

and articles on the Swiss publishing house Ringier (2012). He currently works on the German textile industry.

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Jenkins of Mexico: How a Southern Farm Boy Became a Mexican Magnate. *By Andrew Paxman*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 509 pp. Notes, illustrations, photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$34.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-045574-3.

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Reviewed by Susan Gauss

Today, the world's wealthiest people—like Mexico's Carlos Slim—are household names, so it is striking that so few have heard of William Jenkins. Even in Mexico, where Jenkins was once arguably the richest person, he is relatively unknown, despite his wealth being linked to Slim's later rise. But as Andrew Paxman reveals in this deeply researched and vividly written biography, Jenkins deserves remembering, not least because, despite being American-born, he embodies Mexico's twentieth-century economic growth. Paxman covers a lot of ground, from Jenkins's years as a farm boy in Tennessee to his prerevolutionary forays into Mexican business, his bold, revolutionary-era entrepreneurialism, and his textile, sugar, film, and cotton ventures, and finally through his philanthropic years. In the end, Paxman has produced a novel and often brilliant analysis of business and politics in modern Mexico.

Puebla is at the heart of Jenkins's story. According to Paxman, with its dominant textile industry, parochial elites, cronyism, labor unrest, and undercapitalized hosiery sector, it was, contrary to conventional wisdom, the ideal setting for an ambitious entrepreneur. When the Revolution exacerbated weaknesses in Puebla's industrial and agricultural sectors, entrepreneurs like Jenkins pounced. Jenkins quickly outpaced competitors in the hosiery industry using technological innovation, building capital that enabled him to then diversify. He also learned the importance of political connections to business success. However, as Paxman shows, Jenkins understood throughout his career that connections alone could not replace innovation and hard work if one wanted to succeed.

During more than six decades in Mexico, Jenkins displayed a preternatural ability to read and respond to the prevailing zeitgeists. The revolutionary violence that unsettled many businesses was, to Jenkins, an opportunity to make predatory loans to enfeebled owners. Persistent political instability prompted him to cultivate relationships with diverse political, military, and church officials. Business savvy explains

these actions, but the fact that he had none of the obligations, ideologies, or alliances that shackled Mexican competitors also helped. As Paxman argues, Jenkins was less insular and more risk-taking than his peers. Diversification, capital, connections, bribery, political contributions, hard work, and business acumen all protected him from risk while he pursued new opportunities in Mexico's unstable business environment.

Paxman's interpretation of multiple industries—textiles, film, sugar, banking, philanthropy—is deft, and his research is extraordinarily deep and broad. Most impressively, he uses business-state relations to produce new insights about a range of interdependent phenomena that typically are analyzed in isolation, including labor relations, agrarianism, agricultural and industrial development, populism, violence, corruption, infrastructure, and local, regional, and national politics. He argues that businesspeople and politicians were joined in dense networks not by simple cronyism, as many scholars suggest, but by what he terms “symbiotic imperative,” or their respective need to limit risk or build legitimacy among conflicting client groups (pp. 6-7). Thus, business was deeply implicated in wider social and political issues as elites collaborated to pursue economic development, social peace, and political stability.

As the uncertainty of the 1920s morphed into stability and growth by the 1940s, Paxman argues, that “symbiotic imperative” evolved into “symbiotic convenience,” where corruption and rent-seeking increasingly dominated (pp. 6-7). Insiders' trust of this symbiosis was such that public losses were assimilated due to confidence in later, often private trade-offs. During this stage of Jenkins's career, he increasingly used frontmen for his businesses; Paxman's painstaking research into frontmen along with his subtle analysis of business-state relations emerge in this section as models for scholars who deal with the hidden histories of business.

By mid-century, Jenkins had become both a missionary capitalist and monopolist. To these he added philanthropist when he created the Mary Street Jenkins Foundation in memory of his wife and pledged his life's earnings to it. Paxman argues that Jenkins was sincere in his desire to improve education and health care in his adopted state of Puebla, though the foundation also became a way for politicians to fund their campaign promises. It was in this gray area between legitimate business and political opportunism that what Paxman refers to repeatedly as a Black Legend about Jenkins festered.

