
REVIEW ESSAYS

INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND ENCOUNTERS:

Recent Directions in the Literature

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THE WAR OF 1898: THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA IN HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY. By Louis A. Pérez Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. Pp. 171. \$34.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

SUMNER WELLES, FDR'S GLOBAL STRATEGIST. By Benjamin Welles. (New York: St. Martin's, 1998. Pp. 437. \$35.00 cloth.)

EL TRIANGULO IMPOSIBLE: MEXICO, RUSIA SOVIETICA Y ESTADOS UNIDOS EN LOS AÑOS VEINTE. By Daniela Spenser. (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1998. Pp. 269.)

THE IMPOSSIBLE TRIANGLE: MEXICO, SOVIET RUSSIA, AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE 1920S. Foreword by Friedrich Katz. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998. Pp. 254. \$49.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)

MEXICO BETWEEN HITLER AND ROOSEVELT: MEXICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF LAZARO CARDENAS, 1934-1940. By Friedrich E. Schuler. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998. Pp. 269. \$47.50 cloth.)

STRATEGY, SECURITY, AND SPIES: MEXICO AND THE U.S. AS ALLIES IN WORLD WAR II. By María Emilia Paz. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997. Pp. 264. \$55.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)

THE CHAINS OF INTERDEPENDENCE: U.S. POLICY TOWARD CENTRAL AMERICA, 1945-1954. By Michael L. Krenn. (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996. Pp. 228. \$72.95 cloth.)

- EISENHOWER, SOMOZA, AND THE COLD WAR IN NICARAGUA, 1953–1961. By Michael D. Gambone. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997. Pp. 247. \$65.00 cloth.)
- THE SPARROW AND THE HAWK: COSTA RICA AND THE UNITED STATES DURING THE RISE OF JOSE FIGUERES. By Kyle Longley. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997. Pp. 239. \$29.95 paper.)
- POLITICS OF ILLUSION: THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION REEXAMINED. Edited by James G. Blight and Peter Kornbluh. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1997. Pp. 284. \$45.00 cloth.)
- BAY OF PIGS DECLASSIFIED: THE SECRET CIA REPORT ON THE INVASION OF CUBA. Edited by Peter Kornbluh. (New York: New Press, 1998. Pp. 339. \$17.95 paper.)
- BENEATH THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORY OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA. By Lars Schoultz. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998. Pp. 476. \$19.95 paper.)
- CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF EMPIRE: WRITING THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS. Edited by Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998. Pp. 575. \$59.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)

U.S.-based scholars have long studied the relationship between Latin America and the United States. Four of the twelve articles in the first volume of the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (1918) dealt with various aspects of the subject, and by that time, several universities were already offering courses on diplomatic and commercial relations between the two regions. Practitioners in the field have usually fallen into one of two categories. One consists of U.S. diplomatic historians or specialists in the history of U.S. foreign policy. Samuel Flagg Bemis was perhaps “the founding father” of this group, having produced in 1943 a widely read study entitled *The Latin American Policy of the United States*, along with many other works that dealt only tangentially with Latin America, if at all.¹ The second category consists of scholars, mainly historians, who were trained as Latin Americanists and whose writings on the region are not confined to studies of its relations with the United States. Arthur Whitaker is an early exemplar of this group, having written *The United States and Latin American Independence, 1800–1830* (1941), as well as books on the colonial mercury mine at Huancavelica, Peru, and the fall of Juan Perón in 1955.²

Over the years, the work of both groups has occasionally been informed by Marxist, dependency, or world-systems theory. Some have

1. See Mark T. Gilderhus, “Founding Father: Samuel Flagg Bemis and the Study of U.S.–Latin American Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 21 (1997):1–13.

2. See the obituary for Whitaker in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, no. 3 (1980):473–75.

heeded calls for the necessity of using Latin American sources, especially unpublished documents from archives in the region. More recently, the entire field has been roiled by the emergence of new epistemological approaches usually placed under the heading of postmodernism and post-colonialism that delegitimize practitioners' traditional focus on the state and its agents. These approaches emphasize the need to inject discourse analysis into the study of U.S.-Latin American relations and to enlarge the conceptualization of the field to include gender, non-elite groups, and other subjects in addition to or instead of states. Some scholars, meanwhile, pursue a traditional course, seemingly unaffected by changes in the field. Each of these categories is represented by one or more of the books under review here, and together they offer a panoramic view of a field in flux.

