

ing expectations and wishes for greater self-rule. The Spanish Cortes and the 1812 constitution had let the genie of dissent, query, and self-rule out of the bottle, and despite the best efforts of Ferdinand and his loyal viceroy, the elusive sprite was beyond their control. All that was required was a leader committed to independence to appear and to take advantage of the changing circumstances.

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National Period

The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South.

By LEON FINK. Research assistance by ALVIS E. DUNN. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Photographs. Maps. Notes. Glossary. Index. xiii, 254 pp. Cloth, \$34.95. Paper, \$17.95.

Civil war in Guatemala, especially the atrocities and widespread slaughter that took place in highland Maya communities in the early 1980s, triggered massive displacement and prompted thousands of people to flee the country for a safe haven beyond its borders. *The Maya of Morganton* adds to a growing body of literature that documents the Maya diaspora throughout Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Fink's nuanced account demonstrates how exodus from Guatemala resulted in a resilient network of refugees in a most unlikely setting—Morganton, North Carolina, “a usually quiet industrial center of sixteen thousand people perched at the edge of Great Smoky Mountains” (p. 1). This, however, is far more than an accomplished contribution to studies of migration and acculturation. With skill and compassion, he contextualizes the experiences of the Maya of Morganton in ways that deepen our understanding of political struggle, labor organization, and ethnic solidarity in the face of economic exploitation, governmental indifference, and legal manipulation. The anonymous forces of globalization are here given human faces, with predictable outcomes in the dog-eat-dog society that the United States can be.

Fink starts with the Case Farms chicken-processing plant that employed the first Maya migrants to arrive in Morganton—illegal residents who had already worked in the fruit and vegetable groves of Florida. Some 20 were involved in a walkout over working conditions in 1991, a prelude to widespread stoppages and myriad arrests in 1993. A four-day strike galvanized a successful unionization drive in 1995, by which time some four hundred Mayas were on the Case Farms payroll. Another dispute in 1996 led to a six-year standoff; the company refused to sign a collective bargaining agreement struck by the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) on behalf of the workers. LIUNA formally withdrew from the campaign in 2001, effectively undoing the breakthrough attained in 1995. Fink's account of this history is a fine example of the crossroads of academic research and activism.

The Maya who live in Morganton hail from remote corners of the Sierra de los Cuchumatanes, a region of Guatemala where Spanish rule intruded and left its mark during colonial times but did not obliterate native culture. Maya culture endured and eventually thrived all over the Cuchumatán highlands, and anthropologists have recorded a rich array of cultural traditions and community cohesion. When conquest, in the form of state terror, was unleashed upon them four and a half centuries after conquest by imperial Spain, these Mayas had seen it all before. This time, instead of regrouping within places like Aguacatán and San Miguel Acatán, they reconstituted a resolute sense of community in hundreds of scattered outposts, from Houston to Toronto, from Miami to Vancouver, far from the lands of their ancestors.

The first waves of Morganton migrants were political refugees, something not lost on the personnel manager at Case Farms. "Mexicans will go back home at Christmas-time," he told Fink. "You're going to lose them six weeks. And in the poultry business, you can't afford that." People fleeing for their lives, however, are another matter. "Guatemalans can't go back home," the manager observed. "If they go back home, they get shot" (p. 20). These views are reinforced by many of the Maya pioneers, such as don Pancho, who remarked, after learning about an army massacre of Maya villagers in San Miguel Acatán, "I kept thinking there would be peace, but there was no peace" (p. 40). Political refugees gave way, in time, to economic refugees. Despite their troubles with Case Farms, the Maya of Morganton know very well that work in the United States pays much better than work in Guatemala. Subsequent waves of Mayas arrived and found employment in all sorts of jobs throughout the country. Their remittances were estimated nationally, in 1999, "at \$3 million per day, ranked just below coffee exports as the largest source of foreign currency for the Guatemalan economy" (p. 165). Transnational links between place of birth and place of work are now entrenched. The money Mayas earn in Morganton is sent back to Aguacatán so that a relative can keep growing corn, onions, and garlic on the family plot. Being Maya, Nancy Farriss contends, is all about "strategic acculturation," the resourceful ability to make changes to how you live "in order to preserve essentials." The Maya of Morganton illustrate the Farriss thesis as much in relation to a U.S. chicken-processing factory as to the practice of *costumbre* in churches or cornfields in Huehuetenango.

Fink and his assistant, Alvis E. Dunn, together furnish us with a multifaceted tale that will appeal to diverse constituencies in Latin American, labor, and oral history, as well as specialists in the field of migration and ethnic studies.

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