

Borges' book is an important contribution to our understanding of the emergence of conditional income transfers in Latin America. It deserves a wide readership among researchers, students, policy-makers and those with an interest in Latin American social policy and society.

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Christina Heatherton, *Arise! Global Radicalism in the Era of the Mexican Revolution*

University of California Press, 2022, pp. x + 311

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This book can be read in two ways: as a polemical indictment of capitalism coupled with an impassioned paean to its radical critics; or as a work of history locating the Mexican Revolution within a broader context of global – chiefly North American – socio-political protest. As a polemic it perhaps succeeds ('success' depending very much on the disposition of the reader). The book roams restlessly over a broad and diverse landscape, drawing on an impressive bibliography; it boldly links people, places and protests that, more commonly, are confined within narrower national boundaries (perhaps for good reason); and it is driven by earnest empathetic engagement – that is, high moral indignation laced with low-grade Marxist 'theory'. As for its status as a work of history, I naively assumed that – given its title – the book was about the Mexican Revolution and its international ramifications. However, 'in the era' signals that the author feels free to include any radical movement or activist of the early twentieth century (and, indeed, beyond), irrespective of any direct involvement in the revolution flagged in the title.

Two chapters – a third of the book – focus on a couple of radical women, Dorothy Healey and Elizabeth Catlett. As a labour organiser in Southern California in the 1930s, Healey worked with Mexican farmworkers (and others); though, it seems, she never went to Mexico. The connection – assumed rather than demonstrated – is that the Mexicans were profoundly influenced by events south of the border. Catlett, a Black communist artist in New York, settled in Mexico, where, she claims, 'the revolutionary atmosphere in which I developed [...] was determinant in my development' (p. 149). But by 1946 – the year Catlett arrived and the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI) was born – Mexico had demonstrably abandoned its revolutionary project, as Daniel Cosío Villegas declared in his celebrated essay 'La Crisis de México'. One chapter ('How to Make Love') deals with Alexandra Kollontai, who served as Soviet ambassador for six months in 1927 – suffering from the heat, altitude and unsuitable high heels (p. 116) – and had scant impact

on Mexico. M. N. Roy, who receives seven pages (pp. 55–62) within a breathless catch-all chapter ('How to Make a Map'), was more consequential: he spent three years in Mexico (1917–20), helping set up the Mexican Communist Party (a party which never remotely emulated the success of its Bolshevik mentors). Neither account adds to our understanding of revolutionary Mexico: they are brief tales of transient foreigners.

A chapter ('Making a University') focuses on Ricardo Flores Magón, the well-known and much-studied 'precursor' of the Revolution; but it covers his 20-year exile in the United States (1904–24), half of it spent in gaol. Flores Magón therefore played no direct role in the Revolution which, defying anarchist hopes, eventuated in the nationalistic, state-building, populist regime of the 1920s. In short – *caveat emptor!* – the book tells us very little about the Mexican Revolution. That, however, does not prevent one blurb-writer (someone with no apparent Mexican expertise) from rejoicing that 'Finally! The Mexican Revolution is restored to its rightful place as an integral act of modernity', whatever that might mean.

The organisation of the book resembles a collage: a string of stories, involving specific people and episodes, loosely strung together by repetitive reminders of the virtues of 'internationalism' and the evils of capitalism, racism and imperialism. These big 'isms' are not clearly defined or convincingly deployed. 'Internationalism' comes in many shapes and sizes; Heatherton baldly states that the notion – 'commonly attributed to Marx' – 'was actually coined by Jeremy Bentham' (p. 10). Coinage – which can lead to a sterile search for semantic origins – is surely less important than currency: how the notion was practically deployed and implemented. Of the several kinds of 'internationalism' (socialist, anarchist, liberal, capitalist, Christian), Heatherton is concerned with the leftist socialist sort, although she recycles and reifies the term to the point of meaninglessness. 'Streams of internationalism' coursed through the Mexican Revolution (p. 16); an Okinawan immigrant battling his way through Mexico to the United States in 1917 'discovered and rediscovered internationalism' (pp. 48, 51) (this seems to mean that, not surprisingly, he encountered a lot of foreign people, some sympathetic, many not). Alas, the author laments, 'far more people, who lived during the era of the Mexican Revolution, who even came to Mexico at the time [...] did not become internationalists' (p. 52).