In *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*, Louis Pérez Jr. deals with only those aspects of the war related to Cuba. Arguably the leading historian of Cuba in the United States, Pérez writes in a largely traditional mode, but his purpose is iconoclastic: to demolish conventional U.S. explanations of the causes and outcome of the war and to offer his own interpretation. Chiding U.S. historians of the war for their failure to consult Cuban sources, Pérez argues in the preface that they have fashioned a narrative that "has served as a means of self-affirmation of what the nation is, or perhaps more correctly what the nation thinks itself to be . . ." (p. x). He goes on to review each of the themes that have dominated historical discourse about the war in the United States, such as the desire of Cuban insurgents for U.S. intervention and popular hostility toward Spain, especially after the sinking of the *Maine*, which dragged a reluctant President William McKinley toward a war that may have been unnecessary but was certainly unintended and motivated largely by altruistic motives. Pérez offers an alternative construction that neatly upends traditional interpretations of these themes. His principal contention is that far from being pushed toward belligerence by an aroused public, the McKinley administration moved against Spain to forestall Cuban independence, which had been virtually assured by early 1898. Thus the Cuban revolutionaries had no reason to seek U.S. intervention and in fact did not do so. In opposing Cuban independence, the McKinley administration was adhering to a U.S. policy that could be traced back to the early nineteenth century: "Cuba was far too important to be turned over to the Cubans" (p. 13). In contrast, Pérez maintains, widespread popular support for Cuba Libre was reflected in the Joint Congressional Resolution of 20 April 1898, which declared Cuba to be free and independent and in the Teller Amendment disclaimed any U.S. intention to annex or otherwise control the island. But the McKinley administration was by no means disposed to countenance Cuban independence and subverted the wording of the Teller Amendment to maintain control of the island by means of the Platt Amendment. Meanwhile, although the Cuban insurgents played a decisive role in

the U.S. defeat of Spain in 1898, their contribution was unacknowledged at the time and in subsequent historiography.

Pérez makes the case for his interpretation of the war effectively. His treatment of the U.S. historiography is less satisfactory, however, mainly because he does not really confront it in a systematic way. His practice in developing his arguments about the conventional U.S. point of view is to cite a seemingly indiscriminate array of authors, ranging from contemporary journalists to writers of textbooks to historians of the war. Moreover, the citations often do not follow chronological order. Thus in a paragraph on U.S. writers' self-congratulatory portrayals of U.S. motives for going to war, Pérez refers to eight different works, most of them studies of U.S. foreign policy, dating from 1972, 1933, 1909, 1939, 1943, 1988, 1926, and 1958, respectively (pp. 41–42). Only the last of these sources, Frank Freidel's *Splendid Little War*, deals exclusively with the events of 1898. But neither here nor in the bibliographical essay at the end of the book does Pérez offer a sustained analysis of Freidel's interpretation of the conflict or compare it with those in other specialized works. In short, Pérez's *War of 1898* offers a provocative reinterpretation that will undoubtedly influence subsequent writing about the war but is less successful as a critique of the scholarly literature.

Benjamin Welles's account of the life of his father, *Sumner Welles, FDR's Global Strategist*, illustrates the virtues of traditional biography. The younger Welles, a former journalist, has made excellent use of his father's papers to produce a work that offers few surprises but paints a detailed and sympathetic portrait that does not disguise the flaws of its subject.

Born in 1892 into the Northeastern aristocracy, Welles studied at Groton and Harvard University before embarking on a diplomatic career that began with a successful assignment in Tokyo. By 1917, when he returned to Washington from Japan, Welles had become convinced of the need to cultivate closer relations with Latin America and asked for a post in the region, usually considered a backwater to be shunned by ambitious young diplomats. Starting with a tour in Buenos Aires, Welles would be intimately involved with Latin American affairs for the next twenty-five years. His long-standing ties with Franklin Roosevelt, whom he had known since childhood, led to his elevation to the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America in 1933. In this capacity, he was able to promote non-interventionism and other elements of the Good Neighbor Policy that he had advocated for many years.

The author devotes two chapters to the most controversial phase of Sumner Welles's Latin American career: his six-month stay in Cuba in 1933 as ambassador prior to taking up his post at the U.S. State Department. Benjamin makes clear Sumner Welles's opposition to U.S. recognition of the short-lived government of Raúl Grau San Martín, who he claimed had little popular support. He explained to journalist Drew Pearson (another close

friend) that recognition would impose on Cuba a “military dictatorship fast becoming as bad as Machado’s” (p. 178). Afterward Welles and President Roosevelt adhered to the Estrada Doctrine, automatically recognizing any government that came to power. The Good Neighbor Policy bore fruit when Welles was able to create hemispheric consensus at inter-American conferences in Buenos Aires in 1936 and in Rio de Janeiro in 1942, despite the obstructionism of Argentina. His performance in Buenos Aires brought him promotion to Undersecretary of State, the number two position in the department, and increasing preoccupation with problems relating to the impending world war.

Benjamin Welles does not minimize the reckless personal behavior that wrecked his father’s career on two occasions. In the 1920s, his liaison with Mathilde Gerry (a married woman eight years his elder), his abandonment of his first wife (Benjamin’s mother), and his subsequent marriage to the divorced Mathilde resulted in his dismissal from the State Department on the orders of the straitlaced Calvin Coolidge. More serious was Welles’s alienation of FDR’s Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, who was inexperienced in foreign affairs and often absent because of poor health. In 1943 Hull and other enemies forced him out of office by exploiting a report that a drunken Welles had made homosexual overtures to a sleeping car porter three years earlier. These events were previously recounted in detail by Irwin Gellman in *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles* (1995). Gellman asserted that Latin American policy suffered as a result of Welles’s departure: Hull refused to recognize a new Bolivian government in late 1943, only to reverse himself six months later, and engaged in a futile confrontation with Argentina.

