

THE "ORGANIZATION" OF
MEXICAN AGRICULTURE:
Conflicts and Compromises

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HISTORIA DE LA CUESTION AGRARIA MEXICANA. Volume 3: *CAMPESINOS, TERRATENIENTES Y REVOLUCIONARIOS, 1910-1920*. By Oscar Betanzos, Enrique Montalvo, Jane Dale Lloyd, and Pedro González. (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno and Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo en México, 1990. Pp. 239.)

HISTORIA DE LA CUESTION AGRARIA MEXICANA. Volume 4: *MODERNIZACION, LUCHA AGRARIA Y PODER POLITICO, 1920-1934*. By Enrique Montalvo, José Rivera Castro, and Oscar Betanzos Piñón. (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno and Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo en México, 1990. Pp. 253.)

HISTORIA DE LA CUESTION AGRARIA MEXICANA. Volume 5: *EL CARDENISMO: UN PARTEAGUAS HISTORICO EN EL PROCESO AGRARIO, 1934-1940 (PRIMERA PARTE)*. By Everardo Escárcega López and Saúl Escobar Toledo.

HISTORIA DE LA CUESTION AGRARIA MEXICANA. Volume 5: *EL CARDENISMO: UN PARTEAGUAS HISTORICO EN EL PROCESO AGRARIO NACIONAL, 1934-1940 (SEGUNDA PARTE)*. By Saúl Escobar Toledo, Luis Hernández, Pilar López, and Rossana Cassigoli Salamón. (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno and Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo en México, 1990. Pp. 623.)

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In the years since the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917), the relationship between the state and the Mexican peasantry has been dynamic, conflictive, and often violent. The state has periodically shifted national objectives between building a capitalist agriculture based on collective organizations of campesinos and developing a modern, capital-intensive agriculture based on the private sector. During these political swings, Mexican campesinos have been alternately incorporated into or deleted from the agenda for national development. Thus Mexican rural society has witnessed a long history of state-introduced organizations, development programs, and policy incentives, all of which have changed significance and acronyms with succeeding presidential administrations. The thirteen volumes under review here address these issues in detail and examine the influence of these policies on campesino organizations and rural society in different regions in Mexico throughout the postrevolutionary period.

The seven volumes of the *Historia de la cuestión agraria mexicana* reviewed here present a historical analysis of Mexican agrarian policy in the postrevolutionary period, while the remaining six works examine specific case studies. Several crucial historical lessons emerge from these studies. Campesino organizations were generally established and institutionalized through alliances with the Mexican government. These external alliances have enabled local peasant groups to confront the local private sector more effectively, particularly landholders and local political elites, but

governmental support has exacted its price. The dependence of campesino organizations on state financing and political support to produce and survive has inevitably increased their vulnerability to changes in succeeding administrations. All the studies under review here emphasize the major political role played by agricultural organizations of campesinos and private growers in shaping Mexican agricultural development throughout the twentieth century.

Social scientists researching peasant cooperatives and collectives have long assumed that these organizations have been essential in defending their members' interests in an international capitalist economy. The Mexican experience exemplifies the need to examine carefully the diversity and complexity of all organizations, the conditions in which they arise, and their political impact. The volumes of this series contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationships existing among the state, the private sector, and campesinos with their detailed analyses of conflicts, shifting alliances, and consequences at given times in given places. Careful historical analysis demonstrates the periodic crises encountered by the Mexican government in shifting political support back and forth between the private sector and organized rural masses. These studies thus provide historical lessons and insights into the current situation, when Mexico is opening its economy to the international market and foreign investors.

