

REVOLUTIONS AND REVOLUTIONARIES IN LATIN AMERICA UNDER THE COLD WAR

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REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTIONARIES: GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA. Edited by Daniel Castro. (Wilmington, DE: A Scholarly Resources, 1999. Pp. xii+236. \$55.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)

CAPTURING THE REVOLUTION: THE UNITED STATES, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND NICARAGUA, 1961–1972. By Michael D. Gambone. (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2001. Pp. iv+274. \$95.00 cloth, \$23.95 paper.)

SAD & LUMINOUS DAYS: CUBA'S STRUGGLE WITH THE SUPERPOWERS AFTER THE MISSILE CRISIS. By James G. Blight and Philip Brenner. (Lanham, ME: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. Pp. xxvii+324. \$29.95 paper.)

CUBA ON THE BRINK: CASTRO, THE MISSILE CRISIS, AND THE SOVIET COLLAPSE. Expanded ed. By James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch. Foreword by Jorge I. Domínguez. (Lanham, ME: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. Pp. xix+537. \$30.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper.)

THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TO POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, 1979–1990: CASE STUDIES ON NICARAGUA, EL SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA. By Danuta Paszyn. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. ix+161. \$19.95 cloth.)

Scholarship on Latin American revolutions and radical movements during the cold war has long challenged the notion that such movements were the result of external influences and a derivation of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation. Such studies have made it amply clear that the roots of social movements in Latin America were national in origin and in causes, generated by class, gender, and ethnic subordination and exploitation.¹

1. Roger N. Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Ricardo Falla, *The Story of a Great*

International phenomena had made, of course, a fundamental economic, political, and cultural impact on Latin American revolutions, but social scientists still discuss the nature of the external and the internal, their interaction and the weight of each in determining the processes and outcomes of such radical movements. One current in the scholarship on revolutions during the cold war posits the global South at the center of inquiry and seeks to explain them as a result of the way the domestic social processes affected the dynamics of the cold war.² Another perspective sees the impact on world events by “minor actors,” who could moderate, block, or influence the process and outcome of the cold war on the periphery of the superpowers contest and drag them into situations not of their choosing.³ Recent scholarship has shown, however, that “minor” actors loomed large on the stage of world history, and influenced the process of the cold war in a major way.

The books under review explore different revolutionary experiences: one steeped in the internal social dynamic, two within the purview of one or the other superpower, while two works examine the role of Cuba on the world historical stage.

THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION

Castro's *Revolution and Revolutionaries* is a reminder of the main protagonists engaged in Latin American guerrilla and revolutionary warfare and of their ideas and actions. The chapters included in the book are both scholarly works and excerpts from memoirs, diaries or documents, all of which have already been published elsewhere. The anthology purports

Love: Life with the Guatemalan “Communities of Population in Resistance” (Washington, DC: EPICA, 1998); Deborah Levenson-Estrada, *Trade Unionists Against Terror: Guatemala City, 1954–1985* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Daniel Wilkinson, *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002); Steve Stern, ed., *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980–1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Orin Starn, *Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Daniel James, *Doña María's: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Rosa Isolde Reuque Paillef, *When a Flower is Reborn: The Life and Times of a Mapuche Feminist*, ed. Florencia E. Mallon (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950–1973* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Lynn Stephen, *Zapata Lives!: Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

2. Richard Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History of the Cold War: The State, Military Power and Social Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

3. Tony Smith, “New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 24 (4): 567–91 (Fall 2000).

to be reminiscent of the fact that guerrilla warfare was not a recent phenomenon when the Cubans descended from the Sierra Maestra and took state power in the early hours of 1959. Rather, guerrilla warfare dates back to the colonial era, has evolved over time and, according to Castro, is not over yet. This assertion leads the compiler to believe that the death knell for guerrilla warfare as an alternative to resolving the contradictions afflicting Latin America has not yet sounded.

