

Wrath, who comments, 'I'll be ever'where – wherever you look', there are glimpses of Cubans in this corpus of literature that are both unique and widespread.

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Fred Rosen (ed.), *Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. xvii + 263, \$79.95, \$22.95 pb; £50.00, £12.99 pb.

The focus of Fred Rosen's edited volume is on 'the interaction of imperial power with the dissent and resistance it has engendered' in Latin America. Today, this power is largely *economic*, with Washington insisting upon a neoliberal growth model whose most perverse consequence, Rosen continues, is increased inequality. Although Latin Americans who oppose this inequality and neoliberalism's other shortcomings 'have been treated as though they simply do not understand the dynamics of human nature and the "real" world', this volume is intended to demonstrate not only that the critics understand quite well, but also that they have no intention of conceding to the Washington Consensus.

Five of the nine chapters that follow Rosen's introduction are case studies of how Latin Americans are currently resisting US hegemony. Those five cases are preceded by four chapters grouped together in a section labelled 'Historical Reflections', two of which are useful and two of which have only the most tenuous tie to US–Latin American relations. One of the mysteriously incongruent chapters is Gregory Dowd's discussion of eighteenth-century Native American resistance to British colonialism in the US Midwest; even less obviously relevant is John Oldfield's discussion of the British public's resistance to the slave trade. That leaves two chapters of historical reflections. One, by Alan Knight, provides a helpful roadmap to understanding US policy, guiding readers' attention to the distinction between formal and informal empire (the latter being more characteristic of the United States), to the functions of imperialism, to the mechanisms for fulfilling these functions (with a brief but provocative discussion of the export of US cultural norms), and to the differences between US power in the circum-Caribbean region and in the rest of Latin America. Knight notes that throughout the region Latin Americans' 'collaboration is more common than resistance', but he admits to having no idea why: 'Whether the Latin American taste for U.S. material benefits is thoroughly opportunist and self-interested, or based on some deeper cultural empathy, is a riddle I would not try to answer.' What Knight knows is that the stick has historically rested alongside the cultural carrot: 'The markets threaten swift sanctions against those who stray too far from the Washington consensus.'

Carlos Marichal closes the section of historical reflections with a useful chapter on the US government's role in debt negotiations from 1945 to 2005. Focusing on Mexico and Argentina, Marichal gives some attention to the Cold War era, emphasising, for example, how 'international and multilateral banks funnelled substantial sums of money precisely to the military dictatorships and authoritarian governments that reigned in Latin America in the 1970s, most of them with clear support of the Pentagon'. But the focus is upon the more recent evolution away from *bond* finance to *bank* finance, which has facilitated a herd mentality: vast mountains of petrodollars flowing quickly in and just as quickly out of emerging markets, sometimes

creating and always at least exacerbating crises. These crises, in turn, leave most Latin American finance ministers with no option other than a flight to Washington, cap in hand. There the neighbouring Mexicans might find welcome relief, but Marichal reminds us that it came at a hefty price in the early 1980s: ‘a dramatic restructuring of the public sector, including privatisation of state enterprises and the liberalisation of foreign trade’. In contrast, Marichal interprets the Argentine refusal to concede in the face of its grossly (criminally?) mismanaged, neoliberalism-induced 2001–02 meltdown as ‘a major turning point in Latin American financial history [that] points to the possibility that other governments in the Third World will likewise demand more equitable treatment’. A major turning point? Can he really believe this? Apparently not, for three pages later he concludes that ‘the prospects for further reform appear remote’.

Then it is on to the five case studies, beginning with Neil Harvey’s analysis of Mexican *zapatismo*, a rebellion triggered by ‘the crisis and transformation of capitalist states around the world’, whatever that means, and in particular by the fear of NAFTA’s deleterious effect upon rural Mexico. ‘The struggle for local and regional spaces of self-government is one of the most important ways in which rural communities are resisting neo-liberalism’, Harvey writes, but primarily in sweeping generalisations, giving us little feel for today’s Zapatistas or for the broader resistance movement in southern Mexico – a disappointment to readers expecting an update on his *Chiapas Rebellion*, now a decade old.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui’s chapter on Bolivia emphasises what we are currently reading in the daily news: ‘indigenous-peasant identity has become a political force to be reckoned with’. Coca is central to this identity: ‘The ritual consumption of coca in public becomes a symbolic assertion of the nation’s dignity and sovereignty.’ Coca is also taking on a new economic role as its use becomes popular in Bolivia’s *criollo* middle class – coca-leaf flour and syrup have become main ingredients in everything from cookies and cakes to energy supplements and alternative health products, all ‘opening a high-value market of an expansive, quality-oriented world market’. Perhaps, but what Rivera rejects out of hand is the need for a discussion of coca’s role as the principal raw ingredient of cocaine: ‘The cocaine market is marginal in Bolivia’, she writes, ‘while it is booming in Colombia and Peru.’ A modestly informed reviewer should defer to a scholar with decades of experience in the Yungas, but surely a chapter on Bolivia in a volume on Latin American resistance to US hegemony should give some attention to Bolivia’s resistance to Washington’s Andean Counterdrug Initiative?