Benjamin Welles concludes his book with an account of his father’s final years, which were marred by dissipation and depression, and with a chapter evaluating his contributions to U.S. foreign policy. The son calls the Good Neighbor Policy largely a memory, but it is likely that Sumner Welles will be remembered mainly for his achievement in forging hemispheric unity before and during World War II. In any event, Benjamin Welles’s book should stand as the definitive biography for a long time.

Mexico’s Foreign Policy Examined

The three books under review that examine aspects of Mexico’s foreign policy are traditional in that they focus primarily on the Mexican state. But all three are notable in their use of unpublished documents from Mexican and European collections as well as from U.S. archives. In addition, Friedrich Schuler and María Emilia Paz and to a lesser extent Daniela Spenser ascribe agency to Mexico’s political leaders and diplomats. Scholars of U.S. relations with Latin America or with individual countries have frequently depicted officials and others in the region as passive objects who

were acted upon or even victimized by the representatives of the more powerful nation. Pérez's analysis of the relationship of Cuba's revolutionaries of 1898 to the McKinley administration fits this mold in that he presents the Cuban leaders as being consistently elbowed aside by U.S. officials.

Daniela Spenser's *El triángulo imposible: México, Rusia Soviética y Estados Unidos en los años veinte* traces Mexico's relations with the Soviet Union and the United States during the 1920s, highlighting Washington's fears about the advance of Bolshevism in Mexico and its possible spread to Central America and the United States. Her study is also available in English. The often strained relationship between Mexico and the United States in the 1920s has been studied by numerous scholars, some of whom are cited, such as Robert Smith. Spenser also cites a 1970 article in *Historia Mexicana* by James Horn but not his 1969 dissertation or his article in *The Americas*, both of which directly addressed U.S. alarm over Bolshevism.³

Much more valuable is Spenser's discussion of the equally troubled relationship between Mexico and the USSR. In July 1924, Mexico became the first country in the Western Hemisphere to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Although the administration of President Alvaro Obregón had pursued informal contacts with the Soviets since 1922 with the aim of developing trade between the two countries, Spenser attributes the 1924 decision to political motives. The move enabled Obregón to appease leftists who were disturbed by the administration's concessions in the recent Bucareli agreements with the United States. Among those supporting Obregón's decision were the members of what Spenser calls "the radical intellectual elite": individuals who held influential positions in the government, were committed to social and economic reform, and were inspired by the example of Russia's Bolshevik Revolution. This group included Jesús Silva Herzog, Ramón de Negri, and Marte Gómez.

Spenser shows, however, that "normal relations" with the USSR were impeded by the Soviet embassy's overt and covert connections with the Partido Comunista Mexicano. It also appears that the Soviets valued their ties with Mexico mainly because of its suitability as a base for their activities in the Western Hemisphere, as many U.S. officials believed. When Soviet Foreign Minister Georgi Chicherin made a speech to this effect in 1925, President Plutarco Elías Calles felt compelled to declare that Mexico would be the instrument of no country.

Mexico severed relations with the USSR in January 1930. Unfortunately, Spenser's faulty organization obscures the issues involved. When she first mentions the break, she does so in the context of an abortive Com-

3. James J. Horn, "Diplomacy by Ultimatum: Ambassador Sheffield and Mexican-American Relations, 1924-1927," Ph.D. diss., State University of New York-Buffalo, 1969; and "U.S. Diplomacy and 'The Specter of Bolshevism' in Mexico (1924-1927)," *The Americas* 32 (1975-1976):31-45.

munist Party uprising, which she indicates was a by-product of the Escobar revolt of 1929 and was launched on the instructions of the Communist International. The Mexican government's savage repression of the party brought denunciation by the Comintern and anti-Mexican demonstrations in Latin America, Europe, and the United States, which in turn precipitated the break. When Spenser returns to the subject in the following chapter, she mentions other causes, including President Emilio Portes Gil's belief that Marxism was incompatible with Mexico's need for capital for economic development. Spenser also devotes an intriguing section to the disillusionment of the radical elite, notably Jesús Silva Herzog, who was sent to the USSR as ambassador in 1929 at his own request. Isolated in Moscow and angered by public attacks on Mexico, he concluded that the Russian people had gained little from the revolution and that the dictatorship of the proletariat had been converted into the dictatorship of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Little cultural or ideological affinity existed between Mexico and the USSR, and the prospects for trade were nil. To Silva Herzog, the Mexican Embassy in Moscow seemed superfluous.

Because Spenser observes in her brief conclusion that Mexico was trapped between the capitalist reality represented by the United States and the socialist ideal represented by the Soviet Union, she might well have entitled her book "Mexico between Moscow and Washington." By contrast, Friedrich Schuler's title, *Mexico between Hitler and Roosevelt: Mexican Foreign Relations in the Age of Lázaro Cárdenas, 1934–1940*, is something of a misnomer as the book deals as much with domestic matters as with foreign affairs during the Cárdenas era. Unlike Spenser, Schuler does not perceive Mexico as trapped between nations that were more powerful economically and militarily. To the contrary, he emphasizes the diplomatic prowess of Mexico's officials: "Mexicans were better skilled in international negotiations, more realistic in the evaluation of historical contexts, and more creative in situations of crisis than their European and U.S. counterparts" (p. 1).