Cardenismo and Campesino Organizations, 1934–1940

The seven volumes of the *Historia de la cuestión mexicana* comprise a limited selection of a more ambitious undertaking by the Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo en México. The center plans to publish thirty-two volumes that will present a historical overview of property conflicts, land tenancy, modes and relations of production, campesino organizations, and other agrarian issues in Mexico from 1800 to 1982. The volumes reviewed here encompass the postrevolutionary period, from 1920 to 1970. Other published editions cover the earlier periods, and the center plans eventually to publish a volume on each state in Mexico, including the Distrito Federal. The volumes vary in organization and intended audience. The earlier ones, including the third, fourth, and sixth, present general overviews and review the published literature. These editions will be most useful to readers with a general interest in Mexican agrarian issues. Advanced researchers, however, will want to consult the original works. The later volumes (the fifth, seventh, and eighth) are edited works in which each article focuses on a different agrarian issue during the historical period covered. Usually based on original research, these articles often present new information or interpretations. They thus represent a valuable resource for serious scholars.

Volumes 3 and 4 review agrarian social movements and political conflicts in the years preceding the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas. Volume 3, edited by Oscar Betanzos, examines regional diversity in agrarian unrest during the Mexican Revolution. Its studies range from Jean Dale Lloyd's discussion of *ranchero* participation in the revolutionary movement and land invasions in Chihuahua to Enrique Montalvo Ortega's analysis of the postrevolutionary governments' agrarian initiatives and peasant response in Morelos. Volume 4, covering the period from 1920 to 1934, looks at important social movements during these years. José Rivera Castro's study of campesino organizations from 1920 to 1928 discusses the impact of national political changes, including agrarian legislation, the Congreso Agrario of 1923, and the growth of the Confederación Revolucionaria de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CRTM), among others, on peasant mobilizations throughout Mexico. In response, Betanzos Piñón's article on the Cristero Rebellion focuses on the alliances between the Catholic Church and landowners in attempting to prevent state intervention in land reform. He also explores briefly education in the states of Jalisco and Michoacán and in Zacatecas, Durango, Colima, and Guerrero. The essays indicate that postrevolutionary administrations between 1911 and 1934 attempted to resolve Mexico's agrarian problems by modernizing agricultural production and increasing capital investment in irrigation projects and subsidized credit. Nevertheless, this move failed to modify fundamentally the structure of private property, which was consolidated during the regime of Porfirio Díaz.

Lázaro Cárdenas, who was president from 1934 to 1940, implemented the first major agrarian reform programs in Mexico, which led to the political and economic transformation of Mexican agriculture. This series devotes two books to his administration, the two parts that make up Volume 5. The first, edited by Everardo Escárcega López and Saúl Escobar Toledo, focuses on Cárdenas's agrarian reform program and its implementation. Escobar Toledo presents an analysis comparing the land redistribution programs of Cárdenas with those of previous administrations. He explains the different phases of implementation as well as political resistance from other sectors within the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR). Escárcega López's detailed article on the Ley Agraria and land redistribution in various Mexican regions provides a wealth of historical statistical data. He includes information for all states on properties expropriated, listed according to the names of the company or family affected (pp. 89–120). His close comparison of land reform legislation across different regions (including La Laguna, El Valle de Mexicali, the henequen zones of Yucatán, and El Valle del Yaqui) is based on original legal depositions and resolutions. These documents are reproduced in the appendices (pp. 254–414). Escárcega López convincingly argues that the process of land reform did not begin effectively until 1935.

The second part of Volume 5, edited by Saúl Escobar Toledo, Luis Hernández, Pilar López, and Rossana Cassigoli Salamón, examines agrarian movements and social change in rural society during the Cárdenas administration. Hernández provides a comparative analysis of the growth and consolidation of campesino organizations in different regions. From the moment that Cárdenas initiated land redistribution and proposed to establish campesino organizations, the most radical campesino movements in Veracruz, Sonora, and Michoacán expressed reluctance to join any movement begun by the government (p. 507). Hernández cites a skeptical campesino (originally cited by Susana Glantz in 1974): "We want to be the lords of our own success or our own failure. In no way have we become convinced that we could prosper in this society." Cárdenas promoted land redistribution to meet the social needs of the rural poor and to establish a political constituency that could confront local landholders. The collective *ejido* was the means chosen to provide for rural campesinos and to guarantee continued commercial production of certain crops that required large-scale production to be economically efficient. Hernández accurately points out the discrepancy between political rhetoric and policy implementation. By the end of the sexenio, the Cárdenas administration had established more than fourteen thousand ejidos in Mexico. But only a third of them were constituted as collective ejidos, which occupied some 341,000 hectares (only 1.2 percent of the total amount of land redistributed), although they received most of the subsidized agricultural credit (p. 541).

