

studies as well. The Vargas regime has long fascinated historians of Brazil, and this book eloquently reveals how the corporatist project was embraced and internalized by selected Brazilian intellectuals. And while the dictatorship ultimately abandoned its advocates, science and biology were legitimized in the public mind. Yet the fact that this project was largely a product of an authoritarian political culture underlines the potential contradictions in utilizing science to legitimize “modernization.” This is important beyond Brazil, for an unstated contribution of the book is to reinforce that while other, more diabolical experiences in recent history have dominated the discussion of science and nation, even in a society like Brazil of the 1930s scientists’ narrow appreciation of the power of politics subjected them to influences that had little to do with science. Considering heated debates over global climate change today and disputes in Brazil over recent environmental legislation, the lesson still resonates.

ROBERT W. WILCOX, Northern Kentucky University

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Revolutionary Parks: Conservation, Social Justice, and Mexico’s National Parks, 1910–1940.

By EMILY WAKILD. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011. Illustrations. Map.

Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xiii, 235 pp. Paper, \$26.95.

Undoubtedly anyone who picks up Emily Wakild’s book will be totally ignorant of the fact that Mexico once experienced an extremely active period of national park creation. This is such a deeply hidden history that even Mexicans have forgotten about it. Such a lapse of memory is because the effervescence of creation lasted one administration, that of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40). What makes this episode worth rescuing from the dustbin of history is that, as Wakild convincingly argues, the creation of national parks was imbued with an ethic that integrated conservation and social justice into economic development. Local communities had real negotiating power in the process of establishing parks. Peasants, indigenous people, or campesinos (whichever concept is preferred to describe the sector involved) were agents with power in this instance. Wakild calls the process “democratic environmentalism” (p. 154), part of an ideology of “revolutionary conservation” (p. 22) espoused by Cárdenas, who did not see development and conservation as contradictory. A heavy dose of nationalism complemented the praxis: to love Mexico was to create patrimony, that is, to take care of its natural beauty because Mexicans ought to value and take pride in the nature that belongs to them and because every landscape provided ecological services to the nation. Implementation was difficult, as Wakild explains, because race and class prejudices were in play and definitions of conservation differed. The results of those battles were fascinating and, as Wakild suggests in her concluding chapter comparing parks in the United States and Mexico, both inspiring and cautionary.

The story of Mexico’s 40 national parks is illustrated by four paradigmatic parks in the Valley of Mexico: Lagunas de Zempoala, Popocatépetl-Iztaccíhuatl, La Malinche, and El Tepozteco. Wakild uses each one to analyze the major considerations of the

Cárdenas administration in matters of park creation: education, production, property rights, and tradition. Every park addressed those issues, but each case highlighted one best. Zempoala typified the state's efforts to educate the population about modern science and the value of outdoor recreation and physical activity for healthy childhood development. Simultaneously, the government responded to worries about loss of livelihoods by hiring locals to work in the park and permitting small-scale extraction. Thus Zempoala shows how the government appropriated nature for the postrevolutionary project of nation building, fashioning an interventionist state that included the classes that fought the Mexican Revolution (1910–20) and were supposed to benefit from it.

The Popocatepetl-Iztaccíhuatl chapter focuses on productivity. The volcanoes were a productive landscape, with a paper industry operating on site. Taking a “conciliatory” rather than “hegemonic” approach (p. 85), the Cárdenas administration negotiated the continuation of timber extraction but under heavy monitoring. As Wakild notes, it is not clear how effective the regulations were in slowing down deforestation, but there is no question that the park became wildly successful in creating patrimony, identifying Mexico with and as nature. The image of the twin volcanoes is ubiquitous not only in Mexico but also among Mexicans abroad, a powerful (albeit romanticized) symbol of Mexico's indigenous history and its natural beauty.

Malinche National Park demonstrates how sensitive the Mexican government was to questions of property rights. Local land claims were highly contentious in part because of deforestation. As much as professional foresters involved in the negotiations over park creation showed class and race biases against indigenous campesinos, Wakild proves that the latter dominated the debate. Thus communities within the intended protected area redrew park boundaries and maintained access to natural resources. Therein lay the idea behind democratic environmentalism: rooting rural people in the land and taking advantage of their knowledge to develop conservation plans that had greater chances of success in protecting the forest by providing a living for the peasantry.

Wakild uses the Tepoztlán case to show how tradition resulted in the bottom-up creation of a park. Calling this “community environmentalism,” Wakild documents how locals embraced the idea of being a “traditional” indigenous village to turn the entire municipality into a national park. Despite contention over charcoal production, the strong sense of place local people cultivated fueled their desire for such special designation. That status would allow them to protect the beauty of their location against outsiders and unfettered deforestation. It has indeed done that over the years as one of the most successful national parks to date.

The inspirational part of the story is the example that nature protection and development can be democratic undertakings and need not be exclusionary processes. The cautionary aspect of Mexico's history of park creation lies in the brevity of the experiment, testament to the difficulties inherent in all social justice projects. For those reasons alone, this book deserves wide readership.

MYRNA SANTIAGO, Saint Mary's College of California

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