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BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Religion, Resistance, and Rights in Guatemala

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This essay reviews the following works:

Dealing with Peace: The Guatemalan Campesino Movement and the Post-Conflict Neoliberal State. By Simon Granovsky-Larsen. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. Pp. viii + 275. $70.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9781487501433.

Ladina Social Activism in Guatemala City, 1871–1954. By Patricia Harms. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2020. Pp. xii + 409. $75.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780826361455.

Religious Transformation in Maya Guatemala: Cultural Collapse and Christian Pentecostal Revitalization. Edited by John P. Hawkins. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research, 2021. Pp. xxv + 448. $65.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780826362254.

Human and Environmental Justice in Guatemala. Edited by Stephen Henighan and Candace Johnson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. Pp. v + 263. $36.95 paper. ISBN: 9781487522971.

Guatemala's Catholic Revolution: A History of Religious and Social Reform, 1920–1968. By Bonar L. Hernández Sandoval. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 254. $50.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780268104412.

Cuando el indio tomó las armas: La vida de Emeterio Toj Medrano. By Emeterio Toj Medrano and Rodrigo Véliz Estrada. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2021. Pp. 504. $354.00 paper. ISBN: 9786073043175.

Loosely yet intrinsically linked by themes of religion, resistance, and rights, a cluster of new books on Guatemala adds to a burgeoning literature on the prehistory, aftermath, and consternation of the nation's years of civil war.[1] A *testimonio* written by a liberation-theology-inspired Maya organizer provides a window on the power of faith to inspire and maintain activists confronted by barbaric violence, while a monograph on Catholic reform and church-state relations from 1920 to 1968 presents new data on the religious

[1] Guatemala's thirty-six-year war dates from 1960 to 1996; it reached genocidal heights of violence from 1981 to 1983. For new works on the Cold War revolutions, see Kevin Coleman, "Revolution and Redemption in Central America," *Latin American Research Review* 57, no. 1 (2022): 237–249, https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2022.15.

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background to this human history. Faith and cultural crisis are at the center of two books on very different topics, one excavating the protopolitics and politics of urban Ladina (non-Indigenous) feminists from 1871 to 1944, culminating in their church-inspired conservative stance, and the other highlighting the *longue durée* of cultural crisis that underpins conversion to charismatic Christianity in the Maya highlands. Despite the violence, exclusion, exploitation, poverty, and political decay that are intimately related to such phenomena, resistance and faith in the possibility of justice live on in the neoliberal postpeace era, as shown by works detailing campesinos' struggles for land and shining light on the quest for human and environmental justice in diverse sectors of society.

Emeterio Toj Medrano's memoir, *Cuando el indio tomó las armas*, coauthored with Rodrigo Véliz Estrada, is an important contribution to a growing body of testimonials written by Guatemalan leftists. Toj Medrano's story is particularly compelling. A K'iche' Maya born in 1940 in a canton of Santa Cruz del Quiché, he rose through the once anticommunist ranks of Catholic Action to become a cooperative founder and community organizer whose liberation-theology-inspired efforts ultimately coalesced in the founding of the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC), which launched in 1978, just three years before the military began conducting genocidal scorched-earth campaigns in the Mayan highlands. After representing the CUC in a delegation to raise awareness of the Guatemalan crisis abroad, he was captured by the National Police and the army in July 1981, brutally tortured, and forced to denounce the Left on the military's TV Channel 5. Having convinced his captors of his change of heart, Toj was able to escape in November, after which—forgiven by the guerrilla high command—he organized with the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres in the western highlands, first in and around Sololá department and then in the Ixcán region of northern Quiché, where he worked in the Comunidades de Población en Resistencia. Through the peace process and in the years that followed, he became increasingly disillusioned with the conflicts among the ex-revolutionary Left as he worked in various internationally supported community development and education projects. Toj's *testimonio* serves as a primary source for a six-decade span of history. It will serve scholars who are researching revolutionary consciousness, liberation theology, and the human experience of torture and resistance, as well as those who focus on class-based versus culturally oriented variants of Maya leftism and on the incorporation, and perhaps co-optation, of the Left in the postpeace period.[2]