Capitalist Agricultural Development and Campesino Organizations, 1940–1970

Volume 6, by Sergio de la Peña and Marcel Morales Ibarra, covers the administrations of Manuel Avila Camacho and Miguel Alemán during the 1940s. The introduction stresses the inherent contradiction between the collective *ejido* and capitalist development of Mexican agriculture, the goal of the presidents who succeeded Cárdenas. Massive land redistribution efforts between 1934 and 1940 had resulted in an agrarian movement that was totally dependent on the state. From 1939 to 1942, agricultural production shifted from export crops to food crops, as land redistribution provided income redistribution and increased salaries in rural areas. By the end of 1940, however, inflation and increasing problems in delivering the urban food supply had demonstrated the agricultural sector's limitations in responding quickly to changes in internal food demands (p. 79). These problems and other factors allowed the Avila Camacho and Alemán administrations to justify altering agrarian policies. As 1941 drew to a close, the state proposed to maintain collective ejidos in only a few regions where export agriculture and the collective experience had been demonstrated. As de la Peña and Morales Ibarra indicate, the collective

ejido was an organizational structure that contradicted the state's scheme of agricultural modernization. The ideological and political implications of the collective ejido ran counter to the business orientation of the two administrations following Cárdenas (p. 106). From this time forward, the public image of the collective ejido was preserved as an organizational symbol that had become an integral part of official Mexican political rhetoric. This policy satisfied political groups who opposed its demise because at the same time, the government was actively supporting the parceling of ejidos, public investment, and subsidized credit to the private sector (pp. 109–13). Under the administration of Miguel Alemán, the attack on the collective ejido accelerated. Politicians and private producers' organizations denounced the collective ejidos as corrupt communist organizations. The government withdrew previous incentives, preferential financing, and credit.¹ During this period, the number of collective ejidos declined by nearly half: in 1940, 934 collectives were registered; by 1950, only 483 remained.

Many foreign and Mexican scholars have interpreted this transformation as the result of external factors. De la Peña and Morales Ibarra, drawing on Salomón Eckstein, point out additional internal problems that undermined successful operation of collective ejidos. Many cases demonstrated excessive use of human labor beyond the productive capacity of the ejido unit. Large numbers of campesinos were working small, inefficient productive units and often responded to social pressures to hire relatives and community members for higher wages and unnecessary tasks (p. 150).

Volume 7, by Julio Miguel, Rosario Robles, and Blanca Rubio, covers the capitalist development of the Mexican agricultural sector, from 1950 to 1975. During this period, the state differentiated increasingly between the parceled individual ejido, which produced primarily food crops on marginal land, and the capitalist private sector, which produced primary crops for export to generate income for the industrial sector. Robles's essay on the structural transformation of crop production between 1950 and 1960 analyzes statistical data to demonstrate the increasing concentration of commercial production by private producers in northwestern Mexico. Analyzing different components successively, she points out the concentration of such production factors as irrigation, mechanization, and insecticides and fertilizers being used by private producers in Baja California, Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Durango-Coahuila (pp. 23–84). Rubio's essay on rural migration and agricultural workers documents the impact of capitalist development agriculture on Mexican rural society, particularly on campesinos and landless agricultural work-

