

within the Church, and at crucial junctures pursued iconoclasm when less confrontational tactics might have been more effective. By contrast, Catholic opposition could generally count on the support of social elites, and on the religious beliefs present in everyday life and ritual that revolutionaries simply underestimated or misunderstood.

Among the many themes the book illuminates, that of elections may be the most surprising and original. Recent work by Paul Gillingham notwithstanding, Mexicanists do not usually take elections before the 1980s very seriously. State-level elections emerge here as flawed, murky and corrupt but nevertheless contested, unpredictable and consequential. The case studies of Campeche and Hidalgo culminate with gubernatorial elections whose winning coalition secured surreptitious Catholic support, the so-called *voto morado* or purple vote, and stabilised provincial politics. The cases of Guerrero and Guanajuato begin rather than end with key gubernatorial disputes; thereafter, Catholic opposition was channelled through lay organisations, paramilitaries and caciques, and continued to sway many local elections.

This study has many broader historiographical and methodological implications, and if anything these could have been discussed more. It certainly encourages researchers to keep looking into the post-1940 period to understand the dominant party's longevity. The conclusion briefly suggests that the state's failure to transform the countryside in the 1930s helped persuade subsequent governments to pursue industrialisation and urbanisation. In Chapter 5, Fallaw notes that his research also contributes to a rethinking of the Partido Acción Nacional's relationship with Catholicism, and this is certainly true. The tradition of Catholic organising Fallaw reconstructs surely shaped many other developments too, from the reception of federal health and infrastructure programmes to the experience of the Cold War and even migration. The book raises new questions about the memory of Cardenismo: How much of Cárdenas's image as a consensual state-builder was created after his *sexenio*, once he adopted a role as the discreet left-wing conscience of the dominant party? More generally, the book shows how important Church and lay-organisation archives are to our understanding of Latin America's modern political history.

This is a superbly researched and enduring contribution to the history of the Mexican Revolution and Latin America's political and religious history. For the many researchers who continue to ponder how Mexico's regions responded to national institutions and discourses, Fallaw's book will be indispensable. Rooted in the provincial upheaval of the 1930s, the analysis will shape our understanding of Mexican politics and state-society relations across the twentieth century.

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Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith (eds.), *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2014), pp. xxviii + 444, £65.00, £18.99 pb.

This collection of 18 well-crafted essays captures many of the essential features of Mexico's ambiguous political system, a democracy on paper characterised by one-party rule, political violence and social conservatism. Such a hybrid regime has been described by political scientists Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter as a '*dictablanda*'.

Following an erudite introduction, the editors organise the essays into three broad categories: high and low politics, work and resource regulation, and culture and ideology. The essay by Alan Knight argues that Mexico's retreat from social reform began in 1938 when President Lázaro Cárdenas, responding to stiff resistance from the Catholic Church and social conservatives, halted socialist education. The timing is complicated, however, because that same year Cárdenas nationalised foreign-owned petroleum companies and created PEMEX. Moreover, according to Roberto Blancarte, Cárdenas still believed that Mexican society would become secularised through industrialisation and modernisation. This proved to be a miscalculation, however, as most Mexicans did not benefit from industrialisation and the Church's political position improved following its renewed commitment to social reform with Vatican II. Thomas Roth, in one of the strongest essays, discusses the revolutionary state's more harmonious political relationship with the army. He shows how the state and the army collaborated to achieve shared political goals, despite formal separation of civilian and military authority. Roth explains, for example, that the state used the army to police citizens and to suppress political opponents, and that some generals acquired significant political influence and enriched themselves through illegal activities.

Two related essays discuss relations between regional bosses (*caciques*) and the official state party (the PRM/PRI) that emerged in the post-revolutionary political settlement. Caciques affiliated with the PRI controlled local elections through fraud and violence, and used patronage to build and sustain political support. As the political and economic environment became more complex in the 1950s, however, *caciques* gave way to political families (*camarillas*), whose persistence argues against the theory of the all-powerful state directed from Mexico City. Will G. Pansters then presents a case study of the cacique Gonzalo N. Santos, describing him as the 'prototypical regional cacique of post-revolutionary Mexico' (p. 127). Santos controlled politics in San Luis Potosí from the 1940s to 1958 following the suppression of the Cedillo rebellion against Cárdenas. Santos combined a rustic political style characteristic of his native Huasteca with an acute understanding of PRI party politics in Mexico City. He established his control by stealing elections, increasing the governor's authority and crushing dissenters.

The electoral process in Guerrero and Veracruz is then discussed by Paul Gillingham, who shows that an element of democracy characterised official party politics. Competition existed to get onto the ballot and the winners had to demonstrate that they enjoyed significant popular support. Gillingham also notes that the PRI sometimes allowed opposition candidates who had won elections to take office, rather than provoke riots that could mushroom into major political scandals.

The section on work and resource regulation begins with Michael Snodgrass's examination of union patronage systems in the steel and mining industries in the north and in the sugar industry in Jalisco. In the north, union bosses ('*charros*') distributed jobs to workers' family members and sold goods in union stores at reduced prices, while PRI officials in Jalisco allocated coveted *bracero* permits to sugar mill workers. These privileges consolidated the bond between state, party and unions in important industries. Gladys McCormick then discusses the career of Antonio Jaramillo, a union activist in the sugar cooperative at Zacatepec, Morelos, who worked within the system, despite hostile actions by management and the government. His career is representative of post-revolutionary union leaders and can be contrasted with the actions of his brother Rubén, who organised a general strike, ran for governor

and twice rebelled against the state. Rubén was assassinated along with most of his family in 1962, while Antonio retained employment and received a position for his son. Maria Teresa Fernández Aceves next describes the exceptional political career of Guadalupe Urzúa Flores, who entered politics as a *Cardenista* activist and became a *Priista* congresswoman in Jalisco in 1955, three years after women received the vote. Fernández describes how Urzúa Flores navigated her way within a macho political culture, relying on intelligence, good looks and charm, to win healthcare, education and land for her constituents, making her more of an ‘advocate’ than a *cacica*.

