

2012

H-Diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review

www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables

Volume XIII, No. 27 (2012)

14 May 2012

Roundtable Editors: Dustin Walcher and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable Web/Production Editor: George Fujii

Introduction by Dustin Walcher

Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds. *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8223-4720-0 (cloth, \$94.95); 978-0-8223-4737-8 (paperback, \$25.95).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIII-27.pdf>

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Introduction by Dustin Walcher, Southern Oregon University

On 8 October 2011, the *New York Times* published the story of Victoria Montenegro, a thirty-five year old Argentine woman who learned that the man she grew up believing to be her father was in fact her parents' murderer. Lt. Col. Hernán Tetzlaff had made a career out of capturing, torturing, and killing those he and Argentina's military government deemed "subversive" during the era of dirty war, between 1976 and 1983. The contributors to *A Century of Revolution* add deeper historical context to the stories of Montenegro and the too many others who were victims of state violence in the 1970s and 1980s by framing their experience as part of an "epochal cycle of revolutionary upheavals and insurgencies" (1). Rather than limiting their analysis to those two decades, or even the longer post-World War II period of global Cold War, editors Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph frame the period between the onset of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 and the present as an era marked by Latin America's Long Cold War. The individual essays that comprise *A Century of Revolution* primarily explain episodes of (usually counterrevolutionary) violence motivated by ideology and the quest for wealth and power.

The volume's contributors explicitly build upon the work of historian Arno Mayer, in particular his book *The Furies*. Indeed, the volume concludes with the transcript of an interview Grandin conducted with Mayer in 2008. "When you have a frontal challenge to an established order," Mayer explains, "with not just a political or economic dimension but cultural and religious ones as well, be it in the domestic sphere or at the interstate level, there would have to be a reaction. It goes without saying that those invested in it would try to mount a defense" (417). In the Latin American cases presented, that defense manifested itself violently. *A Century of Revolution* seeks to make sense of that violence.

The reviewers are impressed with the results. Max Paul Friedman writes, "Greg Grandin and Gil Joseph have been producing and cultivating some of the most interesting work on inter-American history published in the last dozen years. The best chapters in *A Century of Revolution* continue their commitment to wide-ranging, innovative research, to breaking with accepted paradigms, and to telling history from below." Kyle Longley finds that the book makes "a substantial contribution to the understanding of the topic of political violence in Latin America in the twentieth century." David Painter calls it "a valuable book packed with information and insights." In light of their past scholarship, Grandin and Joseph unsurprisingly challenge existing paradigms in the field. Although the term "Cold War" appears in the book's subtitle, the editors seek to define the term in ways specific to the Latin American context. Implicitly rejecting the prevailing definition of the Cold War as an ideological and geopolitical struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, *A Century of Revolution* frames Latin America's Long Cold War as a social, political, and ideological struggle between ordinary peasants and workers on the one hand, and powerful elites at home and abroad on the other. Readers learn a great deal about, for example, the struggles of Chilean peasants during the 1930s, the trials of Batista loyalists during the formative stages of the Cuban Revolution, and the nature of violence in Chile under the Allende government. Although Grandin discusses U.S. support for counterrevolutionary violence at length in the introduction, the U.S. role recedes quickly in

the substantive chapters. This is a book about Latin Americans. The result is to redefine the Cold War, or at least its Latin American manifestation, in two key ways. First, by tracing Latin America's Long Cold War to the Mexican Revolution, Grandin and Joseph untangle the global Cold War from its Latin American incarnation. Second, the lines between domestic, international, and transnational issues blur within this framework. Indeed, what often began as domestic conflicts became entangled in larger geopolitical struggles. Outside of Grandin's introduction the converse of this proposition is left unstated, but nonetheless holds true; international actors (most often from the United States) constructed political and legal structures and, together with local elites, incorporated them within Latin American states. Meanwhile, the emergent internal conflicts – usually between peasants or laborers and landowners or capital – often turned violent. Class conflict – albeit with key racial dimensions in particular locations, such as Guatemala – fueled that violence. Friedman clarifies the resulting narrative when he asks “whether a book about political violence in Latin America might not more accurately (if less mellifluously) be entitled ‘A Century of Counterrevolution: Small-Scale Insurgent Violence and Disproportionate, Indiscriminate Counterinsurgent Violence.’” As the reviewers point out, the book's emphasis on developments within Latin American societies does not mean historians of U.S. foreign relations will not find useful insights. “On the contrary,” writes Painter, “in the context of the new history of inter-American relations, it should be required reading.”

Although the concept of the Cold War provides the intellectual scaffolding on which the case studies are built, it is not the central subject of the substantive chapters. Instead, the authors' analytic focus falls most directly and most consistently on the issue of political violence. Twentieth century Latin American history provides fertile ground for such studies. “For untold numbers of Latin Americans,” Grandin explains, “living through revolutionary times meant living part of a life in which political violence and terror were the stuff of everyday existence” (2). He goes on to point out that “[e]scalating political violence was made possible by the provision, coordination, and enthusiasm provide[d] by the United States. Yet its animal spirit was driven by a domestic reaction against the democratization of the region's status hierarchy that had steadily advanced since the decades prior to independence” (4). Friedman observes that “[o]ne stark fact to emerge from reading *A Century of Revolution* is that the overwhelming bulk of the violence we are talking about was committed by the right against the left, or against unincorporated civilians.” The predominance of rightist violence held true across the twentieth century. Nor can the conclusion be easily dismissed as the product of selective case studies; chapters by Michelle Chase and Lillian Guerra examine “Violence and Justice in the Aftermath of the Cuban Revolution” and “Counterrevolution and the Origins of Political Culture in the Cuban Revolution” respectively. Peter Winn analyzes “Violence and Terror in the Chilean Revolution and Counterrevolution.” Finally, Gerardo Rénique casts his focus, in part, upon Peru's Sendero Luminoso. Even with these cases included, *A Century of Revolution* illustrates that violence was asymmetrically applied throughout Latin America over the course of the past century. As a result, the book works to refute the teoría de los dos demonios (theory of the two demons), which holds that violence was basically symmetrical – violence inaugurated by one side was quickly matched by the other. As a result, according to this view, neither the right nor the left bore primary responsibility for the consequences.

While the reviewers are for the most part favorable in their assessment of the volume, they do offer some reservations. Longley advances perhaps the most significant critique in his discussion of the book's scope. On the one hand, he calls for the editors to contextualize their regional analysis with reference to events elsewhere in the world. Noting the benefits that could be accrued by situating Latin American violence in a global context, Longley regrets "the lack of a global connection of the violence in Latin America to other regions of the world during the twentieth century." He highlights "the globalization of the arms trade and training of internal security forces on a global scale" as a natural area for the authors to explore, and goes on to suggest that in some cases the authors would have been better served to develop more completely the U.S. role (Longley points to Forrest Hylton's chapter on the drug war in Medellín as a particularly good candidate for incorporating such analysis). Interestingly, in encouraging comparisons between Latin America and other regions Longley essentially calls on Grandin and Joseph to reconstruct the very global Cold War framework that Grandin deconstructs in his introduction. Painter takes a somewhat different tack, but agrees that greater comparative analysis would improve the book. "Despite the highlighting of revolution in the title," he writes, "A Century of Revolution is largely about violence and does not explain why the twentieth century was a century of revolution in Latin America." The question of causation, and what made Latin America a particularly violent place relative to other parts of the world, is not highlighted.

Longley also suggests that the editors should have employed a broader chronological framework. If the subject of the book is "violence in revolutions and counterrevolutions in Latin America," Longley writes, the book's chronology could be widened usefully beyond the twentieth century, and even freed from the Cold War construct. He points to the 1780 Túpac Amaru II revolt as an example that might fit into a broader history of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence. Indeed, in the case of the Mexican Revolution, Longley finds Grandin and Joseph's chronology incompatible with that of the global Cold War. Because the U.S. response to the Mexican Revolution was "inconsistent," he reasons that the case does not fit well with the others. As Friedman elaborates, "[t]he Mexican Revolution featured a good deal of insurgent violence of all varieties, although applying categories of left and right, or identifying counterrevolutionaries among erstwhile revolutionary allies, is a messy business."

Meanwhile, Painter calls on the contributors to better contextualize their narratives in two key areas. First, the chapters should better explain "the specific economic, political, and social conditions that led to violence." They could, in other words, better address questions of causation. Second, examining these histories in light of changes to the global economic system over the course of the twentieth century "would have been a useful addition to the volume." Indeed, the systematic analysis of the social consequences of economic policies developed by international and supranational elites, in concert with Latin American political leaders, offers a promising avenue for additional scholarship.

