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Review of From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement

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more broadly. The book successfully engages the reader with a topical deconstruction of the specific conflict and war in general as well as an abundance of primary sources. However, Lepore does not fully illustrate the role identity and literacy had on the Anglicized non-literate Indians. Overall, this book is an excellent addition to contemporary scholarship and a successful study of a topic that is difficult to negotiate with documents alone.

Rocco Bowman

From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement. By Matt Garcia. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

Cesar Chavez is often held up as a hero or saint within modern liberal discourse, akin to Martin Luther King or Susan B. Anthony. In *From the Jaws of Victory*, Matt Garcia sets out to demonstrate that the successes of the United Farm Workers (UFW) were by and large the result of its diverse volunteer group, who were highly motivated, quick to learn from mistakes, and thoroughly innovative. In doing so, he de-emphasizes Chavez's role in the UFW's victories. Furthermore, he argues that Chavez's attempts to assert control over the union ultimately led to its downfall.

Garcia organizes his book chronologically, following the entire arc of the UFW: from its humble beginnings, to its first major success with the grape boycott of 1966, to the union's internal and external pressures that eventually led to its collapse. This begins in Chapter 1 with the background and initial struggles of the nascent UFW, including the realization that a strike alone would not be enough.

This leads into Chapter 2, where the boycott's origins and methods are examined in detail, though with a focus on the boycott within the US. Chapter 3 moves

abroad to Europe, following Elaine Elinson's efforts to strengthen the union's presence in England and eventually Sweden, and her astonishing success despite a lack of resources and contacts. Chapter 3 also details the role ethnicity, nationality, and gender played within the UFW.

Having now succeeded in their boycott effort, the UFW faces internal and external issues in Chapter 4. Externally, the Teamsters and President Nixon presented challenges to UFW growth and activities. Garcia also argues that the UFW never quite made the jump from pursuing change to actively implementing it. Garcia is at his best in Chapter 5, presenting Harry Kubo as a foil to Chavez: an equally strong-willed leader, but one with a clear objective and message that are easy for voters to relate to. ALRA and Proposition 14 are also examined, with Garcia arguing that, ultimately, the latter's defeat began the UFW's downward spiral.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 chronicle this spiral. More rifts open up within the UFW, especially concerning Chavez's controversial adoption of the tactics of Chuck Dederich and the issue of whether or not to pay staff. Constant divisions, firings, and attempts by Chavez to assert control came to a head at the June 30 through July 4 executive board meeting, which is explored in great detail in Chapter 7.

Finally, in Chapter 8, Garcia devotes a great detail of time to the effects of The Game on the UFW. He sees The Game as an ultimately poisonous addition and symbolic of both Chavez's descent into near-totalitarianism. This finally culminates in resistance by many of the highest ranking and most notable members of the UFW, leading to their departures or firings. Chapter 8 ends on a postmortem for the UFW; Garcia concludes by stating that, though the UFW ultimately failed, the fight for increased rights for farm workers continues.

From the Jaws of Victory is one of the first and only scholarly works to challenge Cesar Chavez and his legacy. It is difficult

work to decanonize a saint, but Garcia's argument is thoroughly compelling. He doesn't just lean on criticism of Chavez, but instead demonstrates the importance of the other members of UFW – though his top-down approach often places more emphasis on Elinson, Cohen, et cetera than on the UFW as a group. Nevertheless *From the Jaws of Victory* is a thoroughly successful book and highly recommended.

Peter F. Racco