Remaining essays in this section examine how tax policy and government corruption benefited corporations and the wealthy. Christopher R. Boyer shows that forest service officers enforced logging bans in areas controlled by peasant communities, but allowed timber companies to log over protected forests in return for bribes. In this case, government corruption enabled degradation of the environment and enriched corporations. Benjamin T. Smith then explains how Mexico’s tax system has favoured business at the expense of the general public. Although Mexico had the lowest tax burden in Latin America, pervasive tax evasion by the wealthy created budgetary shortfalls that reduced funding for social services and education. Regressive taxation and corporate tax holidays, moreover, served to widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

The section on culture and ideology opens with Guillermo de la Peña’s essay on federal policy toward the indigenous. Cárdenas’ wanted to ‘Mexicanise the Indians’ through educational and agrarian reforms, but his successors retreated from these reforms and ignored abuses of Indians by local officials and merchants. On the positive side, Cárdenas’s successors supported academic investigations of indigenous cultures and collaborated with foreign scholars.

Two subsequent essays discuss the relationship between the state and the media. Andrew Paxman argues that the federal government valued the cinema not as cultural production but because newsreels served as propaganda tools for its policies, and because film helped to entertain the masses. Entertainment industries also enriched foreign investors and presidents. For example, US businessman William Jenkins owned 25 of the 75 cinemas in Mexico City, and made generous donations to Manuel Ávila Camacho. When television became more profitable than cinema, Miguel Alemán also acquired a covert stake in a major network. All media expanded in the 1950s and made fortunes for politically connected entrepreneurs. Pablo Piccato next discusses the relationship between the state, the media and murder. Despite PRI control over the industrial press, the party could not prevent reporting of homicides and the perception that murders were political acts. Politicians frequently hired gunmen who killed on command, and politically suspicious murders were not properly investigated. Such cases triggered public discourse regarding the linkage between politicians, police and murder.

Two final essays examine student activism and popular protest. Tanalis Padilla discusses rural normal schools established by Plutarco Calles in the 1920s, which provided instruction in agriculture, culture and politics designed to uplift peasants. The government began to close *normales* in the 1940s, but those that remained protested against government corruption and social conservatism. In 1965, *normalistas* assaulted the army barracks at Madera, Chihuahua, and in the 1960s they threatened armed insurgency in Guerrero. Jaime M. Pensado then turns our attention to Mexico City and protests at the Politécnico in 1956, which launched the student movement of the 1960s. Strikers demanded the director’s removal and a voice in governance, and

they drew support from 100,000 students on neighbouring campuses. Adolfo Ruiz Cortines agreed to invest more resources in the Politécnico and to give students an administrative role. The director, fearing for his life, also resigned. Nevertheless, the strike continued until the army occupied the campus, establishing a pattern of protest and repression.

By way of a conclusion, Jeffrey W. Rubin argues that the federal government attempted to control the popular forces unleashed by the Revolution but could not unilaterally impose authoritarian control. Instead, there evolved a hegemonic process between the centre and the periphery, with regions becoming integrated into the political system while preserving political space through resistance and negotiation.

Scholars can debate if Mexico's political system was authoritarian or hegemonic, but these essays provide little evidence of a democracy. Fraudulent elections, political violence, corruption and patronage characterised the period. The retreat from the Cárdenista reforms, politically imperfect attempts to benefit the masses, resulted in policies that enriched corporations, politicians and their associates.

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Paulo Drinot and Alan Knight (eds.), *The Great Depression in Latin America* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 362, £62.00, £17.99 pb.

The Great Depression of the 1930s has long been read as a turning point in Latin American history. This pivotal role became virtually emblematic of the 1960s CEPAL school of economics, which used the external shock of 1929 as the dividing line between the region's nineteenth-century era of 'Desarrollo hacia afuera' (export-led growth) and the modern era of 'Desarrollo hacia adentro' (inward or industrial growth). That strict periodisation has long fallen under the scrutiny of economic historians, particularly in a wave of revisionist studies inspired by the region's external debt crisis and 'lost decade' of development of the 1980s. What Paulo Drinot and Alan Knight add in this valuable new survey of the depression era, this time in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial meltdown, is a longer time-frame (from the 1920s to impacts felt as far along as the 1970s) but even more so, a wider disciplinary range and sensibility. Rather than centring on the economics of the crash, exports or import-substitution industrialism in the 'periphery', Drinot and Knight's book focuses on the political, social, labour, racial, gender, and cultural shifts arising from the era. As such, their book captures the changing orientations of Latin American historians in the early twenty-first century. Thus, the volume enriches and complicates more than redraws either the classic or revisionist economic history research on the depression.

Paulo Drinot's Introduction lays out these issues, in a widely read and well-internationalised 1930s. Even in political terms, the 1930s were far more than, or more diverse than, just the birth of 'populism'. Roy Hora, in the first of the book's nine national case studies, writes on 'Argentine society' during a period mainly recalled politically as the rightist '*Década infame*'; he pursues instead shifts in migration, gender, the family, and the overlooked roles of communist organisers. Angela Vgarra then surveys Chile, famously hard hit in its nitrates industry, but focuses