Particularly when read in tandem with its counterpart volume, *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*, *A Century of Revolution* promises to serve as a conceptual and methodological point of departure for future scholarship. By intelligently

reconsidering such a well-traveled category of analysis as the Cold War, and by reevaluating the traditional chronological categorization of inter-American history, the book's collaborators advance our collective understanding of those topics considerably. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine anybody studying any aspect of twentieth century inter-American history whose thought process would not be stimulated by this collection.

Participants:

Greg Grandin is Professor of History at New York University and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is the author of a number of books, including *Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Duke University Press, 2000), which won the Latin American Studies Association's Bryce Wood Award; and *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (Metropolitan Books, 2009), which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Next year, he will be the Gilder Lehrman Fellow at the New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, where he will finish, hopefully, a book on Herman Melville and free and unfree labor in the Americas during the age of revolution.

Gilbert M. Joseph is the Farnam Professor of History and International Studies at Yale University. He is a former editor of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, the author of several books, including *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States, 1880-1924*, rev. ed., Duke University Press, 1988, and the editor of a number of collections, including with Daniel Nugent, *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, Duke University Press, 1994. He has just completed a manuscript *The Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Negotiation of Rule during Mexico's Long Twentieth Century*, and is continuing research on a book that examines transnational lives and political and cultural encounters in Latin America during the twentieth century.

Dustin Walcher is Assistant Professor of History at Southern Oregon University and a review editor for H-Diplo. He received his Ph.D. in 2007 from the Ohio State University. A specialist in the history of U.S. foreign relations, he is currently examining the failure of U.S.-led development initiatives and the rise of political violence in Argentina during the 1950s and 1960s.

Max Paul Friedman is Associate Professor of History at American University. After receiving his Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley, he was a Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow and taught at Boulder, Tallahassee, and Cologne. His *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) won the Herbert Hoover Prize in U.S. History and the A.B. Thomas Prize in Latin American Studies. He has received the Bernath Article Prize and Bernath Lecture Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. His most recent article is "Fracas in Caracas: Latin American Diplomatic Resistance to United States Intervention in Guatemala in 1954" in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21:4 (2010). He is working on a study of anti-Americanism and U.S. foreign relations.

Kyle Longley is the Snell Family Dean's Distinguished Professor in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies and School of Politics and Global Studies at Arizona State University. Longley joined the ASU faculty in 1995 after serving as a visiting professor at The Citadel. He has served in many administrative positions at ASU, including director of graduate studies for the history department and a Dean's Faculty Fellow.

Longley's research focuses on U.S. foreign relations and modern American politics. He has published five books on the topics of Costa Rica and the United States during the rise of José Figueres, the United States and Latin America, Senator Albert Gore Sr., Ronald Reagan and conservative mythology, and the American combat soldier in Vietnam. He also teaches courses on similar topics. For his efforts in the classroom, Longley has received several awards including the Zebulon Pearce Teaching Award for Outstanding Teacher in the Humanities and the Associated Students of Arizona State University Centennial Professor.

David S. Painter is Associate Professor of History in the Department of History and Walsh School of Foreign Service. His research focuses on the political economy of U.S. foreign relations, especially as it relates to the international oil industry. Currently, he is engaged in a number of projects including: 1) a study of the 1951-54 Iranian oil crisis; 2) oil and the Cold War, 1945-62 for the Cambridge History of the Cold War; 3) a study of the Italian oilman, Enrico Mattei, 1953-62; 4) the environmental impact of the U.S. military (joint project with J.R. McNeill). He recently completed revisions for a new edition of *Origins of the Cold War: An International History* (co-edited with Melvyn P. Leffler).

Of Furies and Counter-Furies: The Myth of the Two Demons

Greg Grandin and Gil Joseph have been producing and cultivating some of the most interesting work on inter-American history published in the last dozen years.¹ The best chapters in *A Century of Revolution* continues their commitment to wide-ranging, innovative research, to breaking with accepted paradigms, and to telling history from below. I have taught their books with great success in graduate seminars, because of their unexpected arguments, exemplary approach to source criticism, and challenges to all manner of conventional wisdom both scholarly and political. In this volume, the United States as an actor recedes into a minor role in most of the chapters, and the Soviet Union appears only fleetingly, which in a book about “Latin America’s Long Cold War” is no accident: the focus is relentlessly upon the multifaceted Latin American actors from all sectors of society who were the agents of most of the history that is recounted here.

The book appears to have been conceived as an homage to Arno Mayer’s studies of revolution and counterrevolution, and each contributor makes a nod in his direction, often by invoking the “furies” of the title of his work comparing the French and Russian Revolutions.² Two elements of Mayer’s thinking are prominent here: the “persistence” of reactionary forces in resisting social change, and the importance of historical contingency, rather than radical ideology, in producing revolutionary violence.³ In an interview with Grandin that closes the volume, Mayer modestly declines to take credit for any originality in taking such an approach, and the close examinations of both phenomena seem to emerge naturally from the contributions rather than to have been imposed by a unifying concept.

The compelling image of the furies — Greek goddesses of vengeance — as a metaphor for revolution might suggest the opposite of what Mayer and the scholars in this collection

¹ See Grandin’s fascinating monographs, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Duke University Press, 2000); *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (University of Chicago Press, 2004); *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (Metropolitan Books, 2006); and *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford’s Forgotten Jungle City* (Metropolitan Books, 2009), as well as his insightful “Your Americanism and Mine: Americanism and Anti-Americanism in the Americas,” *American Historical Review* 111: 4 (November 2006). Even more influential have been the many collections Joseph has published with Duke University Press, among them Joseph, Catherine LeGrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (1998); Joseph, Ricardo Salvatore, and Carlos Aguirre, *Reclaiming the Political in Latin American History* (2001); Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In from the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War* (2008); and the prolific Duke series launched in 1998 that Joseph edits with Emily Rosenberg, “American Encounters/Global Interactions,” of which the collection under review is at least the 50th publication.

² Arno Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

³ Arno Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (Pantheon Books, 1981).

believe. Conservative authors from Edmund Burke to François Furet and Richard Pipes have held that revolutionary violence inheres in the nature of the revolutionary, a preordained component of psychology or ideology that impels irrational bloodletting and thereby provokes counterrevolutionaries to use violent methods of their own.⁴ Despite the collection's subtitle, however, this is not an account of violence begetting violence. Grandin rejects any "tautological positing of ideological radicalism as the cause of radicalization." (10) Terror in Latin America has not been mystical or a function of indecipherable human nature or dogma, as Joseph writes, political violence has aided in "buttressing class and ethnic exploitation, restricting channels of political involvement, and perpetuating models of exclusionary nationalism and dependent development." (399) Violence, in these studies, is about power, usually the preservation of power by a privileged minority against the claims of an awakening majority.

Grandin notes that historians of Latin America have generally avoided the Burkean tendency, so pronounced in other scholarly discourses in the United States and Western Europe, to equate left- and right-wing violence. The evocative image of the furies does not serve as a substitute for the details so painstakingly uncovered by the historical work presented here, which lays bare key causal factors. As interesting as the engagement with Mayer's provocative oeuvre can be in the essayistic "Reflections" by Corey Robin and Neil Larsen, more significant are the implications of the chapters based on empirical research. Thomas Miller Klubock's careful investigation of "Ránquil: Violence and Peasant Politics on Chile's Southern Frontier" shows convincingly that one of the most violent blights on the record of an otherwise relatively smoothly functioning (pre-1973) Chilean democracy emerged from a clear chain of cause and effect also evident in other cases. In the province of Lonquimay in 1934, state-sponsored disruptions of smallholder or communal ownership of land, in order to rationalize commercial production in profitable, large-scale export agriculture, generated resistance from those affected. That resistance was put down with violence, provoking more protests that brought more repression. It is not a "cycle of violence" to which all sides contribute equally, but a program of despoliation of the poor that requires violence to carry out. Afterwards, the Chilean right massaged the meager presence of Communist rhetoric among some sectors of the peasant defensive movement into a hysterical tale about how swift action saved the country from Communist takeover; Klubock identifies Party documents making clear that the uprising was a local initiative for which the Party had no plan.

Some version of that story can be seen in almost every episode treated in the book. Jeffrey L. Gould's chapter on the failed 1932 revolution in El Salvador notes the far-reaching impact of both of local action and of the passions upon national events, as party militants in the western department of Ahuachapán tried to persuade the Communist Party leadership that they should turn to force in order to install municipal candidates defrauded of their rightful electoral victories. The Party, tactically conservative as usual, tried to forestall

⁴ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (J. Dodsley, 1790); François Furet, *Le Passé d'une illusion: essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe siècle* (Robert Laffont, 1995); Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (Knopf, 1991).

insurrectionary activity, until a local uprising was met with such sweeping state violence that members of the Central Committee reacting with “anger” and “outrage” at “the continued affronts to the dignity of Communists and their supporters” decided to join what had already begun. Gould unravels the stages of violence that began with the repression of protests against a stolen election, provoking modest rebellion in the seizure of town halls, in turn crushed by massacres in which government troops “often engaged in indiscriminate killing of males over twelve years old.” (104) Gould compares this story, carefully exhumed with the aid of British and Comintern archives, to his personal memory of the lenient post-1979 treatment of captured Somocista informers by teenage Sandinista policemen. In that conflict, too, there was a discrepancy between a revolutionary movement determined to avoid the temptation of the *paredón* (the firing squad wall), and the massive resources invested by the United States in funding and arming a counterrevolutionary force that deliberately expanded the scope of its targets to include anyone unfortunate enough to live in the countryside.

