

the process, Catholics found a place in the public sphere free from censure. Stauffer argues that Díaz's handling of the religioneros paved the way for his rapprochement with the Catholic Church, one of the key pillars of his dictatorship. However, juxtaposing liberal and conservative interests, and aligning with rebels only to eliminate or co-opt them after achieving stability, were typical of Díaz's two-handed politics and hardly novel to the Religioneros case. That said, the bigger conclusion here—that the state's reconciliation with the Church derailed its secularization project and thereby constituted a “win” for Catholic rebels—is more convincing and valuable.

This is a carefully conceived and diligently researched book, and it is an achievement in archival investigation. By backgrounding material concerns and focusing on the many Catholicisms of Mexico's spiritual center, Stauffer brings much-needed nuance to the study of secularization and Church-state conflict in the contentious nineteenth century.

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REVOLUTIONS

Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions. By Marc Becker. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. Kindle edition. \$85.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.
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This book offers an overview of revolutionary movements in twentieth-century Latin America, appropriate either for undergraduate level or for a general audience. Aiming to contextualize events in Latin America, the book opens with a chapter that explores the concept of “revolution” from a theoretical point of view, provides an overview of the global left, and highlights the factors required to foster a revolution (social and economic inequalities, leadership, and ideology). This is followed by seven case studies of revolutionary movements analyzed in chronological order: Mexican Revolution, 1910–20; Guatemalan Spring, 1944–54; Bolivia's Nationalist Revolution, 1952–64; Cuban Revolution, 1959–; Chilean Road to Socialism, 1970–73; Nicaraguan Sandinistas, 1979–90; Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, 1999–; plus a chapter that studies 1980s guerrilla movements in Latin America that failed to take power, with a focus on Colombia, El Salvador, and Peru, the three countries with the most significant insurgencies. The book concludes with a survey of the emergence and consolidation of leftist governments in Latin America at the beginning of the twenty first century, “with an eye toward what they can teach us about past revolutionary movements” (vii). As no canon of Latin American revolutions exists, this book's case studies are the byproduct of Becker's “years of study and analysis of transformative movements” (vii).

Each chapter opens with a list of key dates and closes with discussion questions formulated to foster further exploration of the main issues raised by each revolution. Likewise, each chapter includes a biography of a significant revolutionary leader, a primary source document that encapsulates the movement's ideology, a short bibliography in English to deepen knowledge on the subject, and a list of films that provide visual representation of each revolution. In addition, complex terms are highlighted throughout the text and defined in a glossary at the end of the book. Due to "the gendered nature of revolutionary movements," the biographies focus on men. However, far from reinforcing a traditional historiographical account keen on stressing male leadership, a recurrent theme of this book is Becker's insistence on the role women have played in revolutionary movements throughout Latin America (vii).

Echoing the voices of the Uruguayan journalist Eduardo Galeano and scholars such as Bradford Burns, Becker claims that poverty in Latin America stems from its location in the global capitalist system and not from what is known as the "resource curse." Moreover, he argues that the interplay between poverty and inequality in Latin America has made the region a fertile terrain for revolutions (2). Specifically, in Latin America, revolutionaries viewed as their direct opponents "the US imperial extraction of their resources and local capitalists who benefited from this extractive system to the detriment of society" (2). Therefore, their goal became to end US control of the region and remove the local upper class from power.

As this book demonstrates, revolutions in Latin America have taken different avenues, from peaceful and institutional means to armed struggles which "were only victorious when available legal avenues for change appeared to be closed off" (236). Notwithstanding the diversity and the transformations that they brought about with varying degrees of success, Becker's analysis makes apparent a common trend throughout them, that is, the local roots of the revolutionary ethos and action, and thus an effort to consolidate an authentic path. In that sense, Marxist thought, a cornerstone for understanding and envisioning a revolution, has been interpreted by Latin American revolutionary leaders in a rather flexible and nondoctrinaire manner.

Because Latin America lacked a developed industrial economy, and thus, according to Marx, the major engine of revolutionary change (an urban proletariat with a full-fledged consciousness of its role in society), it was not prepared for a revolution. However, in contrast to what Marx wrote in a nineteenth-century European context, as Becker accurately argues, Latin America underwent more revolutions in the twentieth century than any other region in the world, most of them led by rural peasants and not industrial workers.

Not only does Becker inquire about the factors that fostered revolutions in the region, but he also asks why, with the exception of the Cuban Revolution, most of them have failed. He highlights a broad range of reasons, from external factors, such as the United States' direct involvement to topple socialist experiments, as in Guatemala and Chile, to

internal factors, such as failure to abolish the structure of the previous regime or to consolidate a broader local support for the revolutionary project. As Becker claims, the Cuban revolution “forms a gold standard by which other movements are judged” (131); it “was the most successful, longest lasting, and furthest reaching of the 20th-century revolutions in Latin America” (108). Though opponents of the Cuban Revolution usually state their goals in terms of a return to democratic governance, neither social equality nor individual freedoms existed before the revolution. Nevertheless, the author acknowledges the shortcomings of the revolution, especially the fact that its socioeconomic gains have been made at the expense of individual freedoms.

Becker also offers a relatively positive interpretation of the socialist governments that to a great extent defined the political landscape of Latin America at the beginning of the twenty-first century, from Hugo Chávez, in Venezuela, to Tabaré Vázquez, in Uruguay. This view goes against the grain, for as he argues, “despite impressive social and economic gains, one would be hard pressed to find positive stories in the international mainstream media about Latin America’s new socialist governments” (232).

Overall, this is a well-thought-out book that would be enjoyed by anyone interested in learning about the disparate ways by which revolutions (defined in this book as a “broad and vague term to refer to movements that have fought to address societal problems”) have taken place in Latin America (31).

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REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO

Matters of Reform: Pueblos, the Judiciary, and Agrarian Reform in Revolutionary Mexico. By Helga Baitenmann. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. Pp. 342. \$60.00 paper.
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A widely accepted interpretation of agrarian reform after the Mexico Revolution is that peasants demanded restitution of village lands that had been illegally taken by large landowners. Nonetheless, revolutionary officials preferred to expropriate land that did not necessarily belong to villages previously and redistribute it to villages in perpetual, though conditional, usufruct in the form of “*dotaciones*.” Instead of restoring land and ownership to villages, *dotaciones* engendered dependence on a paternal state. Thus, scholars such as Frank Tannenbaum, John Womack, and Arturo Warman concluded that the agrarian reform became a mechanism of clientelism that undergirded Mexico’s postrevolutionary authoritarianism.