Third World, and hence Latin America and Cuba, as part of a general reassessment of its position in world affairs after 1956. That said, Hull's book represents a solid work on the history of British diplomacy in Cuba against the backdrop of Washington's ascending hegemony. It also provides a more general metaphor of British imperial rise and fall. It shows that leaving the Heart of Darkness can bring light and lucidity to the process of foreign policy-making.

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Ben Fallaw, *Religion and State Formation in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. xx + 329, £67.00, £16.99 pb.

At Mexico's constitutional convention in 1916–1917, anticlericalism triggered by far the noisiest and most ill-tempered debate among the delegates. In this book, Ben Fallaw argues that, of the revolutionary state's many obstacles (fractured geography, bureaucratic incapacity, US power), Catholic opposition was the most important, and was far more pervasive and enduring than previously thought. Many historians argue that President Cárdenas toned down anticlericalism, reconciled with the Church, and consolidated the revolutionary state. By contrast, Fallaw shows how many Catholics considered opposition to anticlericalism inseparable from hostility to land reform and federal schooling. Thus, the main legacy of the 1930s was not a hegemonic pact between state and society but enduring Catholic suspicion of the revolutionary state.

The book begins appropriately enough with a six-page glossary of terms, concepts and insults whose local meaning Fallaw is unwilling to translate and dilute. This is a study of crucial national questions that takes the reader deep into the thickets of provincial Mexican politics and society. After a first chapter surveying Church-state conflict, four case studies spanning the 1930s build the main argument: Campeche, Hidalgo, Guerrero and Guanajuato. These states are well chosen; they contain a great many different social, ethnic and political variables. Guanajuato aside, they were neither bases of institutional strength for the Church nor reputed to be particularly pious. The breadth and depth of Fallaw's research in diplomatic, national, regional, educational, and religious archives allows him to show the power and heterogeneity of Catholic opposition in each case. Gun-toting priests, lay women slipping pamphlets under doors and leading truancy strikes, a would-be indigenist bishop, wily caciques, two-faced *políticos*, spontaneous mobs of furious villagers, provincial journalists, landlord-sponsored thugs engaged in white terror; all take part in the drama at different times and places. Fallaw argues that the Catholic Church's decentralised, 'radial' strategy of resistance, similar to that adopted in Italy, was basically successful, even as it prevented coordination and Church control. Whatever their differences, these actors shared a common discourse and recognised that they were part of the same struggle.

For Fallaw, such varied, cross-class opposition (like the revolutionary project itself) resists monocausal explanation, and it is hard to disagree, especially given how carefully the evidence for this contention is laid out for the reader. At times Catholic elites and revolutionary teachers echoed each other in their pursuit of respectable sexual mores, their condescending attitudes to indigenous people, or distaste for popular revelry. Revolutionary social engineers enjoyed some successes, but failed to exploit divisions

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 conservativism. Such a hybrid regime has been described by political scientists Gullermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter as a '*dictablanda*'.