Attention to movements from below is one of the hallmarks of the work Grandin and Joseph have undertaken and promoted, and most of the contributions to this volume are no exception. Carlota McAllister’s “A Headlong Rush into the Future: Violence and Revolution in a Guatemalan Indigenous Village” draws on her extensive fieldwork in the Guatemalan highlands to refute the notion that urban, Ladino ideologues somehow fooled Mayan peasants into joining rebellions that only brought down a backlash upon their communities by the urban, Ladino state. This is an example of the *dos demonios* (two demons) myth popularized in several countries – the idea that a quiescent population was victimized by radicals of the left and repression from the right. Instead, using participant observation and careful attention to language, she finds that Mayans believed they were empowering themselves through their acts of defiance, and engaged in intellectual and political exchanges with Ladino rebels as equals.

One stark fact to emerge from reading *A Century of Revolution* is that the overwhelming bulk of the violence we are talking about was committed by the right against the left, or against unincorporated civilians. In El Salvador, perhaps twenty people were killed in the “Communist uprising” of 1932 that was crushed through the massacre of some 10,000 peasants. In Guatemala, guerrillas were responsible for only three percent of wartime human rights violations, compared to ninety-three percent committed by successive military governments. In Chile, fewer than a dozen members of the security forces and an ex-minister were killed by leftist groups during the Allende era, compared to the three thousand victims of Pinochet’s coup and its aftermath. Indeed, Allende’s government, in the words of Peter Winn, “was defeated by a counterrevolution that was willing to loose *its* furies, while the revolutionaries restrained their own.” (271) Given how wide a net right-wing counterrevolutionaries have cast in identifying as subversive all manner of apolitical or nonviolent individuals, organizations, and ethnic groups, and how numerous have been their victims compared to the targeted furies of leftist rebels, one might ask whether a book about political violence in Latin America might not more accurately (if less mellifluously) be entitled “A Century of Counterrevolution: Small-Scale Insurgent Violence and Disproportionate, Indiscriminate Counterinsurgent Violence.” Even the Peruvian exception, *Sendero Luminoso*, which carried out a great deal of indiscriminate terrorism itself and

helped to create the closest we have to a “two demons” dialectic, is “an extraordinarily singular case in the history of Latin American guerrilla warfare,” (311) according to Gerardo Rénique’s “‘People’s War,’ ‘Dirty War’: Cold War Legacy and the End of History in Postwar Peru.” The Peruvian right has inevitably used *Sendero*’s violence to try to discredit the entire Peruvian left, including bloodless land takeovers by peasant organizations. Yet in the 1960s, Rénique shows, the scope and scale of insurgency and counterinsurgency followed the more typical lopsided Latin American pattern: leftist guerrillas, who engaged only military personnel, killed some fifty-six of them, while the army reacted by massacring some 8,000 civilians, most of them indigenous. The security forces were inspired in part by French officers who had developed sanguinary counterinsurgency theories trying to hold onto France’s colonies, but also by the training of one in five graduates of Peru’s *Escuela Militar* in the United States. *Sendero*’s escalation followed the army’s counterinsurgent brutality, rather than causing it, inverting the conventional chronology that this collection reveals to be largely mythical in so many cases.

Keeping clear this distinction in degree is important, because it is not only in places like El Salvador that there is a “deeply asymmetrical relation between the degree of revolutionary violence or coercion and its weight in collective memory,” as Gould writes. (89) For reasons that have everything to do with contemporary political struggles, the right has worked tirelessly to inflate and delegitimize leftist violence through the mechanisms of memory, culture, and narration carefully examined by Jocelyn Olcott, Michelle Chase, and Lillian Guerra. Yet the imbalance of bloodshed is too striking to be overlooked, and cannot be explained as the product of revolutionaries’ superior morality, but as a function of the structural analysis each side used. On the one hand, there were the rebels who, in societies with the world’s highest rates of inequality in wealth and land tenure and restricted political systems, saw their targets narrowly as the military and sometimes the political officials enforcing unjust social conditions at the behest of a small minority, whose power stemmed from its wealth and the superior armed force it could deploy. That, logically, was the power that must be attacked. On the other hand, there were the counterrevolutionaries who so often had seen their targets as entire sectors of society, ethnic minorities or majorities, or simply “the poor.”

It would be possible, of course, to add cases where the body count ratios were not so stark. The Mexican Revolution featured a good deal of insurgent violence of all varieties, although applying categories of left and right, or identifying counterrevolutionaries among erstwhile revolutionary allies, is a messy business. Friedrich Katz’s contribution in this volume, a classic political economy approach to comparing the Mexican and Russian Revolutions, finds more differences than similarities, both in the greater scope of revolutionary violence in Russia, and in the extent of the transformation of Russian society (and the violence used to effect that transformation) in what after 1917 became a revolution from above. The Mexican revolutionary government managed to carry out profound social and economic change without terror, while tolerating an opposition press and right-wing political organizations. While Lázaro Cárdenas distributed millions of hectares of land to peasants, Stalin was busily taking land *away* from peasants, an inherently violent process. As Jocelyn Olcott shows, Mexicans have developed competing narratives to attribute politically useful meanings within the revolutionary story to such episodes as the *Cristero* rebellion and the

little-studied clash between Communist Party militants and rural guards in Matamoros. It is significant that in the only chapter to dwell on the Soviet Union, Katz uses it as a point of comparison highlighting how little Latin American history had in common with the USSR, rather than an investigation of the Soviet role in the region — which, except for the experience of Cuba and Nicaragua once their revolutions were already established, remained of minor significance in “Latin America’s Cold War.”

The largely neglected case of Castro’s government putting down a rebellion by peasants in Oriente province who wanted to retain their Christian identity and their freedom to market their produce, in which roughly 3000 peasants and 3000 government troops died, shows that the counterinsurgent efforts of a revolutionary regime consolidating its power do not call the overall pattern into question – especially since the stakes were similar (state disruption of traditional smallholder land ownership). In “The Trials: Violence and Justice in the Aftermath of the Cuban Revolution,” Chase walks a fine line, trying to convey the popular (and official) Cuban perspective on the kangaroo courts that led to the rapid and public execution of hundreds of former Batista officials, without engaging in apologetics. Chase marshals enough evidence to show that there was a thirst for revenge among a population in which almost every Cuban had a friend or relative who had suffered at the hands of the dictator’s thuggish police and intelligence services, and that Castro officials were under considerable pressure from below to take harsh measures. Marxist ideology was not the cause.

Whether anything other than these speedy executions would have irresponsibly unleashed a more violent lynch mob remains, like all counterfactuals, unproven, although the Castro regime’s success in suppressing all forms of resistance and disorder suggests that alternatives were at least conceivable. Guerra’s brilliant analysis of the dual paradox at the heart of dissidence in Cuba shows, first, that counterrevolutionary efforts by U.S.-supported exiles were an essential ingredient in “justifying a permanent state of war that entailed strict policing” of Cuban citizens; the counterrevolution strengthened the revolutionary state. Second, in the contemporary era, the state now depends for its economic survival upon remittances from those it considers traitors living abroad, and for its political survival on safely domesticating criticism into its own hegemonic rule: “Whereas life as an enemy of the revolution was once impossible in Cuba, today it seems entirely compatible with the myth of unanimity: so long as dissidence is silent or controlled, its existence does not undermine but *reinforces* the state’s contention that only an insignificant number of Cubans contest their leaders’ right to rule and demand change.” (228) It has been the repressive genius of the Castro brothers to conscript counterrevolutionary forces and principled dissent into the service of maintaining their own predominance.

Gould’s analysis of the crushed 1932 Salvadoran uprising concludes, “All of those who experienced the revolution are left to wonder: was an alternative possible? In El Salvador, most of those who might have asked such a question were executed; those who survived were too traumatized to think about such things.” (90) But the flourishing of a cross-class revolutionary movement fifty years later suggested that many people continued to think and act as if alternatives were possible. Forrest Hylton’s chapter in this volume, “The Cold War that Didn’t End: Paramilitary Modernization in Medellín, Colombia,” shows that

resistance to modernization projects by their victims continue beyond the framework the superpowers so misleadingly labeled a Cold War, even beyond one whose encompassing periodization begins with the Mexican Revolution and ends in the killing fields of Central America in the 1980s and '90s. In this part of the world, it was never cold, and it never ends.