Daniel Castro selected the material for his book “to provide a perspective on various aspects of the character and historical evolution of Latin American guerrilla movements “over the last two hundred years (xii). The editor acknowledges that the material included is but a fraction of innumerable instances of guerrilla outbreaks over the centuries. Starting with the rebellion of Tupac Amaru in 1780 the anthology revisits the caste war of Yucatán; the Zapatismo of the Mexican Revolution; the nationalist and the revolutionary Sandinismo in Nicaragua; refreshes our memory of several South American guerrilla warfare experiences from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s; recalls the Zapatistas appearance in Mexico in 1994; and ends with the account given by the historian Herbert Braun of the kidnapping of his brother-in-law by the Colombian Ejército de Liberación Nacional in 1987.

The strength of Castro’s *Revolution and Revolutionaries* lies in inviting the readers to go back to the literature from which the chapters are extracted. Even from the glimpses the book provides, it allows us to understand better the revolutionary phenomenon together with the reasons for why the guerrilla struggle failed. One explanation for the rebels’ failure, given by the Peruvian Héctor Béjar, founder of the National Liberation Army (ELN), was their lack of a “coherent ideological framework and not offering the masses a structured program” (xxiii). From this assessment, the subject of Béjar’s own book *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience*, we learn that at least in Peru in 1965, “we took up arms guided only by our own sense of readiness” (132).⁴ In retrospect, Béjar reflects, the guerrillas lacked the social base on which they could rely and on behalf of which they fought.

The Peruvian experience, like the rest in *Revolution and Revolutionaries*, does not provide an analysis of guerrilla warfare but instead material for such an examination. It brings home the awareness of the revolutionaries’ lack of a thorough assessment of the objective conditions for their endeavor, their excessive reliance on ideology, and the strength of will. Factors such as the role of intelligence, counterinsurgency methods, the United States, the role of the army, the campesinos’ expectations and collaboration with the state, the economic and political terrain in which the

4. Héctor Béjar, *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

guerrilla operated, the ethnic and racial divisions between the light-skinned intellectual fighters and the peasant and Indian population, and the overestimation of the guerrilla strength anchored in ideas over and above the military strength of the enemy are the stuff of which academic books are written. But Castro's book is a testimony to human resolve, idealism, political ingenuity, and ideological overdetermination.

THE ANTIREVOLUTIONARY TRADITION

Gambone's *Capturing the Revolution* is captured best in a photo on the book's front jacket: "Yankees come back" is scrawled on a squalid house, patrolled by what could be a Somoza national guardsman or a U.S. marine. This image dovetails with the quandary of the U.S. government in Latin America throughout the region's history: "What is the best means to prevent the spread of revolution?" (1). The search for the answer is the subject of Gambone's book.

The author's premise is that Latin America has been revolutionary since the days of the Spanish conquest. As the region integrated into the world system, it carried that birthmark with it. Gambone's understanding of revolutions is different from Castro's. In *Capturing the Revolution*, revolutions are a byproduct of prevalent "history of conflict spanning five centuries." After World War II, "endemic plotting, assassination attempts, and sponsorship of exile armies, harkened back to a time when *personalismo* and long established individual hatreds defined the course of war in the region" (9).

The cold war internationalized Latin American revolutions by making "any armed challenge to the hemispheric status quo not simply a disruption of capitalism or a threat to regional stability, but a component of a global bipolar conflict between superpowers." And Cuba was the showcase of this process, for by 1962 "Castro's revolution had become an appendage of Soviet strategic policy," whereas Latin American wealth of natural resources had been a component of North American cold war planning (9).

Gambone argues that Latin American nations "contested U.S. Cold War priorities" and "began to construct their own departure from the contemporary economic system" such as the Central American Common Market. However, Washington saw these endeavors "with a growing sense that U.S. policy had lost the initiative in Latin America" (78). The Kennedy administration faced grievances and expectations in Latin America as the U.S. dilemma became how "to divine the difference between legitimate political reform and a Communist cat's paw?" (12) Subsequently, instead of sacrificing "a certain degree of power [to] create a certain degree of stability" (12), the United States did not take chances and preempted communism by aborting reforms.

