

over *campesinización* through state-given rights to negotiate as citizens. This crucial point demonstrates how Indigenous peoples in the Central Sierra engaged global changes without losing their identity. What unfolds is a mid-twentieth century triumph of empowered of corporate Indigenous communities moving beyond the bisecting trope of violence and Indigenous loss. Despite the eruption of well-covered political violence beginning in 1980, this study shows an inspiring model of Indigenous empowerment. Alas, the successes in the middle of the century could not foresee how radicals would interpret submission and land reform. *Sendero Luminoso*'s misunderstanding of village-state relations destroyed the hard work of Indigenous individuals who stood up for themselves, their villages, and their collective identities. The era of *Sendero Luminoso* tantalizes historians all the while overlooking the era proceeding nationwide violence. Puente shifts the lens to an era full of state negotiations and village successes. Recapturing this history, this book is an essential reading for those who study indigenous struggles offering new questions about short-lived triumphs.

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#### CATHOLIC ACTIVISTS COMBAT GUATEMALA'S GENOCIDE

*Blessed are the Activists: Catholic Advocacy, Human Rights, and Genocide in Guatemala.*

By Michael J. Cangemi. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2024. \$34.95 paper.

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Today, Guatemala is considered one of the most violent countries in Central America and the Western hemisphere. But today's violence and security practices are a product of the 36-year genocidal civil war (from 1960 to 1996) in which hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people were murdered or disappeared. Scholars have written much about the civil war, the atrocities, and the survivors, but mostly absent from those analyses have been the allies, supporters, and people who tried to remember the humans in the middle of such terrible, violent conflict. Michael J. Cangemi's provides an analysis of the Catholic activists who were important allies for the war's survivors and victims.

Cangemi questions how Catholic activists collaborated to combat the violence of Guatemala's genocide, often attempting to protect the country's Indigenous populations. The book focuses on how Catholic activism intersected with US foreign policymaking, diplomacy, and the Carter and Regan administration's policies regarding Guatemala and the Central American region. Chapter 1 investigates what Cangemi calls "Guatemala's church-state rupture" in the 1960s and 1970s. The chapter establishes the historical roots of Catholic Action, particularly in Latin America, and how the Church's activism became

politically contentious in a context concerned about Cold War politics. Chapter 2 dissects the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights in foreign policy, and how that failed in the Guatemalan context, which ultimately allowed the violence in Guatemala to expand unchecked, if not encouraged, by US forces. Chapter 3 analyzes the first 2 years of General Fernando Romeo Lucas García's reign as president of Guatemala (from 1978 to 1980) and the confluence of politics, religion, and Catholic activism, revealing a growing chasm between the Catholic Church and the Guatemalan government. Chapter 4 shows how this context shaped United States–Guatemalan relationships during the late 1970s, with little progress made for a productive relationship between the two. Chapter 5 returns to the question of the Catholic Church's role in Guatemala in the 1980s, showing how the Church tried to protect human rights and push the Regan administration to do so through policy work. Chapter 6 analyzes the perhaps unsurprising disagreements between the Catholic Church and the Regan administration over the violence of the Ríos Montt regime's genocidal violence in Guatemala. Chapter 7 addresses the relationship between Evangelical interests in Guatemala and the Megía regime as the country worked toward peace through the 1984 and 1985 elections of a civil government. The book concludes with a discussion of Ríos Montt's evasion of justice and the ways in which Catholic activism consistently worked to humanize the war's survivors and victims, despite the inhumane actions against them.

Cangemi rightly brings attention to the ways in which Catholic activists put their own lives on the line and often suffered the consequences, a stark reminder in today's world where allyship has become part of scholarly focus and scholarly action in collaboration with marginalized communities. Cangemi's methodology is not explicitly discussed, but he clearly draws on a variety of documents from Catholic archives, the US government, and more. His careful reading of that archival material allows him to include—albeit briefly—questions and information about the Indigenous population that the genocide he writes about targeted. Significantly, his work brings attention to the Lake Atitlán region and resistance to the violence of the war, which has often been on the outskirts of scholarly attention despite it being well known that much violence took place there. Cangemi's focus on the intersections of Catholic activism and policymaking is perhaps not surprising, but it is an important reminder about how closely the two are aligned at a moment in the world when much foreign policy is deeply informed by religious affiliations and activists. His work is also an important reminder of the need for and legacy of advocacy and allyship in the Guatemalan context today.

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