gave me to deliver to the *prefeito* of Vassouras, explaining what I wanted to do, that I would need to have documents; that opened things up. The foreign minister at that time was Raúl Fernández , who also came from Vassouras. He wrote a letter. With those two letters, I went to Vassouras and showed them to the *prefeito*. I was acceptable.

**Peloso:** *Well equipped.*

**Stein:** Vassouras seemed indeed to be a representative community, and there were the notarial archives. I must say, in those days the municipal archives were stored with the municipal paints! Of course, we could look out from there, a sort of sub-basement, and see our daughter and her nanny. Our daughter was two and a half

at the time. So it was convenient and the pensão was located just across on the other side of the plaza. I decided that we would simply move there and work in Vassouras. That's how we gathered material, working in a notarial office.

**Peloso:** *In the book, you thanked some informants.*

**Stein:** Barbara had to get supplementary food for our youngsters customarily. She used to go to the mercado in the countryside on Saturday. Some weeks after we arrived there, she advised me, "Stan, there are two old people here who must be ex-slaves. Don't you think we ought to look into this." I went and talked to them. They became my informants. They would come in from the countryside on Saturdays. I used to go out and visit them, walking out most of the time and walking back.

Talk of informants reminds me of my contact with Melville Herskovits. It was Frances Herskovits who advised me how to go about taking field notes, learning how to interrogate people. Not to write anything in front of them but when you left to write down your notes quickly, and I would sit immediately to record them and Barbara typed them up. It gave me an idea of the basic techniques of oral history. I was particularly interested in life from a slave's point of view, so I would go out on a given work day, with a series of questions in the back of my mind so that it was kind of a structured interview. I did that repeatedly, and that was the basis of that whole section on the social background of the slave.

**Peloso:** *You mentioned that in the course of conversations with your informants, former slaves in Vassouras, they referred to some sort of songs, "jongos." Was access to these songs related to your friendship with the Herskovitses? Can you comment on those stories?*

**Stein:** A book containing those work songs has just been published in Brazil by Silvia Lara and Gustavo Pacheco, *Memórias do Jongo* (2007), and an introduction to the U.S. edition is being prepared in Puerto Rico by Juan Giovanetti. In his essay he refers to the Melville Herskovits correspondence, which contains some detail about how and when Barbara met the Herskovitses. Barbara was in Bahia in 1941, and Herskovits and his wife, Frances, were there doing research on Africans in Brazil. Barbara was at that time working on the abolitionist movement in Bahia. She met the Herskovitses and they took her to her first *candomblé*. She was then studying the process of the abolition of slavery, and subsequently she returned to the states and to a teaching assistant's job at Smith College, where she had graduated. That forms the background of our contact with the Herskovitses. Then came, of course, the war and Barbara wanted to be engaged, so she went to Washington and was working in the Labor Department. That gave her contact with a number of people who were coming up to the United States from Latin America.

In late 1947, I drew up an application for a grant from the Social Science Research Council. By chance, Melville Herskovits was in Boston, attending an AHA meeting, and that's where I met Herskovits, through Barbara. We must have talked about the project and what we had in mind, and then about my own interest in the African background of Brazil, so I began reading Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), *Dahomey* (1938), and *Life in a Haitian Valley* (1937). The correspondence between Barbara and Herskovits, and later me and Herskovits is what Giovanetti has referred to.

Herskovits became interested in our project. He invited me to go to Northwestern University, to look at materials he had and to learn about how you go about oral history, which I did. When I was there he introduced me to the anthropologist and musicologist Richard Waterman, who was doing recordings of Blacks in the Caribbean. At that time I remember listening to one done in Trinidad, which fascinated me because it was a Moody and Sankey hymn. Then, after the first or second verse, it began to change. It was no longer a Moody and Sankey hymn, but they were hand clapping and it was shouting. So you begin to get the idea of how Africans in America were really transforming their religious practices. That's when the idea came to mind that recording would be very interesting to do. Afterward, I received very good instructions from Frances Herskovits about how to carry out interrogation of people, all the details about it.

But I was interested essentially in plantations and not in the chance of doing recordings. Well, I had found, I think I told you, these two ex-slaves in Vassouras, through Barbara's instrumentation. It was at that time that I began to learn about *jongos*. At one point, I went down to Río, got a wire recording machine from the U. S. Cultural Affairs office, lugged it up to Vassouras, and made some recordings. Of course I was limited in recordings because I had to be near an electric power source.