Walt Rostow 's fear of the prospect that the Soviets might create "hell in the underdeveloped areas" for the United States (22), compounded by restiveness in the colonial world and the gradual loss of economic dominance in the Western world, led the Kennedy administration to devise for Latin America the Alliance for Progress and to reorient defense policy in order to regain the initiative in the cold war. Military aid came along with the Alliance to provide "a necessary degree of stability for economic and political assistance" (51). In addition, the Bay of Pigs disaster in April 1961 was a wake-up call for American efforts to contain communism in the Western hemisphere (47). Thus, the U.S. embassy interpreted the social conflicts, which followed on the heels of economic imbalances in Central America, and in Nicaragua in particular, as communist-inspired.

The Alliance for Progress made little difference to a country like Nicaragua because the Somoza family gobbled up most of its spoils. Following Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, according to Steve Rabe, the Alliance was dead.⁵ Gambone concedes that the U.S. government under Lyndon B. Johnson had neither a policy nor a vision to replace it with anything but more fear of communism and the specter of another Cuba. The administration met such fears with increased military spending and an expanded counterinsurgency mission.

In the last part of the book Gambone surveys the Nixon years and the U.S. foreign policy turn to defending national interests to prevent communism from expanding. But Latin American countries were frustrated by the absence of economic development and U.S. assistance and looked for measures to alleviate the economic distress, whether by expropriating foreign assets or by looking for alternative sources of investments and markets. Increased trade with the Soviet Union and the election of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1970 were ample evidence that the United States had to stop this process that was taking place in its own backyard.

The Nixon administration departed radically from the original concept of the Alliance for Progress and delegated responsibility for development in Latin America to multilateral agencies whose mission was to secure and promote private investment in the hemisphere. This policy "allowed Washington to exercise influence without the absolute political or economic cost of assistance" (226). In Central America the abandonment of the Alliance meant a changeover from projects that sponsored social infrastructure to projects that endorsed an economic infrastructure. Free enterprise and regional integration proved

5. Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

exclusive goals. Free trade led to competition among the common market members and the market itself ceased to serve the common purposes. The 1972 earthquake in Managua brought the country's economy to its knees. The Somozas largely pocketed the relief money that reached Nicaragua. As for the entire region, despite thousands of advisors, "and the expenditure of millions of dollars in aid and still more billions in investment, fundamental stability still eluded the hemisphere"(245). So, what had gone wrong?

The author points to institutional disunity in the United States with regards to decision making, heavy-handed politics toward the region, gradual abandonment of the Alliance for Progress, corruption and mismanagement in Central American countries, failure of the common market, and demographic explosion; yet in the end, blame for revolutionary movements went to communism, which flourished because it found allies among more moderate political and social institutions and movements such as the Church, Christian Democracy, and "an inert peasantry" (246).

Gambone draws largely on U.S. sources and depends for his analysis of what went on in Nicaragua on the Managua embassy cables to the State Department. This limited evidence does not allow him to transcend the narrowly focused dichotomy of communism/anticommunism of run-of-the-mill administration functionaries. In the final analysis, Gambone concludes that Latin America was not Europe, and American policy makers did not understand the region nor the reason why the Alliance for Progress floundered. Latin American institutions did not have the capacity to adapt to the development model that led to free trade and democratic values.