Mexico between Hitler and Roosevelt is based solidly on research in archives in Mexico, the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. Yet it is marred by typographical errors, annoying omission of the given names of personages both obscure and prominent, and occasional infelicitous phrases like "the Mexican revolutionary nomenclature," presumably to suggest an analogy with the Soviet Nomenclatura (p. 55). Either the author or the editors should have corrected these solecisms.

Much of Schuler's argument rests on his contention that by the mid-1930s, Mexico had developed a cadre of professional bureaucrats in the foreign relations and treasury ministries who were committed to national economic development rather than to any single chief executive. During the Cárdenas administration, the treasury ministry (Hacienda) headed by Eduardo Suárez became the major player in foreign affairs because of its power over exchange rates and international contracts and purchases.

Schuler makes the related argument that by early 1938, the administration was facing an economic crisis and its costly development plans were in danger of collapsing because of labor unrest, bad weather, falling government revenues, and Mexico's dispute with the foreign oil companies. Schuler maintains that this crisis produced the conservative phase of the Cárdenas era as well as the oil expropriation of 18 March 1938.

Differing from other interpreters of these events,⁴ Schuler defines the expropriation as a dramatic gesture aimed primarily at regaining the economic initiative. It also enabled the administration to carry out a long-planned peso devaluation without controversy. Schuler further asserts that in the aftermath of the expropriation, the power of the oil companies, despite their arrogance, was limited because of the deteriorating situation in Europe, which enabled Cárdenas to force the multinationals to accept a negotiated settlement. Schuler hails the rupture of diplomatic relations with Great Britain as a brilliant maneuver: it showed that a leftist government could expropriate British property with impunity, stripped the British-owned companies of diplomatic representation in Mexico, and allowed Mexico to exploit U.S.-British rivalry in the petroleum conflict.

Schuler goes on in *Mexico between Hitler and Roosevelt* to discuss Mexico's relations with the fascist powers of Europe and with Republican Spain, all of which proved disappointing. Meanwhile, Mexican rightists were heartened by Francisco Franco's rise in Spain and received financial support from his organization, the Falange. German propaganda activities in Mexico were also substantial, although Schuler finds no evidence of German backing for the rebellion led by Saturnino Cedillo in 1938. Schuler emphasizes the links between the Cárdenas administration and Washington's New Dealers: "only in the United States were there individuals, organizations, and government representatives who were genuinely and sincerely interested in the economic and social modernization of Mexico" (p. 202).

The last chapters of Schuler's book overlap with the opening chapters of María Emilia Paz's *Strategy, Security, and Spies: Mexico and the U.S. as Allies in World War II*. She draws on material from Mexican and U.S. archives as well as captured German documents to describe the often prickly relationship between the two North American allies during World War II as they dealt with questions of defense, raw materials, and espionage. Like Schuler, Paz discusses the ambivalence of Mexican leaders as they became aware of the role that Mexico was expected to play in the global conflict. The two authors agree that in 1940, Mexican army and navy officers were inclined to cooperate with the United States in the hope of

4. For examples, see Albert L. Michaels, "The Crisis of Cardenismo," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 2, pt. 1 (1970):51-79; and Lorenzo Meyer, *Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917-1942*, translated by Muriel Vasconcellos (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977).

modernizing the armed forces and enhancing their importance in the Mexican political system. Civilian leaders, notably Cárdenas and Ambassador Francisco Castillo Nájera, were more suspicious of U.S. intentions. Differences persisted after the inauguration of President Manuel Avila Camacho on 1 December 1940, partly because Castillo Nájera remained in Washington and Cárdenas was appointed commander of the Pacific Zone in December 1941 and defense secretary in September 1942.

A continuing source of conflict was the United States' desire to station uniformed military personnel in Mexico, which was contrary to the Mexican Constitution. President Avila Camacho was disposed to accede to U.S. wishes, but Cárdenas insisted that properly trained and equipped Mexican troops were capable of defending Mexico's Pacific coast against the Japanese. Even after Avila Camacho declared in May 1942 that a state of war existed between Mexico and the Axis powers, conflicts occurred over staffing of an air base in Tehuantepec built at U.S. government expense. The project was abandoned in 1943, as were plans to build airfields in Baja California and a road along the peninsula. Paz also reviews the decision to send Mexican troops to the front lines. U.S. military officials were unenthusiastic about Mexican participation in the fighting, and President Avila Camacho realized that it might be unpopular in Mexico, but he considered it the only means of securing Mexico a seat at the peace negotiations. On 27 March 1945, an air force squadron of some three hundred Mexican officers and troops left for the Philippines after receiving training in the United States.

