



Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing: Imperial Politics in the American Southwest (Cmas Border & Migration Studies)

Gilbert G. González

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Chicano history, from the early decades of the twentieth century up to the present, cannot be explained without reference to the determined interventions of the Mexican government, asserts Gilbert G. González. In this pathfinding study, he offers convincing evidence that Mexico aimed at nothing less than developing a loyal and politically dependent emigrant community among Mexican Americans, which would serve and replicate Mexico's political and economic subordination to the United States.

González centers his study around four major agricultural workers' strikes in Depression-era California. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, he documents how Mexican consuls worked with U.S. growers to break the strikes, undermining militants within union ranks and, in one case, successfully setting up a grower-approved union. Moreover, González demonstrates that the Mexican government's intervention in the Chicano community did not end after the New Deal; rather, it continued as the Bracero Program of the 1940s and 1950s, as a patron of Chicano civil rights causes in the 1960s and 1970s, and as a prominent voice in the debates over NAFTA in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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