The revolutionary anthropologist and priest Ricardo Falla provides a prologue to the work, "Cuando un torturado vence al Estado torturador." As this title suggests, the most compelling thread of Toj's narrative is that of strength and resistance. Toj tricked his captors but remained inwardly steadfast under torture, both physical (with drugs, acid, water, electricity, chains, and an oven, for example) and psychological (promising but never delivering a visit with his missing family). The section of the book that focuses on Toj's captivity and torture accounts for nearly half of its five hundred pages. It follows a preface and introduction by Rodrigo Véliz, and Toj's account of his life before 1981, and is followed by chapters cowritten with Véliz, who interviewed him in a multiyear collaboration. The pages on captivity are largely based on a manuscript that Toj first produced just after his escape and had to burn when fleeing a safe house in 1982, which he wrote again shortly thereafter.[3] Toj's twice-authored testimonial of torture unfolds almost in real time, its horrors beginning in a station of the National Police in Quetzaltenango and

[2] Literature on Guatemalan left-wing militancy is reviewed in Manolo E. Vela Castañeda, "Nuevas perspectivas sobre militancias de alto riesgo: Ciudad de Guatemala, 1980–1985," *Latin American Research Review* 56, no. 4 (2021): 831–843, https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.1011.

[3] Another important source is a previous testimonial. Emeterio Toj Medrano, *En dignidad a pesar de lo vivido: Sobrevivientes de masacres, desaparición forzada y tortura durante el conflicto armado interno en Guatemala* (Guatemala: Dirección de los Archivos de la Paz, Secretaría de la Paz de la Presidencia de la República, 2011).

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unfolding in at least six military bases (seven, if one counts a clandestine army prison in Guatemala City) around the capital and the highlands. The narrative of captivity is in part an expiation, inasmuch as Toj's concern is to explain why he denounced the cause on military television despite never having lost the faith. Writing and publishing the testimonial, however, is also in itself an act of resistance. Toj shows us the where and the how of atrocities committed by the state. He also details the who, providing evidence for human rights trials by naming his torturers.

As Falla points out in his prologue, Toj Medrano was always an organizer, not a soldier. Throughout his *testimonio* we see the painstaking "trabajo de hormiga," or "ant's work," of organizing in highland Maya communities, and the book offers many insights into the inner workings of the Left, as well as on debates within the left-wing Maya polity. Toj Medrano espoused a class-based analysis that came to be called *tojismo*, as opposed to *cojticismo*, after Demetrio Cojtí, which referenced the viewpoint of the *culturalistas* who focused on ethnicity, race, and custom (130). Political divides were friendly during the war, Toj writes, but they became more acute in the years leading up to and after the 1996 signing of the peace accords. In this regard, Toj Medrano's memoir joins many others that express disgust with conflicts among the Left as its members were reintegrated into political and civil society. But that is not the strength of this work, which is essential reading for all modern Guatemalanists. Its real power lies in the window it opens on leftist Maya organizing, on resistance and courage, and on the role of faith in informing and underpinning revolution.

Bonar L. Hernández's monograph *Guatemala's Catholic Revolution: A History of Religious and Social Reform, 1920–1968*, provides a wider lens on this history, mining untapped sources to explore ideological changes in the Catholic Church in the years before the progressive Catholicism of the revolutionary turn and the 1968 Medellín conference. *Guatemala's Catholic Revolution* covers the 1920s to the 1950s and uses a transnational approach that centers the ties between Rome and Guatemala. Pushed by the Vatican, and spurred by the reestablishment of diplomatic relationships during the Jorge Ubico dictatorship (1931–1944), the church in Guatemala set out to reevangelize the rural indigenous population, and in so doing, to revitalize an institution gutted by liberal anticlericalism, with "only ninety-four pastors [in 1925] for a population of two million" (5). Hernández argues that the "transformations within the Guatemalan Church were propelled by the institutional renewal of rural Catholicism, which dates back to the interwar period when a reconfiguration of national and international politics created new spaces for the Church's resurgence" (3).