Spy buffs will enjoy Paz's account of Axis espionage and U.S. counter-espionage during the war years. German agents associated with the Abwehr (military intelligence) were the most active, viewing Mexico as a convenient listening post and base for sabotage against the United States. According to Paz, Mexico did little to curb the activities of German spies between 1940 and 1942, partly because of conflicts between the ministries of the interior (Gobernación) and foreign relations and partly because Mexican officials were bribed to allow German agents to enter the country.

Although Paz's assessment of Mexico's successes in dealing with the United States is more guarded than Schuler's, she observes that during the war years, "Mexico developed its negotiating skills, taking advantage of the fears and the security needs of its powerful neighbor. For the first time Mexico enjoyed a certain leverage over the United States" (p. 6). Here Paz diverges from the interpretation recently offered by Stephen Niblo in *War, Diplomacy, and Development: The United States and Mexico, 1938–1954* (1995). Although he noted that Cárdenas had qualms about the erosion of national sovereignty, Niblo asserted that both Cárdenas and Avila Camacho cooperated fully with the United States: "There was to be no neutrality, much less any attempt to use the northern neighbor's problems to avenge old wrongs. The speed and depth of [Mexico's] international commitment

were remarkable.”⁵ Niblo argued further that wartime collaboration between the two countries, especially in the economic realm, allowed the United States to regain lost influence over a dependent Mexico and set the stage for the return of massive amounts of foreign capital after 1945. Paz deals only with security issues here, but perhaps she will turn in the future to other aspects of U.S.-Mexican relations during World War II.

The Cold War in Central America and Cuba

While the three works on Mexico provide an excellent portrayal of its relations with the United States and other countries from 1920 to 1945, the three books on Central America under review examine the region’s relationship with the United States in the decade immediately following World War II. As Michael Krenn observes in *The Chains of Interdependence: U.S. Policy toward Central America, 1945–1954*, Central America was of slight importance to high-ranking U.S. officials until the Guatemalan crisis of 1953–1954. This evaluation is reflected in the scholarship on the region for the years in question. Although the literature on the Guatemalan revolution is voluminous, the rest of Central America has been neglected. An exception is Thomas Leonard’s *The United States and Central America, 1944–1949* (1984), which Krenn mentions briefly.

The Chains of Interdependence is by far the most traditional of the three works under review here. Krenn has mined the files of several U.S. agencies and the papers of numerous officials, including ambassadors and Assistant Secretaries of State for Latin American Affairs. One finds no evidence, however, that he consulted a single Spanish-language source. As a result, Krenn deals exclusively with the perceptions and concerns of U.S. policy makers as presented in various communications and reports.

Krenn’s purpose is to study the U.S. concept of interdependence as it was applied to Central America. In his view, U.S. officials, convinced that the war had brought the non-Communist nations closer together, developed the notion of interdependence as a guiding principle for U.S. policy. For the developing world, interdependence meant that the United States would supply capital and technology, military assistance, and support for democratic values. In return, the United States would gain markets and raw materials as well as military cooperation and support in the United Nations.

As policy makers surveyed Central America, they saw a region undergoing social and political upheaval and handicapped by its Iberian heritage, racial makeup, and impoverished and poorly educated population.

5. See Stephen Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development: The United States and Mexico, 1938–1954* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1995), 63.

Especially worrisome was the “bug” of economic nationalism, which was present in all the countries except Nicaragua and undercut a basic premise of interdependence. Krenn uses the case of Honduras to examine military assistance and that of El Salvador to review technical assistance between 1950 and 1954. His chapter on Nicaragua stresses that the regime of Anastasio Somoza García was viewed much more favorably after 1949 because of the dictator’s staunch anti-Communism. Guatemala, at first treated as a “danger zone,” was given large amounts of economic and military aid after the fall of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. Throughout the book, Krenn emphasizes the contradictions that ensured the failure of interdependence. For example, military assistance to the Central American armed forces protected against the spread of Communism but did not advance democracy. Economic assistance was intended to bolster the Central Americans’ traditional role as suppliers of raw materials and did little to promote the development of the region. Krenn concludes that interdependence failed because, despite the rhetoric, “most U.S. officials could never wholeheartedly support an interdependence that threatened what they perceived as definite nationalistic interests of the United States” (p. 206).

In *Eisenhower, Somoza, and the Cold War in Nicaragua, 1953–1961*, Michael Gambone pursues two objectives. First, he attempts to study the policymaking process in the two countries. With respect to the United States, he concentrates on the development of policies specifically related to Latin America and Nicaragua. For Nicaragua, he examines the internal political dynamics of the country in the waning days of the regime of Antonio Somoza García and the tumultuous period that followed his assassination in 1956. Gambone’s second goal is to define the nature of the relationship between the two countries during the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower. Acknowledging the disparities between the two countries, Gambone suggests that the relationship was not one of patronage, in which Nicaragua was totally subservient to the United States. Instead, he views Nicaragua as “an independent actor in a bilateral relationship” whose priorities and interests frequently diverged from those of the United States (p. 10).