PUTTING CUBA AT THE CENTER

Fortunately for historians and policy makers, enough documents have been declassified over the last decade to avoid stigmatizing Cuba as a mere Soviet appendage. Owing to new evidence from the Cuban, Russian, as well as North American archives, historians are able not only to rectify past omissions, but they can confidently bring Cuba back and put it on the central stage of history in 1959 and thereafter. This is the aim of both *Cuba on the Brink* and *Sad & Luminous Days*. The authors' methodology, which they call critical oral history, assists them in bringing history to life and challenge Cuba's invisibility even to scholars.⁶

Blight, Allyn, and Welch's *Cuba on the Brink* unfolds as a historical drama. The characters included the missile crisis veterans from Cuba,

6. Jorge I. Domínguez, "Foreword," to *Cuba on the Brink*, ix.

the United States and the former Soviet Union, together with scholars and policy makers. The purpose was to assemble knowledge about the missile crisis drawn from experience, from research, and from newly declassified documents. In an open, critical confrontation the dramatic personae give their version of the events and, in the course of doing so, cross-examine history.

The stage is Havana in January of 1992; the drama reenacts the 1962 missile crisis in the context of an ongoing conflict between Cuba and the United States. The protagonists meet thirty years after the event. The Soviet Union no longer exists, but Cuba, which was close to annihilation in October 1962, is there to host former foes and friends. The main protagonist of the drama is Cuba, which in 1962 was left out of the solution of the crisis and of most of the subsequent representations of the conflict. Robert McNamara, secretary of defense in 1962, characterizes the lessons of history: "The end of the Cold War has eliminated the principal threat to the hemisphere and to U.S. security . . . we've each feared—and I think with some frustration— that the security of our nation was at risk during that period of time. If it ever was, it no longer is" (46).

The main protagonist of the drama replayed in Havana in 1992 is, of course, Fidel Castro. Unlike in 1962, Castro has the upper hand this time. In a dialogue with the former CIA deputy director for intelligence, the same one who supervised the analysis of the U-2 photographs that confirmed the presence of missiles in Cuba, Castro expresses the pleasure that this time Ray Cline had to request a visa to visit Cuba. Both laugh and exit the scene (204).

In another episode General Anatoly Gribkov, in charge of the Cuban operation in 1962, reveals to his audience that the missiles in Cuba were operative when the crisis broke out in October. This disclosure has an electrifying effect on McNamara, who also learns that the Cubans were ready to use the missiles had the United States invaded the island (249). The conversations in the conference room reflect upon events and on impressions from 1962. For instance, the former Russian ambassador to Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseev, corrects Khrushchev's assertion at the time that there was no time to consult the Cuban government on the next step to be taken once the missiles were discovered: "Nikita simply did not consider the need for consultation" (79). Sergei Khrushchev, Nikita's son, recalls his father saying: "We threatened with missiles we did not have" in Suez and Iraq. But in 1962 the Americans discovered the missiles were real (130).

As in a classical Greek tragedy the dialogues echo the timelessness of the drama, in this case of the U.S.-Cuban confrontation, implying that history is a circle. Yet in 1992, Ed Martin, assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs under Kennedy, repeats the hackneyed qualification

about Cuba as a Soviet agent in Latin America, no matter how many new ideas have come to light since the 1960s, to question this claim. It is Fidel Castro who breaks the circle: "And I ask myself if anyone can be so ignorant of history, as if there were no history of relations between the United States and Cuba and the United States and Latin America, going back almost two hundred years, long before Cuba existed and long before the Cuban Revolution existed," for no other country had intervened in Latin America as many times as the United States (174).

In *Cuba on the Brink* Castro walks onto the stage of history to let his audience enter into his mental and emotional states then and now. His audience, in turn, is privileged to ask questions about what Kennedy referred to in October of 1962 as "one hell of a gamble," in reference to the decisions that had to be taken to avert the nuclear clash.⁷ In 1992 the participants in the drama are privy to valuable information about the installation of the missiles and about the secret military agreement between the Soviets and the Cubans, which Castro opposed deep down but trusted that the more experienced Soviets knew what they were doing. Yet it was only in the course of Castro's visit to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1963 that he realized that Cuba was used as a bargaining chip: "You do not defend Cuba by withdrawing missiles from Turkey" (225), Castro said with reference to the secret exchange agreed by Khrushchev and Kennedy to end the missile crisis to the satisfaction of the superpowers but ignoring Cuba.

