

*The Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest.* By NILES HANSEN. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Tables. Map. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 225. Cloth. \$17.95. Paper. \$8.95.

The United States–Mexico border is clearly the area of major convergence, cooperation, and conflict between the two countries. Yet as important as this zone has been, it has, for the most part, been much neglected by scholars from both countries. It is only recently, primarily because of Mexican factors, that researchers have begun to publish important works dealing with various themes of the frontier between the United States and Mexico.

One representative study of this trend is Niles Hansen's *The Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest*. In his study, Hansen attempts to define the nature of the economic relationship between the border communities. The author begins his analysis with an assessment of border development policies and of three general economic theories concerning border regions. He takes strong issue with the negative characterization of border economies found within these theories, namely, the international trade theory, the location theory, and the growth pole theory. Hansen postulates mutually advantageous conditions of the United States–Mexico border as his central thesis. According to this thesis, both sides of the border function in a symbiotic relationship. One important example is the role of the twin plants (*maquiladoras*) as sources of employment for both countries. Other examples that Hansen points to are the contributions of Mexican labor and the Mexican American community in the economic development of the United States Southwest.

*The Border Economy* is basically a synthesis of current economic data and secondary economic literature on the border. The emphasis is on the United States side, with only passing references to the Mexican economy. The main contributions come from the initial chapters' studies of economic border theories and issues. The treatment of Mexican and Mexican American labor is repetitive of other research. This study should be viewed as an outline of major themes and concepts that will, one hopes, be examined by other scholars in a more critical and original manner.

University of New Mexico

DAVID R. MACIEL

*El Salvador: Background to the Crisis.* By FRANK AFFLITTO et al. Cambridge, Mass.: Central America Information Office, 1982. Tables. Chronology. Maps. Bibliography. Pp. 148. Paper.

Although the authors state in the first sentence of this slim book that their aim is "to provide an accurate and critical introduction to the current situation in El Salvador . . .," it is clear throughout the volume that the authors are really more interested in rallying opposition to United States policy in Central America. As they state in the second sentence of the book, "the U.S. government can only conduct [*sic*] an immoral foreign policy by keeping people in the dark." Unfortunately, the book is neither accurate nor a critical introduction—unless by "critical" one means anti–United States.

Written by some eighteen persons (Students? It is unclear who they are.) and published by a "Central American Information Office" (CAMINO—an organization "dedicated to research and to dissemination of information about current problems in Central America"), the book is divided into fourteen chapters, with a text that is 114 pages in length, and has two appendixes, maps, and a glossary. No specific authors are identified with specific portions of the book, so the extent of collaboration among the authors is unclear.

Although in a few of the chapters the authors attempt to provide brief historical backgrounds, the focus is clearly contemporary. The source material used is heavily weighted

toward recent journalism. The overall impression is one of very hasty research, driven by a collective desire to criticize United States support of the regime and the unexamined fear that El Salvador might become another Vietnam. The chapters, however, are too brief (the chapter on the Catholic church in El Salvador is four pages long) and summary to be of more than cursory value. The bibliography at the end of the book is extensive, but incomplete, with many important sources missing.

This book appears to have been written by students with incomplete academic training, to appeal to fellow students already in opposition to United States policy in El Salvador. There is little that is new or even well synthesized, and there are now several books that cover the same territory better (T. S. Montgomery, Marvin Gettleman et al., and Jaime Labastida et al.). This book should be read only by persons doing research on the anti-United States policy groups that emerged on El Salvador.

New Mexico State University

JOSÉ Z. GARCIA

*Order without Government: The Society of the Pemon Indians of Venezuela.* By DAVID JOHN THOMAS. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982. Tables. Maps. Figures. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 265. Paper. \$17.50.

The Pemon are a dispersed group of savannah- and forest-dwelling, Carib-speaking Indians of southeastern Venezuela. Thomas provides a solid, problem-oriented ethnography of that interesting and attractive society. The problem is of importance for historians and political scientists as well as anthropologists: how is a truly egalitarian social order maintained?

In the first two chapters the problem is introduced; and the people, their setting, and history are generously sketched. The next three chapters contain the meat of the book; they detail, with a nice balance of ethnographic generalization and specific case histories, the social world of the Pemon—kin and neighbors, leaders and followers, and “forces of disharmony.” The next chapter exemplifies the cultural rules and concepts just extracted, by means of a thematic analysis of three Pemon myths. The conclusion pulls together the evidence accumulated about the social relations and institutions that permit the Pemon to perpetuate their remarkably peaceful and unexploitative society. A graceful and humane epilog sees all too clearly the inevitable end of this society, as the Pemon are “civilized”—which, for them, means being incorporated into the lowest rung of rural Venezuelan national society.

The essence of Thomas’s argument is that in the absence of shortages that would permit economic coercion, the Pemon forestall political coercion by implanting all individuals in a dense, but fluid, social network where the demands and responsibilities relating any two people are continuously negotiable (within limits) and the principle of the essential autonomy of the individual is protected ultimately by the ability of any person simply to distance himself spatially from an intolerable situation. The point is well substantiated and the book is a valuable addition to the literature.

Pennsylvania State University

STEPHEN BECKERMAN

*Chan Chan: Andean Desert City.* Edited by MICHAEL E. MOSELEY and KENT C. DAY. Foreword by DOUGLAS W. SCHWARTZ. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982. Maps. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxii, 373. Cloth. \$29.95.