Gambone is only partially successful in achieving the first of his goals. For example, using documents from the Eisenhower Library and other U.S. collections, he relates in detail the evolution of policy on economic assistance to Nicaragua and other developing nations, describing conflicts between fiscal conservatives such as Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey and those who favored the expanded extension of “soft loans.” Gambone also discusses various technical assistance programs carried out under the aegis of the U.S. Operations Mission in Nicaragua during the first Eisenhower administration (1953–1957). In the following chapter, he traces Nicaragua’s successful efforts to diversify its exports and markets and to obtain foreign investment from countries other than the

United States. Because of Gambone's reliance on printed documents produced by the World Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Nicaraguan and U.S. governments, however, he cannot provide an authoritative account of policy making in Nicaragua but at best a summary of policy decisions.

Nevertheless, Gambone contributes a sound overview of U.S.–Nicaraguan relations under Eisenhower. *Eisenhower, Somoza, and the Cold War in Nicaragua* can consequently be considered a sequel to Paul Clark Jr.'s *The United States and Somoza, 1933–1956: A Revisionist Look* (1992), which Gambone unaccountably does not cite. He conveys the travails of the small U.S. Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG) dispatched to Nicaragua in 1954. Charged with forming and training a combat infantry battalion within the Guardia Nacional that would act against external and internal threats, the MAAG made little headway in creating the new force. Gambone attributes the setbacks partly to the failures of the MAAG's commanding officer but also to the resistance of the elder Somoza, who considered it a political liability. In the mid-1950s, Nicaragua embarked on a rearmament program by purchasing aircraft, armored cars, and other weapons from Japan, Israel, and Europe that were cheaper than U.S. models and could be sold to third countries to gain needed foreign exchange. Washington eventually became annoyed by the threat to regional stability posed by Nicaragua's rearmament and by its tendency to bypass U.S. officials. Episodes like these underpin Gambone's conclusion that the Nicaraguan government developed an "increasing ability to pursue a unilateral course" instead of slavishly following U.S. initiatives (p. 227).

In *The Sparrow and the Hawk: Costa Rica and the United States during the Rise of José Figueres*, Kyle Longley adopts the interaction between the two types of birds as a metaphor for the relationship between the United States and another small Central American country, Costa Rica. Like the sparrow, such countries rely on evasion and manipulation in their dealings with the hawkish powers of the world. Longley develops his thesis by using U.S.–Costa Rican relations during the period from 1942 to 1957 as a case study.

Basing his arguments on voluminous printed and manuscript sources, including documents from Costa Rica's Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Longley begins by reviewing the relationship during the administration of President Rafael Calderón (1940–1944), who proved a cooperative ally during World War II. Calderón's close ties with the Communist Party (the Vanguardia Popular) aroused little concern during the war. But U.S. officials became alarmed when his successor, Teodoro Picado (1944–1948), although staunchly pro–United States, failed to distance himself from a connection that was viewed with increasing disfavor. As a result, when Picado attempted to impose Calderón as his successor in 1948

and ignited the revolution led by José Figueres, the U.S. government favored the rebels despite reservations about Figueres.

With the triumph of the revolution, Figueres headed a junta that gave way in 1949 to the presidency of Otilio Ulate. In 1953 Figueres himself was elected president. Figueres and his associates (who formed the Partido Liberación Nacional in 1951) undertook policies displeasing to Washington, such as nationalizing the banking system and negotiating a more favorable contract with the United Fruit Company. What most alarmed U.S. officials was Figueres's material and moral support for the Caribbean Legion, which was dedicated to the ouster of dictators in the region. Figueres did not waver, however, and criticized U.S. support for the dictators, going so far as to boycott the 1954 inter-American meeting because it was held in Caracas, where President Marcos Pérez Jiménez held sway.

Longley shows that Figueres pursued a nationalist agenda and at times defied Washington while retaining U.S. support when regimes that threatened U.S. hegemony (like those ruling Guatemala and Iran) faced extinction. Longley attributes Figueres's success to several factors, but above all to his anti-communist posture and to his preference for accommodation rather than confrontation. Figueres and the PLN also benefited from Costa Rica's favorable image in the United States and from a network of sympathizers, such as Adolf Berle and liberal members of the U.S. Congress. Longley might have undertaken a more extended comparison of the Costa Rican case with that of Guatemala, or better yet, with that of Bolivia, whose 1952 revolution also received benevolent treatment and substantial economic assistance from the United States. Cole Blasier's study of U.S. responses to twentieth-century revolutions in Latin America, *The Hovering Giant* (1985), pointed out the essential moderation of Víctor Paz Estenssoro and other Bolivian leaders and their skill in cultivating advocates in Washington.

In the conclusion to *The Sparrow and the Hawk*, Longley generalizes beyond the Costa Rican case to that of small countries in their dealings with major powers. Adapting the thesis of James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985), Longley argues that subordinate states, like peasants, can devise nonviolent strategies that enable them to shape their relations with the United States. Thus Longley, like Gambone, aligns himself firmly with those who assign agency to peripheral states.

