shows how vendor politics – from the group petitioning for lower fees in the late nineteenth century to organising into workers' unions in the twentieth century – did yield some substantial gains. For instance, the establishment of a dedicated lending bank for vendors in 1943, the Banco del Pequeño Comercio del Distrito Federal (the Federal District Bank for Petty Commerce), addressed critical issues of credit for sellers and led to the organisation of credit unions. Vendor politics also undergirded the establishment of 160 new public market places throughout the city. Another notable long-term outcome of these decades of vendor activism was their inclusion in the establishment of the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (National Confederation of Popular Organisations, CNOP), the largest sector of the postrevolutionary state's official party in the 1930s. *Vendors' Capitalism* argues that, despite some gains, street vendors and market sellers needed to continually voice their demands in order to force action on the part of urban policymakers. Bleynat explains that, even after the establishment of so many new markets, tens of thousands of vendors remained on the streets of Mexico City, who were vulnerable to the oppressive tactics of urban police and market inspectors, while many of the largest vender organisations and unions turned a blind eye to their situation.

Overall, the expansive time period of the book enables Bleynat to demonstrate the historical and more contemporary centrality of markets as contested spaces and as spaces of subsistence, since selling was a primary means of production for a significant number of Mexico City residents across this time period. *Vendors' Capitalism* will be essential scholarship for its contributions to Mexican history and comparative urban history of markets and sellers; it should also be read by those interested in the informal economy, internal worker hierarchies, contested public spaces, the politics of union organising, urban planning and urban development.

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Stephen G. Rabe, *Kissinger and Latin America: Intervention, Human Rights, and Diplomacy*

(Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2020), ix + 316 pp.

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Henry Alfred Kissinger may be dead by the time this review is published, but in a sense he will live forever. In this excellent, tightly focused new study, Stephen Rabe provides what may be read as a scholarly headstone for this statesman: a powerful global actor who 'aided and abetted the savage despots of the 1970s'; an authoritarian bully who 'chastised, rebuked, and even shouted at diplomats who promoted

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democracy and human rights in Latin America'; a single-minded Cold Warrior who gleefully worked to overthrow governments in Bolivia and Chile, and delighted in the company of military dictators (pp. 234–9). Rabe is unstintingly fair in outlining more positive aspects of Kissinger's legacy (see Chapters 5 and 6), but his moments of diplomatic triumph and pragmatic devolution of control (as in the case of the Panama Canal) pale into insignificance alongside his role as *éminence grise* in some of modern Latin America's most murderous, anti-democratic and socio-economically regressive political moments.

Chapter 1 is an excellent summary of the 1960s and the many vicissitudes and tensions in US–Latin American relations. Using Richard Nixon as a route into Kissinger's life, Rabe characterises the first year of his government as a 'year of study', in which the new president gave signs of interest in Latin America but ultimately fell back on Nelson Rockefeller's 'tumultuous' fact-finding mission (p. 41). Only with the accession of left-wing governments in Chile and Bolivia a year later did Nixon – and particularly Kissinger – turn their interest more fully toward the region (p. 19). This reveals a rather narrow field of attention, for there were many valid reasons to concentrate on Latin America: in contrast with other parts of the world, the United States was running a healthy trade surplus with its neighbouring subcontinent and direct investments had trebled between 1950 and 1970. By contrast, Latin Americans were increasingly dissatisfied with the ordering of the global economic system, and in 1969 the 'Consensus of Viña del Mar' (a 1969 agreement between Latin American governments) demanded a 'fairer international division of labor'; this came just two years after Chile's Christian Democratic president Eduardo Frei famously claimed that the Alliance for Progress – President John F. Kennedy's plan to safeguard capitalist development in the region – had 'lost its way' (pp. 20–1). The irreconcilable tension between the Alliance's developmentalist rhetoric and its national security *Realpolitik* had crystallised longstanding North–South tensions. In the sixties, 'more U.S. technicians worked on police projects than on health and sanitation programs' (p. 26). Public endorsements of dictators such as Manuel Odría and Marcos Pérez Jiménez had only served to make the contradiction the more obvious. All told, a genuine engagement may have been of great benefit to the United States, but it was lost amid the incessant red-baiting of 1970–3. After March 1970, Nixon explicitly told aides that he and Kissinger were henceforth interested only in 'Cuba, or anything else that may be concerned with the East–West conflict' (p. 47).

Though the book ranges widely across Kissinger's long career and many regional interventions, the most impactful section is the account (in Chapter 2) of the destabilisation of Allende's government in Chile, and Kissinger's energetic whitewashing of the Pinochet dictatorship. Though this is hardly new ground, Rabe carefully presents a persuasive case which suggests – to me at least – that Jonathan Haslam's idea of 'assisted suicide' (*The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende: A Case of Assisted Suicide*, 2005) does not go nearly far enough. What occurred instead, I think, was 'assisted murder'. Even in 1969, Nixon was calling the attachment to democratic government in Chile a 'knee-jerk reaction' which ought to be set aside (p. 40). Rabe tackles head-on the notion that Allende's government may have been collapsing anyway, thus removing the United States from the nexus of blame. Given the stranglehold the Nixon government placed around the Chilean

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economy (and indeed, in a different way, Allende's rising popularity), he calls this 'counterfactual reasoning', recounting the conversation between Kissinger and Nixon where they establish the agreed 'line' that the United States helped create the conditions for the *golpe* and allowed it to play out (p. 78). This attempt at creating distance is revealed to be wholly cynical as Kissinger's lasting sentiment towards Pinochet's regime was that 'however unpleasant they act the government is better for us than Allende was' (p. 82). 'Better for us' is crucial here, as it gives the lie to professions of general betterment for Chileans (and indeed others) that were the putative priorities in overthrowing left-wing governments. 'What mattered most', Rabe concludes, 'were the views and actions of Nixon and Kissinger and high-ranking Chilean military officers' (p. 75).

