

Texas presumably for bonds in 1837. In Chapter 3 we learn that bondholders had quite a bit of confidence in Santa Anna's centralist regimes when prices on the London market actually rose and how the U.S. indemnity went to pay creditors. Finally, everybody intervenes for one debt or another, Maximilian makes things much worse, and the whole shebang ultimately gets resolved during the Porfiriato.

Salvucci comes up with some startling and debatable conclusions in this book, and he knows it. For example, he believes that if the Bourbon fiscal system had stayed in place, Mexico could have easily covered its debt payments, but that fiscal federalism was fatal to Mexico's chances to repay. Certainly many historians, notably Jaime Rodríguez in his famous essay, "Down from Colonialism" (1983), would agree about late Bourbon rule. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine an independent state coupled with a colonial system of taxation. Part of the whole point of the independence struggles was the achievement of self-determination. Plus, the independence wars caused plenty of physical damage, not to mention a real crisis of legitimacy of the national state that still continues. Salvucci reminds us that the British loans basically guaranteed Mexican independence, but at what cost? What does independence mean when you "sell" 55% of your national territory only to give away much of the proceeds to foreign creditors? Of course, the worthless bonds hurt the Scottish widows and orphans who held them, but what about *Mexican* war widows and orphans left to fend for themselves? Further, it is a miracle that centralism was ever reestablished given the internal logic of a Mexican nation stretching from Chiapas to California. A centralist political system in the 1830s and 1840s would perhaps have furnished the government with sufficient revenue to pay the debt, but in fact it led to further and costly conflict. The subsequent loss of Texas and the war with the United States made it impossible after the early 1850s to repay without borrowing more, as the French Empire did. Only in the 1880s, when Mexico had to get access to new capital abroad to finance railroad construction was it able to settle its debts and make way for new ones. It is to Salvucci's credit that his conclusions lead to such fundamental questions about Mexican nationality and sovereignty. Now let's hope this book gets translated into Spanish and gets the debate really going.

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*Developing Zapatista Autonomy: Conflict and NGO Involvement in Rebel Chiapas.* By Niels Barmeyer. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. Pp. xxvi, 282. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Glossary. References. Index. \$29.95 paper.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) caught international attention when it rose up against the Mexican government on New Year's Day of 1994. This new kind of rebel movement sought not to win power but to democratize the country from below. Central to this goal has been the effort of indigenous peoples to resist neoliberal policies and create alternative forms of development that are decided through democratic debate. During the past 15 years, many scholars and journalists have debated the causes and consequences of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas. Niels Barmeyer's book is one of the first to examine changes at the community and regional level and adds valuable new perspec-

tives on the practical difficulties of building grassroots autonomy. While generally sympathetic to the Zapatistas' struggles to build such alternatives, Barmeyer also notes some problems that weakened the movement during the period from 1995 to 2001.

One of the strengths of this analysis is that it is drawn from fieldwork carried out in several communities. Some of these are older villages that were divided by political affiliation, while others are newer settlements located on lands recuperated after the uprising. In the latter case, communities tend to be more homogenous in their Zapatista affiliation and emerged somewhat stronger from the turmoil of the late 1990s, in comparison to the more divided villages which saw the loss of many members. Barmeyer cites the EZLN's failure to defend the villages against army offensives in February 1995, together with the policy of refusing any government projects after 1996 as the main reasons for this loss of support in the second half of the decade. The hardships of living without basic goods and services proved too much for many. However, as the author points out, political affiliations in Zapatista territory are rather fluid and reflect pragmatic considerations as well as longer-term commitments. The EZLN has therefore had to compete with the Mexican state in providing access to land, education, health care, and productive projects. In doing so, it has had to maintain its appeal among national and international NGOs, and it is the relationship between outside NGOs and members of the Zapatista communities that forms the core of Barmeyer's analysis.

As a participant in several NGO projects in Chiapas, the author is able to provide a first-hand account of local interactions between indigenous base supporters and the staff of NGOs. His personalized accounts of two indigenous leaders who found work with NGOs is illustrative of the kinds of problems that can arise unintentionally, the most worrying of which is the distancing between leaders and other community members. Although the Zapatistas have responded to such dilemmas by periodically reforming their own internal structures, Barmeyer sees the potential for clientelism to reappear in a fashion that is reminiscent of how the Mexican state implements its rural development projects. The key distinction in how Zapatista autonomy operates resides in the rotation of community and regional authorities, a practice designed to prevent the emergence of a new and permanent class of leaders.

This book offers many lessons. On the one hand, Barmeyer highlights the diversity of communities that participate in the Zapatista movement and gives due weight to their quite different local histories. On the other, it calls on NGOs to carefully examine the impact of their projects on communities that may already be divided. Rather than adding to conflictive tensions, Barmeyer believes that NGOs could potentially act as mediators of local disputes and help avoid their further escalation. As such, this book will be of interest to students, researchers, solidarity activists, and NGO workers who share with Barmeyer the hope of building more socially just and inclusive forms of development in Chiapas and beyond.

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