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Publisher: Routledge

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Paedagogica Historica

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cpdh20>

Hacer Escuela, Hacer Estado: La educación posrevolucionaria vista desde Tlaxcala

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Available online: 01 Jun 2011

To cite this article: Alan Shane Dillingham (2011): Hacer Escuela, Hacer Estado: La educación posrevolucionaria vista desde Tlaxcala, Paedagogica Historica, 47:3, 449-453

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2011.552262>

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the developments they report the authors assume the position of an undeclared standpoint, so that their text winds up being underdetermined with regard to knowledge gains that could have been made. This I think is unfortunate, in particular because there seems to be a good deal of fairly well-established historical and contemporary evidence concerning persistent issues in raising the quality and achievements of deaf education. If the core professions involved in Dutch deaf education today and yesterday are to be defined by their normalising intent, then they also deserve to be appraised against claims that were made, and continue to be made, in favour of educational objectives that almost never provide deaf people with an education that is equal to that of their hearing peers. Something useful might come out of better understanding the striking failures of deaf education would be my normative claim, such as a powerful critique of *orthopedagogiek*.

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DOI: 10.1080/00309230.2010.531530

Hacer Escuela, Hacer Estado: La educación posrevolucionaria vista desde Tlaxcala, by Elsie Rockwell, Zamora, El Colegio de Michoacán, 2007, 405 pp., \$176, ISBN: 978-970-679-237

From many, one: Indians, peasants, borders, and education in Callista Mexico, 1924–1935, by Andrae M. Marak, Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2009, 226 pp., CAD \$34.95 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1-55238-250-9

Two recent books take up the relationship between revolution and education reform in Mexico, addressing the potential for social change in educational centralisation projects at the beginning of the twentieth century. Elsie Rockwell's *Hacer Escuela, Hacer Estado* and Andrae Marak's *From many, one* constitute welcome contributions to a robust literature on education and state formation in Mexico. These two monographs focus on local experiences of reform, particularly among indigenous communities. Indigenous education, celebrated in Mexico as part of broader multicultural policies valorising indigenous language and knowledge, has nonetheless received insufficient scholarly attention from historians, making these books important additions to the literature.

An experienced and innovative scholar of Mexican education, Rockwell takes up revolutionary reform as it was carried out in Tlaxcala, a geographically small state in south central Mexico whose population consisted of a majority Nahuatl- and

Otomí-speaking peoples. Rockwell focuses on two major federal education programmes: the “Mexican new school” in the 1920s and socialist education, codified in the 1934 constitutional reform. In the process, she provides ample historical background, examining at length late nineteenth-century positivist education policy, as well as the Tlaxcaltecan social and political context.

She argues that primary school education was a key component of the centralisation of political power and the consolidation of a corporatist federal state in Mexico. Furthermore, and perhaps more provocatively, Rockwell argues that this process ultimately privileged urban politics, political parties and the emergent teachers’ unions to the detriment of rural and indigenous populations. At the same time, she tracks the contested and negotiated nature of this process, noting that actual classroom practice was mediated through a host of forces other than the centralising state. Rockwell recognises the contradictory nature of this process, in which communities could leverage educational reforms for their own interests, even as more conservative centralising forces eventually won out. While initial efforts at federalisation of education began in 1922, the author convincingly demonstrates that substantive federal control was only achieved in Tlaxcala in the early 1930s.

Rockwell pioneered what is now considered the post-revisionist school of Mexican historiography, which has questioned the power and homogeneity of the post-revolutionary state in favour of approaches that employ negotiation and hegemonic frameworks. For scholars of education, this has meant an emphasis on studying local educational experience and culture and how they interfaced with national projects of reform. Rockwell’s latest work can be seen as the culmination of this methodological approach, in which she details the various levels of mediation in educational reform, from policy-makers, normal schools and teachers’ own cultural traditions, to local communities themselves. Rockwell deftly examines how these distinct actors shaped the educational experience in Tlaxcala. Specifically, she argues that federal school inspectors, led by federal official Rafael Ramirez, were crucial to the success of these reforms. Rockwell notes that federal education officials, including Ramirez, opposed policies specifically targeted at indigenous populations in large part because they viewed US educational posture toward indigenous peoples as a system of “second class” education. In analysing how reform played out at the community level, the author shows how indigenous communities (often barrios on the outskirts of larger townships) actively petitioned for their own schools and federal teachers to achieve more political and social autonomy from municipal authorities, demonstrating how education was inextricably linked to state formation.