1. For a more complete discussion, see Eckstein (1966) and Hewitt de Alcántara (1978).

ers. She estimates that between 1950 and 1960, more than two million Mexicans abandoned rural areas to move to urban centers like Mexico City. Rural population declined from 57 percent of the total in 1950 to 41 percent by 1970 (p. 113). During this period, unemployment and underemployment became structural characteristics of Mexican agricultural development. Rubio calculates that by 1970, 45 percent of Mexico's economically active population was either unemployed or underemployed; another 60 percent were working in agriculture. Rubio emphasizes the reformed agricultural sector's inability to provide gainful employment for the rural masses. This interpretation, however, misrepresents the statistical implications. Far more important for succeeding administrations, like that of Luis Echeverría (1970–1976), was the fact that despite the withdrawal of government support and a lack of viable opportunities, 45 percent of the total population remained in the rural areas. Unemployed, underemployed, and poorly paid, these campesinos formed the basis for the land invasions and the social movements of the 1970s. The administrations in office between 1950 and 1970 promoted capital-intensive agricultural development, trusting in industrialization to be the basis of future economic development. The industrial sector, however, never absorbed a large portion of the total population. In the long run, the government could not afford to ignore the reality that almost half the total population of Mexico continued to live in rural areas.

Volume 8, by Julio Moguel, Hugo Azpeitia, Hubert C. de Grammont, Rosario Robles, and Pilar López Sierra, examines state policy and agrarian conflicts from 1950 to 1970. Moguel and Azpeitia focus on shifts in food production, price subsidies, and agricultural policy shifts during this period. These authors investigate the conflict between the state and the private sector, as the government responded to urban food demands by intervening directly in production and commercialization. By the 1950s, the Mexican government had initiated Plan Maíz, a program to increase maize production and distribution through credit, new state agencies, and increased regulation and control over prices and supplies of basic food crops (pp. 5–9). In the 1940s, the state had relied on the private sector to supply earned foreign exchange and to meet internal agricultural demands. When inflation and low prices for food crops arrived, private producers increasingly shifted production to more remunerative crops, exporting at times the very crops that Mexico needed most.

Grammont delves into the question of the growth of private producer organizations, as the private sector recognized the need to defend their own interests in the political realm. In 1932 the Cárdenas government disbanded the *cámaras agrícolas*, regional organizations controlled by private landholders, and was promoting instead specialized agricultural associations dominated by campesino members who had benefited from the agrarian reform. Cárdenas structured these associations in pyramidal

form to organize the beneficiaries within the governmental structure. By 1940 the private agricultural sector had no organizations operating at the national level. Faced with increasing problems in food production and productivity, the Alemán administration fostered reorganization of private producers in 1946 as the *Confederación Nacional de la Pequeña Propiedad* (CNPP), incorporating the private producer in the same manner that Cárdenas had employed with the ejido sector. Private producers, however, understood that membership in government-initiated organizations would not give them the autonomy needed to defend their interests against agrarian movements and ejido organizations. In addition, many export producers had entered into international trade and supportive relations with foreign companies and agencies. Grammont also details the growth and expansion of private unions outside government auspices, including the *Asociación Nacional de Cosechadores* (ANC), founded in 1947, the *Unión Nacional de Productores de Algodón de la República Mexicana* (UNPARM), and the *Unión Nacional de Productores de Hortalizas* (UNPH) (pp. 48–59).

Grammont's analysis contributes to a better understanding of the conflictive relationships among the state, private growers, and campesinos since the Mexican Revolution. The government, faced with national problems, increased intervention in private-sector management of Mexican agriculture. In response, private producers withdrew from government organizations, relying on their own autonomous unions to pursue their economic and political agenda at the national level and in the international market. By operating outside the government structure, these associations actually had more influence on national policy and the commercialization of important export crops. For example, the UNPH, which was dominated by private growers in Sinaloa and Sonora, eventually expanded to regulate production and export of all major horticultural crops in Mexico. Thus the UNPH controlled planting and export permits in all Mexican states. The conflict between the government and the private sector continues. In 1988 the government, through the efforts of the agriculture ministry, forced reorganization of the UNPH.

Moguel's concluding study presents an overview of the crisis in the agrarian sector during the 1950s. By the early years of the decade, it was apparent that the rural population had again become a central political issue and that stagnating productivity would never be resolved until the rural sector was revitalized (p. 105).² Between 1953 and 1970, under the administrations of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, Adolfo López Mateos, and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, land redistribution was concentrated in marginal newly colonized lands, thus avoiding any major confrontation with landowners.