All in all, *Cuba on the Brink* is a unique book, full of revealing insights into the events and the individuals involved, both alive and dead. The book allows readers to revisit history not only through archival material but also through the unusual confrontation of historical documents, their authors and the protagonists of the drama. The book is unique, furthermore, in that it lets the Cubans, Fidel Castro in the first place, vent their thoughts on the United States without any visible anger and without retaliation from the other side. In addition, the North Americans reveal their ideas on revolutions, on the Soviet Union's quest to dominate the world, and have the Cubans answer their questions in an academic context. However, even though many at the conference table wanted to move from history to the discussion of the present-day situation, the participants feared that such a discussion would lead nowhere, because "almost everyone in the conference room knew that, for the foreseeable future, U.S.-Cuban rapprochement was impossible" (373).

The Cubans are probably right when they say that, as far as Cuba is concerned, the cold war is not over yet. But from the historians' point of view the cold war was buried during the 1990s. Moreover, the 1990s

7. See Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, "One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964" (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1997).

saw the release of new documents from Russian, as well as from Cuban and North American, archives on the history of the cold war in Latin America. Among the documents was Fidel Castro's secret speech delivered in January of 1968, when Cuban-Soviet relations had reached rock-bottom. Castro's speech, which took him ten hours to deliver, was addressed to some one hundred members of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party; a portion of the document dealt with the history of the October 1962 missile crisis. We do not know what the rest of the speech said. This fascinating document, with some pages excised and lines blacked out, was declassified in 1992 at the request of the authors of the book under review. *Sad & Luminous Days* is constructed around this speech, placed in a larger historical context. And while *Sad & Luminous Days* examines one phase in Cuban-Soviet relations dealt with in *Cuba on the Brink*, the two books in many respects can be read profitably in tandem.

Castro's speech dealt with two related problems. First, it addressed dissent within the Cuban Communist Party by the so-called microfaction. This opposition group sought support from the Soviet leadership against Fidel Castro and his colleagues. The speech also denounced the Soviet's lack of support for revolutionary movements. The dissenting group had voiced criticism of Fidel Castro's economic policies and in doing so referred to the recently killed Che Guevara as someone who "had crippled the economy" and whose departure from Cuba was "[t]he best thing he did" (136). The group was eventually put on trial and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. In his speech Castro criticized the Soviets' behavior during the missile crisis in an unprecedented manner. Going over the history of the decision to place the missiles on the island, Castro explained that the Cubans had had full trust in the Soviet Union, but found after the event how much the Soviet military commanders had improvised when they placed the nuclear weapons on the island and how politically erroneous their decision not to make the deployment public had been. Once the weapons were discovered, Cuba was even weaker vis-à-vis the United States than before.

Castro criticized the Soviet Union's hostile attitude to what for the Cubans was the essence of revolutionary internationalism, but what for the Soviet leaders of the 1960s was "a fantasy of their fathers" (99) that undermined their leadership in the third world and their policy of détente and peaceful coexistence with the United States. As a result, in 1967 Leonid Brezhnev began to ration Soviet oil shipments and reduce aid and technical assistance to the island.

The Soviet retaliation forced the Cuban government to define its foreign policy terms. The opportunity arose on the occasion of the Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, which put an end to the Prague Spring and to the attempt to give Soviet-style socialism a

human face. Occupation was the wrong term in Cuba, however. Castro went on television on August 23, two days after the invasion, and stated "in contradiction with the emotions of many," that "the Czechoslovak regime was heading toward capitalism and was inexorably heading toward imperialism" (141).

