

Julio Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home! Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

For nearly a century, historians of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 have concentrated their attention on the peasant insurgency led by Emiliano Zapata and Francisco “Pancho” Villa. Romanticized notions of the Mexican peasantry contributed to the fascination for North American scholars, and the complexity of factional struggles and the convoluted periodization of reform gave ample material for academic debate. Mexican politicians have likewise fixated on agrarian revolution, either crafting policies to control peasant movements or protesting the failure of the resulting land distributions. Yet the Zapatista movement in Chiapas notwithstanding, the defeat of the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, in the 1994 presidential campaign owed more to his rural focus, in a country that is now over 70 percent urban, than to vote fraud by the ruling Party of the Institutional Revolution – although the same cannot be said of the 1988 race. Scholars have finally taken notice of this changing social reality, and in the last decade a flourishing historiography of urban revolution has thrown new light on the development of modern Mexico. *Yankee Don't Go Home!*, by Julio Moreno, offers an important contribution to this literature by examining how urban Mexicans sought to reconcile the ideals of social revolution with North American business practices and consumerism.

The Mexican Constitution of 1917 enshrined the promise of a revolutionary society, but reformers battled for another two decades to implement land distribution, workplace benefits, universal schooling, and moral improvement – never mind the original calls for democracy. As historians have recently shown, many of the conflicts that raged through the countryside in the 1930s actually began with urban revolutionary experiments in the 1920s. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri pioneered this field of study with *La experiencia olvidada: El Ayuntamiento de México: política y gobierno, 1876-1912* (1996). This timely and important book, published on the eve of Mexico City's first local election in over 70 years, examines the downfall of the city council under the dictator Porfirio Díaz and its brief revival in the early days of the revolution. Meanwhile, a complementary pair of urban and labor histories, John Lear's *Workers, Neighbors, and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City* (2001) and Andrew Grant Wood's *Revolution in the Street: Women, Workers, and Urban Protest in Veracruz, 1870-1927* (2001), insightfully analyze popular mobilization through food riots and rent strikes in the absence of democratic institutions.

This new revolutionary history has pursued a diverse range of topics, all sharing a common emphasis on the shifting boundaries of citizenship as politi-

cians claiming to represent the “revolution” confronted a population that had grown militant through the experience of armed conflict. Katherine Elaine Bliss’s *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (2001), which looks at moral reform campaigns directed against a vice associated with Porfirian decadence, is valuable both for its gendered analysis of revolutionary politics and for the agency it allows to some of the most disadvantaged women in Mexican society. Another important book, Patience A. Schell’s *Church and State Education in Revolutionary Mexico City* (2003), examines the complex negotiations between anticlerical revolutionaries and the Catholic Church in their collaborative efforts to moralize the Mexican working classes. Finally, Enrique C. Ochoa’s *Feeding Mexico: The Politics of Food since 1910* (2000) describes how the threat of worker unrest stimulated the creation of a welfare bureaucracy to subsidize urban food supplies. This program became one of the leading bulwarks of the ruling party, but it served primarily the needs of industrialization rather than improving popular nutrition. Thus, even agrarian policies were usually influenced by the revolutionary party’s primary goal of creating a modern, industrial nation.

Julio Moreno argues that by the 1940s Mexicans had come to welcome North American business, but only so long as it respected their revolutionary and nationalist traditions. According to Moreno, the corporation that adapted best to Mexican conditions was Sears Roebuck. In contrast to Porfirian-era department stores, El Palacio de Hierro and El Puerto de Liverpool, which sold exclusive European goods to an upper-class clientele, Sears sought to democratize consumption by pitching its merchandise to the middle classes and by offering credit, a novel practice in Mexico. The US retailer also implemented a profit-sharing plan and promoted Mexican workers to management positions, while carefully ascribing these progressive labor practices to Mexican revolutionary traditions. On the eve of its grand opening, local managers even invited the Archbishop of Mexico City to perform a highly publicized religious procession through the store. When the doors finally opened, in February 1947, more than 100 000 customers flooded the store over three riotous days. “Employees panicked ‘as a sea of hands thrust pesos toward them, into their pockets, into their blouses, anywhere – just to complete a purchase. Shopping crazed crowds anxiously screamed, ‘Let us in! Let us in!’ ” (1). The euphoria soon passed, particularly after Mexico adopted prohibitive tariffs on 80 percent of the company’s goods, both to bolster the declining peso and to stimulate domestic manufacturing. Sears established a network of local suppliers, but it never completely adjusted to the lower purchasing power of the Mexican middle classes compared to their North American counterparts.