The essays in Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph's *A Century of Revolution* make a substantial contribution to the understanding of the topic of political violence in Latin America in the twentieth century. Reading them reminded me of one of the first books that I read on Latin America in graduate school, Tina Rosenberg's *The Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America*.¹ The centrality of violence in the region remains a perplexing cornerstone of many political cultures. This volume clearly assists in understanding the complexity of the topic and its ramifications.

Fundamentally, this is a book written by Latin Americanists for Latin Americanists that concentrates on revolution and counterrevolution in the individual countries where Grandin emphasizes that "the learning curve on the state repression has steadily increased throughout the twentieth century and except in the cases of Cuba in the late 1950s and Nicaragua in the 1970s, was always a step ahead of movements seeking social and political transformation." (4) The essays successfully demonstrate how the revolutions and counterrevolutions, all grounded in internecine warfare, evolved in countries including Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, Cuba, and Colombia. The articles are thought provoking, integrate new archival research, and are well grounded in the secondary literature. Here the book admirably succeeds in its outlined goals.

Grandin (as well as Gilbert Joseph and Corey Robin) stress the U.S. role in the violence. In the introduction, Grandin emphasizes that "escalating political repression was made possible by the provision, coordination, and enthusiasm provide (sic) by the United States." (4) He adds that while the traditional Cold War era mattered most, "its animal spirit was driven by a domestic reaction against the democratization of the region's status hierarchy that had steadily advanced since the decades prior to independence." (4) Despite the emphasis on the U.S. role, in reality it often is absent in the essays. This creates a disconnect between the stated goals of the editors and the contributions of the majority of authors, albeit not always. The international dimensions disappear frequently, but for the sake of the forum, I will concentrate on when they appear successfully and suggest some other questions that could frame the debates on U.S. responsibility for violence in Latin America during the Cold War.

The first section of the book, "The First Cold War" makes an interesting argument that the Cold War began in Latin America with the Mexican Revolution in 1910. Beyond Friedrich Katz's opening essay, "Violence and Terror in the Russian and Mexican Revolutions," the essays by Jocelyn Olcott on post-revolutionary Mexico, Thomas Miller Klubock on Chile's southern frontier, and Jeffrey Gould on El Salvador and the El Montanza of 1932 have little on U.S. involvement, with the exception of the latter where Gould emphasizes international communism in the uprising of Augustín Farabundo Martí and points out similarities with

¹ Tina Rosenberg, *The Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America* (New York: Penguin, 1992)

Nicaragua in the 1980s. This is a correct approach, not trying to force something into the narrative about the role of the United States. For example, in El Salvador, the Great Depression and onset of the Good Neighbor policy with the Hoover administration ensured the United States played a limited, almost non-existent role in the massacres, other than serving as a bystander which promoted anti-communism in the Western Hemisphere.

Katz's "Violence and Terror in the Russian and Mexican Revolutions" remains the sole essay that examines the U.S. role. While only a secondary focus, the inclusion of the United States is significant, something already shown in great detail by historians such as Mark Gilderhus, Linda Hall, and John Hart.² The problem is that the U.S. response creates problematic issues for the book's chronology. The major U.S. interventions in Mexico occurred before the traditional interpretation of the onset of the Cold War that began in 1917 with the rise of the Bolsheviks in Russia. American leaders responded to Mexico's social revolution because of threats to American businesses and political influence, especially in 1914 and 1917, not in response to a communist menace. Certainly continuities existed with the post 1917 period, but in reality the special relationship with Mexico shaped the response more than the Cold War.

The choice of the Mexican example also causes some problems in demonstrating that the United States proved a counterrevolutionary force. Even after Mexicans sought to consolidate the revolutionary gains highlighted in the 1917 Constitution, the U.S. response was inconsistent. Yes, American businesses pressured the Harding and Coolidge administrations to protect American subsoil rights, something done in the Bucareli agreements. Yet, most Americans proved ambivalent toward the conservative *Cristero* Revolt, and U.S. officials replaced the consummate "ugly American" Ambassador James Sheffield with the much revered Dwight Morrow who skillfully worked with the Calles administration. The onset of the "Good Neighbor" policy with the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations only reinforced U.S. ambivalence. When Cárdenas expropriated millions of acres and ultimately the oil industry in 1938, the Roosevelt administration, despite pleas from domestic lobbying groups, refused to intervene. U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Josephus Daniels noted that while the oil companies prayed for the return of Porfirio Diaz and the Big Stick, he urged compromise and reminded President Roosevelt, "[w]e are strong. Mexico is weak. It is always noble in the strong to be generous and generous and generous."³ The U.S. response to the Mexican Revolution (that in reality extended three decades) provides some insights about the complexities of U.S. relations with the first major social revolution of the twentieth century and does not fit nicely into a framework that argues that the United States acted as a counterrevolutionary power in all cases.

² Mark Gilderhus, *Diplomacy and Revolution: U.S.-Mexican Relations under Wilson and Carranza* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); Linda B. Hall, *Oil, Banks, and Politics: The United States and Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1917-1924* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1995); John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

³ As cited in Kyle Longley, *In the Eagle's Shadow: The United States and Latin America* second edition (Arlington, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2009), 173.

The second half of the book focuses primarily on the late 1950s and the rise of Fidel Castro (ignoring the important period, 1932-1959). The essays reveal the violence associated with revolution and counterrevolution in major social and economic confrontations in Cuba, Chile, Guatemala, and Peru. While the majority of essays have little focus on the United States, a couple shed some light on the complexities and nuances of the U.S. role. Michelle Chase's "The Trials: Violence and Justice in the Aftermath of the Cuban Revolution," underscores mainly domestic issues relating to the Castro revolution, but does highlight the importance of the transition from the revolution's anti-Batista focus to anti-imperialism. She notes the importance of the American press and some policymakers in critiquing the trials and executions of those accused of atrocities during the fighting in the late 1950s, showing growing disillusionment with the Castro regime even among pro-revolutionary groups in the United States. In addition, Castro supporters turned the opposition into a propaganda effort to discredit Washington and mobilize support among Cubans. While comprising only a small segment of the essay, this is an insightful idea not raised in much of the existing historiography.

The most substantial essay that really goes to the heart of the role of the United States in the counterrevolution, and ties to the thesis promoted early and often in the introduction and conclusion, remains Lillian Guerra's "Beyond Paradox: Counterrevolution and the Origins of Political Culture in the Cuban Revolution, 1959-2009." She persuasively argues that "perhaps no other revolution since the eighteenth-century revolution led by slaves in the French colony of Saint Domingue has so directly threatened the existing social and political world order." (201) She adds that Washington's actions sought "to serve U.S. corporate interests and imperial power" rather than combat the perceived Communist threat. Guerra concludes, "U.S. policy toward Cuba remains locked in a dead-end struggle to discredit, isolate and deliberately impoverish the island society as a means for dislodging its government." (201)

More important, she underscores how the Castro government utilized American efforts to displace the regime to make battling the counterrevolution "a way of life and *fidélismo* a new religion." (203) She notes, "in a society defined by a constant state of alert against U.S. military assaults (which, after 1961, never materialized), the militarization of workplaces, education, and public culture that consumed so much of the nation's energy and resources until the mid-1980s now seems as worthy of critique to many Cubans as the alliance between the U.S. government and Cuban exiles living in the United States appears to the U.S. public." (203-4) She stresses that the exaggerated threats have fundamentally shaped Cuba's political culture since U.S. actions as well as those of Cuban exiles allowed Castro's government to create a permanent state of war to shape domestic debates and prevent dissent. Yet, Guerra acknowledges changes taking place. She employs the histories and stories of the revolution and its aftermath including those of Norberto Fuentes, who viewed peasant counterrevolutionaries through a different lens than official state histories. She concludes, "in short, Fuentes constructed the rebels as typically peasants rather than bandits, the revolutionaries as typical peasants rather than heroes." (213) Ultimately, "many Cubans have had the courage to reassess and reassign the charge of counterrevolution on their own, thereby attempting to redirect the political culture of Cuba

toward greater citizen participation and allowance for critique.” (226) This thought provoking essay clearly places the United States in the center of the debate, this time highlighting the ways its role allowed for limited direct violence after the early 1960s as anti-Americanism became a foundation of the centralization of Castro’s power.

The other essays in the section have much less focus on the U.S. role. Despite the lack of attention on the United States, they and their predecessors lead the reader to ask important question. For instance, did the Cold War really matter or would these conflicts have occurred without the global confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union? Of course, it provided an alternative ideology in Chile, Cuba, and Peru as revolutionaries looked to Communist China and the Soviet Union for inspiration, but one wonders whether had the Soviet Union and United States not been embroiled in the conflict the internal conflicts would not have developed along the lines of the Mexican Revolution. In fact, as evidenced in the first Sandinista movement in the 1920s, the Mexican Revolution provided more of a model for change than Marxist ideas and each revolution had multiple ideological inspirations, many linked to long-term developments in the region.