**Peloso:** *So what are jongos?*

**Stein:** The *jongos* are really what we call work songs or hollers or chants. This was summarized when we had a colloquium at Princeton, organized by Pedro Meira Monteiro, at which time many papers were presented and they asked me to make a contribution, and I did, what I call "My Marvelous Journey," to take off from [the American translator] Samuel Putnam. I described what I've been talking about to you now. In effect, I had forgotten about the wire recordings. I did not know what had happened to them until Gustavo Pacheco, a Brazilian ethnomusicologist, came through one day. He had been asking me about these [recordings] for years, and one day I opened a drawer and there I saw them at the bottom. I gave them to him, he sent them to New York, had the wire put on tape or disk, and they proceeded to analyze it, and so they got their essays together. They have the

transcription of the jongs from the disk. They also have a disk in the volume that they are selling [*Memória do Jongo: as gravações históricas de Stanley J. Stein, Vassouras, 1949*, edited by Silvia Hunold Lara and Gustavo Pacheco, (Campinas, Brazil: CECULT; Rio de Janeiro: Folha Seca, 2007)]. In other words, now I realize that Brazilians are beginning to look into this material. Some people have been collecting this material and they tell me, I don't know whether it's true, I was the first one to do such recording. But others started after me. The songs today are very useful, and Brazilians are collecting the same thing and working on it.

**Peloso:** *I saw a poster. The conference that you are referring to was held here at Princeton in the fall of 2004, and it was called "Chattering Songs." Apparently it was a discussion of the jongs that you had collected in Brazil in the late 1940's. Among the participants in that 2004 conference were Silvia Hunold Lara, Robert Stenes, of Unicamp[Brazil], a very well known Brazilian scholar; and several Princeton faculty members, including Colin Palmer of the History Department; Pedro Meira Monteiro and Arcadio Díaz-Quinones of the Spanish and Portuguese Department; Michael Stone of the Latin American Studies program, and yourself. Isn't that the case?*

**Stein:** Silvia Lara was very instrumental in organizing the program; not to overlook the spadework of Gustavo Pacheco.

**Peloso:** *Later your work turned in another direction. Your book Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe (2000), co-authored by your late wife, Barbara, focused on the commercial relations of America, Spain and Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, and you called Spanish colonialism "the cutting edge of the early global economy." Seemingly the more the Hapsburgs refined the metropole's imperial structure the more dependent Spain became on its colonies.*

**Stein:** Well, I should say that this study did not begin this way. The study began because first I wanted to move out of Brazilian history, and as a Latin Americanist, I thought I ought to be studying another economy and the most obvious—and most interesting one to study—at that time was Mexico. Secondly, this study was ideated at the time that there were anti-colonial wars going on. Specifically, the war in Algeria and the war in Vietnam. I was interested in the conditions under which colonialism would end. So, I became interested in the outbreak of revolution in Mexico in 1810. My point was, who were the most important people at this time in Mexico and what was their role? In what ways did certain groups (in particular merchants), assist in or counteract or oppose [the political events]; what was the role of the commercial groups, mainly the extremely wealthy merchants of Mexico City? [What role did] most of those of peninsular origin have in the coming of the revolution for independence?

What inevitably became a kind of European history wasn't supposed to be that. It was really a study of Mexico, the great silver producer of the eighteenth century, and the metropole which obviously became more and more dependent upon its colony, Mexico, because of silver production, which reached astonishing amounts in about 1800. I would say about 27 million pesos a year in coin, without counting leakage. So my question was: what have silver and merchant groups and the metropole got to do with colonialism in Mexico, and with the obvious growing dependence of the metropole? Hence, silver. Also, these were merchants who, after all, were the hands through which silver went out because after all people bought goods. What they imported they sold, and ultimately the silver from the mines, etc., went through their hands and back to Spain. The third element was the role of war in interrupting this circuit of trade; so therefore "silver, trade and war" made sense. This first volume was really supposed to be just an introductory section to what would be happening between 1808 and 1810. As in all such matters, you go back and back. The second volume was a continuation of the period from 1759 to 1789, which is the period of the great "reforms." I was particularly interested in the effect of the reforms. How were these reforms made? Who was interested in reform? What was their effect in Mexico? I'm still interested in the connection between metropole and colony. Volume three, which I am working on now, is supposed take us from 1789 to the French invasion of 1808, because that's what I think is the real factor that blew up the Spanish system.

**Peloso:** *The second volume that you refer to is the book that later was published as Apogee of Empire: Spain and New Spain in the Age of Charles III (2003).*

**Stein:** Exactly. And now I'm on the third volume which is what I'm now copy-editing, which is essentially on that key period between 1789 and 1808 and on the interaction of silver, trade and war because by 1797 it was quite evident that the Spanish navy would not be able to counter the English navy. As a wrapper [book jacket] I'm going to use a painting I found with the help of my daughter, by [Robert] Clevely, of the Battle of Cape Saint Vincent [14 February 1797]. If you look at the documents that I have been looking at, 1797 was decisive because that brought Spain into conflict with England and the English proceeded to blockade trade. So you had what was called *comercio neutro* which meant in effect that the Spanish government said, okay, foreign countries that are allied with us and neutral countries may trade with the colonies. That lasted from 1797 to 1799, when pressure from commercial interests, Lima, Mexico City, and Cádiz, stopped it. What I'm getting at here is that symbiotic relationship between silver from Mexico, trade, and the growing conflict between Spain (as an ally of France), and England, getting involved in their fraternal wars.

**Peloso:** *From the way you speak, it's evident that dependence/dependency is a many headed hydra.*

**Stein:** It is, that's right. And it seems to me that it becomes quite evident that as long as you could get silver from Mexico—and I traced the way the silver gets to Europe, to England, to France and to Spain between 1797 and 1808—that was really the crux of the volume. And if you're interested you could look at my table of contents.