All three books dealing with Central America highlight the importance of cold war issues in the U.S. relationship with the region. According to Longley, it was not U.S. intervention in Guatemala but rather its role in helping to bring down the Picado administration that marked the onset of the cold war in Latin America. As is well known, Anastasio Somoza García and his son and successor Luis Somoza Debayle collaborated with U.S. anti-Communist initiatives in the region and inflated the Communist threat

at home to ensure continuing U.S. support. In Gambone's view, the Somoza government was tottering politically and economically when the Cuban Revolution erupted, allowing Nicaragua to appear to Washington as an island of stability in a troubled region. Gambone points out, "Thus, in one sense, the Cuban revolution saved the Somoza regime" (p. 221).

In 1961 the Somoza government demonstrated its anti-Communist commitment and reliability as an ally by allowing the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to use the Nicaraguan port of Puerto Cabezas as a staging area for the Bay of Pigs invasion. This "perfect failure," as Theodore Draper dubbed it, produced many recriminations and charges of betrayal as participants sought to explain the debacle. In mid-1996, Cuban, U.S., and Soviet participants gathered at the Musgrove Plantation Conference Center in Georgia to reexamine the Bays of Pigs invasion in the light of newly available documents. Among the participants was Jacob Esterline, the CIA operative in direct charge of the operation, who discussed his role publicly for the first time. Also present were several scholars, among them Philip Brenner, Jorge Domínguez, Piero Gleijeses, and Thomas Skidmore.

Politics of Illusion: The Bay of Pigs Invasion Reexamined is the record of the Musgrove conference. It is based on what editors James Blight and Peter Kornbluh call "critical oral history," a method that "requires the simultaneous interaction of documents bearing on the paper trail of decisions . . . , memories of those who participated in the decisions, and scholars, whose business it is to know the relevant aspects of the written record" (p. 4). Along with the edited transcript of conference proceedings, the volume contains detailed chronologies and the text of newly published documents. Most of these items are declassified U.S. government documents that were released at the request of the National Security Archive, a nongovernmental research facility located at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Kornbluh, a senior analyst at the archive, and Blight, a professor at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies, provide an introduction and an epilogue.

Politics of Illusion offers no sustained arguments or much reflection on the propriety of attempting to overthrow another Western Hemisphere government, but it does provide fascinating and at times poignant insight into the events of 1960–1961 as recalled and reinterpreted by participants. Considerable attention is devoted to the resistance within Cuba. Conference participants included Lino Fernández of the Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria and the late Enrique Baloyra of the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (subsequently a political scientist and administrator at the University of Miami). Both agree that the invasion was premature, given the existing capabilities of the resistance, and they are skeptical of the U.S. belief that delay would have meant confrontation with a stronger Cuban government. But at the time, they and other anti-Castro Cubans

were caught up in the John Wayne syndrome. As Bay of Pigs veteran Rafael Quintero recalled, “the Americans hated communism and, like John Wayne, they never lost—ever” (p. 22). Also discussed at length are the actions of Richard Bissell, the CIA’s deputy director for plans, about whom Esterline remains bitter: “Dick promised, but he didn’t deliver” (p. 44). According to the editors, the main achievement of the conference was to help move the participants away from the betrayal theories associated with the Bay of Pigs.

Politics of Illusion will be useful to students of U.S.-Cuban relations and the policymaking process. It should be supplemented by another volume edited by Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba* (1998). That volume consists mainly of two long documents that were not released until 1998. The first is the “Inspector General’s Survey of the Cuban Operation,” completed in October 1961 after an internal investigation by CIA Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick. The survey is a devastating critique of the shoddy planning and organization that characterized the entire project, which Kirkpatrick believed should have been aborted. He also minimized the significance of President John Kennedy’s controversial decision to cancel the air strikes scheduled to coincide with the start of the invasion. Kirkpatrick’s report is followed by “Analysis of the Cuban Operation,” a point-by-point rebuttal made by Bissell’s deputy, Tracy Barnes.

Contrasting Overviews

Kirkpatrick criticized some CIA employees for treating Cubans “like dirt” and wondered whether any operation could be successful “when the attitudes toward the other people are so unfavorable” (p. 74). Lars Schoultz would argue that such attitudes have been at the root of U.S. policy toward Latin America for nearly two centuries. In *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*, he argues that three interests have driven U.S. policy: national security, the demands of domestic politics, and the promotion of U.S. economic development. But “underlying these three interests,” Schoultz adds, “is a pervasive belief that Latin Americans constitute an inferior branch of the human species” (p. xv).

Schoultz does not develop this argument in a systematic way, however. What follows is a chronological survey of U.S.–Latin American relations from the 1820s to the late twentieth century, although the last three decades are covered in a single chapter. Throughout, Schoultz offers a rather conventional narrative, periodically incorporating derogatory statements about Latin Americans by U.S. officials, especially diplomats assigned to the region. These statements usually refer to the dismal racial and ethnic heritage, childishness, and general incapacity of Latin Americans.

Remarks by Elihu Root on South American politeness and culture in a 1906 speech are described as condescending but atypical: "Until Root spoke these words, no senior U.S. official had ever publicly characterized Latin Americans as refined or cultivated" (p. 196). Few emulated Root, however, and even the "Good Neighbor Policy did not reach into the minds of U.S. leaders and the public to change the way in which they thought about Latin Americans" (p. 315). The concluding chapter emphasizes the continuity of U.S. policies and attitudes, with references to the writings of Jeane Kirkpatrick, Richard Morse, Howard Wiarda, and Lawrence Harrison.