Rabe is a wonderful summariser and synthesiser; for instance, a crisp pair of sentences remind us that in the mid-1960s, 'No military analyst expected the Soviet Union to invade the Western Hemisphere. The primary purpose of the aid was to ensure that the United States retained the confidence of the armed forces of Latin America' (p. 26). Similarly, on continuities between Kennedy and Johnson's foreign policy, Rabe ties many threads into a victor's garland: 'Neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba had expanded their reach in the region. Latin America was no longer "the most dangerous area" in the world' (*ibid.*). Rabe gives another pithy summation of the precise characteristics which allowed Kissinger to dominate Latin America policy; it was because he was 'intelligent, diligent, shrewd, and ambitious, and because he served his masters, Presidents Nixon and Ford, well' (p. 33). These confident and illuminating statements are built upon rigorous, extensive scholarship, and interested readers will find tremendous value in Rabe's copious notes.

The legacies of Nixon and Kissinger are entwined long after the former leaves the national stage, and Rabe artfully examines their own views towards Latin America. Nixon moved from publicly discussing the importance of democracy in 1958, to subordinating democratic considerations to anticommunism in his tour of 1967, eventually omitting it entirely from his reminiscences of 1978. His view of Latin Americans was deeply cynical. 'The Latins know they are not special. When you say they are, they like it', he asserted, adding that 'Latin Americans don't have competence … [further Inter-American Development Bank aid] would be money down a rat-hole' (p. 46). Kissinger shared Nixon's contempt for Latin American popular forces and admiration for the Argentine and Brazilian dictatorships. Nixon praised the 'new breed of military leaders [which] has arisen in Latin America dedicated to progress rather than protecting the status quo', though of course such fawning did not extend to genuinely progressive military leaders in Peru or Bolivia (p. 30). Kissinger himself opted for silence on the detail of his dark arts, ignoring many interventions altogether but choosing in his memoirs to engage in 'repeated attempts to absolve himself of participation in the campaign to destabilize the Chilean government' (p. 235).

How, then, should we think of Kissinger and his Latin American legacy? As a wily diplomat who knew when to offer concessions or flattery in order to maintain amity? Or as a man 'unmoved' by extra-legal executions, uninterested in the liberalisation of dictatorship in friendly regimes, and a willing party to the 'destruction of constitutionalism and democratic processes' (p. 36)? Rabe is wise enough to leave the ultimate decision to the reader, but he provides an awful lot of rope,

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not least in some of his chapter titles (such as 'Overthrowing Governments', 'Mass Murder and International Assassination', and 'Failed Initiatives'). In the end he throws the responsibility for judgment over to the region's people themselves, saying that while the 'good Pope Francis would undoubtedly forgive the United States and Henry Kissinger for the past … Latin Americans with a sense of history would probably be less forgiving' (p. 247). A characteristic understatement.

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Alan McPherson, *Ghosts of Sheridan Circle: How a Washington Assassination Brought Pinochet's Terror State to Justice*

(Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 382 pp.

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On a grey, autumn morning in late September 1976, an explosive device that had been mounted under the car of Orlando Letelier was detonated as the former Chilean diplomat approached Sheridan Circle in Washington, DC's Embassy Row neighbourhood. As an ambulance rushed him to nearby George Washington University Hospital, Letelier, whose body had been severed at the waist by the blast, was pronounced dead. Also perishing in the explosion was Ronni Moffitt, Letelier's young colleague at the Institute for Policy Studies, the progressive DC think tank where Letelier and his wife, Isabel, had become exiled critics of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Moffitt's husband, Michael, seated in the car's back seat, was the bombing's lone survivor. As historian Alan McPherson reminds us, the heinous attack, carried out by agents of the Chilean dictatorship, remains to this day the 'only assassination of a foreign diplomat on U.S. soil' and the only act of state-sponsored assassination to ever occur in the District of Columbia proper (p. 8).

McPherson is a leading scholar of US–Latin American relations, having published an important study of anti-Americanism during Latin America's Cold War and a more recent book on Latin American resistance to US military occupation in Central America and the Caribbean. In *Ghosts of Sheridan Circle*, he draws upon this expertise to provide a detailed historical account of the Letelier–Moffitt assassinations. Using US government and Chilean archives, and important collections of personal papers and organisational records, the author moves between the United States and Chile over some four decades. In the process, McPherson underscores the impact that the assassinations had on US–Chile bilateral relations while also illuminating how the 1976 attack was shaped broader transnational processes related to state terror, human rights activism and transitional justice.

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