

Si en los primeros capítulos lo evidente es mostrar el lugar de Puerto Rico en la estrategia general norteamericana, en la segunda mitad del libro se ve a Puerto Rico en la política que va dando paso a Luis Muñoz Marín. El autor señala que en esos años el desarrollo político de Puerto Rico estuvo acompañado e inclusive fue posible –sostiene– por el cambio de los líderes políticos locales, lo que dio paso a nuevos interlocutores. Pese a que se reconoce la significación de este nuevo líder como factor importante, no se muestra en forma cabal el proceso, y su figura y actuación quedan un tanto desdibujadas en el análisis de la trama que se tejió en esos años.

Las abundantes fuentes consultadas tanto en Puerto Rico como en Estados Unidos muestran la riqueza del tema, y sus referencias en este libro constituyen de por sí un catálogo y una guía invaluable para nutrir otras investigaciones. No ocurre lo mismo con los mapas. En un texto como éste, resulta imprescindible contar con una serie de ellos.

De lectura fácil, *Strategy as Politics* es un libro atractivo y sugerente que aborda desde una perspectiva distinta el desarrollo de Puerto Rico en tiempos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y que, no obstante el tema y la mirada geopolítica, consigue “narrar una historia interesante” (uno de los deseos del autor). En esa historia se muestra la manera en que los Estados Unidos, que necesitaban urgentemente una transformación política en la isla, la propiciaron y lograron, asegurando la estabilidad y la colaboración necesarias para convertir a Puerto Rico en un baluarte.

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AARON BOBROW-STRAIN: *Intimate Enemies: Landowners, Power and Violence in Chiapas*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007.

The 1994 Chiapas uprising by the Zapatista National Liberation Army in Mexico has produced a massive amount of research and writing about indigenous peoples and their movements. But no book in English has told the story of the ruling class against which the uprising took place. Aaron Bobrow-Strain's *Intimate Enemies* does an excellent job of filling this gap: he offers a nuanced account of the experiences of the *ganaderos* or cattle ranchers as they lost their land and their dominant position in the northern region of Chiapas, centered around the town of Chilón.

*Intimate Enemies* starts with some little-known facts about the material accomplishments that took place after the Zapatista uprising: about 500,000 hectares were redistributed among indigenous peasants as a direct result of land

takeovers, or invasions, as they were called by the author and by the *ganaderos*. The government paid fair prices to landowners for their former properties. Bobrow-Strain's research question is: "Why would coffee planters and cattle ranchers with a long and storied history of violent responses to agrarian conflict react to these recent invasions with quiescence and resignation instead of thugs and guns?" (p. 7). To answer this question, the author points to two main factors: First, the neoliberal reform that started in the mid-1980s in Mexico placed *ganaderos* in a very different position from that which they had occupied during the import-substitution industrialization period (1930s to 1980s). During that time, subsidized meat production became a key element in Mexico's modernization and urbanization processes. But the 1980s neoliberal reform had different tenets where cheaper imports were a desired possibility for the government. This change entailed a major shift in the relation between *ganaderos* and the state.

Second, before the 1970s, *ganaderos* had been almost the sole mediators between Indians and outside world. The region's physical isolation had placed workers in a state restricted by semi-feudal relations for 100 years. But in the 1970s the Catholic Church began to send *catequistas* or catequists to indigenous communities. Catequists played a critical role in empowering indigenous communities by raising their sense of dignity and self-respect after centuries of oppression, exploitation and dispossession of land and territory by *ladino* (non-indian) ranchers and coffee growers. Initially it was mostly German and other foreign landowners who took over Indian lands in the early nineteenth century. But by 1900 all of the *ladino* families that would endure through the 1994 crisis had purchased or taken over most properties. *Ladinos* went from merchant capital to landed production.

Indian actors or sympathizers had explanations for the 1994 conflict that were similar to the *ganaderos*: the Church and other organizations played a key role, which reinforced the effect of neoliberal crisis. Yet, valuations of whether resulting shifts were "good" or "bad" were very different between the two groups.

The author skilfully combines a political-economy critical-realist approach with a poststructuralist concern for identity and culture and successfully interweaves both approaches. His challenge was to reconstruct the "honest shadows" of social actors that were heavily stereotyped as the bad violent guys, the *ganaderos*, and disentangle the truth from their own stories. To answer that challenge he had to check their stories against the archival records of other landowners and indigenous actors.