The main contribution of *Guatemala's Catholic Revolution* lies in its exploration of the theological and political workings of the church under the conservative archbishop Mariano Rossell y Arellano (1936–1964) and his predecessor, Luis Durou y Sure, appointed in 1928. The author presents this history in three two-chapter parts built on diplomatic records and correspondence housed in the archive of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Guatemala and the Vatican, as well as on missioners' records and church publications and pastoral letters. The first part, "Foundations," explores church-state rapprochement in the years after President Orellana exiled the archbishop in 1922. Sending Vatican envoys to Guatemala and adhering to an apolitical and to some extent "nationalist" (44) stance, the efforts of an expanding church ultimately gave rise to "an unprecedented period of Church-state conciliation" (22). Conciliation came to a head under Ubico, who restored diplomatic relations with Vatican in 1936 and permitted the reentry of the Jesuits a year later.

Church revitalization, along with the church's modernizing projects and focus on sacramentalism, laid the groundwork for the initiatives of Catholic Action, which arrives in the second part of the book, "Expansion." This part focuses on a "new era of resurgence" (61) under Rossell y Arellano, beginning with efforts to educate and integrate the laity,

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train priests, and import missioners in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As Guatemala transformed during the democratic revolution of 1944–1954, Catholic Action expanded, and missioners, the Maryknollers chief among them, spread throughout the countryside. Modernizing projects, new parochial schools, and blossoming lay associations, mostly associated with Catholic Action, "reached regional and national proportions" (93). The church, however, and within it the Maryknollers, engaged in struggle and negotiation with indigenous *costumbristas*, deftly explored in chapter 4. Efforts to instill respect for the sacraments in the place of *costumbre* (e.g., cargo-based faith healing, saint veneration, Maya-calendar day keeping) never quite succeeded, and in the end, "sacramentalism and costumbre became part of the same cultural fabric" (11). The missionaries' efforts laid the ground for "Transformations," as the final section is titled, during the 1950s and 1960s. Cold War anticommunist development projects sparked a "green revolution" by the 1960s (145) and "paved the way for a program of socioeconomic reform" (105). While the archbishopric remained conservative and opposed to the revolution and land reform, at the grassroots, liberation theology gained sway. It spread, as detailed in Toj Medrano's story, through the "ant's work" of organizing and consciousness raising that Hernández's work does not cover. Instead, readers will gain critical insight into the understudied relations of church and state in the years before the leftward turn, delivered with brevity in a work well suited for use in graduate seminars.

Like Hernández's study of the revitalizing Catholic Church, Patricia Harms's thorough work *Ladina Social Activism in Guatemala City, 1871–1954* steps into a scholarly void. Covering Ladina, mostly middle-class feminists and protofeminists in the nation's capital, it is the first such comprehensive study of its kind. Ladina feminists, despite participating or attempting to participate in "every aspect of sociopolitical life in Guatemala City," have been "effectively erased from the national memory and historical consciousness" (11), Harms claims. Her research unearths "a complex, significant, and palpable feminist movement that emerged and survived under the most difficult political circumstances, [and] a feminist consciousness that emerged slowly and sporadically, as women struggled to critique and identify Guatemala's gendered structures in a context of repressive dictatorial political regimes and entrenched patriarchy" (292).

The author substantiates this argument with a wealth of archival documents and eyewitness oral testimonies, presented in seven chronological chapters. The bulk of the text focuses on the 1944–1954 revolution, following on two chapters that cover 1871 to 1944, drawing heavily on periodicals. In excavating what was in many ways a literary and protopolitical movement, Harms never loses sight of the political economy, incorporating data on women's labor, literacy rates, and educational attainments. She also highlights the importance of political associations, such as the Sociedad Gabriela Mistral that emerged in the political opening of the 1920s, which, despite being modest in its aims and fairly short-lived, was the first "sustained effort" to "challenge gender norms" (67). Given the patriarchal ideology of the Ubico regime, feminists had to proceed with caution, focusing, on the one hand, on "the legal inequality of women and their disenfranchisement from the educational system" and, on the other, on "the intellectual and spiritual rejuvenation that feminism offered" (88). Their work formed a bridge between the advances of the 1920s and political movements and suffrage campaign that followed Ubico's fall.