The book adheres to the intellectually perverse – but all too common – practice of aggregating endnotes, so that a single note often attaches to an entire paragraph and contains multiple references (one endnote, running to 39 lines, cites 14 sources, p. 201). This practice – aggravated by the author's taste for references that are (here readers may differ) either impressively wide-ranging or casually scattershot – makes it difficult and at times impossible to trace the origin of a given fact, quote or opinion. At times, it seems, the references are there to convey scholarly heft rather than to help inquiring readers. And it does not help that the author, apart from getting some names wrong, often places excessive faith in a few approved sources: so, for M. N. Roy's role in the Mexican Revolution, we get Roy's own memoirs; or, for the 1848 revolutions, we get Frederick Douglass. Douglass – like Marx – was a vigorous commentator on current affairs. But he is a partisan and inadequate historical source. What is more, Heatherton quotes him very selectively: we read Douglass' denunciations of globalisation and its evils (slavery, genocide and armed aggression) (pp. 35–6); yet, in the same passages (which Heatherton omits), Douglass positively hails globalisation – enhanced

trade and closer communications – as ‘bringing mankind into harmonious bonds of a common brotherhood’ (‘The Revolution of 1848’, *The North Star*, 4 Aug. 1848). So, we hear the quasi-Marxist Douglass, but the Cobdenite Douglass is carefully silenced. Jeremy Bentham gets similarly selective treatment, which turns a critic of colonialism into a callow apologist of imperialism (pp. 30–3). Academic historians, too, are casually quoted: Barry Carr’s description of the appeal of Bolshevism to Mexican anarchists is extended to Mexicans in general (p. 113).

Beyond these specific queries, the author seems strangely at sea when tackling Mexican history. We are told that ‘standard histories of the Revolution [...] tend to focus on key figures like Zapata and Pancho Villa’ (p. 212), which perhaps was true 50 years ago. Cortés, landing in Mexico in 1519, could not have ‘challenged [...] Olmec sovereignty’, since the Olmec ‘empire’ had disappeared 2,000 years earlier (p. 102). Yucatán is populated by Maya, not ‘Mayo’ Indians (p. 59). The Revolution was not ‘the greatest demographic catastrophe of the twentieth century’ (the quote omits the crucial qualifier ‘in the Americas’) (p. 200). And Veracruz in 1926 was not ‘bustling with exports of oil’: petroleum was piped offshore from Tampico and Tuxpán (p. 98).

Finally, Heatherton’s style is overwrought and convoluted. Slaves are ‘diabolically transformed into commodities [...] to reap cotton, the blood-red raw material of the new (American) republic’ (p. 40). ‘Rubber ran like devil’s milk from Congolese vines [*sic*]’ (p. 47). And, thanks to the ‘new imperialism’ (a recurrent concept, never properly explained), ‘the dark slumbering core of the earth was flooded with light, wrenched by fiery blasts, then hacked and dragged, bit by craggy bit, to the surface [...]’ (p. 47). These are presumably examples of what one blurb-writer terms the author’s ‘gorgeous prose’.

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Timothy J. Killeen, *A Perfect Storm in the Amazon Wilderness: Success and Failure in the Fight to Save an Ecosystem of Critical Importance to the Planet*

White Horse Press, 2022, pp. xxiii + 484

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A Perfect Storm in the Amazon Wilderness is a long and well-written monograph that aims to provide a comprehensive discussion on the fate of the Amazon. Timothy J. Killeen draws on his extensive knowledge and decades-long experience as a conservation scientist to offer a detailed and activist account of the main challenges and possible pathways ‘through a perfect storm of environmental mayhem to a sustainable future for the Pan Amazon and all of its inhabitants’ (p. 64). The