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The Struggle for Indigenous Rights in Latin America. Nancy Grey Postero and Leon Zamosc, editors. Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2004. VIII + 250 pp. Paperback \$27.50.

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This volume is the outcome of a research seminar at the University of California, San Diego, and a conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2003, where the editors met Latin Americans who “brought an insider’s perspective to the discussions” (vii), though unfortunately none of the insiders seem to have contributed an essay to the book. The eight chapters include an introductory essay (Postero and Zamosc, anthropologist and sociologist respectively); a concluding essay (J. Warren, Director, Latin American Studies, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington); and six essays on indigenous movements in Mexico (G. Dietz, anthropologist); Guatemala (E. Fischer, anthropologist); Colombia (T. Rathgeber, political scientist); Ecuador (Zamosc); Peru (M. E. Garcia and J. A. Lucero, anthropologist and political scientist respectively); and Bolivia (Postero). The coverage is excellent, though criteria for inclusion are never stated, leaving open the question of whether inclusion was an accident of who attended what meeting.

Each of the country chapters more or less follows a similar format: a summary of the history of ethnic, and sometimes class, relations and indigenous movements of the country being discussed, the current state of affairs, the structure and policies of the movements, governments and other entities, and the role of contemporary neo-liberal policies in relation to indigenous movements. Each also deals with the double helix of class and ethnicity. Each author raises interesting points, and, to varying degrees, deals with central issues raised in the introduction. The authors usually make an attempt to figure out what the future may bring, most ending on a pessimistic (or realistic?) note. Most chapters run to about 25 pages, and most have a helpful bibliography.

Into the 1950s the debate was whether and/or how “Indians” (in this volume “indigenous” is generally preferred) could be assimilated to the modern nation-state. Assimilation (indigenista) policy now seems almost as dead as acculturation studies in anthropology. After the 1950s, liberal and Marxist-inspired writers dominated the discussion, favoring social class analysis over ethnicity and regarding ethnic (and religious) differences as epiphenomenal and/or elite-manipulated phenomena designed to fragment worker solidarity. In this sense, indigenous people as such could not be in the forefront of collective movements to change prevailing distributions of inequality, power and civic inclusion in their countries of origin. Recently, as socialism (if not socialist theory) seems to wither away, indigenous groups are forcing scholars and others to recognize that they are “important social actors in the struggles over the future of Latin American democracies” (Postero and Zamosc, p.1). The “Indian Question” is on the agenda throughout Latin America, indigenous populations have gained socio-political space, had some victories and lost many battles and, above all, have made it clear that they intend to actively push their diverse agenda despite obstacles and opposition.

In this context, the editors pose critical questions, among which are: How did marginalized, impoverished indigenous groups manage to mobilize to articulate their demands? How did the movements become powerful from about the 1970s and 1980s on? What are the (temporary, one supposes) outcomes and prospects for indigenous movements in Latin America? How will they affect democratization and implementation of current neo-liberal policies? What do indigenous peoples want? What rights should they have as citizens of democratic nations? Are group rights and entitlements compatible with modern concepts of democracy? (“Group” may not be the right word, because some of the authors too easily slide back and forth between ethnic *categories* and social *groups*.) How are indigenous movements related to class-based popular movements? Who sets the agenda for the indigenous movements and how? Do Indian leaders, armed groups, or political parties working through the electoral process set the agenda? Through what combination of direct action, open conflict and/or elections are agendas set?

Postero and Zamosc’s framework for dealing with these questions is tentative because of the diversity in Latin America. In a general way, they argue that modern indigenous social movements were triggered largely by wide-spread democratic liberalization, organized opposition to neo-liberal reforms, the end of corporatist and assimilation/acculturation models of relations between Indians and the state, and a growing NGO (non-

governmental organization) movement that created links between local and transnational groups. Postero and Zamosc also argue that "Ultimately, it is at the level of the nation-state where movements wage their principle struggles" (p. 3) if for no other reason than that the state plays a powerful role in shaping the outcome of popular movements.

As may be expected, what indigenous peoples want, how they get it, etc., varies with national differences in histories of military conquest and ethnic stratification, land and labor policies, demography, geography, political games at regional, national and international levels, and, of course, diversity among indigenous cultures.

Despite the diversity, some generalizations and hypotheses are possible. For example, most Latin American countries recently have turned to neo-liberal policies the cost of which falls most heavily on indigenous, popular and lower class groups. By and large, there also seems to be an inverse relationship between the size of the indigenous population, where they live and what they want. Thus, lowland groups, generally few in number, are more likely to demand geo-political-cultural autonomy than more numerous highland groups. Where the "Indians" are a majority, as in Guatemala and Bolivia, they demand to be counted as participating citizens equal to other citizens in democratic polities, even if they also demand some sort of special recognition, under such terms as multiculturalism, multiethnic state, etc.. The tension between modern democracy (based on concepts of the *individual* as citizen) and identity politics (often based on ideas about collective rights) may help keep the political pot boiling.

