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Andrew J. Kirkendall, *Paulo Freire and the Cold War Politics of Literacy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), pp. xvi + 264, $34.95, hb.

For people of my generation a book with Paulo Freire on the cover has instant appeal. His image evokes the idealism of the twentieth-century Latin American Left in its purest form. He personified the cheerful ethos conveyed by Rafael Alberti's poem 'Creemos el hombre nuevo cantando' ('Let's Create the New Man Singing'), put into song by the Chilean folk group, Inti-Illimani. Freire's innovative literacy training method, through its generative words and emphasis on empowerment and *concientización*, provided the means to create a 'new person' (to update the wording). With the Freirean method students became literate, and both teachers and students were supposed to emerge from the programme understanding oppression, being able to identify oppressors and taking action to break free. The powerful in Latin America felt threatened by this approach while the Left identified literacy programmes as effective tools to subvert the old order. Hence the second half of Andrew Kirkendall's title: 'The Cold War Politics of Literacy'.

The 1960s and 1970s, the decades when Freire was most active, were also the heyday of developmentalism in its different versions. People from diverse perspectives coincided in believing that vigorous state actions could quickly bring people out of ignorance and poverty. According to Kirkendall, this 'optimism and impatience of the times' is an indispensable background to understanding why Freire became prominent so swiftly and had such far-reaching influence.

This brings us to Kirkendall's main contribution. By approaching the study of Freire's career and the influence of his ideas in a broad political context, the author helps us understand the extent to which literacy programmes were an important part of the competition for the hearts and minds of the people of the 'third world'. Fortunately for the author, Freire's international career was divided into distinct stages quite suitable for a six-chapter book format. He brought his literacy method to some of the most important sites of the Cold War: Goulart's Brazil in the early 1960s, Frei's Chile during the rest of the decade, recently decolonised African countries in the 1970s, Nicaragua in 1980. At the end of his life Freire helped to start another chapter for the Latin American Left when he contributed to the foundation of Lula da Silva's political party, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party, PT).

Kirkendall methodically analyses every stage of this remarkable career, putting it in context. A typical chapter moves from the history of education to global and local ideological trends, to Freire's activities, to the national and local political context, and then back to Freire. The reader has to navigate this back and forth without the help of subheadings, but it is a worthwhile effort. For example, in a characteristically well-researched section the author sheds light on the intellectual environment in Brazil that nurtured Freire's ideas. The importance of developing a critical consciousness was a subject of frequent discussion in the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros, and the Movimento de Cultura Popular in 1960s Recife provides the background for Freire's culture circles.

Kirkendall approaches his subject in a detached manner; his analysis is sympathetic, but not uncritical. The literacy projects in which Freire was directly involved were almost invariably introduced in polarised environments; they themselves were polarising. The book shows that going from idealistic theory to messy political reality implied constant compromise. In Brazil in the early 1960s the Left heavily criticised Freire's willingness to accept Alliance for Progress funds; in Tanzania in 1971 he

worked with the one-party state created by Julius Nyerere; in the failed project of Guinea-Bissau in the mid-1970s he advised a project that sought to teach literacy in Portuguese in a country where the vast majority of the people did not speak the language of the former colonisers. Not surprisingly Freirean literacy campaigns had mixed results; as the failure in Guinea-Bissau showed, like many other universal recipes for development, they did not travel well.

One gets the impression that Freire was a somewhat detached character. It is only an impression, since the book has little on him as a person. The author provides biographical information only if it is related to the educator's career (the first 20 years of his life are covered in two paragraphs and his wife is mentioned on only two occasions). Freire seems to have been more at ease as an inspirational figure than as a project manager, and as a result many important aspects of his method got lost in translation. Kirkendall's analysis of textbooks shows that the dialogue of equals at the heart of the method was one of the casualties. In most cases, government-written literacy manuals were loaded with official prescriptions for what was expected of the 'new person'.

The thorough chapter on Nicaragua is light on Freire and strong on the Cold War politics of literacy. One can choose to see it as an outlier, but one can also see it as illustrative of the goals of the book. The Brazilian educator spent only six days in the Central American country, and the chapter devotes exactly three paragraphs to him. More than in Tanzania or Guinea-Bissau, Freire inspired and the government decided. On the other hand, the profound idealism characteristic of his projects was an essential component of the campaign, and teachers learned as much as students. The contras' deliberate targeting of literacy volunteers for execution is the most tragic illustration of the extent to which literacy campaigns were part of the Cold War.

The core of Freire's ideas is as relevant today as five decades ago, and interest in his method is alive and well (in summer 2011 a Google search on Paulo Freire yielded 6,370,000 hits). I would encourage any new revolutionary government interested in starting a literacy campaign to read this book's sober analysis of the problems encountered when going from theory to the real world.

My only complaint is stylistic. The author's even-handed and detached scholarly style is very effective in showing the political implications of literacy campaigns. But it is less suited to conveying fully the excitement of the times, the personality of Freire, or the seductive side of the task of creating the 'new person', important parts of a story where significant groups of people were mobilised to join campaigns to further the cause of education. Maybe academic books are not supposed to evoke the feelings of the times. Regardless, this well-researched book does a fantastic job of illuminating an important aspect of the Cold War and should be in every syllabus on the history of education in Latin America.

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James N. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. xiv + 450, $94.95, $26.95 pb.

We Cannot Remain Silent is a book about 'speaking truth to power'. It works simultaneously on several levels. The book informs us about the role of both US and