

choice in marriage. Finally, chapter 5 introduces what is possibly Stark's most significant finding: that slaves in Puerto Rico achieved high birth rates and, ultimately, a natural growth rate, both exceedingly rare in Caribbean slave societies.

Stark builds his arguments on an impressive foundation of quantitative evidence, collected from the marital, baptismal, and burial records of 21 parochial archives across Puerto Rico. He concentrates on the northwestern province of Arecibo, where the *hato* economy was most entrenched and where records are most complete, and contextualizes his findings there within the broader scope of the island. Stark uses the method of family reconstitution—reading disparate records side by side to map changes to individual families—allowing him insights into issues that are often not addressed explicitly, like the size of slave populations on individual *hatos*. Although the limitations of parish records are evident throughout—a fact that Stark discusses frankly—his methodology is a valuable model for scholars confronting similar evidentiary constraints.

There are some areas in which the book's limits are more noticeable. For instance, Stark regularly shuffles between quantitative measures in an effort to extract as much meaningful data as possible, which occasionally leads to greater confusion than it does clarity. More seriously, Stark's reading of *hato* slavery, contrasted with the brutality of plantation slavery, sometimes appears somewhat rose-colored. A more critical analysis of racial violence and power dynamics would have been a helpful complement to Stark's explicitly comparative approach.

Stark is meticulous in his research, clear in his writing, and judicious in his argument. By connecting contraband trade to rural slave labor, Stark successfully fuses familiar strains of Caribbean social history with more recent interest in transimperial commerce. Above all, this book makes a thoroughly original contribution to scholarship on a time and place that are both understudied and central to our understanding of Caribbean slavery beyond the sugar plantation. For these reasons, it constitutes a major addition to Caribbean history and the history of slavery more generally and will be of lasting importance to scholars in these fields.

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## Twentieth–Twenty-First Centuries

*The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule.*

Edited by CARLOS AGUIRRE and PAULO DRINOT. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017. Maps. Figures. Notes. Index. vii, 353 pp. Paper, \$29.95.

This is a book that we have long needed on a regime and period in Peru's recent past that has largely faded from popular memory, been erased from official recognition, and gone mostly ignored in recent scholarship. Recall that for a startling few years the revolutionary military regime of General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–75) turned Peru upside down in a striking effort to bring the notoriously tradition-bound, oligarchy-ruled, and generally socially archaic country into the twentieth century.

Expertly edited by two of the country's leading historians, this book brings together a collection of original essays by a group of veteran and new Peruvian scholars to probe and assess the process and outcome of a wholly uncommon military regime that transfixed observers at the time due to its unusual transformational goals. As to be expected in a collection of this type, there is no central thesis to the book. However, it constitutes an important shift away from the political science–dominated approach that characterized the immediate, first-generation scholarship on the regime, which the editors carefully survey in the introduction. Rather, *The Peculiar Revolution* takes a new cultural, ideological, and interdisciplinary approach to the subject in a set of themes and interpretations that are consistent with the cultural turn in historical studies over the past couple of decades.

This can be seen clearly in the organization of the book into three parts, respectively titled “Symbols, Icons, and Contested Memories: Cultural Approaches to the Peruvian Revolution,” “Teachers, Peasants, Generals: Military Nationalism and Its Agents,” and “Decentering the Revolution: Regional Approaches to Velasco’s Peru.” Part 1 consists of four contributions. Carlos Aguirre examines the regime’s patronization of the sesqui-centennial celebration of independence to illustrate its national liberation credentials. Similarly, Charles Walker skillfully shows how the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (RGAF) championed the eighteenth-century revolutionary leader Túpac Amaru II as a national symbol of its goal to liberate Peru from internal and external domination. Adrián Lerner offers a narrative history of General Velasco Alvarado’s funeral to illustrate many of the characteristics of the regime that he led. Paulo Drinot analyzes the contested memories of the RGAF in an innovative way through an examination of hundreds of comments on the regime uploaded on YouTube.

Part 2 examines the particular policies of the RGAF and its key institutions. Patricia Oliart focuses on the regime’s education reform, particularly influences that shaped it such as Paulo Freire as well as the opposition from teachers aligned with the left-wing Unified Syndicate of Workers in Education of Peru. Jaymie Patricia Heilman considers how land reform was limited to changes in land tenure but also its long-run impact on peasant organizations and politics. Lourdes Hurtado explores the divisions within the masculine culture of the armed forces that, along with other factors, thrust the army into the central role in the reform movement and created the popular view of Velasco Alvarado as a father figure. George Philip adroitly explains the rapidity and completeness of the decline of the Velasco Alvarado regime between 1973 and 1975, although he observes correctly that it was attributable not just to him but to the failure of the entire military experiment.

The third and final section comprises five contributions. Anna Cant reveals the local dynamics and contexts of the revolution, normally only examined from on high via Peru’s Lima-centric polity. While the National System of Support for Social Mobilization established overall policy from the center, on the ground the group was subject to local conditions and pressures. Mark Carey opens up a heretofore-neglected but important subject: the impact of the regime’s new water laws and irrigation projects on agriculture and agrarian reform on the coast. Nathan Clarke examines for the first time the

Chimbotazo, the riot that exploded in 1973 in Chimbote, Peru's most important port city. Mark Rice shifts attention to Cuzco in the context of the understudied subject of tourism. Finally, Stefano Varese brings his personal experience to bear in his contribution on the impact of the reforms on the Amazonian peoples.

All these chapters open a window on new subjects, illuminated for the first time, with impeccable scholarship and clear, accessible writing. It is a work that will draw a wide range of readers to a seminal event in recent Peruvian and South American history, one that contrasts sharply with the other Cold War-driven military interventions in the region.

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*Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory.*

By ROBERT F. ALEGRE. Foreword by ELENA PONIATOWSKA. The Mexican Experience. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. Photographs. Map. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xx, 275 pp. Paper, \$40.00.

Robert Alegre writes with palpable empathy. He cares for the railway men and women whom he portrays in *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico*. The result is a thoughtful examination of the lives and times of railroad workers, especially in the years immediately following World War II until the massive strikes that rocked Mexico's railways in 1958 and 1959.

The book focuses on three interweaving themes. The first is the brief but important redemocratization of the Sindicato de Trabajadores Ferrocarrileros de México (STFRM) and the important strikes, particularly in the late 1950s, in which workers sought better wages, improved benefits, and greater autonomy. The second theme is gender. Alegre is primarily interested in including women in the male-dominated story and in framing Mexico's railway industry as ruled by patriarchal norms and machismo. Of these two themes, the political narrative is more dominant, in part due to Alegre's choice to focus on the politics and economics driving STFRM actions and in part due to a lack of sources documenting women. The STFRM only allowed male members who, in turn, worked in a male-dominated industry. The lack of documents about women's lives also points to one of the regrettable consequences of patriarchy in mid-twentieth-century Mexico more broadly. But Alegre's decision to incorporate gender nonetheless makes *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico* original, refreshing, and insightful. The third theme is the Cold War and how it affected the politics of the era.

Alegre makes a number of arguments. The one that stands out is that after years of discontentment over stagnating wages and *charro* (government-allegiant and corrupt) union bosses, members of the STFRM victoriously kicked out the *charros* and created a more democratic syndicate that obtained benefits for its workers while threatening the hegemony of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Mexico's ruling political party. Alegre argues that these were genuine successes for these workers, even if they were short-lived and ultimately quashed following a strike in 1959. Alegre's more gender-themed arguments are that women such as Lilia Benitez and Virginia López López were