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978-0-521-86324-7 - The Ecology of Oil: Environment, Labor, and the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1938

Myrna I. Santiago

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## THE ECOLOGY OF OIL

This book explores the social and environmental consequences of oil extraction in the tropical rainforest. Using northern Veracruz as a case study, the author argues that oil production generated major historical and environmental transformations in land tenure systems and uses, and social organization. Such changes, furthermore, entailed effects, including the marginalization of indigenes, environmental destruction, and tense labor relations. In the context of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), however, the results of oil development did not go unchallenged. Mexican oil workers responded to their experience by forging a politicized culture and a radical left militancy that turned “oil country” into one of the most significant sites of class conflict in revolutionary Mexico. Ultimately, the book argues, Mexican oil workers deserve their share of credit for the 1938 decree nationalizing the foreign oil industry – heretofore reserved for President Lázaro Cárdenas – and thus changing the course of Mexican history.

Myrna I. Santiago is Associate Professor of History at St. Mary’s College of California. Before earning her Ph.D. in history from the University of California at Berkeley, she traveled to Mexico on a Fulbright Fellowship and later worked in Nicaragua as a Human Rights investigator. Her work has appeared in *Environmental History*.

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MEXICAN REVOLUTION, 1900–1938

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*St. Mary's College of California*



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*to Josefa De Alba Martínez,  
for giving to me the education she never had*

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well as the pedestrian lode that historians mine on a daily basis; I thank them very, very much. In Europe, the staff at the Institute for Social Research in Amsterdam and at the International Center for Research on Anarchism in Lausanne were not only helpful, but also extraordinarily welcoming and friendly. Graciela Jolidon introduced me to the archive at the International Labor Organization in Geneva and to its accommodating staff, and I thank them all. Joshua Borkowski produced the two wonderful maps under the expert guidance of Darin Jensen at the University of California, Berkeley, and I thank them both for their good cheer and assistance with all matters technical. Jan Williams did a wonderful index under a lot of time pressure and I thank her for that. Katie Greczylo and the team at Cambridge University Press were methodical, accommodating, and superb with questions and editing. My gratitude to them for all their hard work.

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Map 1. Major Oil Fields in the Huasteca, Veracruz, ca. 1921.

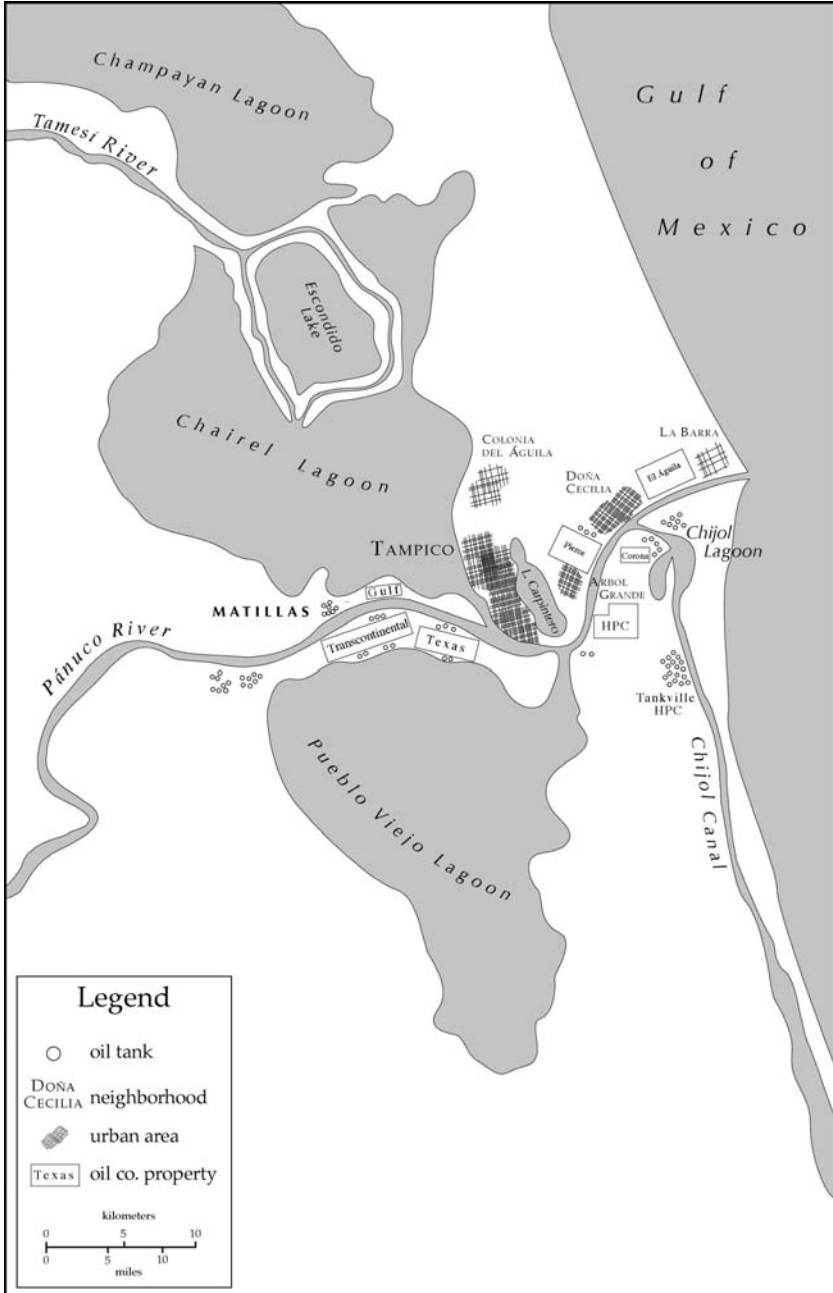
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Map 2. Tampico and Its Environs, ca. 1924.

Sources: *Boletín del Petróleo*, Map section, Vol. 4, No. 4 (October 1917); *Boletín del Petróleo*, Map section, Vol. 22, No. 4 (October 1926); Secretaría de Industria, Comercio y Trabajo, Departamento de Petróleo, Comisión Técnica, *Carta de la Zona Petrolífera del Norte de Veracruz y de las regiones colindantes*. Mexico City: Secretaría de Industria, Comercio y Trabajo, Marzo 1925.