

The histories of land invasions in this book provide rich material for gaining deeper understandings of the ongoing dances between different organizational strategies.

A stronger political context would also be helpful in gaining a fuller understanding of the deeper significance of the land invasions. For example, in the 1990s the Itchimbía invasion in Quito occurred under the hostile mayorship of Jamil Mahuad, but even this does not explain why as the elected president in 2000 he would be “hated” (p. 174). Land invasions do not operate outside of a broader political context and, frankly, politics matter.

Repeatedly Dosh explains how land invasion leaders play into the hands of clientelistic policy-makers. Rather than remaining ideologically grounded in alternative visions of how society might be structured, leaders trade access to services for electoral support for politicians. Current leaders of New Left movements committed to participatory forms of democracy continue to struggle against this heavy legacy of clientelism, and Dosh misses opportunities to provide a deeper political analysis of these historic patterns.

The book ends with an epilogue, “From Scholarship to Activism,” with Dosh returning to Villa El Salvador in Lima after the conclusion of the study to engage in social justice and development work with his nonprofit organization Building Dignity. Now he sees himself as a causal factor, which makes it impossible for him to analyze recent changes in the settlement communities. Rather than a conclusion for the study, I would have preferred for this to be a point of departure. Scholarship and activism, similar to scholarship and teaching, do not have to be held in tension with each other, but can build on and inform each other. Bringing insights from political engagement into this type of academic study would heighten its analytical insights, probing interpretations, and political relevance. *Demanding the Land* is an important study, and I look forward to more significant work from Dosh in the future.

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“I Sweat the Flavor of Tin”: *Labor Activism in Early Twentieth-Century Bolivia*. By Robert L. Smale. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010. Pp. x, 256. Notes. Bibliography. Index.

Given the primacy of ethnic politics in the Andes today, and particularly in Bolivia, it is easy to forget, or perhaps minimize, the historical role of urban working classes and workers in the export sectors in shaping the politics of Latin American countries with large indigenous populations. Current analyses tend to privilege ethnicity over class, not only because the ethnic appears more politically salient (and focus on it may prove more advantageous in one’s career) but also because class-based interpretations appear not to have weathered well the shift away from the Marxian paradigm. But, as Charles Bergquist masterfully showed for the cases of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and

Venezuela a quarter of a century ago, workers matter. True, in most countries and in particular in Bolivia, they represented an infinitesimal proportion of the overall laboring population. But their social and political imprint tended to be disproportionate to their size both because of their strategic role in key economic sectors (resource extraction, transport, industry), but also (though this is less often examined) because of their symbolic role as perceived expressions, and agents in the obtainment, of “modernity” or “progress.”

For these reasons, Robert L. Smale’s careful and close study of labor activism in the city of Oruro in the first three decades of the twentieth century is to be welcomed. Drawing on a range of primary sources, but particularly on prefectural correspondence—for a particularly useful vantage point on local and regional politics—Smale explores in detail the multiple forces shaping the emergence of the working class movement around the tin mines of Oruro. Although organized chronologically, the chapters explore a number of themes that will be familiar to students of the labor history of other Latin American countries, including paternalism and worker resistance to coercive forms of employment, the role of artisans in shaping the early labor movement, labor migration (in this case between nitrate and copper camps in Chile and Bolivia) and the effect of such transnational experiences of work on labor militancy, the adoption of the strike as a method of struggle, the influence of radical ideologies (anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, socialism, Marxism, etc.) on an increasingly organized labor movement, and the see-saw between “progressive” policies regulating the workplace and repressive measures regulating workers and unions as characteristics of evolving state labor policy.

These themes notwithstanding, Smale’s approach is largely narrative and at times excessively detailed. It is driven by a chronology wherein political events (changes of government, strikes, massacres) are given pride of place. There is little attempt to frame the discussion in a comparative perspective (with respect to other Latin American cases or beyond) or to engage with the broader historiographical debates that this study intervenes in and potentially contributes to. The final chapter, or epilogue, summarizes the history of Bolivia from the Chaco War to the 1952 revolution in eight pages, but does not constitute a conclusion as such. The book also lacks an introduction (Smale opts instead for a short prologue). There is a wealth of information here, and it is carefully documented and well written and its narrative of struggles of the Oruro workers is compelling. But the reader is left asking what historiographical work it is doing—where does this book fit in the context of Bolivian or Latin American labor history? In what ways does it challenge or confirm previous interpretations of, say, state-labor relations in Bolivia? In what specific ways does it inform our understanding of Bolivia’s early twentieth-century history? By failing to address these questions explicitly, Smale does his fine social history of labor in early twentieth-century Oruro a disservice.

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