The origins of the Black Legend lay in what Paxman shows were unfounded suspicions that Jenkins engineered his own 1919 kidnapping when he was U.S. consul in Puebla. The persistence of these suspicions reveals much about Mexico's changes after the Revolution. Like

historians Paul Garner and Mark Wasserman, Paxman argues that foreign businesspeople acted and were treated in ways similar to Mexican peers. Yet, in the postrevolutionary period on which Paxman focuses, gringophobia emerged as part of the political theater of revolutionary nationalism. Fueled by gringophobia and resentments against Jenkins, the Black Legend grew, as Jenkins became a simulacrum for U.S. exploitation of Mexico and thus a scapegoat that prevented a deeper questioning of the ways that various parties, including labor leaders, politicians, and industrialists, betrayed revolutionary nationalism to pursue self-interest.

Jenkins represented the predicament of Mexico's ruling party and the two sides of Mexico's development. While the party's legitimacy rested on revolutionary nationalist rhetoric, it remained dependent on foreign investment and beholden to business. By publicly blaming problems on men like Jenkins while privately allowing them to profit, the ruling party diverted popular criticism while shoring up the support of elites and foreign investors. This helps to explain why the ruling party retained its legitimacy long after its ideas ran out of steam, a question that has long preoccupied historians of Mexico. Paxman consequently produces new insights into how Mexico's midcentury political stability, economic growth, and mass politics were married to persistent violence, inequality, and social exclusion.

As a former journalist, Paxman is an experienced researcher, and few write with such verve, depth, and detail about local politics and business in Mexico. He consulted a notable array of archives. Even more impressive are his stunningly candid interviews with Jenkins's friends, family, and allies. The interviews are especially remarkable because Jenkins was a private person who refused to grant interviews or to leave a written record. This frees Paxman from the constraints imposed on biographers who grapple with subjects who have tried to define their own legacy. But it also creates a paradox, in that the processes of subjective formation that underpin other biographies are elusive. While Paxman ably dismantles lesser scholarly and popular efforts to define Jenkins, including the Black Legend, Jenkins's motives must be read largely through his actions. But that is to history's benefit. Paxman has produced a complex, significant biography that provides an essential interpretation of Mexico's modern economic, political, and social institutions. Perhaps it is fitting that this is its biggest contribution. Jenkins, to the end, never defended himself publicly, while remaining deeply committed to Mexico's economic and social development. That his biography should do the same is perhaps Jenkins's final act.

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Industrial Eden: A Chinese Capitalist Vision. By Brett Sheehan. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015. 327 pp. Bibliography, figures, photographs, glossary, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$46.50. ISBN: 978-0-674-96760-1.

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Reviewed by Christopher Leighton

Gospels of development have had great allure in modern China. From left and right, China's leaders have shared a state-centered dream of development, from the nineteenth-century self-strengtheners who sought to industrialize and arm the Qing Empire to resist the West, to the varied visions of socialism pursued in the People's Republic of China (PRC) since 1949. In *Industrial Eden*, Brett Sheehan shows us that businessmen, too, could dream. Through a fascinating case study of the Song family and their enterprises in the first half of the twentieth century, he recovers a distinctly capitalist vision for Chinese modernization in which their business would itself be, as his title telegraphs, an industrial Eden.

The family origin story follows an upward arc of virtue and success. The founding figure, Song Chuandian (1872–1929), was born in a small village that in the year 2000 was still full of mud-thatched homes. Though seemingly remote—half a day's walk from the county seat and a further three days on horse to the provincial capital—economic and cultural penetration by new domestic and foreign forces brought opportunities to the doorstep of strivers of little means. In this case, a fortuitous connection to British missionaries afforded Song new vistas. He studied and then taught at a local Christian school. Before long, the head missionaries were calling him their godson and had him take over the mission businesses.

The family empire would be built from here, founded on hairnets, laboriously knitted from real human hair to match that of the wearer, and with the thinnest of profit margins—perhaps 1 yuan per gross. Workers had Sundays off to attend church. The story takes off with Song Feiqing (1898–1956), son of the founder and the transformational figure Sheehan rightly emphasizes. Born in the same village but reared in the more urban and upwardly mobile milieu of his father's success, he