

on the state by the private sector remained acute. A response to this pressure was the rise of SOEs, especially in capital intensive sectors, but this primed debt-led growth. Tools faced conflicting objectives; when exacerbated by price pressures, the fixed exchange rate regime was insufficient to provide both stabilisation and a long-run competitive rate.

Bulmer-Thomas's nuanced account attests to the complexity of models employed in any given period of Latin American economic development. His latent optimism for greater integration of the region into the global economy underscores that export diversification was possible given the right set of incentives. The prescriptions in the new economic model of export-led growth and a smaller role for the state were painful and imperfect. Lamentably, Latin America was distracted by domestic macro adjustments when the age of globalisation began. But both commodity-led growth and inward looking development were framed by the same entrenched elites in oligopolistic markets that reinforced colonial patterns of asset distribution.

Bulmer-Thomas does not just analyse Latin America's external position but instead squarely situates it in the world economy, and he finds the region lacking. He points us toward the national disconnects between policy and missed international opportunities driven by slow price adjustment triggered by absent and segmented markets. At the core of disappointing growth in Latin America is a failure to invigorate total factor productivity. Bulmer-Thomas is cautiously optimistic about fiscally prudent poverty alleviation tools, but does not connect this to how entitlement changes will impact productivity to promote shared growth. He closes on an upbeat tone, asserting that the forces of globalisation may galvanise missing productivity enhancing investments. But he is unclear on the concrete mechanisms to achieve equitable, sustainable growth.

Chapters are organised by historical period and presented with meticulous detail and carefully traced footnotes. Bulmer-Thomas characterises not only the economy but the prevailing academic and policy views of each time. This temporal approach is important in showing how micro components align with macro outcomes, but it makes it trickier for the reader wanting to learn, for example, how regional integration or poverty changes over time; one needs to track the topic across chapters. Although not neglected, the political is perhaps underplayed in explaining why Latin America does not meet its growth potential. But these are not criticisms, simply trade-offs explaining why Latin American growth fails to meet expectations. Bulmer-Thomas's richly detailed history clearly points to the lack of resilience to global shocks, inconsistent policies and the tricky nature of achieving internal and external balance.

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Christopher Hull, *British Diplomacy and US Hegemony in Cuba, 1898–1964* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. ix + 291, £60.00, hb.

One of the most striking scenes of Francis Ford Coppola's movie, *Apocalypse Now* takes place in a French plantation, on one of the jungle-lined banks of the fictional Nung River, somewhere in between Vietnam and Cambodia during the 1960s. The sequence shows a fortuitous meeting between a group of French colonists, citizens of Vietnam's former colonial occupant who, have decided to stay in Indochina, in

spite of defeat at Dien Bien Phu, and a band of US Army soldiers, belonging to the new 'colonial' power, on a mission to track down Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, mysteriously disappeared in the Cambodian jungle. The meeting serves as an occasion to generate a powerful image: one where the old and the new colonial powers are put one in front of the other, symbolising the transition from one imperial project to another. The conversation between the American soldiers and the French also shows the melancholia of the former colonial power, unable to completely detach itself from its old, lost dominions and the scepticism and foresight with which the French look at the new 'colonists', probably aware of the difficulties the Americans will face and the price they will have to pay throughout the pursuit of their neo-colonial dreams in Indochina.

Although dealing with a different context, Christopher Hull's book strongly reminded me of this powerful image. The book describes the history of British diplomacy in Cuba, at the time of Washington's ascending hegemony over Latin America and the Caribbean and London's decaying global supremacy, and it is a richly researched reflection on the imperial transition and its complex political implications. Hull shows that, like the French colonists in Indochina, the British faced difficulties in their retreat from a position of global power. However, he also illustrates the foresight that the former imperial role bestowed (sometimes) on London's diplomacy. Hull shows the practical difficulties and the reluctance with which British diplomacy had to progressively come to terms with its new, diminished role as a global power against the backdrop of expanding American hegemony in the western hemisphere. He explores the implication of this process on London's policies towards Cuba, and shows how 'colonialist British haughtiness' was gradually if reluctantly tempered by London's imperial decline, pushing the Foreign Office to adopt a pragmatic strategy toward Cuba. In many cases, in the long term, this process of repositioning resulted in a more balanced approach to the intricate political dynamics of the island than that maintained by Washington, especially during the 1950s insurrectional times and the years of the Revolution led by Fidel Castro.

The history of British diplomacy in Cuba or Latin America, especially during the second part of the twentieth century, represents a secondary episode in terms of Latin American or Cuban history. Consequently, the book does not add anything particularly new on what we already know about the unfolding of Cuban events between 1898 and the mid-1960s. However, drawing on a rich variety of British diplomatic sources from the Foreign Office, Board of Trade and Treasury files, among others, along with US primary documentation, the book represents an accurate piece of British diplomatic history. Furthermore, by providing the British diplomatic point of view, the book offers an interesting counterpoint to the American diplomatic sources related to Cuba, helping to better contextualise US policies toward the island, especially during Castro's insurrection and after the triumph of the Revolution.

In its first part, the book retraces British attempts to maintain a privileged commercial position in Cuba during the early twentieth century in spite of the informal protectorate set up by Washington after Cuba's truncated independence from Spain in 1898. Those are years when British imperial haughtiness eventually hampered London's capacity to manoeuvre in Cuba, determining the Foreign Office failure to achieve one of its main political objectives, namely, the conclusion of an important trade agreement with the new formally independent, but informally dependent, post-1989 Cuban governments. 'At almost every turn', Hull argues 'the predominant position of the United States in Cuba impinged upon British interests there' and,

eventually, he concludes 'the British government's general submission to US supremacy partly responded to the need to reduce naval commitments in the Americas as part of a global strategy of political realignments' (pp. 53–54).