The focus on the Cold War also may detract from viewing the long-term effects of violence in revolutions and counterrevolutions in Latin America. The case of the 1780 revolt of Túpac Amaru II (José Gabriel Condorcanqui) in Peru, and the Spanish response, shows the long-term evolution of the process. Many others existed, such as the brutal response of Porfirio Diaz to the Yaquis and other dissidents during the late nineteenth century. While the Cold War played a role, the political culture of the region, particularly in countries with deep Spanish roots, shaped the movements more than the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Another major challenge relates to the lack of a global connection of the violence in Latin America to other regions of the world during the twentieth century. The authors make references to the French, Chinese, and Russian Revolutions, particularly through the historiography of the topic of revolution and counterrevolution, but the global context often disappears. This often occurs for those with a regional focus as it becomes easy to zero in on Latin America because of the understanding of the region. But in this case, more global context might have been beneficial. For example, how would the cases of Latin America compare to similar events unfolding in Africa, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the globe. There are those (like Jeremy Kuzmarov) who look at issues of police training by the United States on a global scale that could provide some insights.⁴ There appear to be some significant continuities regarding violence in revolutions and counterrevolutions as well as the role of the United States and other global powers, both before, during, and after the Cold War. Some acknowledgement of this ongoing and parallel development would have been beneficial.

⁴ Jeremy Kuzmarov, “Modernizing Repression: Police Training, Political Violence, and Nation-Building in the ‘American Century,’” *Diplomatic History* (April 2009): 191-221.

The authors also miss chances to discuss the globalization of the arms trade and training of internal security forces on a global scale. In the introduction and conclusion, it would appear that the United States constituted the only source of the repression. In reality, other powers including the French, Israelis, Spanish, and British as well as the Soviet Union and its Communist allies played a significant role in training and arming Latin American revolutionaries and reactionaries. As an example, during the Carter administration, 1977-1981, the United States suspended military assistance to countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Argentina only to find the void filled by U.S. allies. This phenomenon demonstrates the complexity of the relationships that existed during the Cold War.

There are other areas where the potential for the U.S. role exists. The essay on Medellín and the drug war by Forrest Hylton is extremely interesting, although the role of the United States remains underdeveloped. There is more here that lends itself to the long durée of the impact of violence in Latin America. For example, the author could have stressed the impact of Plan Colombia and its perceived success and its transfer to Mexico. Furthermore, the effects of the Cold War and the drug issues could be developed (in another essay) with an examination of issues such as the massive deportation of gang members from the United States after the change in immigration laws in 1996. In Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, the United States has deported tens of thousands of gang members, many associated with the Los Angeles based *Maras Salvatrucha* (MS13). Many of these young men came with their families fleeing the violence of the 1980s in Central America. They have been forced back to their country of origins, where the gangs have destabilized the governments and local cultures through violence including rapes, kidnappings, executions, and the continued drug trade. This consequence of the fighting has dramatically shaped the dynamics of twenty-first century Latin America in these countries.

In conclusion, the essays fully succeed in addressing important issues relating to violence in the revolutions and counterrevolutions of twentieth century Latin America. However, they have not been as successful in highlighting the U.S. role in the process. Has the United States played an active role in Latin American affairs? Yes. Has the role of the United States often been exaggerated? Yes. Clearly, the United States shaped events in episodes such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua during the 1920s or covert operations in Guatemala or finally Nicaragua and El Salvador during the 1980s. At the same time, the works of Eric Roorda, Paul Coe Clark, and others show that Latin American elites such as Rafael Trujillo and Anastasio Somoza García often inflated the U.S. role for their own political perspectives, something accentuated by the Latin American left, including Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez, who have vilified the United States to cover their own deficiencies.⁵

In reality, this volume could easily spark one devoted to the concept proposed by the editors on the role of the United States in the rising levels of violence in the region.

⁵ Eric Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Paul Coe Clark, *The United States and Somoza, 1933-1956: A Revisionist Look* (New York: Praeger Press, 1992).

Involving those who concentrate on the United States and its relationship to the region, as well as those who view the process from a global perspective could create an important contribution to the topic of violence in Latin America. Insights could be expected on the geopolitical level and others, such as the domestic consequences of drugs that really constitutes a transnational issue.

Involving scholars who concentrate on the United States and its relationship to the region, as well as those who view the process from a global perspective, could result in an important contribution to the larger topic of violence in Latin America, which would examine the geopolitical factor and many others, such as the domestic consequences of drugs that really constitute a transnational issue.

Over the past two decades, the ability to combine regional expertise (including relevant language skills) with expertise in one's primary field of study has become a standard that serious scholars of American foreign relations must meet. In terms of historians of U.S. relations with Latin America this has meant that scholars need to possess a firm grounding in Latin American history and command of Spanish and/or Portuguese.¹ The standard grew out of the recognition that to write accurately about U.S. relations with the region or individual countries in the region scholars must have a clear understanding of the "other side" of the relationship. They cannot rely solely on U.S. records and perceptions.

Although most of the essays in *A Century of Revolution* mention the United States, only the editors devote much attention to the U.S. role in Latin American violence.² This does not mean that *A Century of Revolution* is not relevant to scholars whose primary field is American foreign relations. On the contrary, in the context of the new history of inter-American relations, it should be required reading.³

A Century of Revolution grew out of a conference at Yale University in May 2003 on "Rethinking Latin America's Century of Revolutionary Violence." According to one of the editors, it seeks to provide a new agenda for studying revolutionary change and political violence in twentieth century Latin America and to rethink what the Cold War meant for the region (397). One of the volume's distinctive features is its emphasis on counter-revolution and counter-revolutionary violence, a focus influenced by the work of the distinguished European historian Arno J. Mayer, especially his study, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (2000).

Drawing explicitly on Mayer's work, Greg Grandin argues that in addition to taking counter-revolution seriously, scholars need to be sensitive to context and chronology and should pay close attention, as Mayer did, to the clash of concrete social, economic, and political interests.⁴ Moreover, Grandin argues, scholars studying violence in Latin America

¹ See Max Paul Friedman, "Retiring the Puppets: Bringing Latin America Back In: Recent Scholarship on United States-Latin American Relations," *Diplomatic History* 27 (November 2003): 621-36.

² A companion volume, *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), devotes more attention to U.S. policies and actions.

³ The volume also provides a counterweight to Eurocentric accounts of the Cold War that focus on the Soviet Union and on Communism in Eastern Europe and ignore counter-revolutionary violence in Latin America and the Third World in general.

⁴ In this regard, Lillian Guerra's provocative essay on "Counterrevolution and the Origins of Political Culture in the Cuban Revolution, 1959-2009," contains numerous insights, but might have been stronger had she paid more attention to context and change over time. Similarly, Corey Robin's interesting but somewhat abstract essay on counter-revolution seems out of place in a volume that stresses the importance of historicizing political violence.

should also be aware of the international context (“field of power”) within which revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces clashed (26). Gilbert M. Joseph underscores this point when he argues that “in the context of North-South imperial dynamics” the Cold War in Latin America began as early as 1898 and has not ended (402), a periodization that highlights the U.S. role.⁵

The twentieth century was a century of revolution and counter-revolution in Latin America. Beginning with the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and continuing through the upheavals of the 1980s in Central America and the Andes, peasants, workers, and indigenous peoples attempted to overthrow what by the early twentieth century had become “an unsustainable model of exclusionary nationalism, restricted political institutions, persisting rural clientelism, and dependent, export-based development.” (Grandin, 28) They were met by fierce counter-revolutionary violence, and the essays demonstrate that in almost all cases, counter-revolutionary forces triumphed, largely because they were more willing and more able to employ violence. In addition, the United States, which over the course of the century achieved first regional and then global hegemony, usually supported Latin American counter-revolutionaries.

Some conservative writers in Latin America and the United States have distorted this history of violence by blaming the left for the violence that occurred and by exaggerating the extent of revolutionary violence. The essays in the volume make clear that there was a deep difference in the nature and scale of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence; counter-revolutionary violence was more widespread and almost always more brutal than revolutionary violence.

In a carefully argued essay that draws on his extensive previous research on the subject, Jeffrey L. Gould examines “one of the most violent episodes in modern Latin American history,” the massacre of ten thousand people, mostly indigenous peasants, during a Communist-led revolt in El Salvador in January 1932, known in Salvadoran history simply as *La Matanza*. (88) In contrast to the slaughter carried out by the Salvadoran government and its supporters, the insurgents “probably killed no more than twenty civilians (some armed)” during their brief occupation of a small number of towns and villages. Moreover, the insurrection itself was an act of desperation and self-defense by the Salvadoran Communist Party, which faced an intensification of state violence against its leaders and members.

