

nationalization of the copper industry. All in all, they present a fascinating panorama of Latin American labor history in the twentieth century.

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ADRIAN A. BANTJES: *As if Jesus Walked on Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1998.

Adrian A. Bantjes has written an important book. It is a study of the many sides of Cardenismo in Sonora in the 1930s. The great strength of the volume is that it examines the impact of Lázaro Cárdenas's reforms from a number of perspectives: the president's political project, the relationship between the local political factions and the central government, the tradition of anti-clericalism and the defence of the Church.

The study informs broader issues relating to the impact of the Mexican Revolution in the 1930s and, beyond that, to a number of bodies of theory. The great strength is that, like several other recent studies, it examines the links between culture and politics. The long tradition of Jacobinism that linked the Bourbon reforms and the *reforma* to the revolution also generated local opposition to Cárdenas's projects. The willingness of a central government to force changes, in the name of reason and education, upon what it saw as a backward and superstitious peasantry moved to centre stage.

As with events in Puebla, Michoacán, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Tabasco, Nuevo León and Sinaloa, strange alliances emerged as the clash between Calles and Cárdenas nationally, forced local Cardenistas into league with pro-clerical anti-Callistas at the level of state politics—all the while local beneficiaries of land reform faced the hostility of peasant culture, in which the Church played an integral role. Certainly, this study shows how local politics and culture make facile generalisations based exclusively on national political agendas seem shallow. It also goes a long way toward enriching our understanding of regional variations in the era of Cardenismo.

The study is also important in that it explores the clash between top-down and bottom-up forces. Bantjes concludes that Cardenismo in Sonora was as much the former as the latter, although not where labour was involved. The heaviest hand of centralism was reserved for the battle between the CTM and CROM. Local Byzantine political factionalism persevered in the face of Cárdenas's most ardent reforms, and political pragmatism tempered revolutionary passion more often than not. Even the era of intense Cardenista

reform lasted only from 1936-38 —a conclusion that supports other recent studies of the period.

Interestingly, Bantjes confirms that the Yaqui Indians —but not the Mayos— were major beneficiaries of land reform in Sonora, a process that probably went further than national leaders wanted in that state. Intended to strengthen rural social justice and convert peasant farming into capitalist agriculture, the land reform in Sonora touched half the rural population who were involved with either *ejidos* or agrarian committees.

The most controversial aspect of the Cardenista project undoubtedly was the anti-clerical effort to replace what was then called "fanaticism" and "backwardness" with a rational, educated, revolutionary "new man." That pitted a considerable segment of local and peasant culture against a modernising state and produced counter-productive results from a Cardenista perspective. Teachers here, as well as in other regions, were the shock troops of the cultural reform and they bore the brunt of the conservative backlash as the limits of the Cardenista project became apparent, even to Cárdenas after 1938. Indeed, in Sonora, the state building aspects of Cardenismo were weak in the face of local politics and ultimately led to a tacit understanding that the central government would back off in exchange for political stability.

In short, Bantjes's book is an excellent example of state and local studies that link up with national agendas and broad traditions of theoretical inquiry. It complements other strong regional studies by Paul Friedrich, Wil Pansters, Romana Falcón and Carlos Martínez Assad. Assiduously researched, well produced and with a strong analysis, it is a splendid addition to the literature on contemporary Mexico.

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