The success of Sears contrasted with the disastrous early attempts by the prestigious J. Walter Thompson advertising agency to export North American

promotional methods to Mexico. The company confronted stiff competition from Mexican advertisers, most notably, Juanita Guerra Rangel, who had started as a secretary in the Nestlé corporation's sales division in 1931 and went on to become president of the national advertising association. Indeed, when the Thompson agency opened its Mexico City office, it hired two of the top local executives to ensure the success of the venture. Nevertheless, the multinational firm made little use of its employees' local knowledge and instead emphasized a scientific approach based on opinion surveys. As a result, the company made embarrassing mistakes in its early campaigns; a radio spot for Carnation milk featured the words "a satisfied cow" followed by a bull's "moo", which Mexicans interpreted as a hilarious sexual innuendo. Thompson recovered from such early disasters only by reorganizing the office to make better use of local talent.

Moreno concludes that Mexican advertising

promoted American industrial capitalism and lifestyle while celebrating anti-American nationalism. It championed pre-revolutionary liberal ideals while proudly celebrating Mexico's socialist and revolutionary traditions. Advertising glorified Mexico's indigenous past as well as current folk traditions at the same time that it encouraged Mexicans to move away from rural areas. It reinforced traditional views by showing women how to be obedient daughters and wives while teaching them how to be popular, how to attain beauty, and how to conquer men (112-13).

In short, Mexican and North American advertisers alike promised that all problems could be solved with enough consumer goods, although consumerism dictated that one could never buy enough.

Even this fantasy world of consumption was closed to most Mexicans. Moreno offers tantalizing glimpses of how little advertisers actually understood working-class life. Rather than risk entering crowded Mexico City tenements, Thompson employees conducted their surveys of radio listening habits by copying down whatever they heard from the streets. They did not even try to gauge the attitudes of rural workers, and simply concluded that advertisements would be transmitted to poor *campesinos* from wealthy landowners who did have access to mass media.

Although the middle class forms the subject of this work, any study of Mexican consumer culture in the 1940s must acknowledge that this was the decade when the government renounced President Lázaro Cárdenas's Keynesian approach of stimulating development by increasing the purchasing power of all citizens. In its place, technocrats designed trickle-down industri-

alization policies to concentrate capital in the hands of the wealthy. Corrupt union bosses and agrarian bureaucrats conspired with industrialists and agribusiness to produce stagnant wages for at least two generations of Mexican workers. Needless to say, foregoing domestic consumption led not to the growth of an efficient manufacturing sector but rather to a sclerotic economy incapable of competing for export markets, thus setting the stage for another encounter with North American business culture under NAFTA.

In light of this experience, Moreno's use of the term "social democracy" to describe the corporatist Mexican state seems inappropriate. The Institutional Revolutionary Party did not "buy" social peace through Nordic wages and welfare, as Enrique Ochoa's study of food policy clearly shows. Whatever carrot the government offered through subsidized maize was backed up repeatedly by the stick of repression – the 1952 election campaign of Miguel Henríquez Guzmán, the railroad workers' strike of 1959, the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, and the "dirty war" of the 1970s, the full brutality of which is only now coming to light.

These reservations notwithstanding, Julio Moreno has provided a thoughtful and nuanced account of middle-class business and consumer culture in Mexico during the first half of the century. *Yankee Don't Go Home!* will become an essential starting point for future studies of Mexico's encounter with globalization.

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Alfred Yee, *Shopping at Giant Foods: Chinese American Supermarkets in Northern California* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

From the 1930s through the 1970s, supermarkets owned by Chinese Americans outside of Chinatowns catering to non-Chinese clientele featuring mainstream products and services, dominated the grocery business in North California. Especially during the first three decades when these businesses required little technical knowledge and initial capital, Chinese-American owners edged out other competitors with cheaper prices by employing family members, relatives, and sponsoring recent immigrants from their own villages in China who, as a result of personal ties and lack of better employment alternatives, worked long hours for low wages. The secret to success was the system of "paternalism" from the "old world," "combined with ethnic solidarity and good timing" (132-3). Ironically, beginning in the mid-1950s, these supermarkets' success contained seeds of their undoing. The pool of cheap labour gradually disappeared as labour unions monitored the stores' practices and demanded that employees