Postero and Zamosc point out that indigenous people (or they could have said, any subalterns) cannot participate fully in the political process, whether as citizens in the Enlightenment sense or as "Indians," unless governments invest in social overhead and human capital. Without a certain level of social and economic development, constitutional democracies may exist only in theory and not in ordinary practice.

Dietz deals with the ethnic or identity politics and the emergence of national ethnic organizations and their links to democratization. Despite past attempts, Indians have not acculturated (to use older jargon) and have not become part of a homogenous mestizo nation. Current neo-liberal policies also have failed, and opposition to them has created here as elsewhere spaces for new ethnic actors, including the EZLN in Chiapas. Indian intellectuals, turning from unions, co-ops, political parties, and peasant organizations, are returning to their communities to engage in what sounds like a self-help community development movement. Though this localism impedes formation of ethno-regional movements, some groups have organized themselves into a "people" ("nación"), e.g., Nación Purepecha in Michoacán. In the process, indigenous groups no longer wait for government patronage but forcefully articulate their demands before the government as active citizens of Mexico and create new levels of articulation, (see diagrams on p. 64; for some reason the labels have not been translated into English). In short, the "Indians" of Mexico are becoming self-determining, re-ethnicizing identity, and creating new intermediate levels of articulation, which Dietz describes under the rubric of ethnogenesis, cultural hybridity, and regionalism. All this tends to open formerly isolated, closed communities. What Indigenistas could not do, these new movements are doing--bringing Indians into Mexican society as citizens of a multi-ethnic country. Dietz makes special mention of the Purepecha movement (where his heart seems to be), contrasting it to Chiapas, Oaxaca, Vera Cruz and Guerrero.

Fischer (Guatemala) deals largely with post-war events, an internal war lasting from about 1960 to 1996 (and not really finished) in which Maya people were the main victims. The social organization of contemporary Maya movements is bewilderingly complex, and unlike for example Bolivia and Ecuador, Guatemala Maya leaders are often out of touch with and unable to mobilize the Maya grassroots. Of course the movements do share some things in common, including a tendency to begin organizing with a stress on language, a rejection of the racist right-wing and also of insurgents who tended to subordinate identity to class. Fischer concludes with a call for a Foucauldian approach to power, and, more interestingly, notes that being labeled "victim" may gain Maya international sympathy and support but to the extent that Maya buy into the label, it can be self-crippling. Of course Maya peoples have been victims, but they are much more than that, and they have their own self-created goals and sources of power. Fischer also notes that because they are so diverse at all levels (there is no "the Maya"), indigenous Guatemalans may fail to create a pan-Maya movement and thus dilute their political strength, but the "Indian question" will not go away. .

Rathgeber (Colombia) notes that indigenous struggles in Colombia are important not only for their (partial) success but also because they "pioneered the continent-wide trend in indigenous organization." (p. 105) continuing a resistance that began in the colonial period, though the recent movement began in the 1970s. A remarkable achievement given that the indigenous peoples of the country speak some 64 languages and, aside from those in cities, is only three percent of the total population. One strategy for success (often in law rather than in practice) has been forming alliances with peasants, to further distinctively Indians goals (e.g., authority over ancestral lands). Rathgeber illustrates how a wide range of factors, including left- and right-wing battering of

Indians and peasants, play out by means of three case studies: U/wa who try to defend ancestral lands through courts and support from the working classes; Embera-Katío who defend their lands by appeals to courts and reliance on international support networks; and Puracé who assumed ownership of a bankrupt mining company and allied themselves with the workers. Puracé are the most successful, perhaps because they adopted modern business organizational forms for the sake of older goals and identities whatever the exact nature of their identity (Rathgeber, like the other authors, says much more about the politics of indigenous struggles than about the meaning of Indian identity to the Indians themselves). Finally, sounding one of the themes of the book, Rathgeber recommends that social scientists fret less about whether indigenous struggles for autonomy (or what some may regard as ethnic nationalism) is a “deviation from the class struggle” (p. 128) and do more to align their theories with reality on the ground and think anew about indigenous and class struggles.

Zamosc (Ecuador, where Indians are 10 percent of the population) describes a movement that has translated influence into real political power. Zamosc, following the general scheme mentioned previously (history, current situation, etc.), is clearer than the others about who gains and loses from neo-liberal policy and how it affects national political alliances (or maybe the situation in Ecuador is easier to see). Whatever its virtues, the implementation of neo-liberal policy has intensified political instability, thus inhibiting the very reforms it seeks. Indigenous groups, with past experience in organizational mobilization, have led popular opposition to neo-liberal reform drives, thereby locating their own identity issues within a broader social, political and class context. However, Indians do not want to be subsumed under other headings, and in an on-going crisis of legitimacy and representation, the indigenous movement formed its own political party, Pachakutik, which via the electoral turned the movement’s influence into power. Naturally enough, Pachakutik leaders with power *in* government may be co-opted and lose influence *with* the base (the political fortunes of indigenous leaders and organizations rise and fall). Zamosc leaves unexplained why peasants have not learned to use indigenous tactics, and he leaves one wondering why the deep poverty and profoundly destabilizing perceptions of injustice (both so sharpened by neo-liberal reform) have not led to much more social unrest and violent protest in Ecuador.