Similarly, Peter Winn demolishes the carefully cultivated conservative myth that the military coup that overthrew elected Chilean leader Salvador Allende in September 1973 and the terror that followed were a legitimate response to the “climate of violence” created

⁵ Many of the other contributors point to the Mexican Revolution as launching the twentieth-century cycles of counter-revolutionary and revolutionary violence. U.S. relations with Latin America reach even further into the past and in many ways been a model for U.S. relations with the rest of the Third World; see David S. Painter, “Explaining U.S. Relations with the Third World,” *Diplomatic History* 19 (Summer 1995), 525-48.

by Allende's Popular Unity government.⁶ Winn points out that most of the alleged acts of violence carried out by the left during the Allende years were against property rather than people. Around 100 Chileans died in political violence during this period, including twenty-two killed in a counter-revolutionary army coup attempt in June 1973. Moreover, three times as many Chileans lost their lives as the result of counter-revolutionary violence than from revolutionary violence in this period. In contrast, during and following the coup counter-revolutionary forces killed more than three thousand Chileans, and arrested and tortured between 28,000 and 50,000 others. (259) It is hard not to agree with Winn's conclusion that Pinochet and the counter-revolution prevailed over Allende and his allies because the right was willing and able to commit acts of unspeakable violence and the left was not. Winn also argues that U.S. support and, at times, assistance were important elements in the Chilean right's willingness and ability to move against Allende.

Although some writers have sought to portray the 1973 coup and subsequent dictatorship as an aberration in Chilean history, Thomas Miller Klubock's examination of the roots and results of a 1934 rebellion by mestizo and indigenous Mapuche peasants in southern Chile reveals a much less stable and less democratic and a much more violent side of Chile. The rebellion grew out of colonization and land grabbing by Chilean elites on the southern frontier, and ended with repression by government forces and the massacre of scores of captured insurgents. Klubock's carefully researched essay underscores the importance of examining the specific historical and socio-economic roots of violence.

Blaming the left for the violence perpetrated by the right has become common in Guatemala, which experienced the bloodiest armed conflict in twentieth century Latin America. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, conflict between a series of reformist and revolutionary movements and Guatemalan conservatives claimed over 200,000 lives, the vast majority victims of counter-revolutionary violence. Carlota McAllister's careful research into what happened in a Guatemalan indigenous village in the 1980s exposes the flaws in the so-called "*dos demonios*" interpretation that seeks to portray indigenous Guatemalans as hapless tools of radical revolutionaries whose recklessness engendered a genocidal response by the Guatemalan government, which possessed the resources, ruthlessness, and external support (from Argentina and Israel as well as from the United States) to crush the popular insurgency. She shows that most of the village's inhabitants knew what they were doing and risking when they supported the radical groups against the government. They were agents, not pawns.

One country where the *dos demonios* interpretation might seem to be relevant is Peru, where between 1980 and 1992, the military carried out a brutal anti-subversive campaign against civilians and popular groups and the *Sendero Luminoso* responded with terrorist violence not only against government officials but also against almost anyone who disagreed with their version of "people's war."

⁶ Many of the adherents of this view genuinely believe it. I first heard it in the early 1980s from the wife of a U.S. Foreign Service officer who lived in Chile during the Allende years.

Gerardo Rénique argues persuasively that to understand what happened in Peru in the 1980s, one must examine the historical and structural factors that led to the conflict. Peru's history, he notes, was characterized by "systemic class-based, racist, repressive violence." (328) The country's political system was exclusionist, its social system racist, and its economic system marked by extremely high levels of inequality. Well before *Sendero* emerged, the Peruvian military had received extensive assistance and counterinsurgency training from the United States and had engaged in widespread and brutal counterinsurgent violence against peasants, workers, and other leftist groups. While not downplaying the brutality of *Sendero*, Rénique points out that the chronology of the war "clearly suggests that Sendero's escalation of violence was a direct consequence of the equally brutal retaliation of the armed forces against its combatants and prisoners; the increasing resistance of popular organizations to *Sendero's* political and military advances; and the state's recruitment and mobilization of armed peasants as counterinsurgent forces." (330)

In contrast to the counter-revolutionary violence of conservative Latin American governments, revolutionary governments in Latin America have not been exceptionally violent. In a perceptive comparative essay, the late distinguished historian Friedrich Katz points out that one of the main things that distinguished the Mexican Revolution from the Russian Revolution was the relatively low level of political violence in Mexico. He also notes that one consequence of the low level of revolutionary violence was that in Mexico the old dominant classes continued to hold economic if not political power.

Michelle Chase examines the trials and executions of Batista supporters in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. Most of those tried were members of Batista's security forces, and most of those executed, she concludes, were probably guilty as charged. In total, somewhere between 300 and 700 people were executed, "a figure which, in retrospect, marks the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution as distinctly less bloody than the other tumultuous regime changes that have punctuated the twentieth century." (186) Having experienced the brutal nature of the Batista dictatorship, especially the violence unleashed by Batista's forces during the revolution, a large majority of the Cuban people probably supported the trials and executions. Chase argues that the trials helped the revolutionary government consolidate its authority by providing an alternative to uncontrolled mob justice, by responding to and channeling popular demands for justice and retribution, by eliminating potential opponents, and by exposing and dramatizing the horrors of Batista's counterinsurgency campaign.

Jeffrey Gould provides some brief comments on the third revolutionary government in Latin America – Nicaragua. While not ignoring the revolution's turn toward dictatorship in the 1980s, largely under the pressure of a brutal U.S.-sponsored counter-revolution, Gould argues that "the everyday forms of state coercion" in revolutionary Nicaragua "never amounted even remotely to the Reaganite description of a totalitarian dictatorship." (114)

Over the course of the twentieth century, the locus of violence in Latin America shifted from rural to urban areas as the region, like the rest of the Third World, became

increasingly urbanized.⁷ Forrest Hylton analyzes the history of violence in Medellín, Colombia in the context of Medellín's transformation from one of the most vibrant industrial centers in Latin America to a "dynamic, narcotics-based, finance, insurance, real estate, and service-sector economy." (360) Hylton argues that Cold War counterinsurgency capabilities, neoliberalism, and the U.S.-sponsored war on drugs were at the heart of the violence that the city experienced from the 1980s to the early twentieth-first century. Medellín was the murder capital of the world in the 1980s, and between 1990 and 2002 over 55,000 people, mostly young men, were murdered in the city. While not unrelated to the distribution of power in Colombian society, violence became increasingly criminalized. Medellín's experience is now playing out in similar ways in Central America as a recent report by the Congressional Research Service reveals.⁸

Despite the highlighting of revolution in the title, *A Century of Revolution* is largely about violence and does not explain why the twentieth century was a century of revolution in Latin America. Neil Larsen raises the important issue of the "structural relationship of revolution and counterrevolution to the process of capitalist modernization in Latin America," but does not examine it in depth. (383) Was there something distinctive about Latin America's social, economic, and political structures and/or its position in the world system that made it especially prone to revolutionary upheavals and counter-revolutionary violence?⁹ Was Latin America's experience distinctive, or did other parts of the world experience similar cycles of revolution coupled with counter-revolutionary violence? These are the types of questions that *dependistas* and world systems scholars, among others, have asked and tried to answer, and the absence of direct engagement with these issues is a shortcoming in an otherwise very useful collection.

With the exception of Klubock's essay on Chile and Hylton's on Medellín, most of the contributors do not deal in depth with the specific economic, political, and social conditions that led to violence. Rénique notes that the escalation of counterinsurgency violence in the 1980s coincided with the Peruvian state's embrace of economic neoliberalism, as privatization and other structural reforms led to widespread immiseration and resistance. The resulting dynamic leads him to comment that "economic neoliberalism depended on counterinsurgent repression the same way that nineteenth-century liberalism depended on a range of extra economic coercion to maintain order." (331)

Larsen comments briefly on the changing economic climate in which Latin American violence takes place, but more sustained attention to this issue would have been useful. Over twenty years ago Jeff Frieden examined the political consequences of different types

⁷ See Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).

⁸ Congressional Research Service, *Central American Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress*, Report 41731, 30 March 2011, available at <http://www.fas.org/blog/secretcy/>.

⁹ Robert G. Williams, among others, clearly lays out the links between export agriculture and conflict in his classic study, *Export Agriculture and the Crisis in Central America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

of U.S. foreign investment in the Third World. Investments in enclave situations (such as mining, oil, and bananas), he notes, were much more likely to result in U.S. political and military intervention than were investments in domestic manufacturing or private loans to Third World governments. Although his essay is about the Third World in general, it is largely based on the history of U.S. investment in Latin America, and its observations are especially relevant to the Latin American experience.¹⁰

Frieden ended his analysis in 1950, but his basic idea illuminates key features of the era of globalization that began in the 1970s. Foreign investment in export processing zones and/or in low cost export-oriented industry, which began to become important in the decade, has a very different impact on Third World economies than foreign investment in Third World manufacturing aimed at domestic markets in the Third World.¹¹ In the new model, there are far fewer backward linkages into the local economy, and the interest of foreign investors in local prosperity is largely severed. Whereas in the earlier case, foreign investors needed local prosperity to provide a market for their products, in the later case their main interest is in low costs, and local prosperity can result in higher costs and relocation of the investment. Although promoted by the World Bank and other promoters of globalization as a path to prosperity, the model's results for the working populations of these countries have been devastating. These changes have important implications for Latin America's growing urban population, and some discussion of them would have been a useful addition to the volume.