One of her more compelling treatments of the educational experience is found in Chapter 7, “Cultura: Nuevos sentidos de la experiencia escolar”, in which she traces how the social significance and perceived value of education changed over time. She does this by detailing the evolution of the classroom experience. Initially, for many rural Tlaxcalans, school was significant as a place less of learning to read and write but more so for its focus on job skills (the Ministry of Education [SEP in its Spanish initials] sometimes distributed more agricultural implements than pedagogic materials), and music instruction, particularly important for indigenous communities. As communities became more integrated into the state (along with broader economic development), reading and writing took on a new significance, as tools for both community and individual achievement.

Rockwell effectively opted for a thematic rather than chronological organisation of her chapters. While this organisation is clearly the correct choice, allowing her to

follow the various levels of mediation, it does lead to some topical overlap in the chapters. Clearly the product of a long-term project, Rockwell has conducted extensive archival research, in both national and state repositories, as well as oral histories of retired education workers in Tlaxcala. At her best Rockwell succeeds in her cultural history approach, yet the vast amount of data collected can at times read as an institutional history, charting the various legal and structural changes in the education system. Her ability to comb through extensive archival material and produce a compelling narrative is one of the great strengths of the text.

Overall, Rockwell's impressive research and argumentation add weight to her nuanced conclusions: namely that educational centralisation was a key component of state formation; that the process, while contested and diverse, involved coercion and violence; and that, ultimately, the central state's aims often trumped more popular impulses. Further, indigenous communities, while rhetorically and aesthetically celebrated by the revolution, continued to face discrimination and racism within the educational reforms, though at times they could use the system for their own ends. These arguments further our understanding of the diverse experience of educational centralisation while integrating them into a national history.

Andrae Marak takes up similar issues in a different context on the northern border amongst indigenous groups in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Marak focuses on the period from 1924 to 1935, examining the federalisation of state primary schools, the experience of special frontier schools, and specific policies toward the Tarahumara (today self-identified as Rarámuri), the Seri and Tohono O'odham peoples, tracking how centralisation played out in these distinct contexts. The state of Sonora was the home of a particularly strong political dynasty centred on president Plutarco Elias Calles (1924–1928) and, compared with states such as Tlaxacala in southern Mexico, had a more advanced economy and a relatively larger state education budget.

The author argues that President Calles's nation-building along the northern border focused on incorporating so-called barbaric groups and defining Mexico against its northern neighbour, the United States. As such, Marak notes that Calles oversaw the reorganisation of the Ministry of Education and extended its reach throughout the republic. Marak motivates his subject by correctly noting that the political structures later used by president Lazaro Cárdenas (1934–1940) to create the corporatist state were initially set up by Calles. In addition, the author argues that Calles's personal investment in the role of education to facilitate modernisation is crucial to understanding the transformation and expansion of the SEP.

Rather than a pursuing a single central argument, *From many, one*, consists of standalone chapters focused on the experiences of distinct educational initiatives, many of them targeting specific indigenous groups. For example, Marak uses the case of the Tohono O'odham to argue that indigenous groups used the border as a tool to make claims on the US government as well as the Mexican Ministry of Education. In another chapter, the author focuses on frontier schools, a handful of which were set up along the border in an attempt to compete with and attract Mexican students away from schools in neighbouring US border towns. In the case of the Seri, a numerically small indigenous group on the Sonoran coast (at the time estimated at approximately 200 people), Marak argues that federal education policy more closely resembled the US's Bureau of Indian Affairs approach, that is, of segregating indigenous peoples from the rest of society for their own protection. Marak notes that this ran counter to the general trend of Mexican indigenous policy at the time, which viewed the integration and assimilation of indigenous populations as key to Mexico's development. This

exception to broader integrationist policies can in part be attributed to demographics; in regions where indigenous populations made up a smaller percentage of the overall population, education officials deemed it expedient to develop specialised policies of containment.

One interesting parallel in Rockwell and Marak is that both demonstrate that one of the most controversial aspects of the federalisation of schools was not only the severe anti-clericalism promoted under Calles as well as Cárdenas, but in particular the creation of mixed or coeducational classrooms. Communities which either had no previous school experience or were accustomed to nineteenth-century gender-segregated schools often resisted the comingling of boys and girls. Particularly in the case of young girls, the coeducational classroom threatened the longstanding gender norms of indigenous communities.