2. For a discussion of the failure of the "milagro mexicano," see Tannenbaum (1952).

Official statistics document that between 83 and 91 percent of all land redistributed was arid or mountainous (p. 216). Although the government denied the existence of a rural problem, Moguel details the early growth of dissent within the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), first through the efforts of General Miguel Henríquez Guzmán and later through the renewed political efforts of former President Cárdenas and the establishment of the Partido Popular, directed by Vicente Lombardo Toledano (pp. 108–41). Moguel also analyses the growth of agrarian movements and dissenting groups within the PRI during the 1950s and early 1960s. The state's unwillingness or inability to deal with agrarian issues became a critical factor in the development of radical agrarian movements and generalized land confrontation in the 1970s.

Collectives in Mexican Agriculture: Regional Comparisons

In *Producción colectiva y desarrollo capitalista en el agro mexicano (1970–1980)*, Alfredo César Dachary ambitiously undertakes a comparative analysis of the historic experiences, organization, management, and other characteristics of fifty-one collective and semi-collective ejidos in six Mexican states. This project was carried out over several years. During the first stages, Dachary and others on the team worked in state agencies in some area of rural training. This experience provided Dachary with insights into the operation and institutionalization of collective ejidos. During the second stage, researchers completed questionnaires with the ejido leaders, and statistical data and qualitative information (such as assembly minutes) were collected. The first chapter briefly reviews the historic experience of the collective ejido and Mexican agrarian policy, a subject discussed in greater detail in the volumes of *Historia de la cuestión agraria mexicana*.

By the 1970s, the crisis in production, increased rural conflict, and other factors forced the state to address the ignored rural masses. Agrarian policies of the Luis Echeverría administration returned to the objectives of earlier Cardenista programs. Echeverría proposed to target small producers, both private and *ejidatario*, to regain national food self-sufficiency, reestablish *campesino* trust in governmental agencies, and to promote the modernization of Mexican agriculture at the *campesino* level. He did not reject the capitalist development introduced by previous administrations but proposed it in a new, government-subsidized form that would guarantee equal access for smallholders (pp. 59–61).

After reviewing the historical experience, César Dachary turns to variations within the ejido sector. He identifies two periods of ejido growth and institutionalization: those established under the Cárdenas reforms and collective ejidos established during the 1960s and 1970s. He also distinguishes between two types of ejido: the true collective and the semi-

collective. Chapter 3 describes the process of organization and presents statistical comparison of characteristics such as ejidatarios' responses to factors like government intervention and credit history. These data are useful in generating hypotheses and questions for further research, but the limited number of organizations in each category precludes any statistically significant conclusions. More valuable are César Dachary's qualitative comparisons among the ejidos, which are based on his personal experience and interviews with ejido leaders.

The main findings about organization, production, and state relations point to the complexity of types of state-initiated collective organizations. César Dachary demonstrates that the true collective is characteristic of newer organizations in areas where the state constructed irrigation systems and colonization projects in an attempt to implement commercial production within the ejido sector. In contrast, the semi-collectives are characteristic of more marginal zones, where ejidatarios grow food crops on individual parcels and cooperate on limited projects introduced by the state (pp. 191–92). In both cases, state relations have been imposed on ejidatarios, although in a different manner. In true collectives, collectivization was forced by a lack of options. State-imposed organization is even more rigid because the government usually granted rights to the ejido as part of a colonization project, tying land-use rights to accepting collective production, obtaining bank credit, and producing specific crops (pp. 144–49). In semi-collectives, a subgroup within the ejido community participates in a limited project. Continued access to project resources requires following guidelines imposed by state agencies. César Dachary notes that semi-collectives or limited cooperative projects often increase stratification within the ejido because some members use their intermediary status as a way of accumulating individual wealth and profits.

By means of comparative analysis, César Dachary draws conclusions about factors that have influenced long-term success in Mexican agricultural collectives. Internal organization was critical. Groups that survived were often limited in number, cohesive due to family ties, and members of the same generation (pp. 213–18). In a few other cases, collectives that were independently established and are coordinated by regional organizations have had more success in defending their members' interests in negotiations with local and regional state representatives. As an example, Dachary cites the experience of the *Coalición de Ejidos Colectivos del Valle del Mayo y Yaqui*, in which ejidos that were originally bank-financed reinvested profits to form their own credit union and implement new commercialization and production projects (pp. 286–92). These success stories, however, are rare.

