tion, *Empresa extranjera y mercado interno* will be of special interest to economic and transportation historians.

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A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico. By WILLIAM E. FRENCH. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Maps. Tables. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 262 pp. Cloth. $40.00.

In this well-written and innovative book, William French rejects the "essentialism" of historians who have assumed that particular forms of class consciousness and action emerge inevitably from capitalist wage relations or dependent export production. He does not focus exclusively, or even primarily, on work structures and experience to explain the formation of class; nor does he look for or find anarchist and revolutionary workers, or crude victims and perpetrators of state and capitalist manipulation. Drawing on extensive archival research and informed by recent social and cultural histories of other countries, French situates Mexican class formation in terms of preindustrial traditions, popular values, political culture, and above all, relationships between social classes.

Starting in the 1890s, the copper industry in Chihuahua's Hidalgo District was transformed by external technological developments. This allowed for both renewed investment by U.S. companies and a transformation of work that reduced the control and number of skilled workers while incorporating large numbers of unskilled workers from largely rural backgrounds. A major concern of this book is the rural migrants' reluctant and partial adaptation to the rhythms of and dependence on wage labor, and to the "developmentalist" morals and manners of an urban and industrial society dominated by other groups.

The book's title suggests, first, an ideal of working-class behavior articulated and shared by foreign mine managers, Porfirian officials, and a nascent middle class in the towns and cities of Chihuahua. Mine managers resorted to the "proverbial carrot" of bonuses and benefits to bind recent migrants to place and work discipline, and the "proverbial stick" of close ties and financial contributions to political authorities and police to minimize theft, violence, and strikes. French's evidence challenges long-held assumptions that the company store was a way to extract a further surplus and tie workers through debt. But the key interaction examined is between middle-class townspeople and workers. The *sociedad culta* of Chihuahua, even those of different ideological stripes (*científicos*, opposition liberals, social Catholics), elaborated common ideals of virtuous middle-class behavior that set them apart from most mine workers, who were seen in opposing terms as vice-ridden and a danger to the community. While the *gente decente* were as much concerned with their own self-definition, as individuals and as a class, as with social control, the moral standards

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they elaborated issued in a program implemented by Porfirian and revolutionary authorities to educate the "dangerous classes" and to regulate and punish drinking, gambling, prostitution, and a loosely defined vagrancy. Public urban spaces became contested terrain for different notions of morality, and domestic life was held up to a new cult of female domesticity.

French argues that workers resisted proletarianization and moral impositions by clinging to rural ties and by reshaping rural traditions of drinking, personal honor, and physical prowess in a way that challenged managers, authorities, and *gente decente* at work and in urban spaces. At the same time, skilled workers in particular drew on symbols of nineteenth-century Mexican liberalism and absorbed and transformed the discourse of middle-class decency to fit their own demands.

Here French elaborates a "moral economy" through which workers advanced their declared right to earn a living. This transformation became most obvious in the "great awakening" of the 1910 revolution. As long as work was available, workers were unlikely to join revolutionary factions or attack foreign companies. Instead of turning to radicalism, expressed in the languages of anarchism or socialism or in attacks on capitalist production, miners asserted their right to earn a living by pocketing ore, entering unworked mines, and striking to raise wages. In a brief but suggestive final chapter on the early 1920s, a period of "hammering out a new relationship between foreign companies, workers, and the state," French explains how workers and their labor organizations incorporated and transformed middle-class discourse to assert their rights as "a peaceful and working people" to decent wages, working conditions, and unprecedented participation in municipal politics.

A few minor concerns: for all his attention to language, French often paraphrases his rich sources when additional direct quotes would be more persuasive. This reviewer wondered if more radical ideologies might have been important among at least a minority of workers, and more generally absorbed and reshaped by workers, along with the more dominant languages of liberalism and middle-class moral reform. Although French does not try to generalize his points for the rest of Mexico, I wondered to what extent oil workers in Tampico, textile workers in Veracruz, or craft workers in Mexico City reacted similarly to economic change and developmentalist discourse. Such a comparison may not yet be possible; at any rate, future research on both working people and the middle class in Mexico and Latin America during the early twentieth century will necessarily need to consider the methods and argument of this important book.

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