One of the goals of *Sad & Luminous Days* is to arouse the reader's empathy with Cuba, a country which has faced mighty obstacles to its sovereign national existence. The authors see the Cuban endorsement of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in this light. However, more research is necessary to learn what went on in Castro's mind when he condemned the Czechs: "Millions of people have been placed before this tragic alternative: they must either remain passive in the face of circumstances that recall certain episodes of the past, or else they must make common cause with pro-Yankee spies and agents, and with other enemies of socialism" (143).

Books like *Cuba on the Brink* and *Sad & Luminous Days* have already aided scholars in other area studies such as the history of the Soviet Union,⁸ and have contributed to some of the most innovative theoretical work on the cold war.⁹ In addition, they have helped to revise the notion of the cold war as a bipolar conflict that spilled over to other parts of the world and subordinated the periphery of the superpowers to their machinations. By putting Cuba at the center of their inquiry, the authors have shown the centrality of the periphery and the might of the small players on the world scene.

THE SOVIET UNION'S PROJECTION IN LATIN AMERICA

One question that historians have asked is how deeply and extensively the Soviet Union was involved in Latin America during the heyday of the bilateral conflict. It was not until the Soviet archives were opened, largely after the USSR had disappeared, that scholars could begin to unravel the answers to these questions. Paszyn's *The Soviet Attitude to Political and Social Change in Central America* intends to contribute to this discussion. Originally a 1995 MPhil thesis at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, Paszyn addresses important questions posed by scholars of Soviet foreign policy.

The book's argument is framed within the concepts of regional conflict resolution and superpower cooperation. Its central thesis is that state and party politics, diplomacy, and ideology all went their

8. William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and his Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

9. Richard Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War. The State, Military Power and Social Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

separate ways in the Soviet Union's historical trajectory, that from Lenin to Gorbachev "ideology was being adjusted to reality," and that Marxism-Leninism was malleable enough to change according to the requirements of the historical moment (3). Paszyn goes even further, however, and argues that "Soviet policy towards the area reflected the decline of Marxist-Leninist ideology as a basis of Moscow's foreign policy formulation, in favour of pragmatism" (viii).

The book covers Soviet attitudes towards Nicaragua before, during, and after the Sandinistas took state power in 1979 (chapters 2–5), the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador (chapter 6), and the Guatemalan revolutionary process (chapter 7). The author contends that Central America had been of little interest to the Soviet Union even after the Cubans triumphed in the Caribbean. Indeed, "the Soviet Union watched Nicaragua's autonomous armed uprising with only the remotest interest" (25). One reason was that no one in the USSR believed that the United States "would let a left-wing revolution succeed on their own door step" (26), another was that the recent history of failed 1960s guerrilla campaigns in Latin America promised little chance for success ten years later. As Paszyn states, the USSR was careful to consider the broader implications of its involvement in the region's revolutionary process (26).

However, both ideologues and Latin America specialists in the Soviet Union began to see in the triumph of the Sandinistas a shift in "correlation of forces" on the world political scene in favor of socialism, which prompted them to reevaluate the conditions for revolution in the rest of the region. Even Che Guevara, whose expedition to Bolivia the Soviets had opposed as an adventure in 1966 and 1967, was rehabilitated along with his insurrectionary principles, whereas the Nicaraguan Communist Party "seemed to be ignored by the Soviet Union after 1979, and even faced criticism" (32).

The USSR was not prepared to take on yet another commitment on the Cuban scale and pushed Nicaragua to maintain economic links with capitalist countries. However, as U.S. pressure on Nicaragua mounted after Ronald Reagan came to power in 1981, the USSR increased, albeit reluctantly, its economic and military assistance. Even though this support never reached the amount the Nicaraguans needed and wanted, it was more than what the Soviet Union could afford given its own ailing economy.

