

pena que las mismas normas que explican sabiamente la política de de la Barra no sean impuestas cuando se trata de Zapata y las fuerzas populares. Es cierto, como argumenta el autor, que el temor de Zapata al desarme por intermedio del ejército federal, que sería seguido por una masacre general, no encuentra sus fundamentos documentados (pp. 95-96). Pero, no hay que olvidar por un momento el mundo de los símbolos y sus cargas históricas. El autor ignora en gran medida la propaganda antizapatista de los porfiristas, que estaba basada en el desprecio y el paternalismo de las viejas elites hacia Zapata y su gente. Tampoco enfatiza la importancia de la simbología del ejército federal como opresor de los pueblos y aliado de los hacendados, que justificaba ampliamente los temores de Zapata. El otro lado de la moneda no consigue mostrar otra cosa fuera de lo ya sabido sobre la cooperación entre el presidente interino y las fuerzas reaccionarias al proceso revolucionario dentro del ejército federal, que convirtió todo esfuerzo de Madero por llegar a un acuerdo con Zapata en una tarea sisífrica.

Finalmente, la acción política reaccionaria de de la Barra en la época del gobierno de Madero y Huerta –que el autor trata con menos longitud que las otras– no deja mucho de lo poco "rescatado" por el autor en su obra, lo que no refuerza las tendencias revisionistas de lo mencionado a lo largo de su investigación.

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**ENRIQUE OCHOA: *Feeding Mexico: The Political Uses of Food since 1910*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2000.**

With the creation of the Constitution of 1917, Mexican revolutionaries granted their future governments sweeping powers with which to shape the modern Mexican state during the twentieth century. Many of the constitutional provisions sought reforms and targeted the traditional sources of power and wealth enjoyed by the privileged classes. Land reform, control of commercial monopolies, public health, and the provision of basic foodstuffs for the Mexican population became the focus of presidential administrations working to produce social justice. Government bureaucracies and policies developed as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) worked to realize the revolutionary ideology established by the Constitution. One of the gravest injustices they sought to right was the perpetual hunger and malnutrition facing the masses of the Mexican population.

Enrique Ochoa's detailed monograph, *Feeding Mexico: The Political Uses of Food since 1910*, is a study of the creation and implementation of federal food policy in post-revolutionary Mexico. Ochoa states that his study is an

exploration of "the social, political, and economic factors that led government policymakers to intervene in the marketing and distribution of basic foods [and] how these policies became a pillar of social welfare policy for well over half a century." (p. 1) However, his work is not just an examination of government food policy. Ochoa extends his thesis to argue that the interventions of successive presidential administrations in food policy denied the revolutionary spirit of the first decades of the century and failed to accomplish the goals set forward by the Constitution of 1917. Ochoa contends that food policy was never really about feeding the hungry, but maintaining popular political support for the PRI. A clear goal of his thesis, as stated by Ochoa, is to examine the political integrity of the PRI by comparing the results of the reality it created with the rhetoric it presented.

Using sources drawn from Mexico's Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), personal and institutional archives, and the U.S. National Archives, Ochoa attempts to "reconstruct the inner working of post-revolutionary bureaucracy in Mexico and its connection with larger social, political, and economic questions." (p. 11) He demonstrates that food policy and the actions of the government's food bureaucracy served multiple purposes. The empowerment of a governing food administration reinforced efforts to centralize political power and influence in Mexico. Additionally, Ochoa shows that the systemic intervention in food production and distribution provided the government with powerful tools for economic intervention and manipulation. Ochoa highlights the economic aspects of food policy with his claims that the government food bureaucracy served the purpose of "speed[ing] the process of market formation by attempting to create an efficient distribution system with a uniform market." (p. 7) The creation and management of government food policy had the potential to impact the great majority of the Mexican population. As such, food policy was an inherently political element of any administration.

In order to simplify his narrative structure, Ochoa collapses the six incarnations of the Mexican food policy bureaucracy into a single institution he designates the "State Food Agency." While his decision makes for easy identification, it leaves questions about the evolution of the food policy bureaucracy itself. One would imagine the process of creating, morphing, and renaming the agencies of the food policy bureaucracy would bear significantly on the reconstruction of the inner workings of such agency(ies). A more complete exploration of the institutions of the food policy bureaucracy would have served to illuminate Ochoa's assertion that while food policy "seem[ed] on the surface well planned and structured", it "often developed in an ad hoc manner" because of political pressures. (p. 8) Crisis, political and economic, became the primary pressure impacting and shaping food policy.

One of the themes Ochoa pursues throughout the book is the tension between political intentions, appearances, and results. The author claims that the process of political manipulation of food policy might have seem a calculated political act, but in fact it "appeared to develop in an ad hoc and unsystematic way." (p. 10) Likewise, while an effective food policy bureaucracy was intended to reach all Mexicans, it tended to serve those in the capital city more than other regions. Indeed, one of Ochoa's conclusions surfaces as he discusses the ongoing plight of the needy and malnourished population despite more than seventy years of organized government intervention in food policy, production, and distribution.

Ochoa traces the development of food policy using the chronological framework of the successive presidential administrations. The focus on presidential initiatives provides clear links to the political nature of food policy. The politicized nature of the "State Food Agency" also opens a path for Ochoa to explore the types of and tolerance for corruption in the massive, and expensive, programs of production, management, and distribution of food. The size and complexity of the food policy bureaucracy becomes clear as Ochoa explains that by mid-century, the "State Food Agency" was used as "a 'catch-all' agency to perform various types of social welfare functions." (p. 151) The expanded role of the agency helped and hurt it as more money and expectations did not always yield the results desired.

The focus of Mexican food policy continued to shift and develop with each successive presidential administration. By the 1980s, the interventionist tendencies of the earlier incarnations of the "State Food Agency" gave way to a more regulatory role. As political agendas shifted to accommodate the drive toward the privatization of public assets, the food policy bureaucracy lost many of its retail assets and budget for production subsidies.

The overriding concern of the various presidential administrations centered on the reinforcement of their institutional foundations. With the goal of reinforcing the PRI's institutional stand, policy development of any kind, and especially food policy, by nature, had to be a selective process. As Ochoa demonstrates, food policy created a selectively responsive welfare state. That food policy even became an aspect of a welfare response to meet the needs of Mexico cannot be taken as a given in such a politicized environment. Other ideological pressures influenced the degree to which food policy reflected welfare policy and social concerns rather than developmental or economic concerns. Ochoa does a fine job in revealing the connections and contradictions that arose from the ideological foundations of the revolutionaries and then grew in response to crisis and corruption in a political environment.