and linguistic references. A criticism must be made, however, of the unfortunate editorial decision to use modern-day US expressions such as 'mom', and 'cute', which jar in 19th-century Latin American narrative fiction.

Iona Macintyre

references

Chambers, S.C. (1999) *From Subject to Citizens: Honour, Gender and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780–1854*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University (1999).

doi:10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400209

Church and state education in revolutionary Mexico City

Patience A. Schell; University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ, 2003, £29.30, Hbk
ISBN 0-816-52198-0

Many people wanted to change the world in 1920s post-revolutionary Mexico. Supporters and opponents of the Revolution alike held up visions of an ideal nation and set about earnestly to create it. Both saw education as the lever to move the mountain. What is new and important about this book is that it is the first to take on the task of examining three complicating issues to understanding early post-revolutionary education in Mexico. First, how divergent were the educational methods and goals of ostensibly opposing church and state political camps? Second, how much of what was printed in the official curricula of either was implemented in the classroom? Third, given that the overwhelming majority of teachers, volunteers, and (at least among adults) the students, were female, what was the role of gender?

In order to answer these questions, Schell examines the federal state schools but she also looks at municipal and, importantly, Catholic education. She contrasts their curricula and goes on to distinguish between these printed blueprints and what was really going on in the classroom. She examines primary education, but also vocational and adult schools, and extra-curricular educational initiatives sponsored both by the government and the Catholic Church. Finally, she never assumes that a single standard was applied to both sexes, whether they were teachers, children or adult learners. The study is necessarily limited, covering only the first decade after the Revolution and the capital city. Even so, it is the only work of its kind and as such is extremely useful to anyone interested in post-revolutionary Mexico, issues relating to state-building, church–state relations, or Latin American women's history.

Chapter One gives a quick tour of the relevant historical background. The revolutionary goal of using education to achieve a patriotic, industrious, hygienic

and healthy population was in fact drawn from the model developed in the previous century. Education had been and continued to be a tool in the hands of the federal government to reduce the power both of the church and local leaders. The first chapter also traces the development, in the first years of the 20th century, of Catholic social (and political) action which, from the start, was dependent on women. Political Catholics, like members of the secular revolutionary movement, demanded effective suffrage, labour reform and social justice. It was not until the 1917 constitution was drafted that anticlericalism became an official part of the revolutionary programme; Zapata went into battle under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Even then, however, the bitter antipathy between the two factions that eventually emerged was not yet set in stone.

Chapters Two and Three look at primary and vocational education from the top-down perspective of curricular objectives for the major education providers in Mexico City: the municipality, the federal government and the church. Nationalism and morality were core themes to all three curricula. Catholic educators felt that Catholicism was such an entrenched element of the national consciousness that no version of nationalism was complete without religion at its core. They also routinely criticized secular schools as, at best, amoral, since they did not include religious instruction. They advised parents that only a Catholic education could ensure the moral health of their children, especially for girls.

Schools for adults also provided means for acquiring basic literacy and numeracy, but more often offered vocational training, which differed vastly for men and women. Both male and female training focused, in theory, on rebuilding the national physical, economic and industrial infrastructure, but in completely different ways. Men studied mechanics and engineering, electricity and physics, while women learned 'professionalized domesticity'. Almost twice as many women as men attended federal vocational schools, and they were instructed that their role in (re)building the nation lay in their influence over future generations. They learned puericulture (the 'scientific cultivation of the child') and housewifery, for some in preparation for managing their own homes and raising their own children, and for others in anticipation of domestic servitude. Even courses aimed at making women economically independent, however, were careful not to challenge women's essentially domestic role. Remunerative activities such as sewing and hairdressing were aimed at giving women an alternative wage earning possibility to prostitution that could be practised without leaving the home.