Jeffrey Rubin’s chapter on Brazil is basically a lament over President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s capitulation to neoliberalism – how this former leftist has ‘eschewed reform and accepted the socioeconomic status quo’ and has ‘adjusted to the politics of the possible, focusing on economic stability and carrying out small reforms in social security, support for family farmers, and food for Brazil’s poorest’. Two sentences later, Rubin notes that ‘Lula has played a key role in challenging the U.S. version of globalization’, but he immediately drops that subject to return to the theme of domestic disillusionment: ‘The Lula administration and the PT betray more than two decades of social-movement mobilization and leftist party building.’ Why have they sold out? Rubin cites domestic political factors, especially a ‘lack of political vision and imagination’, but locates the principal problem overseas: ‘Opposition on the part of international financial institutions precludes innovative policymaking in Brazil.’

Daniel Cieza begins his chapter by noting, as Argentines often do, that ‘as always, the Argentine case is unorthodox’. Specifically, in Argentina ‘a unique, progressive style of “Caesarism” has emerged, aligned with the new Latin American political movements, but with very peculiar characteristics’. In a few well-crafted pages Cieza describes and assesses the neoliberal policies of the Menem/de la Rúa years. They led to the 2001–02 disaster and facilitated the rise of what Cieza labels caesaristic Kirchnerism, which seems much like *chavismo* without as much money. And the resistance? Cieza offers nothing on the weak dissenting role played by Argentina’s once-militant labour movement (for that we can dig out his excellent 1998 NACLA article) and very little about new social actors – only a few sentences on the *piqueteros*.

Steve Ellner begins his chapter on Venezuela with the assertion that Hugo Chávez ‘punctured the Washington Consensus-promoted myth that in the age of globalization any deviation from the standard macroeconomic model was doomed to failure’. As a leading student of Venezuelan politics, Ellner knows that he should have added that major oil exporters, a class by themselves, are free to deviate until their spending grossly outpaces their income (as in Mexico in the early 1980s), and it will be fascinating to see how the current collapse in oil prices affects the apostasy we call *chavismo*. In the meantime, Ellner provides a useful brief guide to Chávez’s movement, but it is an informative chapter in search of a conclusion: ‘As long as the Venezuelan model depends on oil income, its applicability beyond its borders will be limited’, Ellner writes, followed two paragraphs later by a claim that the outcome of the Chávez model ‘is of transcendent importance for the rest of Latin America and the Left worldwide’.

There is no stated conclusion, but readers will deduce one: If Washington is intent upon maintaining its Latin American ‘empire’ by insisting upon traditional neoliberalism – a big ‘if’ about which a chapter would have been welcome – then the level of dissent in today’s Latin America is not sufficient to force Washington to reconsider. That may change, of course, but anyone reading these nine chapters will bet on continuity.

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Günther Maihold (ed.), *Venezuela en retrospectiva: Los pasos hacia el régimen chavista* (Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2007), pp. 346, € 28.00, pb.

Venezuela has become the focus of an ever-expanding literature on the merits and shortcomings of the Bolivarian revolution. If many hail it as an attempt to redirect the course of history away from the evils of free-market fundamentalism and to blaze a new era of equality, many others, with similar passion, fear it as a long descent into tyranny by the ideologised masses over the forces of reaction, as well as by the government. It is debatable whether the Fifth Republic is a complete break with the past (if there is ever such a thing) or whether it may be more accurately characterised as the interplay between the old and the new, tradition and novelty. Clientelistic networks continue to be entangled with the state apparatus and public resources. Throughout the tumultuous years of Chávez’s presidency, however, a large number of observers both in Venezuela and abroad have been persuaded that the country is on a path of political, economic and cultural transformation. This is