The chapters on the 1944–1954 revolution begin with a study of the institutionalization of "maternal feminism" in day care and nutritional centers for children, and in the new career of social work, projects championed by Elisa Martínez de Arévalo, the president's wife. The fourth chapter examines women's political activism, notably including the Unión Cívica Guatemalteca, founded during the revolutionary tumult of June 1944 to promote suffrage, which ultimately was won the following year for literate women alone (a franchise that was not expanded until 1965, nine years after men won universal suffrage). In the context of Cold War polarization and of a revolutionary state that sidelined or

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ignored women's issues, many literate urban Ladinas voted for anticommunist candidates associated with the growing movement of Archbishop Rossell y Arellano. As an (extremely truncated) voting bloc, they showed their power in the 1948 municipal elections in an example of how, in Harms's analysis, the revolution in part ultimately met its demise for having failed to incorporate women.

This failure unfolded despite moments of opportunity, such as the First Inter-American Congress of Women, covered in chapter 5, held in 1947 in Guatemala City; its anti-U.S., anti-imperialist resolutions divided the nation's women's movement, Harms argues. The Alianza Femenina Guatemalteca (AFG), founded after the congress and examined in the book's sixth chapter, was the first organization that directly challenged patriarchy. The AFG uniquely fought to extend suffrage and worked across lines of race and class during the polarized politics of Jacobo Árbenz's presidency. However, it proved too radical for the middle-class feminists of the Arévalo era, most of whom declined to join. They escaped the fate of AFG leaders such as Ester de Urrutia, who fled into exile when the 1954 invasion marked the end of the Alianza itself. Despite the AFG's thwarted efforts, Harms concludes, "the exclusion of urban ladina women of all social classes from full revolutionary participation must . . . be integrated into the explanation of its demise" (295). This argument is further developed in the concluding chapter, which details the widespread support among women generally and market women specifically for Rossell y Arellano's anticommunist campaign.

A brief epilogue, "The Return to Silence," notes that the struggle of Guatemalan women continues, with many obstacles remaining despite the reemergence of feminist activism during the 1970s and 1980s and the new movements of the postpeace era. Harm's pathbreaking work fills a serious gap in the literature. It also calls for further research, particularly on working-class and Maya women, and for studies that tie their history over the modern period together with analyses of wartime violence and femicide in the postpeace era.

Connecting long cycles of "cultural collapse" to contemporary crisis is a goal of *Religious Transformation in Maya Guatemala: Cultural Collapse and Christian Pentecostal Revitalization*, edited by John P. Hawkins. Complementing works on Protestantism by Virginia Garrard, and, in the urban context, by Kevin Lewis O'Neill, the book is the fourth volume of studies from Brigham Young University's Nahualá/Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán Ethnographic Field School, directed by the editor and Walter Randolph Adams from 1995 to 2006. Largely written by Hawkins, who authored two of its three parts and edited and/or cowrote the pieces in its opening section of student-conducted studies, the book covers the "pentecostalization of Christianity" in two K'iche' Maya highland municipalities. The author-editor attributes this sea change in his area of study to crisis in a corn-based culture that unfolded over the course of the twentieth century, and especially since the 1950s, primarily because of population growth and land expropriation. Hawkins's analysis draws on Durkheim and Weber, with attention to changing material and economic conditions inspired by Marx and Engels, and is developed through a series of studies whose impressive scope is not quite conveyed by the work's title. Historical essays begin with the significance of maize as far back as 3000 BCE and pay due attention to key conjunctures in the modern nation's history, and the book relates cultural change in two *municipios* to phenomena in failing societies in the Christianized parts of the postcolonial Global South and even in wealthier regions of what the author calls the "Digital North" (361–362). Even leaving aside that it is the fourth volume of studies from the Brigham Young field school, *Religious Transformation* is a testament to decades of dedicated scholarship and a poignant reminder that sustained fieldwork is worth funding.