Catholics also offered vocational education for adults, led by both laypeople and religious, and possibly exclusively for women, although not enough data survive to be sure. Like the government-operated schools, Catholic night schools assumed women's importance lay in their influence over future generations. Unlike the government schools, however, they also assumed that religious education was essential to moral maternity. By this logic, secular education of adult women was dangerous to the future of the nation. Organizations such as the *Unión de Damas*

Católicas (Union of Catholic Ladies) offered women church-sanctioned courses in domesticity, as well as technical training, also with a mind to avoiding the need for turning to prostitution.

Chapters Four to Six move away from curricular concerns towards a view of what life was like inside the classroom, from the perspectives of instructors, children and adult students. Chapter Four characterizes the teachers, priests and volunteers who staffed classrooms in 1920s Mexico City as 'urban missionaries'. Whether municipal, federal, Catholic, primary or vocational, teachers shared the distinction of receiving almost hypothetical salaries with a minimal level of social standing. They were typically overworked, and frequently coerced into 'volunteering' additional overtime and/or money to make possible special school programmes such as school breakfasts. They were also overwhelmingly female. Schell argues that the persistent underpayment, overwork, and under-recognition of teachers may have stemmed from the high percentage of women in the field. Their numerical dominance did not guard them from discrimination. Sexually active women, euphemistically categorized as 'married' were routinely fired and sometimes banned from teaching altogether.

Catholic schools depended also on a network of entirely unpaid female volunteers. Schell forcefully debunks the long-held notion, even among historians, that Catholic women volunteers in organizations like the *Unión de Damas Católicas* were mere pawns of the male clergy. While officially under the supervision of the hierarchy, the *damas* acted with autonomy most of the time, and occasionally defied clerical suggestions with apparent impunity. In dealing with the question of Catholic women activism, Schell draws on Temma Kaplan's work for her theoretical base, arguing that 'to transcend the division between "feminist" and "conservative" women', allows us 'to view all women's political activity as potentially revolutionary' (p. 123). Thus, while Catholic women like the *damas* may have publicly opposed women's right to vote and to hold public office, this does not mean that their activism was not progressive. The *damas* consciously advocated a form of feminism they referred to as 'reasonable', in order to distinguish it from the feminism put forth by their political opponents, which they felt was inappropriate for their sex. 'Reasonable' feminism, which they felt was not only compatible with Catholicism but required by it, demanded women's active involvement in society in order to overcome its many ills. Catholic schools faced many of the same obstacles as state schools, and struggled to be able to maintain free schools alongside fee-paying institutions. As in the federal schools, girls' behaviour was particularly worrying, despite the religious environment. As in state schools, however, powerful and innovative leadership was able to produce extraordinary results on occasion.

This book is in the tradition of a recent historiographical trend that emphasizes the way popular and elite actors hammered out reality in a complex process of conflict and negotiation that took place in virtually every social space, including the classroom. The classroom on occasion became a hotly contested arena over values.

The Gabriela Mistral School, a federal vocational school for young women, serves to illustrate the point. A scandal emerged over a teacher who had allegedly been distributing pamphlets promoting and describing methods for birth control. In the ensuing debacle, teachers, students and government officials all took sides, demonstrating, in Schell's words, 'conflict between the [Ministry of Education] and the individuals who composed it' (p. 181).

Chapter Seven discusses the efforts of both the government and the church to educate outside of the classroom in the broader community. The bulk of Catholic attempts to educate in the community were focused on social action that included a strenuous effort to counter the growth of secular, government-affiliated labour unions with Catholic ones. The same *damas* who volunteered to sustain Catholic schools went into factories and organized working women into church-sponsored unions. The final chapter tells the story of how church-state relations devolved into open conflict by the end of the 1920s resulting in open civil war in large areas of the country between supporters of the church and government. Importantly, the conflict went beyond questions of religious belief to include gender. In Schell's words, '...anticlericalism was a program developed by men and aimed at women and children'. In the end, many schools were closed, but perhaps more importantly, the moderate wing of the church that shared so many values with revolutionary reformists was suppressed, destroying any possibility for peaceful co-existence.

Stephanie Mitchell

doi:10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400213