Case Examples: Northwestern and Central Mexico Compared

The individual case studies of different regions in Mexico provide the local-level analysis required to understand the complexities of the observations made in *Producción colectiva y desarrollo capitalista en el agro mexicano*. Comparison of these cases points to regional differences in campesino-state relations in agricultural development, further documenting the complexity noted in the historical essays. *Ejidos and Regions of Refuge in Northwestern Mexico*, edited by Ross Crumrine and Phil Weigand, comprises a collection of papers first presented at a 1978 symposium of the American Anthropological Association. The contributions present case studies of different cultural groups in northwestern Mexico (Sonoran and Sinaloan Mayo as well as Yaqui) and western Mexico (Tepacano and Tarascan), and they return to analyzing the concepts of enclaves and regions of refuge initially proposed by Edward Spicer (1962) and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán (1967). The symposium sought to explain the persistence of ethnic diversity and enclaves in regions, particularly in Northwest Mexico, where capitalist agricultural modernization has transformed adjacent areas. Theoretical analysis focuses on ethnicity and culture as the means by which these groups retain their cultural identity. Examples are Steven Lutes's comparison of Yaqui and Mayo ritual life and social organization (pp. 11–20) and Crumrine's essay on enclave maintenance among the Mayo of southern Sonora. These essays demonstrate the need for local-level studies that examine specifically the role of ethnicity and cultural identity in the interactions of campesino and indigenous groups with the outside world (such as the state or private commercial entrepreneurs). Their brief and superficial treatment of economic issues, particularly state agrarian policy and state-initiated agrarian programs like the collective ejidos of the Yaqui and Mayo, make it difficult to compare these essays with the volumes already reviewed.

Thomas Sheridan's *Where the Dove Calls: The Political Ecology of a Peasant Corporate Community in Northwestern Mexico* is an ethnographic study that explores the relationship between economic organization and cultural ideology in Cucurpe, an isolated mestizo community in Sonora in northwestern Mexico. Sheridan places this case study within a theoretical framework of "political ecology" (see Wolf 1982), in which he analyzes the ecological adaptation of campesinos within the political context of the capitalistic development of the Sonoran ranching industry. The study documents the isolation and marginality of a community that remains outside Sonoran economic growth yet is increasingly tied into a market system as small campesino ranchers produce male calves for Sonoran stock raisers (pp. 20–47). Sheridan's focus on class differentiation and economic inequalities within the community reveals the internal structure of the community. As a single village, Cucurpe represents the mar-

ginal, resource-poor communities in which commercial agricultural and livestock development does not transform the system. The reason is that neither the state nor the private sector wants to invest in the area.

In *The Keepers of Water and Earth: Mexican Rural Social Organization and Irrigation*, Kjell Enge and Scott Whiteford study the establishment, management, and persistence of communal irrigation systems in the Tehuacán Valley in Puebla. Despite the state's expansion in the region in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly through efforts to control water distribution and management, local groups have historically resisted state control because water is privately owned in the valley. These associations were originally established during the 1940s and 1950s, when campesinos organized and constructed irrigation systems covering some seventeen thousand hectares without state initiative or financial support. In Tehuacán, irrigation associations (known locally as *galerías*) continue to be based on voluntary membership and social control via peer pressure. Instead of seeking subsidized credit and state aid, campesinos have successfully resisted incorporation into state programs (pp. 8–12). This local study, supplemented by Enge and Whiteford's comparison of two adjacent communities, provides fascinating critical insight into the specific mechanisms used by these organizations to manage a cooperative irrigation system effectively. The authors examine the critical role of factors like the pooling of money for construction, shared risk, and the purchase of private shares in irrigation construction as a form of future investment (pp. 107–11). *The Keepers of Water and Earth* emphasizes the complex nature of local organizations. The collectives maintain local control over water, which is also used to expand commercial production for local and national markets.