Lucero and Garcia (Perú) describe indigenous movements in, paradoxically, a “country without Indians” (p. 158). For complex reasons, including acculturation programs, submergence of ethnic into class conflict (1970s), and government equating terrorism with Andean indigenous communities (1980-90s), “Indians” were mainly in the sparsely populated lowland forests; highland “Indians” were defined as peasant citizens. More recently, opposition to neo-liberal policies, the ILO’s famous article 169 (1989), and urban intellectuals dreaming about pan-Indian movements (though they hardly represent the Indian masses), among other things, put the “Indian Question” squarely onto President Toledo’s agenda. Here, as elsewhere, a paternalistic regime threatens to co-opt indigenous leadership and thus inhibit indigenous movements. The really interesting aspect of the situation is that Highland Indians are an ethnic *group*, even if not exactly a self-conscious ethnic *category*. I am reminded of some subsistence farmers in western Panamá who define themselves as *campesinos* (peasants) to distinguish themselves from Ngöbe indigenous people who only recently have formed themselves into cross-hamlet *groups*. Since Peruvian Highlanders have not identified themselves by familiar ethnic categories, observers cannot find “Indians” in the highlands. While this essay may not completely answer questions about why people accept or reject an ethnic identity, it certainly challenges social scientists to reexamine their approaches to the subtleties of correspondences between the symbolism of ethnic categories and on-the-ground ethnic groups engaged in social and political action.

Postero (Bolivia) describes “articulations and fragmentations” (p. 189) in the indigenous politics, noting that Bolivian Quechua (unlike Aymara) retain traditions of collective land ownership and other (undefined) customs, and rejected inclusion in class-based organizations. If this rejection further marginalized them, it also contributed to the creation of the Katarista Indian movement, part of the alliance that took control of the government in 1993. Now, the state could create a type of democracy that embraces ethnicity (and attracts the ethnic tourist market), and gives the state legitimacy. At the same time, the neo-liberal state lumped Indians with poor peasants who were to be incorporated into a modern labor force, and this broke the alliance between Indians and government. In somewhat similar terms, modern [neo]liberal democratic ideologies challenge indigenous concepts of collective land-ownership. Government did enhance Indian political power at the municipal level, but this can fragment ethnic unity at regional and national levels. Yet, Aymara, Quechua and lowland Indians have been able to unite to mount protests to a government that became increasingly non-responsive. In alliance with NGOs, political parties and the lower classes, the Indians have become citizens of the state (articulation), but democratic and other processes also threaten to divide them (fragmentation). Postero finds the Bolivian situation less bleak than in other countries. Here, intentional human action may create a multi-cultural society from the bottom up (rather than multiculturalism imposed by the state) and create concepts of citizenship that go beyond “identity politics” and help satisfy the legitimate demands of indigenous and class groups. The right structural possibilities are in place; now it is up to Bolivians the wise use of them.

Warren's concluding discussion deals with Lula's victory in Brazil, indigenous movements in Latin America, and socialist nostalgia for the good old days of "class reductive, state-centric and elitist (if not authoritarian)" analysis (p. 221). Because the old-style left sees socialism as the sole alternative to individualist market capitalism, it regards ethnic or identity politics as a divisive myth. Or, from another left angle, just because the Spanish invented the category "Indian" and fragmented conquered polities into parochial communities does not for a minute detract from the contemporary reality, even primacy, of communal, ethnic (and religious) identity. Warren rightly insists that in Latin America racism is "foundational" (p. 223), and class inequality rests on ethnic subordination. Thus, in his view, ethnic mobilization as in Guatemala or Bolivia can be progressive and "liberatory" (p. 225), or can increase the number of people who declare themselves "Indian" as in Brazil. Today ethnic groups have chosen democracy and opposed the negative consequences of neo-liberalism. Warren does not argue that Indian movements are a panacea for all ills, but rather that "if we are to realize more democratic, less violent, and more prosperous societies" (p. 230), then the racial foundations of Latin American (or other) countries must be acknowledged and confronted. Even if Lula's victory revives socialist nostalgia, the left would do better to stop "mourning the death of its [Marxist socialist] god" and join the effort to create a new meta-narrative where race and class intersect and to help create a "just hemisphere for which we all struggle" (p. 230). This is an appropriately powerful conclusion to the volume.

Almost inevitably in a collection of this type, the most interesting chapters deal with countries least known to the reader. The more one knows, the more an author seems to leave out or oversimplify. But this can become a quibble, for each chapter is densely packed and neatly summarizes complex events in the respective countries. One might wish that more had been said about gender relations and the increasingly thorny relations between conservation NGOs and indigenous people, but that would have lengthened the book, and nowadays it is difficult to publish anything over 250 pages. More critical is that the authors look at indigenous struggles from the outside in, rather than from the inside, even in chapters by anthropologists. Nonetheless, anyone--and that includes specialists as well as general readers--who wants a solid, readable and challenging overview of the Latin American "Indian question" in all its complexity will be well-served by this book. It certainly should be assigned reading for college students.