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0521894166 - Gentlemen, Bourgeois, and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups, 1750-1850

Jesus Cruz

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The crisis of the Spanish old regime traditionally has been interpreted as a result of a bourgeois revolution. Historians have argued that the ascendant class was formed by a group of new landowners, merchants, and bureaucrats who dismantled the old feudal state and began to transform Spain into a capitalist society. In this book, Professor Cruz challenges this viewpoint by arguing that in Spain, as in the rest of continental Europe, a national bourgeoisie did not exist before the second half of the nineteenth century. He proves the model of bourgeois revolution inadequate to explain any movement toward mobilization before 1850.

Historiography based on the bourgeois revolution theory portrays Spain as an exceptional model whose main feature is the “failure” resulting from the immobility of its ruling class. Basing his conclusions in part on an impressive study of over five hundred merchants, bankers, bureaucrats, and politicians who lived in Madrid, Cruz argues that the nature of the crisis of the old regime in Spain was mainly political and in part economic, but never the consequence of a social revolution. This work revises the standard interpretive model of the crisis and relocates Spain in the mainstream for industrialization, urbanization, and democratization that characterizes the history of modern Europe.

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JESUS CRUZ

University of Delaware



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*To my parents:
José Cruz and
Ana Valenciano*

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