A Century of Revolution is a valuable book packed with information and insights.¹² It makes an important contribution to the study of the history of violence in the twentieth century. With its focus on events "on the ground" in Latin America, it also offers a useful contrast to Hal Brands' recent study, *Latin America's Cold War*, which takes a more top-down and less Latin American-centered approach. While acknowledging the scale and brutal nature of counter-revolutionary violence, Brands argues that the Soviet Union and Cuba and their leftist allies bear equal, if not greater, responsibility for the region's political violence. Another difference is that Brands takes the Cuban Revolution and its impact as his point of departure and largely declines to engage with the longer history of violence that this volume underlines.¹³ I learned a lot from *A Century of Revolution*, and I believe other students of U.S.-Latin American relations will profit from it as well.

¹⁰ Jeff Frieden, "The Economics of Intervention: American Overseas Investment and Relations with Underdeveloped Areas, 1890-1950," *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 31 (January 1989): 55-80.

¹¹ See, for example, Peter Evans, *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979). Peter Dicken, *Global Shift: Reshaping the Global Economic Map in the 21st Century*, 6th ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2011) provides a massive amount of information on the shifting nature and destination of global investment.

¹²The only factual error I noticed was a comment from "one of the anonymous reviewers of this volume" which erroneously credits Woodrow Wilson with the overthrow of Mexican president Francisco Madero, an event that took place before Wilson became president (379, n24).

¹³ Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)

Author's Response by Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph

We are grateful to the participants –Max Paul Friedman, Kyle Longley, and David Painter – of this H-Diplo round table, as well as its organizer, Dustin Walcher, for taking the time to engage with *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War*. We are heartened by their appreciation of the volume's contributions, though of course the credit largely goes to our various collaborators, who each took our proposed themes and framing questions in unexpected, thoughtful directions. We also welcome the reviewers' very useful criticisms. In general, their concerns were not with any one essay or argument but with pointing out different ways of thinking about Latin America's Cold War and its Century of Revolution. David Painter, for instance, points out an absence of economic analysis; Kyle Longley draws attention to the fact that while the volume's introduction and conclusion emphasize the role of the United States in propelling regional polarization, many of the cases studies barely mention the United States at all. Hovering over these two issues, we think, is a larger question: what was the Latin American Cold War?

We will try to succinctly address these points below—as well as attempt an answer to the bigger question—but it might help readers whose introduction to the volume will be only this roundtable to offer a quick summary of what we hoped to accomplish. We are both primarily social historians of Latin America, who focused in our early work on from-the-ground-up histories of peasant mobilization, political culture, and state formation. But we have long thought that the history of political violence, revolution, political repression, and democracy in Latin America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has much to contribute to broader debates about the making and moral meaning of the modern world. For the most part, though, study of the region has remained isolated in broader discussions and debates of these themes.

There are many reasons for this isolation. First, after the defeat of the global New Left, social historians tended to turn inward, to focus on the micro-dynamics of politics and political consciousness; meantime, the ongoing influence of approaches that seek to situate Latin America in a larger global context, such as dependency theory and Marxism, as well as newer cultural history concerns, tend to give political, intellectual, and diplomatic history short shrift. Paradoxically, the heavy hand of the United States in the region, its countless interventions and coups (John Coatsworth counts forty-one successful regime changes engineered by Washington between 1898 and 1994) has led to a narrowing of thought, a dumbing down of analysis: instead of trying to work thorough the multivalent causes and consequences of these interventions, scholars often wind up searching for smoking guns or fingerprints. Did Henry Kissinger know about the specific operation that killed General René Schneider in Chile in October 1970? Was it anti-communism or the interests of United Fruit that led the United States to overthrow Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala in 1954? More often than not, such questions preempt broader-reaching critical thought. Another reason for the region's solitude, to invoke Gabriel García Márquez's over-invoked description, is its betwixt-and-between historical development, which falls somewhere between the emergence of western nation states and third-world

decolonization. As a result, as Europeanist intellectual historians have in recent years worked to chart out the transnational origins of liberal multinationalism, they have focused almost exclusively on the decolonizing world in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and ignored Latin America, despite its primary role in generating such modern ideas as sovereignty, non-aggression, and social rights (as Grandin argues in a forthcoming essay in the *American Historical Review*).

As a corrective to this provincialism, we have, individually and together in this volume, tried to do two things: first, we have strived to engage other disciplines, including anthropology, law, economics, and sociology, and to integrate discrete subfields within history, including cultural, intellectual, and diplomatic history; second, we have placed local histories in their multiple, nested contexts, building out from the local to the regional, from the national to the international. Latin Americanists in the 1980s and 1990s were greatly influenced by Theda Skocpol's call to "bring the state back in" as a key variable in explaining social power. *A Century of Revolution*—along with Joseph and Daniela Spenser's companion volume, *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (2008), earlier the focus of an H-Diplo roundtable—therefore, could be understood, as Grandin has put it elsewhere, as trying to "bring the 'inter-state' back in" as well.

It should be clear by this point, but allow us to restate here the two things we do not mean by the phrase "Cold War:" first, and perhaps most obvious, we do not think of it as something external to Latin America, as an independent variable invoked to explain conflict (as perhaps illustrated by several of Longley's comments: "did the Cold War really matter...?;" a "focus on the Cold War also may detract from viewing the long-term effects of violence in revolutions and counterrevolutions in Latin America"; "while the Cold War played a role . . ."). For the most part, we avoid using "Cold War" as the subject of a sentence, followed by a verb and object, as in, "the Cold War did this or that to this or that country." Second, we do not use phrases such as "long Cold War" or "Latin American Cold War" to insist on greater geographical or temporal inclusion in the concept; we are not seeking to broaden the definition of the Cold War to count the third world in general or Mexico and Latin America in particular. We appreciate the recent turn in the "New Cold War History" to engage in multi-sited archival research, particularly in collections outside Europe and the United States, and to reconsider events, previously examined through the bipolar lens of superpower conflict, from multiple angles. But while such an approach may be necessary, it is not sufficient.

It is not sufficient for two reasons: First, broadening the picture without deepening the analysis runs the risk of simply transferring moot questions concerning the "traditional" Cold War to the "transnational" Cold War. Who started it? Who was to blame? And when scholars try to avoid the either/or answers elicited by such questions, they often fall victim to tautology, positing "militancy," "extremism," "ideology," or "anti-Americanism" as explanations for, well, militancy, extremism, ideology, and anti-Americanism.

Second, broadening the picture has the potential for dulling analysis even further, situating the United States as one actor among many. As Max Paul Friedman points out in his contribution, we framed our book around a series of arguments made by Arno Mayer, in his

comparative study of European history. Mayer takes it as a given that our modern interstate system is structured by a set of ideas, norms, and laws that reflect the interests of a dominant hegemon. These principles include more than just property rights; they comprise a cultural and political worldview related to governance, morality, status, and diplomacy. His point is that any given domestic revolution, if it is truly revolutionary, is also already by definition an international revolution, an insurgency not just against national elites but the interstate order. In the case of Latin America, the United States was not just one nation among nations: as first a hemispheric and then global superpower, it set the terms of the debate. As such, efforts by a political class or movement in any given Latin American nation to overcome what we describe in the volume as the region's "unsustainable model of exclusionary nationalism, restricted political institutions, persisting rural clientelism, and dependent, export-based development" came into conflict with the United States—with the form and degree of the conflict determined by the contingency of the moment. This dynamic, we insist, is key to understanding if not the specifics then the broad contours of Latin America's revolutionary twentieth century. We would caution those who embrace the "New Cold War History" not to lose sight of it.

