

most sources that the oil companies tried to stop that change rather than foster it. Furthermore, the oil industry's actual impact on other Mexican sectors during the years at hand is unclear. Indeed, the industry seems to have operated as an enclave and to have affected the rest of the economy very little. Mexican governments, seeking to control and tax these firms, were far more concerned with protecting national resources and generating state revenues than with problems of social control raised by the industry's growth.

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The Maquiladora Revolution in Guatemala. By KURT PETERSEN. New Haven: Orville Schell Center for International Human Rights at Yale Law School, 1992. Graphs. Notes. Index. xvi, 244 pp. Paper. \$7.95.

Doing Business with the Dictators: A Political History of United Fruit in Guatemala, 1899–1944. By PAUL J. DOSAL. Wilmington: SR Books, 1993. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xi, 256 pp. Cloth. \$45.00.

Much of the extant literature on the tragedy that defines Guatemala is misleading. On the one hand, the Central Intelligence Agency–sponsored coup in 1954 that ended the revolution begun a decade earlier has attracted a disproportionate amount of attention to this period. On the other hand, the conflicts that spread across Central America during the 1970s and 1980s tended to obscure Guatemala's distinctiveness.

This generalization holds true especially for historians of U.S.–Guatemalan relations. Not only do we continue to focus on crises at the expense of long-term developments, but we remain wedded to a Washington-centric perspective. As a result, our examinations frequently rob Guatemalans of their historical agency. We should read both these books.

Paul Dosal's straightforward narrative about the United Fruit Company's Guatemalan venture provides missing pieces of the historical mosaic. Because UFCO records were inaccessible to researchers, previous chroniclers of the company's pivotal role before and during the revolutionary period relied on often dated and always suspect published accounts. By exploiting the Freedom of Information Act, Dosal pried out archives the Department of Justice had obtained when it sued UFCO in 1954 for antitrust violations.

These documents confirm what historians had inferred but UFCO had hotly denied: the company's incontestable control of the International Railway of Central America allowed UFCO to wield greater influence in Guatemala than in any other country. Dosal methodically details how and to what end UFCO acquired this monopoly, exposing the conventional list of culprits: Minor Keith, Samuel Zemurray, the Dulles brothers, and the rest. His fundamental argument, nevertheless, is that the most dastardly villains were the caudillos, most notably Manuel

Estrada Cabrera and Jorge Ubico, who betrayed indigenous “nationalists” and “democrats” by granting UFCO the means to stifle all competition and vestiges of economic independence. Dosal does not explain what motivated these “authoritarian and corrupt presidents,” but he makes clear that they—more than the officials of UFCO or the State Department—warrant condemnation.

Kurt Petersen reaches the same conclusion in his study of the maquila industry, a linchpin of Guatemala’s contemporary effort to overcome the legacy of the UFCO-caudillo collaboration. Having deemed futile any attempts at agrarian reform, the Christian Democrats who brought civilian government to Guatemala in the 1980s opted to pursue a development strategy that encouraged nontraditional exports. Of these, the fastest-growing maquila is the garment assembly industry. Armed with compelling statistics and personal testimony, Petersen shows the complicity of the Vinicio Cerezo and Jorge Serrano Elias administrations in fostering a socioeconomic environment that hardly improves on its predecessors. Maquila workers’ pay is abominable, and their working conditions are even worse.

Highly disparate in methodology and tone, these two works complement each other by clarifying the primary responsibility of successive Guatemalan governments for the deplorable state of the nation. Collectively, then, they provide hope that Ramiro de León Carpio can make a difference.

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The 1990 Elections in Nicaragua and Their Aftermath. Edited by VANESSA CASTRO and GARY PREVOST. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992. Tables. Notes. Appendixes. Bibliography. xiv, 240 pp. Cloth, \$55.00. Paper, \$24.50.

This book carefully examines the causes for the Sandinista defeat in the hard-fought 1990 Nicaraguan elections. Each of four authors uses a chapter to explore the complex reasons—including the U.S.-funded and directed Contra war and the U.S.-imposed economic embargo—for the electoral defeat of the incumbent government and the victory of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO). Also included is an adequate, though not extensive, discussion of such often-neglected factors as the horrendous economic conditions that resulted from the U.S.-backed military actions, the economic war, and the frequently ineffective way the Nicaraguan government managed the externally generated economic problems. The result is easily summarized in one phrase from the book: “In 1989 the salaried workers retained less than 10 percent of the real purchasing power they had in 1980” (p. 20). Little wonder that, according to post-election surveys, only 43.9 percent of the workers and employees voted the FSLN ticket.

In the lead chapter Paul Oquist, who oversaw much of the Sandinistas’ pre-election polling, finds that the most important factors in the FSLN defeat were the U.S. aggression, the new international climate that facilitated it, and the Sandi-