

slavery was less harsh than sugar, allowing planters to imagine themselves as benevolent rulers of a utopian community.

The final two chapters shift focus from location to sources—women’s last wills and testaments and their petitions for the return of property confiscated during the Ten Years’ War (1868–78). She notes that women’s final wishes could have significant impacts on the lives of the enslaved, and she argues that domestic and “loyal” slaves were the most likely to be rewarded with freedom or other bequests in women’s wills. The petitions for the return of confiscated slave property provide evidence of the real economic value of slavery to small- and medium-scale female slaveholders. In both cases, comparisons with the experiences of men would have helped illuminate the distinctive experiences and perspectives of slaveholding women.

Part of the paradox that Prados-Torreira presents, and struggles with throughout, is one of women as disempowered in a highly patriarchal society and the extreme power that slave ownership represented. She acknowledges the challenge of reconciling her desire to hold mistresses “accountable” as masters while admitting the limits of their power in a highly patriarchal society. At times, a broader source base or deeper engagement with the historiographies of other Spanish (and Portuguese) American contexts might have helped to reconcile these two positions and allowed for an even deeper consideration of the complex and paradoxical realities that defined patriarchy and mastery. For example, Prados-Torreira raises compelling questions about the relations of mistresses and enslaved women—whether they developed real affective relationships, or, contrarily, sexual rivalries—that she admits that her sources do not speak to. In a standard turn, she looks to the historiography of US and British Atlantic slavery, rather than to the historiography on Latin America that speaks to these issues, to suggest that both could have existed.

Prados-Torreira has presented some interesting stories and insights here. One example is her exploration of descriptions of sugar planters treating boiling-house slave labor as some form of macabre dinner theatre to entertain themselves and their guests during their holiday visits to the plantations.

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## MEXICO’S REVOLUTIONARY STATE

*Soldiers, Saints, and Shamans: Indigenous Communities and the Revolutionary State in Mexico’s Gran Nayar, 1910–1940.* By Nathaniel Morris. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020. Pp. ix, 371. Abbreviations. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00 cloth; \$55.00 e-book.  
 doi:10.1017/tam.2022.20

In this ethnohistory, Nathaniel Morris examines the indigenous peoples in the Gran Nayar region—sometimes grouped as Huichol, but better described as Náyari, Wixárika, O'dam, and Mexicanero—through the early decades of the twentieth century. He follows these polities with careful attention to schools and their ambiguous participation in both the Revolution and the first and second Cristero rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s. He approaches the region as a “shatter zone” where indigenous actors negotiated between forces of development or change, versus political and cultural autonomy. Morris argues that through resistance and accommodation we can trace the rising influences of bicultural caciques and new social structures, religious practices, conflicts, and cash economies.

Through all these shifts, the adherence to custom (8, 9) afforded the indigenous people of the Gran Nayar a degree of resilience, and, ultimately, a point for unification against the forces of a larger state. This was always a complicated process, nonetheless, with many different interests at play. Morris shows these agendas in the interactions of actors at all levels of government and community. Their conflicts illuminate regional and indigenous identities that these groups fiercely retained in communities that were far from “closed” corporate communities and distant from being wholly mestizo.

Morris adheres to a chronological order. The first and second chapters depend more heavily on secondary works and travel accounts, but the following chapters show an impressive breadth of archival research with special attention to the archives of Mexico's education ministry, the SEP. Perhaps the best of his sources are 46 interviews with caciques. These develop the inter- and intra-communal struggles that are the meat of the arguments.

Much of the book works as an engagement with the historiography: Morris debates Butler, Vaughan, Bantjes, and Meyer on education and the Cristeros; contributes to Knight and Joseph on the Revolution; and builds on Wolf and Scott in his ethnography. As one example, he argues that the Gran Nayar demonstrates both “types” of revolutionary impetus that Knight had proposed, as indigenous groups pursued both *serrano* political autonomy and *agravista* land claims.

To this careful, sometimes deferent, engagement with the historical canon, Morris brings interesting reevaluations of indigenous politics. He argues for a nuanced take on rural violence that elides usual notions of passive victims. Morris is also prescient in discussing indigenous boarding schools—a topic well-studied in Canada and the United States, but largely unwritten for Mexico. His look at the *internados* is both novel and welcome. The work also shifts the depiction of indigenous communities with his examination of the “cosmopolitans” (bicultural caciques) and his depiction of native agency. These groups' efforts to preserve their culture, religion, and political economy revealed the internal contradictions of the Revolutionary project. Morris also makes an intriguing point in explaining how, and why, many of the largely non-Catholic

indigenous of the Gran Nayar joined the clerical side of the Cristero rebellions with even more fervor than their mestizo compatriots.

Overall, Morris does an excellent job in bringing the political cultures of the Gran Nayar into light. Some areas where Morris might offer the reader more include a clearer synthesis of how his four peoples differed in cultural practices. Rural violence in Mexico certainly did not suddenly stop in 1940, and therefore, some connection might be made to scholars working on similar themes in later decades, including Cedillo, Aviña, Pensado, and Osten. The seismic shift of changing to new cash crops (these are farmers first, after all) needs further analysis. Turning to coffee, avocados, oranges, and bananas must have been a dramatic moment.

This book is nonetheless of exceptional value to our scholarship on modern Mexico. It is well suited to specialists and graduate students and would appeal to upper division undergraduate classes. Morris provides a smart and well-researched entry to indigenous roles in nation formation and state-building in postrevolutionary Mexico.

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## MEXICO'S LEFT

*Edición y comunismo. Cultura impresa, educación militante y prácticas políticas (México, 1930–1940)*. By Sebastián Rivera Mir. Raleigh: A Contracorriente, 2020. Pp. 286. \$30.00 paper; \$12.99 e-book.  
 doi:10.1017/tam.2022.21

The historiography of the Mexican Left includes a wide range of approaches—from traditional political histories of party formation, electoral politics, and labor unionism to the history of ideas and cultural production. Sebastián Rivera Mir reveals the role of previously neglected actors integral to the Mexican Communist Left: the publishers, editors, and translators responsible for the printing and dissemination of the written material that aimed to forge a robust communist movement in Mexico during the late 1920s and 1930s. Departing from the Communist mantra that “*militar es editar*,” Rivera Mir positions the material world of publishing and distribution at the center of the Left’s political practice and cultural influence, particularly during the Cárdenas *sexenio*.

The book, moreover, skillfully employs a transnational method to examine Leftist editorial practice, following prominent communist figures not only in and out of Mexico City but also across the Atlantic and the Americas. Whereas previous publishing histories of Latin America have tended to focus on the Spain-Mexico-Argentina triangle, Rivera Mir elucidates the intimate connections between Mexican and US actors. One of Rivera