Chapter three tries to construct a concept of a landed class that goes beyond landed production, incorporating factors of gender and race as constitutive elements to the discussion. But the discussion of the political economy becomes too abstract with references to Ricardo and Marx without ever quoting them

directly. Although Mexican scholars have produced one of the most enlightening and impassioned debates on the agrarian question, the author never refers to this debate. Apart from the core literature on Chiapas, which is well covered, there is hardly any attempt to locate this state within Mexico's regional heterogeneity. Given the importance attributed by the author to space and geography and his interest in addressing the social construction of territoriality, such discussion was to be expected. His theoretical focus is too broad, on one hand; but then empirically too micro, on the other. Because of this, perhaps, he posits some of the features of Chiapas *ganaderos* as quite peculiar when, in fact, they are rather typical of *ganaderos* in most regions with a similar ethnic composition, such as the northern highlands of Puebla, or parts of Veracruz.

The Chilón story is told by using interesting conceptual labels, which become specific interpretations of class-state relations. Yet, there is no real attempt to explain why, for instance, the liberal ideal of free-wage labor preferred by lowland coffee growers did not progress in the north of Chiapas in the first half of the twentieth century, in spite of having had governors on their side. Was it the state's inability to rely on agents other than landowners themselves to occupy political office at local levels? Throughout most of the twentieth century, rather than any liberal dream, Chiapas Indians were subjected to landowner violence founded on state support while enjoying impunity. In view of this style of "governance," it is rather puzzling that the author continuously makes reference to landowner "hegemony." This is an equivocal use of Gramsci's term, which refers to "moral and intellectual leadership" as expressed through civil-society organizations functioning in consensus with the ruling class. The existence of hegemony, in fact, allows the ruling class to use the means of violence only exceptionally. But when violence, repression and impunity – combined with paternalism – are the norm, then what you have is domination with little or no hegemony. Therefore, as the author puts it: "Violence and corruption forestalled conflict, but inflamed tensions and contradictions in the countryside" (p. 104). Only a crisis like that of 1994 might have solved this tension.

One of the most important contributions of this book is its analysis of symbolic changes that took place around "production" from the era of import-substitution industrialization to neoliberalism. *Ganaderos* were caught off guard with neoliberal pragmatism and lost their role in production: how could their contribution in this realm be traded for the peasants' subsistence logic? To them, this move was entirely irrational, as they represented civilization while the Indians represented savagery. Noting the change in political winds, *ganaderos* felt they could no longer resort to force to recover their land. Also, Indian mobilization was too big a force, "the conflict was bigger than us," said one of them (p. 183).

In the end, a dramatic inversion of class and race relations resulted from the dialectics of the “geographies of fear.” From a paternalistic and repressive situation, in which loyal Indian workers even protected their landlords and their estates, they ended up taking over the lands and losing “respect” for their former bosses. Older *ganaderos* wanted to resort to guns to recover land, but younger ones preferred a legal solution: the new geographies of fear, along with the lack of economic viability in the neoliberal realm, made it hard to return to farming. Even if former landowners were to recover their land, how could they continue farming when their very lives might be at stake? Eventually, even the town of Chilón became re-indianized. For example, its streets were taken over by Indian merchants who competed with the formally ladino-owned stores. Indians also became the restaurant customers who entered without any apologetic attitude or respect: they owned the stage.

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NICK HENCK: *Subcommander Marcos: The Man and the Mask*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007.

One of the most remarkable features of the 1994 uprising of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) has been the vast discrepancy between its weak military power and its considerable global reach, the latter due in substantial measure to the eloquence of Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, the masked Subcomandante Marcos. As Nick Henck argues in his lengthy and able new biography of Marcos, the EZLN spokesperson has become “the most famous guerrilla leader since Che Guevara” thanks to his “charisma, media savvy, and mystique.”

Henck, on the Faculty of Law at Keio University in Tokyo, began his study in response to Bertrand de la Grange and Maite Rico’s 1998 book, *Marcos: la genial impostura*, a study that Henck considers “well researched” but “prejudiced and polemical” in its hostility toward Marcos. His purpose, he declares, has been “not to judge Marcos” but rather to “comprehend and contextualize him.” Echoing Jorge Castañeda’s view of Che, Henck sees Marcos as a Latin American rebel of middle-class background unable to remain indifferent to the moral issue of social injustice. Amid the post-Cold War world, Henck argues, Marcos’ notable “flexibility of mind” has made him a clever innovator, “the most advanced stage so far in the evolution of the revolutionary—a Homo sapiens in a world of Neanderthals.” The central question, he concludes, “is whether Marcos is the last of a dying breed or the next link in the evolutionary chain.”