Because of the breadth of its coverage and Schoultz's engaging style, *Beneath the United States* can be recommended to general readers and would make an excellent text for courses on U.S.-Latin American relations. It is a traditional work nonetheless. The focus is almost entirely on the U.S. government and its representatives, and except for a few references to resistance to U.S. initiatives, Latin Americans are portrayed as victims of the hegemon—no cunning sparrows here. Moreover, only a handful of non-English language sources are cited in more than sixty pages of notes. Schoultz relies almost entirely on primary sources, normally a commendable approach. But in this case, he has virtually ignored the vast body of scholarly writing on U.S.-Latin American relations.

Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations is in many respects the polar opposite of *Beneath the United States*. The outgrowth of a 1995 conference at Yale University, *Close Encounters of Empire* represents an effort to apply new theoretical frameworks to the study of U.S.-Latin American relations. In the first of three introductory essays, co-editor Gilbert Joseph indicates that the collection is intended not to cast aside dependency or world-systems paradigms but rather to incorporate a broadly defined and fluid cultural dimension into the interaction of foreign and local groups. He also stresses, "if the manifestations of inter-American culture are many and diverse, their history is always interwoven with political intentions and consequences" (p. 8). Steve Stern's opaquely worded contribution, in contrast, seems ultimately to call into question the very premise of the collection. In the third essay, co-editor Ricardo Salvatore examines the ways in which U.S. businessmen, journalists, and others used photography and other manifestations of modern technology to construct a new vision of South America during "the period of neo-imperial engagement" from 1890 to 1930 (p. 78).

Of the ten case studies making up the core of the volume, the majority deal with the Caribbean Basin, always the primary arena for the projection of U.S. economic, military, and cultural power. All the essays attempt culturally sensitive reexaminations of their respective topics, which range from the significance of U.S. visual images of the Andes, 1859–1930 (Deborah Poole) to U.S.–Mexican collaboration in showing cold war propa-

ganda films to Mexican audiences (Seth Fein) to foodstuffs as symbols of national identity in the Dominican Republic (Lauren Derby). Eileen Findlay offers an excellent example of how gendered analysis can illuminate a topic, in this case early U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. Co-editor Catherine LeGrand uses oral history and notarial documents to question representations of the United Fruit Company's banana zone on Colombia's Caribbean coast during the early twentieth century. She finds inadequacies in both Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and the formulations of dependency theorists. Her own account suggests that the Colombian banana zone was not the sort of enclave described by Thomas Miller Klubock in his essay on the introduction of welfare capitalism and its values to Chile's El Teniente mine by the Braden Copper Company. Also avowedly revisionist are essays by Steven Palmer and Michael Schroeder. Palmer questions the existing literature on Rockefeller Foundation activities in Latin America, arguing that its anti-hookworm mission in Costa Rica was preceded by local efforts. While undoubtedly impinging on national sovereignty, it also strengthened and expanded the reach of the state. Schroeder revisits Sandinista rebels, U.S. Marines, and the Guardia Nacional in the Segovias region of Nicaragua in "an effort to muddy up the waters of the master narratives of the period" (p. 211). He argues, for example, that Segovianos used the conflict to further their own personal and political agendas and that peasants and Indians as well as wealthy landowners could be counted among "the active allies" of the marines and the guard (p. 236). Essays by Steven Topik and Eric Paul Roorda examine military display as symbol. Topik describes the maneuvers of Flint's Fleet during the Brazilian naval revolt of 1893, and Roorda narrates Rafael Trujillo's appropriation of the cult of the airplane in the Dominican Republic.

In a section entitled "Final Reflections," Emily Rosenberg places the case studies in the context of current historiographical trends and finds that they all demonstrate that local cultures can reshape "the tools of empire" for their own purposes (p. 510). William Roseberry posits the concept of the social field as a vehicle for analyzing the interaction between global and local forces. Finally, María del Carmen Suescún Pozas considers imperialism in the visual arts with the help of well-chosen illustrations.

Close Encounters of Empire is a fine contribution to the ongoing reformulation of the bases of U.S.–Latin American relations. This and other books considered here indicate that traditional approaches to the subject—relying mainly on U.S. sources, denying agency to Latin Americans, and dealing exclusively with security and economic issues—are rapidly becoming obsolete. Increasingly, scholars in the field are using multi-archival sources, depicting Latin Americans as autonomous actors in their dealings with the United States and its people, and treating culture and values as central to their efforts. Two concerns arise regarding these trends. First, as

Longley, Joseph, and others warn, asymmetries of power should never be overlooked. The second concern arises from the fact that, according to Rosenberg, some of the new narratives seek “to illuminate through partial glimpses, to attend to localized context, to deal sensitively with multiple stories and protean symbolic systems” (p. 510). The danger is that the emphasis on the local and the protean will lead only to kaleidoscopic views that will always elude synthesis. For the moment, however, the new approaches have injected fresh life into a venerable subject.