

policy. Chapter 6, on Latin America, contains no analysis of Venezuela, the most important recipient of Cuban “aid” in the hemisphere. Chapter 7 is curiously devoted to “Internationalism, Cuban style,” presumably the subject of the entire book. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 are arguably the most useful, as they are entirely devoted to Cubans’ firsthand accounts of humanitarian projects in Angola, Ethiopia, and Zambia. The remaining chapters concern global interventions in education (Chapter 11), health (Chapters 12 and 13), and sports (Chapter 14).

If Randall is willing to address some of the blemishes of domestic policies, one can lament her unwillingness to address tough questions about Cuban internationalism, such as the following: Does it really make sense for a poor country with a population the size of North Carolina’s to send hundreds of thousands of troops (and see thousands of them die) to conflicts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East? When Cuba provided the troops and the Soviets the logistics, such as in Angola, is it conceivable that Cubans (mostly blacks) were at least in part cannon fodder for Russian foreign policy? What was the point of dying for Assad in Syria? (Her caveat: “This was not today’s Syria, but that of Bashar al-Assad’s father, Hafaz al-Assad” [71]). In Latin America, was Cuba not inspiring and supporting pretty much all armed insurgencies against bourgeois order, including democracies like Venezuela’s, not just the ones “attempting to defeat cruel dictatorships” (1)? Only about a quarter of the \$6 billion a year the Cuban state is charging for health services abroad is used to pay doctors and nurses, who work in the worst possible conditions. Does not this—plus the fact that health professionals make only about \$30 a month at home and cannot leave the country without the government’s permission—at least invite qualification of the cliché that “Cubans study medicine at no cost” (162)? There may not be simple answers to these questions, but they must not be ignored altogether. In conclusion, this book is hardly an important contribution on the subject, unless the real subject is Margaret Randall herself, a prolific and talented activist who writes passionately about her lifelong quest for utopia.

*St. Francis Xavier University*  
*Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada*  
[ygrenier@stfx.ca](mailto:ygrenier@stfx.ca)

YVON GRENIER

*Che, My Brother.* By Juan Martín Guevara and Armelle Vincent. Translated by Andrew Brown. Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2017. Pp. vi, 264. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography. \$25.00 cloth.  
 doi:10.1017/tam.2018.82

The perils of depicting the life, character, and context of a public figure are all too familiar to us. In Latin American literary and cultural studies, important questions about testimonial writing have occupied the attention of scholars for several decades,

sometimes leading to acrimonious debates about how best to critically approach the inherently hybrid testimonial mode. These debates have allowed scholars to explore not only the question of genre and its impact on how individuals and groups narrate their lives, but also how the role of the intellectual or educated mediator can change the subaltern speaking subject's account. This narrative by Juan Martín Guevara, the younger brother of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, which is described in the sleeve notes as a "unique autobiographical account," does something much more effective: it enacts and celebrates the inherent value of generic hybridity as it moves among the often invisible borders of autobiography, memoir, *testimonio*, political history, and social history.

Indeed, the public persona of 'El Che' merits such hybridity. Beyond the immediate image of the *guerrillero heroico* that now adorns tee shirts, bars, and souvenirs, his role as a philosopher, economist and statesman—as an organic intellectual—is less widely known. Equally, his reception in the public imagination has been polysemic, and, with late capitalism, his image has not only been commodified, but also co-opted to serve the interests of a vast range of political groups and philosophies. Juan Martín Guevara is abundantly aware of the colossal emotional, moral, political, and economic weight that lies behind the figure of 'El Che' and attempts in his account to resist any temptation to oversimplify, to create yet another hagiography, or to recognize the almost-empty signifier that is the over-saturated icon of his older brother. The result is a compelling, moving, and highly informative account, admirable for its genuine complexity and contradictions. It is also a highly personal narrative that is at times presented chronologically, but at others follows the movement of memory and emotion.

Most impressively, it is a story that does justice to the sheer breadth and depth of Che's contribution to social and political change, without constructing a simple image of the man and his life or reducing him to a single monolithic and hagiographic interpretation. It offers a fascinating account of his childhood, youth (including his several journeys though Latin America), and his involvement in the Cuban insurrection and Revolution. Following Che's political development, it narrates his subsequent attempts to "export" revolution to South Africa and, finally, Bolivia. This last section is where Juan Martín Guevara's account is most moving, as he describes his family's search for reliable information about a figure who was internationally 'wanted' and at the same time trying to hide their affiliation with Che for fear of political persecution in Argentina. His account of the family's reaction to Che Guevara's death is equally eloquent in its depiction of its complex emotions. However, keeping family and his own life trajectory at the center of the narrative, Juan Martín Guevara's account also provides a moving and fascinating insight into Argentina under Perón, a social history of the military dictatorship, and, crucially, a more personal but at no time sentimental depiction of his own eight-year imprisonment by the military junta and his attempts to re-adapt to life after being freed.

Notwithstanding some recurrent errors of presentation in Spanish, and some less accurate instances of translation, this book offers a fascinating insight that is subjective and

personal, yet also provides compelling details of the relatively short life of a figure whose influence on his contemporaries and future generations is nonetheless impossible to measure.

*University of Reading*  
*Reading, Berkshire, United Kingdom*  
[p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk](mailto:p.kumaraswami@reading.ac.uk)

PAR KUMARASWAMI

## ECUADOR

*The FBI in Latin America: The Ecuador Files.* By Marc Becker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. 336. \$94.95 cloth; \$26.95 paper.  
 doi:10.1017/tam.2018.83

This book investigates US intelligence-gathering and Ecuadorian politics in the 1940s, during which time the FBI was in charge of US surveillance in Latin America. Becker is not interested in the history of US-Ecuadorian relations per se, but in using FBI surveillance files to help fill gaps in historical knowledge about the Ecuadorian left. He also uses his deep knowledge of Ecuadorian history to assess the accuracy of US claims about Ecuadorian politics. The resulting book is a model for the innovative use of primary sources to explore multiple perspectives in history.

Becker deftly balances background information with detail and analysis, making the work useful and readable for scholars from many different fields. The book opens with an overview of the FBI's Special Intelligence Service (SIS) and its mission to collect economic and political information in Ecuador. Although officially the foremost concern for the SIS was to report on fascist sympathizers, in practice agents focused their attention on communists rather than fascists. Becker argues that FBI officials in Ecuador were in fact less concerned with ideology and politics than they were with defending US economic interests.

The years that the FBI was in Ecuador (1940–47) were turbulent ones in Ecuadorian politics. Responding to President Carlos Arroyo del Río's increasingly dictatorial tendencies, leftists and liberals banded together to oust him from power in May 1944 in the "Glorious Revolution" (*La Gloriosa*). Becker describes the coup and subsequent constitution of 1945 as a moment with the potential for true social revolution. However, the movement lacked the ideological coherence necessary to achieve lasting change. Instead, it brought to power the conservative populist José María Velasco Ibarra, who eventually betrayed the ideals of *La Gloriosa* and purged his government of liberal and radical members. Becker pays particular attention to the role that the Ecuadorian Communist Party played in 1940s politics; he views the party as the main advocate for equality. He contends that although communists had wide popular