While Marak's training is in an interdisciplinary programme, *From many, one* is squarely a work of history, employing archival records from the education ministry, the personal papers of president Calles, Protestant missionary reports from the era, as well as both contemporary and more current anthropological writings on the various indigenous populations. From these sources Marak develops case studies of the varied experiences of educational centralisation, yet the cases themselves could have been more effectively tied together with a strong central argument. While the author, as do many in the field of Mexican education history, notes that education was a crucial part of a hegemonic state-making project, this thesis fails to unite the various chapters.

Further, at times the arguments in the chapters themselves are underdeveloped. For example, in discussing the frontier schools, Marak argues that they were crucial in defining Mexico against its northern neighbour, but it remains unclear how or whether these schools were significantly different from the broader thrust of education policy that similarly stressed nationalist politics. The evidence provided in the chapter demonstrates that, to large degree, the frontier schools were a failure, with few schools actually started and those that were often unable to attract students away from the US schools. This raises the question: How much analytical yield do we get from studying such an experience?

In addition, while this book examines border populations, it would be greatly improved had we been given a fuller sense of what was going on the opposite side of the border. This dynamic is most developed in the chapter on the Tohono O'odham, the majority of whose population resided on the US side. Yet the author provides only glimpses of this experience. In this way, *From many, one* hints at some of the exciting new transnational approaches in the field of history but does not consistently pursue this course.

Finally, in a work that specifically focuses on northern Mexico's indigenous populations, it seems that a more thorough discussion of the Yaquis is in order. Despite passing references, Marak does not elaborate on the largest indigenous group in the state of Sonora, which received a great deal of attention from the federal government at the turn of the century, most famously in violent military campaigns against them, and with whom President Calles had at best an ambivalent relationship. How does the experience of the Yaquis relate to the indigenous groups examined by Marak? For example, the federal government's posture toward the Seri might be more comprehensible when viewed alongside the experience of the Yaqui, who themselves suffered from a policy that alternated between isolation, removal and extermination. This type of comparison would make the presented case studies more compelling.

Despite these qualifications these titles are a welcome addition to the scholarship on education in Mexico and are important in that they uncover the educational experience of native peoples in the post-revolutionary period. These histories of past interactions between indigenous peoples and education reform are informed by new concerns over indigenous cultural knowledge and language rights.

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 DOI: 10.1080/00309230.2011.552262

Models of charitable care: Catholic nuns and children in their care in Amsterdam, 1852–2002, by Annelies van Heijst, Brill’s Series in Church History, Vol. 33, Religious History and Culture Series, Vol. 1, Boston, Brill, 2008, 414 pp., US\$148.00 (hardback), ISBN: 987-90-04-16833-6

Sometimes the impact of research and books changes rapidly over time. This is the case with *Models of charitable care* by Annelies van Heijst. The book is a revised translation of her ‘*Liefdewerk*’, published in 2002 in the Netherlands, subtitled ‘*A reassessment of caritas by the Poor Sisters of the Divine Child since 1852*’. As historical research on the lives of nuns and pupils in charitable institutions is only limited, this piece of historiography, combined with a thorough theoretical evaluation of charitable works by nuns, makes this book important for historians of education. Recent public debates, based on contemporary testimonies of pupils taken into “care” by Catholics in the recent past, put this research in a new perspective. Though the Dutch commotion concerning the many former pupils of Catholic boarding schools who claim to be sexually harassed by male catholic clergy does not go as far back in time as Van Heijst does in her research, it triggers the same question. How can a historical assessment be made of a caring or educational relationship between religious inspired and institutionalised individuals such as brothers and nuns on the one hand and their pupils on the other, balancing both the empowering and overpowering aspects of this type of relationship? In other words: is it possible to make a reliable historical re-evaluation without a perspective of power that frames the educational ambitions of educators and care-takers?

Central to this historiography on the work of the Poor Sisters of the Divine Child is the question “how to *interpret and value* the charitable care of Catholic sister congregations” (p. 1, italics in original). In order to answer this question Van Heijst does not simply tell the chronological story of the charitable work of her congregation, but arranges her historiography along theoretical lines involved in different “models of charitable care”. In the end, Van Heijst introduces her own model of charitable care which is based on a “three-polar dynamic”, evaluating care not only in its productive and repressive aspect, but also in its religious inspired “*generous interaction*” (p. 384). The author claims to establish the “theological notions [which] played a role *in* this specific care practice” (p. 25). She uses historical sources from the archive of the Sisters as well as other sources. In fact, a booklet published in 1994 by a Dutch journalist, depicting the story of his mother who was once a girl taken into care by these nuns, sets off her historical analysis. In contrast to his negative evaluation of the care