

and El Salvador forced the author to research more in Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica, and less in Guatemala and El Salvador (p. vii). It is not surprising that such a regional divide in access to documents follows a pattern of severity of violence. Holden's essential insight into the US role in bolstering, even maturing, the armed forces into concerted war machines overlooks the real differences in the level of violence meted out particularly in Guatemala and in El Salvador over the twentieth century. Why does the northern half of Central America witness such nauseating levels of violence during the twentieth century compared to the southern half of the region? Why does Costa Rica emerge as the exception to the rule in Holden's conclusions that no Central American country fielded an army and an idea of nation among its citizens?

Ethnicity. Plain and simple. A voracious public violence ripped at the indigenous communities in both of these countries, and to lesser degrees among the indigenous populations in Honduras and Nicaragua. Where populations tended to be more homogenous and less indigenous, armed forces inflicted less public violence. The authorities of Guatemala and El Salvador have been unable to pacify and integrate the indigenous peoples into their concept of nation in both periods of Holden's analysis. Curiously, though, the US collaborated more in institutional terms (in constant 1990 dollars) with Nicaragua and Honduras than with the brutal agencies of death in Guatemala and El Salvador from 1950 till 1960.

If the author had included Panama in his analysis, it is likely that Panama and Nicaragua would have dominated total US military sales and grants, making the US investment in local armed forces more dependent upon the geography of transoceanic travel than the ultimate drive to confront communism.

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Karen Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), pp. xv + 279, \$28.00, pb.

*Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution*, in the words of Karen Kampwirth, 'tells the story of *how*, the guerrilla wars [in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Chiapas] led to the rise of feminist movements, *why* certain women became feminists as a result of their experiences with the guerrilla organizations, and *what* sorts of feminist movements they built' (p. 5; emphasis in original). In just under 200 well-written and provocative pages she does just that. Based on interviews with 205 women, mostly from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chiapas, with a handful in Cuba, Kampwirth has written a book that will be useful to both students and experts alike. Additionally, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution* speaks to an interdisciplinary audience, including women's studies, Latin American studies, political science, sociology and history.

Using the positive cases of Nicaragua, El Salvador and the Mexican state Chiapas, and the test cases of Poland, Iran and Cuba, Kampwirth persuasively argues that there are at least three reasons why revolutionary movements can inadvertently engender feminists and feminist mobilisation. The first reason is an ideological one: that is, revolutionary guerrilla groups tend to promote egalitarianism. Kampwirth explains that many of the women she interviewed recalled that the time they spent as guerrillas or members of other revolutionary groups were often the

times they received the most equal treatment from men. As a result, once the struggles ended and their male colleagues attempted to return gender relations to their pre-revolutionary inegalitarian 'norms', women revolutionaries were taken aback by this contradiction and in many cases refused to accept it. The second cause of feminism and feminist mobilisation in the wake of revolution entails the resources acquired by women revolutionaries during their struggles, namely self-confidence and organisational skills. The final reason was the persistence of pre-existing networks which naturally served as a feminist infrastructure. She demonstrates her point in the rest of the book, drawing specifically from the stories of the women revolutionaries and feminists whose experiences serve as the data for her thesis.

I found the book quite an enjoyable read. Kampwirth does an excellent job highlighting the women's words and experiences, making it clear that her analysis came from them rather than shaping their stories to match her hypotheses. The book also reads like an historical document that captures the often untold but inspiring stories of women revolutionaries and feminists. Indeed, one of the most exciting parts of the text is its ability to speak to specialists and non-specialists alike. The author offers a tremendous amount of historical detail about the revolutionary struggles in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chiapas, but in a very accessible manner. As a result she walks the novice through a well-presented story and provides the experts in the field greater detail than was previously available. Furthermore, the eloquent weaving in of the women's testimonies keeps the reader more interested and attached to the story in a way that certainly could not have happened without their inclusion in the book. Her ten years of research are certainly reflected in the plethora of women we meet in the book and the richness of her analysis.

In addition to the methodological accomplishment of conducting a comparative, transnational study based on over 200 interviews, methodological strength of the book lies with the variety of cases Kampwirth includes. Some scholars of revolution might consider the inclusion of El Salvador and Chiapas inappropriate for any study of revolution because in sociological terms El Salvador was a 'failed revolution' and Chiapas only part of a much larger country. However, as feminist scholars have repeatedly shown, we must expand the analytical lenses if we are truly to capture the gendered dynamic of, in this case, politics. One of the particularly powerful messages implicit in the book is that gender is infused into everything. The author demonstrates this point – one very central to women's studies – by showing how gender relations and identities are at once transformed by revolutionary movements while at the same time transforming those very movements.

*Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution* reads particularly well as what might be considered part two to Karen Kampwirth's first book *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba* (Penn State, 2002) and works as a great companion to Shayne's *The Revolution Question: Feminisms in El Salvador, Chile, and Cuba* (Rutgers, 2004). Together all three books document the stories of women whose histories have been largely overlooked by academic scholars of revolution and leftist activists as well. Kampwirth eloquently concludes her book: 'men (and women) who continue to insist that emancipatory political projects have nothing to do with gender relations and personal lives are precisely the people who make feminism likely' (p. 196). Indeed, those same folks should read *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution* and see how inaccurate that all too common assertion truly is.