By the "pentecostalization of Christianity," the author refers not just to the notable growth of Pentecostal sects in Guatemala, a nation in which more than 40 percent of the population has converted from Catholicism to Protestantism in recent decades. His

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conceptualization also takes "Pentecostal-mimicking Catholic charismatics" into account, including all Christian churches with rites that induce "the bodily reception of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by exuberant, ecstatic worship practice, including electronic amplification, bodily movement, trance falling, glossolalia, and healing" (7). Hawkins's phrase "Christian Pentecostalism" speaks to his insistence that while they are distinct, Pentecostals and charismatic Catholics, often the subject of separate studies, can be fruitfully viewed through a single lens. He elaborates this argument and delves further into categories of religious practice in a chapter titled "The Religions of Nahualá and Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán in Juxtaposition" (253–269), in which he calls Pentecostalism a "fourth branch of Christianity" (268–270), a claim that will no doubt spark debate among specialists.

The book begins with a dozen student-led ethnographies that nearly all date to the summer of 2003. The first five describe traditional Maya cargos and faith practices, and the rest give snapshots of life in charismatic churches. The details on topics including the process of conversion, women's empowerment and their role in faith communities, fictive kinship and taboos (among others), useful for classroom readings, are followed by a wealth of contextualizing historical background that dates the tipping point in the crisis of corn culture to the middle decades of the twentieth century (a story in which the *cofradía*-undermining *catequistas* of Catholic Action played a role). Most notably, Hawkins takes issue with the widely accepted scholarly interpretation—particularly associated with Virginia Garrard—that the war and scorched-earth campaigns were drivers of protestant conversion because converting disassociated people from liberation-theology-inspired activism and protected them from army violence. Instead, the author suspects that charismatic forms of worship "better and more openly expressed the cachexy [world-torn-apart state of political violence and depravity] in which people found themselves due to cultural and economic collapse and exclusion now exacerbated by war, and because of legitimate fears they might be targeted ... because of their ethnicity, poverty, or resistance based on religious or ethical principles" (237). For Hawkins, the sustained attacks on maize cultivation and thus on Maya culture are better explanatories, an argument that must be taken into account in further studies of this topic.

The work's third section provides a synchronic analysis of religious diversity in the two municipalities and compares this data on what Hawkins calls "the Christian Pentecostal wail" to religious conversion in other parts of the world. Significantly, he argues that "the most important and profound social movement in Guatemala [since World War II] ... has been ... Christian Pentecostalization" (272). The chapters center the revitalizing and even nation-building role that Christian Pentecostalism plays in crisis-bound communities and the quest of their inhabitants—"desperately liminal people caught between the collapse of the old and exclusion from the new"—"to bring about a more livable society" (315). Building on this theme, the final chapter explores "culture collapse and exclusion across the Christianized world," around Guatemala, across Latin America, and in Africa and India, as well as in the industrializing lands of Europe and the United States. The least common denominator in the globalization of "the Christian Pentecostal God" (356) is the stress of cultural collapse—not in the sense of falling apart or ceasing to exist (the Maya are still very much alive), but in the sense of changing lifeways, realities, and ways of surviving. This is an ambitious end to a volume that brims with data and insights and is rich in field-pushing, provocative, and debate-sparking arguments that will doubtless fulfill Hawkins's wish to stimulate further study.

The years since the Brigham Young University studies were conducted have seen escalating problems around Guatemala and in the field school's home base specifically, where since 2019 still-ongoing battles over land between Nahualá and Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán have led to massacres and on-and-off states of martial law. Whether this conflict is related primarily to land, its market value, and its historical-cultural

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significance or, as local informants conjecture, to the spread of drug-trafficking cartels, the farming of drug cultivars, or other phenomena of this ilk is an open question. What is certain is that the neoliberal turn underway in Guatemala since the 1980s has been accompanied by new forms of poverty, mass migration, lawlessness, corruption, and organized criminality that makes allies of state officials, narcos, and street gangs.[4]

