

Chucho “el Roto” Arriaga, famed kidnapper of priests; the Thunderbolt of Sinaloa, Heraclio Bernal. Some, like León Ugalde, managed to rise from banditry to command a corps of rurales. Although Vanderwood occasionally uses the term “social banditry,” he describes most of these brigands in thoroughly entrepreneurial terms and suggests that “rather than disrupt the social order, [banditry] may have reinforced it” (p. 103).

The wealth of new information that Vanderwood has uncovered about banditry and the rurales serves a rather abstract framework that rests on the putative competition between “order and disorder.” Society tilts from one to the other as a result of individual decisions based on pure self-interest. “When it became worthwhile for Mexicans to settle down,” he writes of the Porfiriato, “a sufficient number of power brokers designed a pattern of domestic peace in their own best interests” (p. 44). The same model applies to banditry, described as a “means of social mobility” (p. 96), employed, one assumes, when the opportunity costs were low and the returns compensated for risk. When Vanderwood asks who turned to banditry and why, his general framework allows him only to report that “no precise pattern appears” (p. 11). He offers the same response to questions about the social determinants of political instability. The social historian might ask for more systematic effort at formulating and testing for patterns in the evidence, but Vanderwood’s data do not lend themselves easily to such effort.

This is “history from the bottom up,” as the author calls it (more appropriately than most since he starts underground, as it were). The framework lends itself to occasional lapses into facile cynicism, but the book is quite entertaining and full of new evidence of real utility to students of Mexico’s social and political history.

University of Chicago

JOHN H. COATSWORTH

*La clase obrera en la historia de México: Al norte del Río Bravo (pasado inmediato) (1930–1981).* By DAVID R. MACIEL. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1981. Tables. Chronology. Bibliography. Pp. 234. Paper.

Perhaps more than any other Chicano scholar, David Maciel in recent years has made intellectual society in Mexico aware of the Chicano experience in the United States. From his two-volume anthology *Aztlán: Historia contemporánea del pueblo chicano* (1976) to his 1978 anthology *La otra cara de México: El pueblo chicano*, plus his various pieces in Mexican journals, Maciel has promoted Chicano scholarship south of the

border. His latest effort, *Al norte del Río Bravo*, is consistent with the objectives of Maciel's earlier publications.

As part of a new series on working-class history in Mexico written by distinguished Mexican scholars, Maciel's study emphasizes the overflow of that working-class experience into the United States. Since the United States conquest of Mexico's northern borderlands, Mexican workers have migrated to the United States in search of employment. Maciel adds to Mexican working-class historiography by expanding it to include Chicano workers. Aimed at a Mexican audience that still knows relatively little about Chicanos, this work cuts no new research grounds in treating the Chicano working class. The importance of Maciel's study is not to contribute new data or a new interpretation, but to synthesize a body of mostly published material for Mexican consumption. This material primarily covers the involvement of Chicano workers in a variety of agricultural, mining, and urban industrial unionizing efforts since the 1930s.

Maciel's view of Chicano workers closely follows the theme first outlined by Juan Gómez-Quiñones in an often cited article, "The First Steps: Chicano Labor Conflict and Organizing, 1900 to 1920" (*Aztlán*, Spring 1973). Gómez-Quiñones argues that the foundation of Chicano labor history is militant class struggle. Once in the United States, Chicano workers became class-conscious and engaged in a series of conflicts against southwestern capitalists. Hence, Chicano working-class history equals a history of strikes and class agitation.

No one can deny that Chicano workers have participated in class struggle. This is an important facet of Chicano history and we need more studies of particular examples of Chicano labor militancy to understand the full dynamics of this process. Where Maciel and Gómez-Quiñones, as well as other Chicano historians pursuing the same conceptualization, err, however, is in their inability to acknowledge that working-class life involves more than just the job experience and involvement in labor strife. In the first place, many Chicano workers have not actively engaged in labor militancy. They may in fact practice forms of "passive resistance," but this is an area unexplored by Chicano historians. As I have pointed out elsewhere (*Desert Immigrants*, 1981), perhaps class militancy is not central to the immigrant experience, which is so vital in understanding Chicano labor history. Beyond the debate of whether class-conscious militancy has or has not been integral to the history of Chicano workers, especially immigrants, the Gómez-Quiñones-Maciel school of Chicano labor history fails to examine workers' lives beyond the work place, such as in the home, within the family, and in the community.

European and United States historians, such as E. P. Thompson and Herbert Gutman, have clearly shown the relevance of exploring working-class culture in order to understand better working-class consciousness and politics. Chicano historians can and should do the same. As it stands, Maciel's study, and that of other like-minded historians, remains rather traditional labor history, resembling that done during the first half of this century; that is, it concentrates principally on institutionalized aspects of labor history: unions and strike activities.

Still, as an introduction to Chicano labor history for readers in Mexico, Maciel's monograph serves a useful and important educational purpose. If Chicanos cannot appreciate their history without knowing Mexico, so too, Mexicans cannot understand their history without knowing the United States, including the Mexican experience within the "Colossus of the North."

University of California, Santa Barbara

MARIO T. GARCIA

*Alvaro Obregón: Power and Revolution in Mexico, 1911–1920.* By LINDA B. HALL. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1981. Illustrations. Notes. Chronology. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 290. Cloth.

In her introduction, Linda B. Hall notes that although the number of studies of revolution is legion, most focus on causes and fail to deal adequately with the transition to peaceful conditions and with the all-important institutionalization process. For Mexico, "the first step in understanding this transition . . . is in understanding the major figure, Alvaro Obregón, and the way in which he himself in the years 1911 to 1920 developed the power and authority to play this transitional role and then began to exercise his influence, even before he became president" (p. 8).

In analyzing the first decade of the Mexican Revolution, Hall traces Obregón's career from the early years of penury, through his largely self-education and career as a revolutionary general, to his victory in the presidential election in 1920. This decade is certainly the most thoroughly researched period in Mexican history. Yet, until now, the emphasis has been away from the most dynamic, if less spectacular leader—and on Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa, or Venustiano Carranza, or on the "Bloody usurper," General Victoriano Huerta. Hall shows that Obregón was able to build a power base, at first in the Northwest and then nationally, that assured him the presidency. His military successes made him a national hero. He showed a stability and a dependability that both