In *Ethnicity and Class Conflict in Rural Mexico*, Frans Schryer explores this complex relationship in Huejutla, a municipality in the Huasteca region of Hidalgo. He focuses on the campesino revolts and land invasions between 1978 and 1981. Schryer criticizes foreign and Mexican social scientists who have characterized these attacks as the actions of a united Nahuatl peasantry. Like many scholars, they have equated class with ethnicity in interpreting Indian protests as class actions. In the Huasteca, however, conflicts over land cut across ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Drawing on the arguments of James Scott (1986), Schryer contends that Nahuatl campesinos of the Huasteca recognized their exploitation by mestizo and Nahuatl local elites. The Nahuatl campesinos never revolted successfully either during or after the Mexican Revolution. In 1960, however, increased population pressure and loss of economic security led them to invade one-third of all private properties in the Huejutla. When the Indian peasants revolted, they invaded the land of mestizo absentee landlords as well as Nahuatl-speaking Indians who were merchants and cattle producers (p. 45). Schryer's analysis concentrates on the multifaceted interaction between changes in economic organization and land ten-

ure, on the one hand, and cultural rules and symbolic systems, on the other.

Ethnicity and Class Conflict in Rural Mexico demonstrates that, within internally stratified corporate Indian communities, class conflicts may arise between poor and rich Indian peasants. Yet Nahua communities often legitimized and disguised class differentiation within the community through cultural symbols and ideology that stressed communalism (p. 317). Even within the state of Hidalgo, Schryer finds regional variation between the northern and southern zones in cultural and historic experience. These differences resulted in varying degrees of ethnic and class identity among Nahua peasants. Schryer's meticulous study elucidates the variety found within local agrarian movements in culturally pluralistic regions and urges scholars to scrutinize more closely the relation between class and ethnicity.

El campesino desposeído focuses on agrarian systems and Tarascan rural society in Michoacán and serves as an indictment of the state and private sector in their efforts at modernizing Mexican agriculture. Thierry Linck argues that mechanization, commercial agricultural development, and state policy have all led to destruction of forest environments, decline in the production of traditional food crops, and deterioration in the living standards of campesinos in Michoacán. This study makes an important contribution by detailing the impact of capitalist agricultural development on marginal, isolated rural communities. Additional research published by Linck and fellow scholars at the Colegio de Michoacán has also documented the situations of communities and subregions in Michoacán that were never targeted by the state for development. This research has demonstrated that indirect ties to more developed subregions do affect these communities (see Cochet, Leonard, and de Surgy 1988). Thierry Linck raises many of the same issues discussed by Sheridan, emphasizing that although these communities have been ignored by the state and capital investors, they are very much affected by development in nearby regions.

Conclusion

The volumes reviewed here document painstakingly the contradiction between modern capitalist agriculture, which relies on increased capital investment in large compact areas, and minifundista modernization, in which smallholders produce within traditional and costly systems. Throughout the postrevolutionary period, the Mexican state has swung periodically between these two types of systems and has generally turned to collectivizing agriculture to resolve this dilemma. The private sector, however, resists collectivization as an infringement on its perceived right to conduct commercial agriculture as a private, independent business. Moreover, campesinos reject total collectivization because it leads to com-

plete subordination of traditional production in favor of state-dominated agriculture.

Many scholars have interpreted campesino resistance to state-initiated development as a rejection of the capitalist system (see Scott 1986). Yet the detailed case material presented in these works suggests that ejidatarios have not spurned modernization. Rather, they reject being reduced to rural proletarians dependent on a new *hacendado*—the commercial bank. Ejidatarios thus have resisted a capitalist socialization of production benefiting the state and intermediaries rather than the producers. The Mexican government is now opening the economy, encouraging private national and foreign investment as a means of financing the capitalist agricultural development that it can no longer afford. History has shown, however, that when the government supports the private sector and ignores campesinos, these periods eventually lead to rural unrest and agrarian movements. Mexico must nevertheless find ways to deal with its large rural population, which the state has ignored or organized to fit a national agenda but never successfully integrated into the national system.

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