Neoliberal governance is also widely accepted as having weakened oppositional social movements. Simon Granovksy-Larsen takes up this topic in *Dealing with Peace: The Guatemalan Campesino Movement and the Post-Conflict Neoliberal State*, which focuses on campesinos' collective struggles for land in an era when market-based mechanisms have stymied hopes for agrarian reform. He argues that the neoliberal project writ large has been at best only a partial success in Guatemala and that strategic campesino social movements have been able to continue their history of resistance by working within the system, "subverting resources intended to co-opt them" (4). Hence the double entendre in the title: campesinos are "dealing" with peace both in the sense of coping with and adjusting to the new realities of the political economy and in the sense of negotiating and contesting the terms of the market-led terrain. Granovsky-Larsen takes aim at scholarship best represented in the English-language literature by Charles Hale, questioning his interpretation of neoliberal multiculturalism and its deleterious effect on the ability of left-wing activists to achieve their goals and effect meaningful levels of change.

An activist scholar, Granovsky-Larsen bases his argument on six ground-level case studies. Four of these are of communities located in the departments of Sololá, Retalhuleu, and Alta Verapaz, and two are of the social movement organizations with which their residents are affiliated—the Coordinadora Nacional Indígena y Campesina (CONIC) and Comité Campesino del Altiplano (CCDA), with which the author has over two decades of firsthand participatory experience. During the heart of his fieldwork in 2009–2010, he worked as a participant observer, collaborating with the organizations while conducting interviews and surveys and collecting testimonies, triangulating them against archival records. Before publishing, the author updated the text to reflect changes from 2010 to 2015.

The first of the book's six chapters covers the author's conceptualization of neoliberalism, which draws on both Marxian and Foucauldian perspectives. He argues that the neoliberal project has produced only an "incomplete transition" (27) in Latin America; beyond repeatedly opposing neoliberal policies, people have also rejected "attempts … to prioritize atomized economic concerns above all other considerations … and in place of collective identities and practice" (26). This failure of neoliberalism writ large to achieve hegemony is at the heart of the book's argument. Resistance within accommodation has continued, despite the fact that in Guatemala—where the neoliberal turn unfolded more slowly than in other nations—the Socio-Economic Accord (the peace accord most relevant to land distribution) was written with "language … so heavily neoliberal that the possibility for significant social change based in the peace accords was effectively cancelled in the final phase of the peace process" (33). The book's mission, then, is to convince readers that campesino movements can chart neoliberalism's waters, "dealing" with the systems of power while never buying into their terms.

The following two chapters provide essential and useful background information on how a fractured, internally divided collection of movements evolved through the peace process and emerged in the following years, embracing different platforms and strategies

[4] See the third volume of these studies: John P. Hawkins, James H. McDonald, and Walter Randolph Adams, *Crisis of Governance in Maya Guatemala: Indigenous Responses to a Failing State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013). This work is available in paperback at a more accessible price than the fourth volume. For a review of new works on migration, see Anita Isaacs, "Driven from Home: Taking Stock of Central American Migration," *Latin American Research Review* 57, no. 2 (2022): 467–478, https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2022.40.

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in their quest to acquire land. Cooperation with or opposition to the Land Trust Fund (Fondo de Tierras, or FONTIERRAS), is at the center of this story; originally sponsored and sporadically funded by the World Bank, FONTIERRAS was created by the Socio-Economic Accord. It promotes market relationships, providing loans at comparatively low interest rates, and works to get land properly titled. Its role in the narrative is ambiguous. Campesino organizations participated in its founding and operations, and "nearly all … have assisted communities through land purchase through FONTIERRAS, even while denouncing the conditions those same communities will face after purchase," the author writes (65). In the final analysis, FONTIERRAS programs have helped "large landowners to sell off unproductive land while securing titles in newly desirable areas, and the involvement of campesino and Indigenous organizations … [in these programs] has helped to define debt-ridden land purchase as the only acceptable method of agrarian reform" (76). Campesinos who are "between the bullet and the bank," as the third chapter's subtitle puts it, press their claims to land through historical precedent, rural labor disputes, and land occupations, occasionally succeeding, but readers are left to wonder how this substantiates the claim that they are successfully dealing with neoliberalism.

