

industrial lubricant. In the twentieth century, oil's abundance, high energy density, and liquid nature—which meant it was easily and cheaply extracted, transported, and consumed—led to its replacing coal and transforming the country. Within decades, oil would power Mexican factories, light homes, pave roads, and fuel cars, trucks, tractors, ships, and airplanes. It would also power the fertilization of agricultural fields, and electrify much of the nation.

After its 1938 nationalization, most oil production fed domestic consumption. According to Vergara, oil transformed Mexico from an agrarian nation into an industrial one by fostering Import Substitution Industrialization, the “Mexican Miracle,” the Green Revolution, rapid urbanization, a demographic explosion, and suburban sprawl. Such far-reaching changes led to broad social and cultural transformations and increased disparities of wealth, especially between urban and rural Mexico. Meanwhile, the federal government tied itself closely to oil in a corporatist manner and facilitated its dominant role in the economy by investing millions of pesos into building an oil infrastructure of pipelines, roads, and refineries.

Although Vergara covers some well-travelled ground, his energy-centric narrative offers new insights that will force scholars to reconceptualize modern Mexico. Although some of the energy transitions that he presents are familiar because they reflect earlier realignments toward fossil fuels in both the United States and Europe, his study's value is evident when he demonstrates how and why Mexico pursued an energy path different from that of the world's first industrial nations—especially regarding water, coal, and oil.

The monograph's orientation is primarily economic (that is, industrial) and institutional (both state and corporate), and its nod toward environmental history stems mostly from the fact that the industries under review are all natural resources. Except for deforestation, ecosystem degradation and recovery receive limited attention, as does the negative impact of fossil fuels on human health. These latter points aside, Vergara's important study will impel scholars of Mexican and Latin American industrialization to include energy as a central component of their analysis; it also may serve as a model for how the energy history of the Americas below the Rio Grande gets written.

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MEXICO'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Mexican Revolution's Wake: The Making of a Political System, 1920–1929. By Sarah Osten. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 285. \$99.99 cloth; \$29.99 paper; \$24.00 e-book.
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The decade of the 1920s receives far less attention in the larger historiography of the Mexican Revolution than does the military phase from 1910 to 1920. Although several

excellent studies over the last few decades have shown that the revolution's radically varied promises and possibilities collided with Mexico's social and political reality during the 1920s, ultimately giving rise to the institutional revolution, the scholarship still generally portrays the 1920s as an epilogue to the military phase, or as a transition to Lázaro Cárdenas's presidency in the 1930s. As a result, many basic questions about the period remain unanswered or ignored.

Fortunately, Sarah Osten has gone a long way in the present volume to answer one such lingering question: that is, how did the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) and Mexico's one-party political system come about? Conventional portrayals of the party's genesis under President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–28), she points out, suggest that the PNR appeared from thin air. Osten corrects this misunderstanding by focusing on the evolution of socialist parties in southeastern Mexico (Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, and Yucatán) and their leaders (Ramón Félix Flores, Carlos A. Vidal, Tomás Garrido Canabal, and Felipe Carrillo Puerto, respectively). During the 1920s, she argues, these organizations strongly influenced Calles's desire to create a national political party.

Although distinct from one another in important ways, southeastern Mexico's socialist parties shared two common characteristics that Calles would later incorporate into the PNR's blueprint. First, they cultivated grassroots support among workers and peasants, especially in the form of *ligas de resistencia* (except in Chiapas), giving themselves a backbone of democratic credibility. While other 1920s political parties brokered candidates and policy among elite politicians and military officials, the socialists in the southeast, pioneered by Carrillo Puerto in Yucatán, built massive popular support and influence over local and regional politics that enabled them to introduce significant reforms. Second, these parties' organizational structures were nevertheless intensely hierarchical, featuring middle-class and elite leaderships that dabbled in quasi-authoritarianism. Osten demonstrates how these dominant features became hallmarks of Calles's PNR, based on his close relationship with the various southeastern socialist organizations and their leaders and rivalries, which were both numerous and violent.

Osten makes no methodological pretenses here. She has produced a straightforward, political history with the intent to fill a major hole in the existent historiography. Perhaps surprisingly for such a rich regional history, she bases her archival work mainly in Mexico City, though she does add significant material from Chiapas, Yucatán, and Sonora. The book is well organized, beautifully written, and features many strengths. For one, it provides arguably the best overview available for this period of southeastern socialism in its own right. The author does a remarkable job of producing a coherent narrative out of disparate and often outwardly contradictory events, as well as the various socialist platforms. She further demonstrates the southeast's ties to national political figures and how the major rebellions of the period (de la Huerta's, for example) influenced the dynamics of both regional and national affairs.

Osten carefully makes a convincing argument without overstating her case. She demonstrates that, although heavily influenced by it, the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) was no mere carbon copy of the southeast's socialism, whose various parties were likewise not identical to one another. She also shows that Calles's national party featured other influences, most notably Luis Morones and the Laborista Party (PLM). In fact, this volume might have benefited from a chapter on the PLM's influence on the early PRM, which would have enabled the author to further round out the examination of the PRM's various influences without straying too far from the book's emphasis on the southeast.

Conversely, material taken from Tabasco archives might have added to the study's strong regional emphasis. As it stands, this volume easily represents the best treatment of the PRM's origins available, and Osten should be commended for producing such a well researched, accessible, and useful study.

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Unrevolutionary Mexico: The Birth of a Strange Dictatorship. By Paul Gillingham. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021. Pp. 464. Abbreviations. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$45.00 cloth.
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Paul Gillingham deepens the relatively light historiographical imprint of mid twentieth-century PRI politics, significantly revising historians' understanding of the official party's machinery by comparing and contrasting regional political formation in the states of Guerrero and Veracruz between 1945 and 1955, roughly centered around the Miguel Alemán administration. This archivally rich study demonstrates the everyday mechanics of hegemony and the manufacture of consent.

The PRI's twentieth-century domination was far from a foregone conclusion. Evidence of plenty of agitation, would-be coups, and the implausible retention of cacical power shows how Mexico's *dictablanda*, or soft dictatorship, narrowly evaded the military dictatorship pitfall in which nearly every other contemporary Latin American nation found itself—but not for lack of violent ambition in military and political circles.

Two very thorough background chapters on each state's respective geographic and economic conditions, stretching back into the nineteenth century, provide such deep context that they could stand as regional microhistories on their own. The next pair of chapters traces the interlaced municipal, state, and federal elections of the 1940s, which saw divergent results in top-down attempts to incorporate local *pistoleros* and *agrarristas*