For example, we like very much Tanya Harmer's new book, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011). It brings Brazil and Cuba into the picture, providing a more textured account of the broader continental crisis that led to Allende's downfall. It usefully avoids trying to place the "smoking gun" in Kissinger's hand in an effort to hold him accountable for the death of Chilean democracy in 1973. By avoiding that pitfall, Harmer is able to argue convincingly, based on impressive research in many different archives, that the U.S. drive to stop Allende reflected a broad consensus in Washington's foreign-policy establishment, and was part of a consistent and coherent crusade against the Latin American left more generally. Nevertheless, at times she seems to reach these conclusions despite not because of her stated "New Cold War" methodology. Her inclusion of Brazil and Cuba only reinforces one's sense of Washington's preeminent power to exert its will. She writes, for example, "U.S.-Chilean relations and the ties between Cuba and Chile were changing, dynamic, and interactive processes rather than static and inevitably determined structures" (15) "Latin American actors" –Brazilians, Cubans, and Chileans—"had considerable agency when it came to the decisions they took. . . . All sides had strategic objectives and interests, but rather than following predetermined paths and being constrained by inanimate social forces, each of them responded tactically to domestic, regional, and international developments they encountered in a far more fluid dynamic process than is sometimes accepted" (16). But then, after writing these sentences early in her book, she describes a very different, almost contradictory, scenario later on: namely, that the only way Allende could have avoided a conflict with Washington was to give up his principles and clamp down on his social base. In fact, Harmer narrates a chronology of conflict in the domains of high diplomacy and covert operations that conforms to Peter Winn's description of a similar process in the social realm, where the flexible, non-reductive relationship between ideas and interests, and the contingent, indeterminate actions of individuals, classes, and political groups evolve and polarize in fields of overlapping, hierarchal power.

In our volume, we conflate the Latin American Cold War with Latin America's revolutionary twentieth century. We do so not to view Latin American history through the prism of Cold War superpower conflict but to redefine the Cold War as a social conflict. Part of that definition entails understanding the social causes of the conflict, particularly as they manifested themselves in sequential efforts to transcend an unstable, repressive, and exclusionary model of politics, culture, and economics. Here, David Painter's point about the relative absence of political economy in the book is well taken; a more textured analysis of how certain forms of accumulation were related to particular kinds of political violence and intervention would have greatly sharpened the analysis.

Both Painter and Longley point out the discrepancy between the volume's case studies, some of which hardly mention the United States at all, and the introduction and conclusion, which emphasize the role of Washington in driving forward regional polarization. We have already engaged this point above. Here let us reiterate that we believe scholarship has to move beyond the polarities of exposé and defense, condemnation and exculpation, over any one case of intervention or violence. The point is not to find the smoking gun; we start with the assumption that the dominant hegemon of any given region will strive, either directly or through proxies, to shape the institutions, laws, and norms of that region to serve its interests—as the United States has done in Latin America. Scholarship on the “Latin American Cold War” and on the “New Cold War History” should go beyond this basic assumption to analyze the historical singularity of U.S.-Latin American relations. The importance of that relationship is deep. As Grandin argued in his recent AHR essay:

In Empire's Workshop, I argued for Latin America's importance in shaping the ideas, tactics, and constituencies of the United States' two great twentieth-century governing coalitions, the New Deal under FDR and the New Right under Ronald Reagan. The argument could be extended back even further into the nineteenth century. President James Monroe's 1823 declaration that all of the Americas were off limits to European intervention was the first of many instances when debates about Spanish America, and the actions resulting from those debates, allowed a reconciliation of competing sectional interests and ideas concerning domestic and foreign policy. As the culmination of Henry Clay's “American System”—a broad, tariff-based vision of how the Western Hemisphere should be organized, with a developing U.S. economy at its center, counterpoised against Great Britain—the Monroe Doctrine helped synthesize positions as diverse as those represented by Clay, John Quincy Adams, and James Monroe.

In reaction, the rising Jacksonians built on the kind of race-based exceptionalism expressed by Everett to attack Clay and his American System; the extended congressional debate over whether the United States should attend Simón Bolívar's 1826 Panama Conference, which Adams, Clay, and others saw as an opportunity to put the system into place, allowed many of the pro-slavery future founders of Jackson's Democratic Party to focus their criticism and build their coalition . . . Spanish America did more than provide ideological focus for the new Jacksonian coalition. It also provided land—through the annexation of Texas and territory seized after the war with Mexico—for the push west, which not only deferred the crisis of slavery but allowed for

a satisfaction of demands generated by the potentially volatile mix of natural law, civic republicanism, and an expanded franchise. Following the Mexican-American War, the United States' exemplary exceptionalism—the idea that the republic could serve as a model to be emulated but would largely restrain itself from imposing that model on other nations—began to transform into what might be called actionable exceptionalism, that is, direct intervention to remake the politics and economics of other nations.

But expansion also accelerated the sectional crisis, and the run-up to the Civil War is the one period in which Latin America could not reconcile the United States: the Confederacy looked south to build an “empire of slavery,” while many people of color and white abolitionists took inspiration from Spanish America, where countries such as Chile, Colombia, and Mexico had ended slavery decades earlier. After the Civil War, Spanish America had begun to be seen by many as a place to naturally extend southern reconstruction, to build the “New Latin America” along with the “New South.”

The United States, in turn, was no less important for Latin America. From independence forward, the region's republicans, liberals, and nationalists honed ideas concerning domestic governance and international diplomacy in relation to an expanding United States. For the sake of space, however, let us confine our concluding remarks to the Cold War period, as it is properly understood: 1947-1989/1991.

Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough have argued that to understand the mainspring of Latin American polarization during these years one needs to consider the region in relation to Western Europe and Japan. In those areas, public reconstruction aid and capital, in the form of the Marshall Plan, provided more space for an independent, non-Soviet allied left—mainly in the form of Social Democratic parties and strong trade unionism—to operate, since investment was not based on ensuring absolute labor quiescence and political stability. In Latin America, in contrast, despite Truman's talk about development and equity, most of the desperately needed capital was, as Latin Americans in Bogotá in 1948 were told it would be, in the form of loans or private investment. So the twinned promises of democracy and development, which in the early 1940s had seemed mutually dependent, were by 1948 revealed to be mutually exclusive. In order to create a stable investment climate and short of a Marshall Plan, governments, now fortified with the polarizing rhetoric of the Cold War, cracked down on labor unrest and persecuted not just Communists—who in many countries were indispensable to democratic advances—but, eventually, all reformers. As the battlefields of the Korean War gave way, in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, to the more covert funding of allied security forces, ensuing aid was overwhelmingly directed to the police and military. A vicious cycle was accelerated: U.S. officials continued to talk about the need to work with a ‘democratic left’ throughout the Cold War (excluding the Reagan years), even as that left was being slaughtered by Washington's own apprentices.

To end with the question as to what makes the Latin American Cold War distinct from Latin America's revolutionary century: it was not the actions or influence of the Soviet Union, which, aside from its presence in Cuba after the revolution, were greatly limited in the

region. An accurate assessment would admit that there was only one superpower involved in the Latin American Cold War: the United States. If the general contours of hemispheric relations had earlier been set, with, for example, U.S. meddling in the Mexican Revolution or its occupations and counterinsurgencies in Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic in the 1920s and 30s, after World War II Washington's containment policy became a more constant variable—shaping each nation's history, albeit with differential results. The massive infusion of counterinsurgent aid quickly led to an erosion of the compromise-seeking center—which in pre-Cold War Latin American politics was already narrowly circumscribed and only tenuously able to incorporate the strains of modern politics. The preponderance of influence exercised by the United States over the hemispheric system—and the organization of the region's nations in the United Nations and the OAS as a caucus united behind Washington's leadership—ensured that the crisis politics of any given country did not spill over into external war (except in the case of the Argentine junta's attempt to retake the Malvinas in 1982). Yet it did greatly accelerate the pace of domestic polarization. Politics and conflict did not end with the defeat of the Sandinistas or the invasion of Panama. But efforts to transcend the past no longer took the form of opposition to the United States but rather subordination to what was called the Washington Consensus (at least for a short time; in the wake of the failure of that consensus, the region has witnessed the return of a dynamic state and social-movement left).

We conclude with a suggestion for further research: Bethell and Roxborough have described something like a postwar transition to social democracy taking place throughout the region. In 1944, only five Latin American countries—Mexico, Uruguay, Chile, Costa Rica, and Colombia—could call themselves democracies; two years later, in 1946, only five countries—Paraguay, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic—could not, as one country after another extended the vote, enacted social welfare legislation, and encouraged, or at least permitted, peasants' and workers' rights. But starting in 1947, shortly after the establishment of branch CIA offices in many countries, and continuing through 1948, a series of coups and anti-communist legislation rolled back this democratic spring. By 1952, with a coup in Cuba, dictators once again ruled much of Latin America.

Clearly, any attempt to define the Latin American Cold War needs to take these coups into account. Imagine how strange it would seem for students of the "European Cold War" to ignore the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948 or elections that year in Italy and France or the Greek civil war. Or how strange it would be for historians to pronounce on the domestic Cold War in the United States without mentioning Taft-Hartley or the Red Scare. But the fact is that historians of Latin America (or of U.S. foreign policy) know very little about these series of post-WWII coups and reactions, even though, in many places, they marked the beginning of a cycle of reform, frustration, repression, and terror that would closely track the history of what we call the Latin American Cold War.

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