The case studies beg the same question. CONIC "has been tremendously successful in assisting … with land conflicts and struggles to access land," but "lacks an overarching strategy for community improvement following land access" (107). CONIC-supported Mam villagers in Victorias III, Retalhuleu, who won land after years of conflict in 1999 are "screwed but happy" (109), diversifying their crops but remaining poor and bereft of basic infrastructure. Their success, the author claims, should instead be "measured in terms of autonomy, organizational strength, and social well-being" (127). Likewise, fifty-six Q'eqchi' families won land in San José La Pasión, Alta Verapaz, in 2007 with CONIC's support; at the time the author did his fieldwork, they had six water taps in total and no electricity, and they had built their own rustic school by hand with unpaid labor. Yet they were able to continue subsistence production and maintain their way of life (and also refused to repay their FONTIERRAS loan), "show[ing] how campesino organizations and communities can navigate the neoliberal agrarian terrain to their advantage and according to alternative visions of socio-economic organization," Granovsky-Larsen concludes (138).

CCDA-supported communities have fared little better. This organization differs from CONIC in its class-based focus, its heavier reliance on FONTIERRAS (despite its critiques thereof), and its support for income-generating projects such as a direct-trade coffee program that sets minimum prices and helps fund infrastructure development and political advocacy. In Salvador Xolhuitz, located in Retalhuleu department, eighty-nine families of former resident coffee workers (*mozos colonos*) borrowed from FONTIERRAS to buy the finca they had worked on in the early aughts but quickly dissolved in conflicts mostly related to finances and partly to the provenance of the original settlers. Armed confrontation followed, and there was a murder when the author visited in 2010. FONTIERRAS failed these campesinos by forcing them to add more members to their original group, and the case study shows us "how the act of attaining communal land ownership is only the first stage in the campesino struggle for community development and autonomy," the author writes (166). Campesinos in Don Pancho, in Escuintla department, were more successful than any of the communities under study; they diversified their crops, got along with the CCDA and FONTIERRAS, and repaid their loan ahead of schedule. They did this, however, with the help of remittances sent from migrant relatives in the United States. The author concludes from these cases that "a community [can] make what it wants of the *Fondo de Tierras* experience" (182), adding that the CCDA's fair-trade coffee initiative engages with neoliberal capitalism to benefit campesinos in an approach that is "radical" and that "fights tirelessly for structural change through political reform" (183). The author's concluding chapter briefly updates the history and reiterates

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the thesis that the rich, on-the-ground evidence given in the case studies could be read as arguing against. That said, if the argument is stripped down to its essence—that "participation in the neoliberal agrarian system and continued insistence on transformation are not incompatible" (212) and that people hate and resist the neoliberal system even though they have to deal with it—this book makes an important point. In the face of a political economy that substantially defangs collective action and subsumes campesino lifeways in market relations, and in the face of a land market dominated by private sales fueled by microcredit organizations not covered in the book and, enormously, through migrant remittances, campesinos in Guatemalan social movements are keeping hope alive.

Granovksy-Larsen poignantly reminds us of the centrality of land to Maya and campesino culture, as seen in Hawkins's work and echoed in Toj Medrano's life of organizing. Too, his point that resistance lives on is important. This is the overall message of *Human and Environmental Justice in Guatemala*, edited by Stephen Henighan and Candace Johnson. A kaleidoscopic, beyond-interdisciplinary collection of essays that use the lens of transitional justice to insist on the links between people, place, past, and planet, this book looks at the multiple valences of the struggle for justice that continue to evolve in Guatemala despite the depredations associated with the neoliberal political economy. In three parts—"Imagining Justice," "Justice in Practice," and "Cultural Responses to Injustice"—the reader brings academics together with Guatemalan political actors and cultural critics, covering topics as diverse as opposition to Canadian mining projects (a major theme in this Toronto-published work) and resistance as seen in performance art and literature. It is a tour of the multiple spheres, the matrix, of human cries and political activism into which fit Toj Medrano's *testimonio* and its naming of names, the efforts of the heirs of liberation-theology-inspired activists and feminists of generations past, and the ongoing *lucha* of Indigenous people, campesinos, and their allies.

