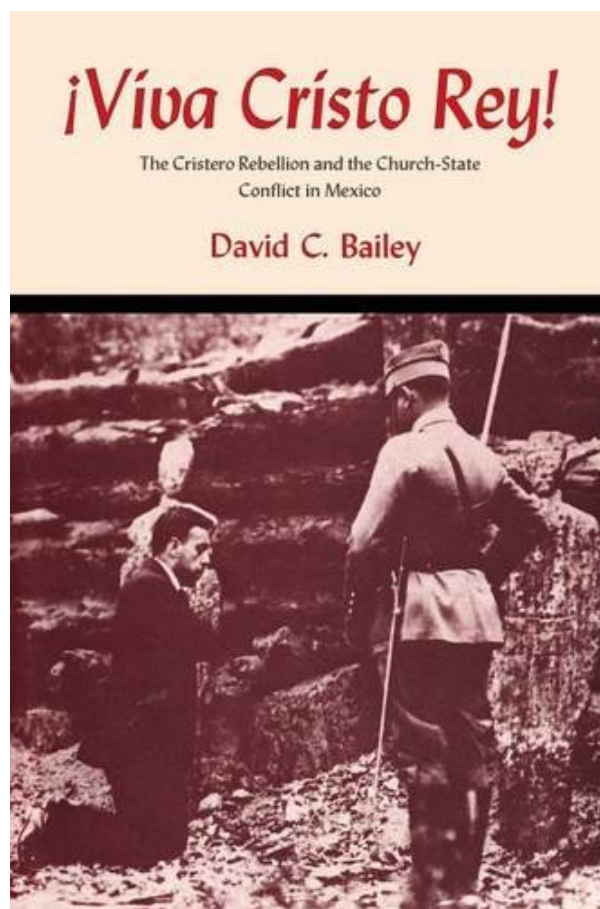


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¡Viva Cristo Rey!

The Cristero Rebellion and the Church-State
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About the Author

David C. Bailey (1930–1982) was Professor of History at Michigan State University.

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Between 1926 and 1929, thousands of Mexicans fought and died in an attempt to overthrow the government of their country. They were the Cristeros, so called because of their battle cry, ¡Viva Cristo Rey!—Long Live Christ the King! The Cristero rebellion and the church-state conflict remain one of the most controversial subjects in Mexican history, and much of the writing on it is emotional polemic. David C. Bailey, basing his study on the most important published and unpublished sources available, strikes a balance between objective reporting and analysis. This book depicts a national calamity in which sincere people followed their convictions to often tragic ends.

The Cristero rebellion climaxed a century of animosity between the Catholic church and the Mexican state, and this background is briefly summarized here. With the coming of the 1910 revolution the hostility intensified. The revolutionists sought to impose severe limitations on the Church, and Catholic anti-revolutionary militancy grew apace. When the government in 1926 decreed strict enforcement of anticlerical legislation, matters reached a crisis. Church authorities suspended public worship throughout Mexico, and Catholics in various parts of the country rose up in arms. There followed almost three years of indecisive guerrilla warfare marked by brutal excesses on both sides. Bailey describes the armed struggle in broad outline but concentrates on the political and diplomatic maneuvering that ultimately decided the issue.

A de facto settlement was brought about in 1929, based on the government's pledge to allow the Church to perform its spiritual offices under its own internal discipline. The pact was arranged mainly through the intercession of U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow. His role in the conflict, as well as that of other Americans who decisively influenced the course of events, receives detailed attention in the study. The position of the Vatican during the conflict and its role in the settlement are also examined in detail.

With the 1929 settlement the clergy returned to the churches, whereupon the Cristeros lost public support and the rebellion collapsed. The spirit of the settlement soon evaporated, more strife followed, and only after another decade did permanent religious peace come to Mexico.

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About the Author

David C. Bailey (1930–1982) was Professor of History at Michigan State University.

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Viva Cristo Rey

By David Bustillos

Excellent book. So little is written in English on the Cristeros. This is a fantastic book. It has a ton of information dealing with the conflict. Highly recommended for Catholics and American Military history students

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Work -- A Primer on the Cristero Rebellion

By David M. Dougherty

Author Baily has done an excellent job of covering the Cristero Rebellion in Mexico from 1926 to 1929 without getting bogged down in the weedy details. In particular he covers the role of the U.S., aid from the American Knights of Columbo to the Cristeros, and the actions by American Ambassador Morrow in bringing about an agreement between the Vatican and the Jacobin Mexican government that ended the war. The text of the agreement from 1929 is included in this work.

This was the author's doctoral dissertation now published in book form, and concentrates mainly on the political actions taken by all of the parties. It adds material to Meyer's "The Cristero Rebellion", generally considered to be the definitive work on the subject. However, Bailey's book is an easier read, and gives a shorter yet thorough presentation of the historical factors leading to the rebellion. Readers are invited to read my review of Jean Meyer's work, and I would recommend purchasing both books to cover the ground. There is less duplication than one might expect.

Highly recommended.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

The Sorrow and the Shame

By Tim Messer

The history of Mexico is written in sorrow and blood. La Cristiada is a continuance of this sad tradition. Like the previous Mexican Revolution of 1911, it is very complex, with shifting sides, motivations wrapped in confusion, selfishness and betrayal. You really need a program to keep all the players straight. In writing Viva Cristo Rey! David Bailey has done a yeoman job of trying to tell this story with an admirable sense of coherence. This is a story of the continuing struggle for religious freedom, based upon saving the Catholic church, faith and freedom of worship. Originally, based upon the persecution of the church and murder and torture of it's priests, the revolutionaries sought help from the Church hierarchy and belatedly expanded their mission to encompass religious freedom as a basic cause in order to gain foreign support and money. It is a story of heroism, betrayal, self interest, ending in more tragedy and death for the Mexican people. It is also a story of the United States, it's fear of Catholicism, and seeking of self interest in a political, not moral sense. The revolutions timing in relation to what was happening in the US was critical, and the American influence and power plays had tremendous effect on the outcome. In that sense it is also a tale of American history . In the end, however La Cristiada did succeed in the greater goal of restoring their right to worship and put a halt to the ongoing persecution of religion by the revolutionary, atheistic forces of the ruling parties. But the cost was high and the true fighters were ultimately betrayed and exterminated.

This is an important story and one that should be told and retold. You may have to take notes, or read this more than once just to familiarize yourself with all the players and action. This is NOT a movie tie in. It does not center around the battlefield, although it is covered in it's place. This is a comprehensive telling of the entire story and a worthy history to be read and an important story to spread to those who need hearing it. Separation of church and state has to be balanced with the separation of State from Church as well.

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