The onset of Gorbachev's *perestroika* redirected Soviet foreign policy goals and reduced aid to the third world countries. In public statements Gorbachev set out also to de-ideologize interstate relations. Yet public statements notwithstanding, the recently opened Soviet archives, not included in Paszyn's analysis, show that new thinking found it hard to take root in a sclerotic system. At least one important source, the documents from the International Department of the Central Committee of

the Soviet Union's Communist Party, shows that aid to local communist parties and guerrilla movements continued, selectively and discreetly, throughout the 1980s. In 1989 this department earmarked several millions of rubles to struggling and needy political organizations around the world even when the Soviet Union was on the verge of its own economic collapse.¹⁰

Soviet aid to the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional in El Salvador, like its initial response to the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional in Nicaragua, was slow in coming. Paszyn adduces that the primary reason was pragmatism and that fear of damaging vital economic relations with Argentina and Brazil were behind Soviet restraint. Once again, Soviet archives show that the Soviets supported the Salvadoran guerrilla forces with arms and money, but not so as to give ground to the U.S. State Department White Paper, which in February 1981 alleged a massive arms shipment to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

This evidence of limited Soviet involvement, despite large quantities of the Soviet arms originating from Cuba and even Vietnam, allows us to put into perspective the Reagan administration's aggressive retaliation in order to justify to Congress and the public its own extensive aid to the Salvadoran army and to the *contra* forces in Nicaragua. Still, the Soviet Union did more than pay "only lip-service to the Salvadoran revolutionary struggle" (106). Paszyn, like many scholars of the Soviet past, still assumes that the Soviet leadership was a monolith, obeying a central command. Instead, deep splits were hidden and/or were presented as differences between hardliners and innovators. Gorbachev therefore had to govern with the hardliners, well entrenched within the military and the party structures who in August 1991 overpowered the general secretary himself.

Paszyn brings our understanding of the Soviet Union's projection in Latin America forward through her reading of the Soviet press and academic journals, but her book, which relies on older secondary works, also leaves several questions unanswered. Perhaps the most important is the apparent contradiction between state and party politics, and between diplomacy and ideology, which scholars have interpreted as different political practices. Marxism-Leninism was essential to any Soviet leader's system of belief, however.¹¹ Even when the Soviet Union expanded trade with Latin American countries in the 1970s, after it had distanced itself from Cuba's foreign endeavors, as *Pravda* put it "each tractor, automobile, machine, tool or other piece of equipment shipped

10. Lora Soroka, comp., *Fond 89. Communist Party of the Soviet Union on Trial* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2001), 266–365.

11. Teddy J. Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology: The Origins of Soviet Foreign Policy* (London and Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1979).

to Latin America carries with it the truth about the Soviet Union, and shows the Latin American peoples the enormous successes that the Soviet Union has scored in a short historical period thanks to the socialist system."¹² In light of the USSR's historical trajectory, Soviet pragmatism, like détente with the United States, was simply expediency. As the wavering support for armed struggle in Latin America (and elsewhere) reveals, the Soviet Union always sought to expand its interests through any means that promised success; but these means alternated between support for liberation movements, trade, and state-to-state relations. Whichever political tactic was preferred at any particular historical conjuncture, the "imperial-revolutionary paradigm" remained unchanged.¹³

CONCLUSIONS

The books reviewed here reflect the methodological and ideological variety that underlies the history of revolutions and revolutionaries in Latin America during the cold war era. They highlight strengths and weaknesses of such studies, depending on the wealth of sources and the resourcefulness of research methodologies. Cuba has always been one of the cold war's flashpoints, but the books here go well beyond the merely spectacular. The studies of Cuba during the cold war present scholars with new ways to approach the subject, which can be applied to the advantage of other cases in Latin America and beyond. What the books under review have also shown is the enormous benefit historians can draw from cross-examining written as well as oral evidence, now when the ambiance of goodwill, respect for truth, diversity of opinions and political standpoints exists among the participants of the dialogue.

12. Cited in Jacques Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution. Soviet Ideological and Strategic Perspectives, 1959–77* (New York and London, Praeger, 1978), 148.

13. For the elaboration of this concept, see Vladimir Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).