The first part of the book, which includes the editors' introduction, "presents the link between human and environmental justice as primary" (20) and situates the quest for justice as both national and transnational. It opens its studies with a trenchant chapter by Catherine Nolin that uses three excavations of mass graves conducted by the Fundación Forense de Guatemala as the center of an exploration of the structural, political, North-South, and deeply human dimensions of the memory-laden quests to unearth the truth or keep it buried, to find justice or elude it. A case study is found in following contribution, by Kalowatie Deonandan and Rebecca Tatham, which focuses on the murder case against the head of security of the Fénix nickel mine, who opened fire on protesters; he was acquitted but was sentenced in 2021, after the work was published—a testament to the power of the "transnational and local solidarities" that the piece explores.

The theme of impunity holds the central section of the book together; it aptly closes with a short piece by Claudia Paz y Paz, who, as attorney general, prosecuted former head of state Efraín Ríos Montt for genocide, only to see his historic 2013 conviction overturned. Mining is the section's opening subject, covered in excerpted opinion columns on the topic published between 2004 and 2013 in *Prensa Libre* by the environmental activist Magalí Rey Rosa. Excellent for classroom use, the piece provides a time-lapse view of grotesque injustices against people and their environment that highlights the "vast profits," "irreversible" human and environmental costs, and the "crisis of impunity" (116) within which the mining industry continues to operate despite decades of sustained protest. Impunity is the subject of the chapter by Helen Mack Chang, the internationally celebrated head of the Myrna Mack Foundation, named in honor of her sister, an anthropologist murdered by the state in 1990. She opens with a discussion of the illegal groups and clandestine security organizations (*cuerpos ilegales y aparatos clandestinos de seguridad*, or CIACs) that infiltrate the body politic. "Impunity has transcended civil society and threatens to install corruption as a widespread and accepted social practice," warns Mack, a founder of the Alianza contra la Impunidad, which works with other organizations to

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strengthen the justice system. Presciently, she writes of the government's desire to expel the UN-backed International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG), which occurred after publication in late 2019.

The "cultural responses to injustice" found in the concluding section are fascinating, and they offer an entry into the diverse human cries that emanate throughout society. The literary scholar Rita M. Palacios focuses on the performance art of Regina José Galindo and the poetry of Rosa Chávez, artists "whose work resists official and collective oblivion by simultaneously staging the unsayable and lend a body to the memory and the trauma of post-conflict Guatemala" (139). Stephen Henighan zooms in on the themes of human and environmental justice in the writings of Rodrigo Rey Rosa (son of the environmentalist Magalí), "the most widely read [yet understudied] novelist of contemporary Guatemala" (173), who lived in voluntary exile from the late 1970s until 1994. The close analysis of Rey Rosa's influences, transnational life, and writings situates the themes of human and environmental justice in prismatic contexts and articulations elegantly echoed in the closing essay by the geographer George Lovell, who romps through "Press Clippings: The Daily News in Guatemala," finding militarism and impunity for genocide, malnutrition, crime and drug traffic, and Canadian complicity in the obstacles that the mining sector presents to achieving any sort of human and/or environmental justice.

The editors' conclusion centers the music of the celebrated Maya musician Sara Curruchich Cúmez in a reprisal of problems that Guatemalans face "in the collapsible time frame" (246) of their history, and of the hope, creativity, and defiance with which they face those challenges. As the works reviewed here show, they have been driven by faith, love of land, and lifeways and battered by geopolitics and economic change. Studying that change, illuminating its multiple dimensions, putting diverse lines of scholarly inquiry in dialogue with one another, and forging ahead with new research remain critical priorities, and that project forms part of the uphill but very much ongoing and not unwinnable battle to forge a more just and human world.

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