

conflict as one of the mineworkers' main leaders, himself travelling to La Paz in a doomed attempt to lobby President Saavedra. He ended up being arrested and forcibly prevented from returning to the north Potosí mining area. Smale seeks to compare his account of events with those of other witnesses to the massacre.

The book is well written and structured, and the chapters highlight themes as well as following a (largely) chronological narrative. It contains some interesting asides, which add to its value. Smale interestingly highlights the role played by urban artisans in the development of a union consciousness, and indeed it was the fact that non-mine workers were involved in the union in northern Potosí that the companies used as a pretext not to negotiate with them. He provides a useful section that compares the development of Bolivian mining with that in Chile in the early twentieth century; indeed (as the Tin Company of Llallagua showed) Chilean interests played a significant part in the Bolivian story. He also has a section on the role played by women in the mining communities, in particular as workers involved in the sorting of raw ores according to their quality, the so-called *palliris*.

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WENDY WOLFORD: *This Land is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land in Brazil*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010.

In *This Land Is Ours Now*, Wendy Wolford takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the “movement within the movement” inside Brazil’s famous Movement of Rural Workers without Land (MST). Wolford bases her analysis upon intensive research in two municipalities: one in the southern state of Santa Catarina where small-holders predominate, and the other in the northeastern littoral sugarcane zone of Pernambuco where salaried workers are the norm.

Wolford’s book joins the burgeoning literature on the MST’s impact in Brazil. Her broader theoretical and historical overviews are the book’s strengths. She deserves credit for her grassroots research on how the MST came into being in the south, and then spread into other areas of Brazil where, sometimes, the social conditions for MST expansion were less than favorable. This is what she discovered in Pernambuco. In the 1990s, some wage workers chose to articulate the call for agrarian reform, establish a network of small holdings, and abandon the life of salaried sugar workers. However, their embrace of the MST proved short-lived. By the mid-2000s, most had left it to engage in sugarcane cash cropping, eschewing the MST’s ideologies of crop diversification, collective labor

and goals, and the MST's ongoing struggle to continue occupying and securing land for Brazil's poor.

Wolford explains this setback as a combination of state and settler rejection of the MST project:

I argue that the MST tried to introduce new understandings of 'rights' into the settlements, but that the settlers' pre-existing definition was embedded in the assistance orientation of the plantation rather than in universalistic notions of 'citizenship' or human rights. And so, MST leaders who introduced new concepts of property and political leadership were seen as uncaring and incompetent because they ignored the norms of responsibility forged on the plantations (p. 223).

Wolford's argument is not wholly convincing. Like many analysts of the MST, Wolford drastically underplays the importance of the unionization that immediately preceded the rise of the MST. Indeed, Wolford presents some confusion on the unions' role saying in a footnote: "Between 1979-1980 and 1992, the rural workers' unions in the sugarcane region went on strike every year to pressure the plantation elites to sign the annual labor contract" (p. 242). Whereas earlier in the book she stated, "The rural unions began incorporating occupations and land reform into their agenda as early as 1993...but the unions did not come to dominate the political scene until after 2000" (p. 167).

The fact is that not only did rural workers' unions dominate worker politics in the sugarcane zone from the 1970s onwards, but also leaders from the same area controlled the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) that built the largest union movement in Latin America during the 1964-1985 military dictatorship. Since the military's fall, there have been important debates on just how authentic unions are, or how much they are in decline. But the national union movement was the first rural organizing effort of long-term significance in Brazilian history, particularly in the political-sociological area Wolford finds critical: citizens' memory of what it takes to get organized. João Pedro Stédile himself, arguably Brazil's most important MST leader, has said, "We were born in the unions." In Wolford's deep analysis of a single Pernambuco municipality, there is no mention of the implications of this national organizing drive that immediately predated the MST and had, as its birthplace, Pernambuco's sugar zone, exactly where Wolford was working.

As a result, Wolford's conclusion omits an important competing hypothesis of why salaried sugar workers with MST farmers opted out of the MST. Wolford's research suggests that the MST leaders had become heavy-handed and were

perceived as outsiders, and that the MST's ideology had gotten out-of-step with local realities as it "scaled up," and furthermore, that the "the moral economy" of the plantation—reifying private property rights and paternalism—had, from the perspective of new, northeastern small holders, pushed aside the MST's collectivist alternative morality. Yet a complementary explanation is likely: Since Brazil's rural union movement found strength, guidance, and its national leadership literally in Pernambuco's sugar zone, and since the *modus operandi* of the union movement's progressive branch was to take state structures—the state sanctioned corporatist unions—to ends *other than those intended by the state*, there was an institutionalized memory of a distinct path to improving life that rural organizations, already indigenous to Pernambuco, offered. This was to fight for wages, workers' rights, and land through political confrontations *within* the state.

The MST—though inserting itself clumsily, as Wolford documents, in inter-mediating between state and civil society—proposed a civil society *independent* of the state and in the hands of rural small holders confronting state authorities with their urban allies. This was and remains a frightening prospect for many, especially within the lethal politics of northeastern Brazil. Murder rates of organized rural workers have been consistently much higher in the north and northeast than in southern Brazil. Better, perhaps, to fight from within than to confront from without, while accepting state *regulated* rather than independent citizenship. This is the path that President Dilma Rousseff and those who dominate contemporary Brazil have almost universally taken.

Turning to generalizations: Wolford asserts that she does not argue that her cases from Santa Catarina and Pernambuco represent the MST throughout Brazil. Yet the title of her book and the tenor of the argument suggest the opposite. Brazil's regions vary dramatically in regard to their social, cultural, and political histories. The cases do not shed much light on these distinctions despite passages such as, "the [MST] settlements in the sugarcane region were, doubtlessly, repeated in different ways around the country and in the medium term contributed to what the movement itself considered to be an increasingly obvious split between the movement's base and its leaders" (p. 13). Evidence is needed here.

Another issue is the editing: there are numerous bibliographic errors that I gave up counting after more than a score. Overall, the book is an uneven read: strongest in its theoretical and broader historical chapters, weakest in its methodological approach.

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