

judgeship in the administration of his uncle (1849–1859). When Mora fell Argüello followed him into exile. The two of them returned to Costa Rica in 1860 in a disastrously unsuccessful attempt on the part of Mora to return to power. “La trinchera,” the title story of the collection of stories under review, is one of Argüello’s accounts of this disaster, which culminated in the death of his uncle. Argüello himself lived to play a minor role in politics and occasionally to write for Costa Rican newspapers.

In his sixties Argüello cast aside his previously partisan approach and composed a series of vignettes on presidential politics. These, his best writings, were originally published in 1898–1899 and are gathered here by José Marín Cañas for republication. Cañas, a writer-politician in his own right, provides a scholarly introduction to the collection, and Carlos Meléndez, Costa Rica’s leading historian, adds explanatory and clarifying notes. These notes are necessary because Argüello wrote from memory and sometimes was guilty of basic inaccuracies.

Argüello’s episodes, furthermore, are superficial and unconvincing. They provide some of the backroom gossip concerning leading Costa Rican political figures of the 1860s but they probably exaggerate the role of the author and they tend to ignore ideological commitment and presidential policy. Two of the selections are semi-fictional, pale imitations of Pérez Galdos’ *Episodios nacionales*.

Except for the unfortunate scarcity of the political memoir in the national period of Costa Rican history it is difficult to justify the republication of these stories. Judged by accustomed standards of history and literature, they scarcely deserve to be singled out as models of historical or literary contributions.

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*Los ferrocarriles británicos y la U.C.R., 1916–1930.* By PAUL B. GOODWIN. Buenos Aires, 1974. Ediciones La Bastilla. Tables. Bibliography. Pp. 318. Paper.

Not only has Paul Goodwin illustrated the complex relationship between the British-owned railways and the leaders of the Unión Cívica Radical between 1916 and 1930, he has also shed light on the UCR’s attitude toward railway laborers and major Argentine pressure groups. To accomplish this, Professor Goodwin drew upon material from the archives of the Ferrocarril Buenos Aires al Pacífico and the

Ministry of Transportation, which he balanced against the partisan press of the period, including the *yrigoyenista* *La Epoca*, the anti-personalist *La Acción*, the conservative *La Prensa*, and the socialist *Vanguardia*.

Goodwin views the Radical leaders as middle-class political opportunists. Yrigoyen never defined his railway policies, despite his nationalistic rhetoric, because he wanted to be the friend of labor, the protector of traditional Argentine commercial and agrarian interests, and the ally of British railway capitalists. On one hand he posed as the “friend of workers” (p. 146), but on the other he worked against revolution by controlling the means of reform. His successor, Marcelo T. Alvear, also allowed political expediency to govern his dealings with the railways between 1922–1928.

Professor Goodwin has done a competent job of discussing the process by which the British-owned railways lost the right to fix their rates and to negotiate directly with labor. His treatment of the railway labor scene for 1916 through 1918 is enlightening, but for the remaining period he treats labor from a more elitist viewpoint. The *semana trágica* is mentioned only in passing. The study would have benefitted by contrasting the UCR’s treatment of the corrupt and inefficient state-owned railways with their handling of the British companies. The author should have dealt also with the implications of the 1929 D’Abernon agreement, especially as regarded the state-owned railways.

Paul Goodwin has written a fine study of an important aspect of the Radical period. In so doing he has made a significant contribution to understanding the bourgeois leadership of Yrigoyen and Alvear.

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*Avellaneda y la nación versus la provincia de Buenos Aires: Crisis económica y política, 1873–1880.* By SUSANA RATO DE SAMBUCCETTI. Buenos Aires, 1975. Editorial La Pléyade. Tables. Pp. 141. Paper.

Nicolás Avellaneda’s contribution to national unification has been overshadowed by the accomplishments of other contemporary political leaders. Plagued by economic and political crises, his presidential administration (1874–1880) is usually viewed as a traditional one that managed to complete a series of projects begun earlier by Mitre and Sarmiento, while paving the way for Roca’s ascension to power in 1880. In a well-researched study of banks and politics during the Avellaneda