This forced political realignment largely meant a diminished British capacity to influence Cuban's domestic affairs and, thus, a reduced British direct entanglement in the island in favour of Washington's presence. However, the book shows that with this came an inevitable detachment and a more balanced approach to Cuban events. This became clear during the 1933 Revolution when, although British diplomacy substantially shared Washington's political evaluation of Grau's revolutionary government, the Foreign Office, following the advice of the man in Havana, Grant Watson, proposed a more diplomatically nuanced approach to the crisis than that pursued by Roosevelt's special envoy in the island, Sumner Welles.

British diplomats continued to provide high-quality analysis informed by Britain's previous role as a global player and its continued, if diminished, involvement in Cuban affairs in the Cold War period. Still, there were exceptions, such as when London unwisely sold military equipment to the dying military regime of Batista in 1959. However, as Hull illustrates, London's approach to Castro's Revolution was mostly based on a more subtle strategy than that carried out by Washington. It drew on the lessons learnt by London's dramatic failures at dealing with the Nasser regime in Egypt and the 1956 Suez crisis. After Castro took power, for example, London suggested maintaining military assistance to the new regime. In part, this position was motivated by commercial interests in the island. However, it was also determined by the fact that, according to British analysis of the situation, 'if rebuffed' in their requests for military equipment, Cubans 'would almost certainly turn elsewhere' and 'this could lead to a whole series of chain reactions within (the) Egyptian model' (p. 160). In Egypt, British reluctance to give up imperial aspirations had hampered diplomats' understanding of its limits, possibilities and, above all, the local political context. By contrast, in Cuba, only a few years after the Suez Crisis the necessary, if slow, adjustment to the American hegemonic role in the western hemisphere helped London to elaborate a balanced and nuanced approach to the Revolution. Here, it would have been interesting to offer a broader image of London's global strategy, in which to insert the Cuban case. Indeed, during those same years, British diplomacy had also begun to develop a strategy of engagement with the Non-Aligned Movement, evidence of a larger, radical shift in the approach to the Third World after the Suez disaster.

In general, as Hull illustrates, London was not able to enforce its point of view with Washington, which usually discarded British's suggestions and proceeded according to its own evaluations of the situation in Cuba. However, British detachment with regard to Cuban affairs allowed the country to take advantage of some economic opportunities. For example, in the early 1960s, evading Washington's blockade on the island, London was able to sell and ship buses to the revolutionary regime, with some positive effects on the problematic British post-World War II trade imbalances. British diplomats judged, correctly, that 'there was "no likelihood" that economic sanctions or a blockade would bring down Castro's regime' (p. 179). Like the French colonists in the Vietnamese jungle, once British diplomacy, overcame its imperial melancholia and came to terms with its new, diminished role in world affairs it could draw on past experience to deal with complex international issues.

The book would have probably benefited from a greater reliance on a global perspective, in order to appreciate the evolving nature of the British approach to the

Third World, and hence Latin America and Cuba, as part of a general reassessment of its position in world affairs after 1956. That said, Hull's book represents a solid work on the history of British diplomacy in Cuba against the backdrop of Washington's ascending hegemony. It also provides a more general metaphor of British imperial rise and fall. It shows that leaving the Heart of Darkness can bring light and lucidity to the process of foreign policy-making.

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Ben Fallaw, *Religion and State Formation in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. xx + 329, £67.00, £16.99 pb.

At Mexico's constitutional convention in 1916–1917, anticlericalism triggered by far the noisiest and most ill-tempered debate among the delegates. In this book, Ben Fallaw argues that, of the revolutionary state's many obstacles (fractured geography, bureaucratic incapacity, US power), Catholic opposition was the most important, and was far more pervasive and enduring than previously thought. Many historians argue that President Cárdenas toned down anticlericalism, reconciled with the Church, and consolidated the revolutionary state. By contrast, Fallaw shows how many Catholics considered opposition to anticlericalism inseparable from hostility to land reform and federal schooling. Thus, the main legacy of the 1930s was not a hegemonic pact between state and society but enduring Catholic suspicion of the revolutionary state.

The book begins appropriately enough with a six-page glossary of terms, concepts and insults whose local meaning Fallaw is unwilling to translate and dilute. This is a study of crucial national questions that takes the reader deep into the thickets of provincial Mexican politics and society. After a first chapter surveying Church-state conflict, four case studies spanning the 1930s build the main argument: Campeche, Hidalgo, Guerrero and Guanajuato. These states are well chosen; they contain a great many different social, ethnic and political variables. Guanajuato aside, they were neither bases of institutional strength for the Church nor reputed to be particularly pious. The breadth and depth of Fallaw's research in diplomatic, national, regional, educational, and religious archives allows him to show the power and heterogeneity of Catholic opposition in each case. Gun-toting priests, lay women slipping pamphlets under doors and leading truancy strikes, a would-be indigenist bishop, wily caciques, two-faced *políticos*, spontaneous mobs of furious villagers, provincial journalists, landlord-sponsored thugs engaged in white terror; all take part in the drama at different times and places. Fallaw argues that the Catholic Church's decentralised, 'radial' strategy of resistance, similar to that adopted in Italy, was basically successful, even as it prevented coordination and Church control. Whatever their differences, these actors shared a common discourse and recognised that they were part of the same struggle.

For Fallaw, such varied, cross-class opposition (like the revolutionary project itself) resists monocausal explanation, and it is hard to disagree, especially given how carefully the evidence for this contention is laid out for the reader. At times Catholic elites and revolutionary teachers echoed each other in their pursuit of respectable sexual mores, their condescending attitudes to indigenous people, or distaste for popular revelry. Revolutionary social engineers enjoyed some successes, but failed to exploit divisions