

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."

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*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

Zapata and Villa lacked. At Aguascalientes in the Revolutionary Convention he proved to be “a reasonable man and a peacemaker” (p. 250). And as Carranza’s secretary of war, he gave decisive support to the radical reformers of the Constituent Congress. By 1920 he was the sole logical presidential candidate. Because Carranza refused to recognize Obregón’s claim, the First Chief lost his control of revolutionary politics and, ultimately, his own life.

Hall’s fine book, important as it is, marks only the “first step,” as she admits, in detailing Obregón’s contributions to Mexico’s growth in the twentieth century. We can look forward to the completion of the study, with a concluding volume on the Sonoran caudillo’s term of office, 1920–24, on the national conciliation that brought together Carrancistas, Villistas, and Zapatistas, on the cultural florescence, and on the efforts of Obregón and Calles to institutionalize Mexican politics. Despite Obregón’s assassination in 1928, his and Calles’s effort led to the solidification of the modern “revolutionary” coalition that governs the Republic today.

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*La lucha por la hegemonía en México, 1968–1980.* By MIGUEL BASÁÑEZ. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1981. Notes. Figures. Appendixes. Bibliography. Pp. 243. Paper.

This is the most insightful, comprehensive, and objective analysis of Mexican politics by a Mexican since Pablo González Casanova published *Democracy in Mexico* in 1965. It is all the more remarkable because the author, although a law graduate with a degree in public administration, and a candidate for a Ph.D. in political science, is a middle-level employee of the Ministry of the Presidency. Basáñez demonstrates clearly that the young Mexican technocrat can offer useful, critical perspectives on his own political system.

The author provides a thorough survey of North American and Mexican interpretations of the role of the Mexican state, suggesting three possibilities: neutral, compromised, or contradictory. Basáñez comes down on the side of the theory of a contradictory state. The rest of the book is devoted to analyses and arguments in support of his interpretation. Although covering the years since 1940, this work particularly focuses on the years 1968 to 1980, a period neglected in United States scholarship.

In leading up to the events of 1968, Basáñez examines three sectors critical to public-policy formulation in Mexico: the public sector, the private sector, and a “dissident” sector. His examination of the public