**Peloso:** *You're referring to the new volume now?*

**Stein:** The one I'm working on.

**Peloso:** *Is there a title?*

**Stein:** It's going to be "The Edge of Crisis."

**Peloso:** *And that's a continuation of the trilogy that started out as Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe?*

**Stein:** *Edge of Crisis* is subtitled "*War and Trade in the Spanish Atlantic, 1789 to 1808.*"

**Peloso:** *In talking about the central theme in these studies, at some points you refer to Spanish bureaucrats as Spanish nationalists. Is that a fair term to use in the eighteenth century? Were they really nationalists?*

**Stein:** As you know many historians refer that way to the people who joined the French government, the French-inspired regime of Joseph, Napoleon's brother, between 1808 and 1814 as *afrancesados*. It has always interested me why these people accepted Napoleon. And this is one of the themes that runs through what I've been writing and thinking about. The problem for Spain in the eighteenth century was: We have to—as we would say today—modernize. We look at what the English have done with their empire in America and what the French have done. The ideas from the 1720s onward, they found abroad. What they were saying was we must borrow but we must do so selectively. We must use what the others—mainly England and France—have done, but more or less maintaining our own, shall I say identity, our own structures but, in a sense, making gradual changes when necessary. The fact of the matter is that they never made changes unless they were really put to it, and I guess the real shock was the Great War from 1757 to 1763 when the British Navy took Manila and Havana at the same time. This was a profound shock. I think this is one of the reasons why you get the Bourbon reforms in that short period afterwards. They realized they had to hurry up.

Now, to get back to your earlier question, if you look through the literature, the afrancesados were looking for models which they could use selectively to improve Spain. And my feeling is that the people who ultimately joined the government of Joseph had grown up under Charles III and Charles IV. They were military officers. They were bankers, they were ex-viceroy who had been in Mexico. And they hoped that somehow they could make changes in Spain to meet what obviously were increasingly critical circumstances as a result of the conflict in Europe between England and France. You know, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. My feeling is that by 1807 or 1808, they realized that the model they had been following would not work, and at this time they looked to Napoleon, who appeared as an aggressive liberalizer. Authoritarian is the word. In other words, you're going to have reform, and you're going to do so in a way they would like, from the top down and not from the bottom up, and Napoleon had the record. He had accepted the Revolution. He may have sounded radical but he in fact wasn't. So in desperation, when for a number of internal reasons the regime collapsed in Spain, many of the afrancesados joined the French on the assumption that they would be able under this new regime to introduce the changes that had long been talked about but had not been effected. That's how I interpret their actions.

**Peloso:** *Would these men influence the Cádiz constitutionalists of 1810-1812? Would they remain active beyond 1812?*

**Stein:** They fled.

**Peloso:** *They fled? So, when the Cádiz assembly met, none of these men were available?*

**Stein:** No, they were with the French. They were part of the regime in Madrid. There was always that split between who would or wouldn't join with José I, the Napoleon-imposed king. And there were many who would not. Many people thought, well no, they were nationalists of a different and curious stripe who would not join with what was in effect an occupying force. So, there is that curious split. I'm not at all sure. I'd have to spend many more years analyzing this group. A split in a political class defined as bankers, military men, bureaucrats, etc. There was a sharp division, and I think they were all nationalists and they were equally imperialists. None of these groups wanted to give up the colonies.

**Peloso:** *I see.*

**Stein:** If you look through the literature, it's quite clear that there would be no effective change. In other words, they would not follow the pattern that had been followed when the Portuguese royal family went to Brazil. And in fact I think I point out somewhere that the opening of the ports of Brazil was not published in

Mexico until about six or seven months after it had occurred, and that's very indicative of what was going on. Anybody who studied the pattern of the British influence in Portugal and then Brazil and then what happened between England and Brazil in the nineteenth century, it's all there. And so that was always in the back of my mind. And it's one of these themes, it seems to me, in colonialism—it's dependence. Although a country may become independent, it's still dependent upon the old motherland in one way or the other. Just look at Francophone Africa. It's the perfect example, it seems to me. You look at your own time and then you begin to think about, well, what are the roots of some of these problems? And that's really the basis. So your question is good. I didn't want to use the term "relevant," because that's been overworked. I deliberately avoided using it.

**Peloso:** *Can you tell us something about your present work and where you see your work going in the future?*

**Stein:** What I want to do now is to continue to do Atlantic history in the sense of looking at an Atlantic empire and its relationship with its wealthiest colony. It's essentially based upon Spain and Mexico and has very little to do with Argentina and Peru. It does have to do with Havana because Havana was becoming the important point of the Spanish Empire, which it would separately become when Mexico collapsed. So, there is that interplay between Havana and Mexico City and Vera Cruz and Cádiz.

**Peloso:** *Very interesting. Thank you.*

*Howard University (Emeritus)  
Washington, D.C.*

VINCENT PELOSO