

proved no more than a short-term technique of ethnic manoeuvring. He found his chief benefactor in Thomas Armstrong, an Irish Protestant and one of the richest 'Anglo' merchants of the era. Armstrong funnelled funds to Fahy, who bestowed them on aspirant Irish landowners. The ties between the two men illustrated Fahy's relentless but pragmatic pursuit of methods to consolidate the Irish community and his willingness to exploit non-Catholic Irish linkages.

Kelly has an interesting chapter on William Bulfin, a fine Irish author who wrote several appealing pastoral narratives about Argentina and Ireland. During the Boer War of 1899–1902 Bulfin sought to promote Irish nationalism in Argentina and published numerous vitriolic anti-imperialist tracts in *The Southern Cross*, his newspaper in Buenos Aires. The campaign failed, and Bulfin returned to Ireland. The writing might have attracted a wider readership were it not for Bulfin's decision to publish in English alone, a clearly misguided tactic on his part. Bulfin's son had a leading role in the Easter Rising of 1916, after which he faced execution. Like American-born Eamon De Valera, he escaped death because he was foreign, namely Argentinian-born.

On Bulfin's era, Kelly might have considered social and cultural change in the community more extensively. By this point, access to land had disappeared; the Irish Argentinians were seeping into the capital; Irish girls, once the chattels of families on remote farms, now worked in the city as chambermaids or laundresses. The Bulfin era coincided with the onset of community urbanisation, exogamy and greater assimilation. Little scope existed for Irish republicanism; instead, the moderately inclined, sober-minded Irish Argentinians appeared far more likely to join the *Unión Cívica Radical* and to become Argentinian Radicals.

University of California, Santa Barbara

DAVID ROCK

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 42 (2010). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10000581

Brian S. McBeth, *Dictatorship and Politics: Intrigue, Betrayal, and Survival in Venezuela, 1908–1935* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008), pp. xiv + 578, \$60.00, hb.

Writing in 1995, historian Steve Ellner observed an emerging trend in modern Venezuelan historiography. He noted that some had begun to re-evaluate traditionally positive portrayals of the post-1945 democratic governments, as well as the commonly held negative images of the military/dictatorial governments of the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Brian S. McBeth's masterful study of the government of Juan Vicente Gómez represents a signal example of this new trend. In his encyclopaedic analysis of the politics of the Gómez regime, the author depicts Gómez as neither a simple tyrant nor a puppet of foreign interests, but as a consummately skilled politician who enjoyed broad domestic support. The author also provides a detailed and thoroughly researched account of the evolving opposition to the regime.

Known for his in-depth analyses of early twentieth-century Venezuelan politics, in *Dictatorship and Politics* McBeth challenges widely held beliefs about

<sup>1</sup> Steve Ellner, 'Venezuelan Revisionist Political History, 1908–1958: New Motives and Criteria for Analysing the Past', *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1995), pp. 91–121.

General Gómez and his long-lived regime. He credits the Tachiran leader with great political acumen and argues that, contrary to the prevailing historiography of the Gómez era, he did not govern without popular and political support. The author asserts that 'Gómez, with his "rural and affable aspect", surrounded himself with enlightened and prestigious men who helped modernise the country' (p. 371). Indeed, after the tumult of Cipriano Castro's rule, many in Venezuela initially saw Juan Vicente Gómez as a reformer, even a liberator.

McBeth also puts the regime in a broader context of foreign relations. Whereas Gómez has often been treated as a puppet of multinational oil companies and their home governments, McBeth reveals that the relationship was not as cosy as often depicted. He attempts – though not entirely successfully – to remove oil as the main focus of political and international conflict. The author demonstrates that both oil interests and the British and United States governments did not immediately embrace Gómez, and indeed even considered cooperating with his opponents. Although anxious for the removal of Cipriano Castro in 1908, the US government did not support Gómez uncritically; Woodrow Wilson was initially quite cool to Gómez's regime, though later administrations embraced closer relations. McBeth notes that 'the United States would continue to encourage Venezuelan conspirators, with US–Venezuelan relations remaining strained until 1922, when US oil needs modified America's policy toward the country' (p. 123). He also shifts focus somewhat from the usual preoccupation with the United States and Britain by noting the role of Alvaro Obregón and Mexico's revolutionary government in seeking the overthrow of Gómez's regime.

The key focus of the book, however, remains the internal opposition to Gómez. McBeth discusses in detail more than 20 efforts to oust him, ranging from stillborn conspiracies to elaborate invasions from abroad, coordinated with internal uprisings. He depicts the anti-Gómez rebels as both politically sophisticated and dedicated, but plagued with two basic problems, 'namely a lack of finance and disputes among themselves as to who would lead the revolution' (p. 207). As a result, all these efforts to remove Gómez had in common their universal failure, allowing the *caudillo* to die still in power at an advanced age. The author also demonstrates the evolving nature of the militant opposition. 'Liberal' political and military groups dominated early efforts to oust Gómez; by the 1920s, the nature of the opposition had begun to change, with the emergence of new groups – the middle class, students and militant leftists – reflecting Venezuela's wider political evolution over 27 years. While providing a detailed discussion of the efforts to displace Gómez, McBeth leaves the impression that the threat was perhaps more perceived than real.

The study takes a generally chronological approach; the author begins with Juan Vicente Gómez's rise to power and ends with the aftermath of Gómez's death in December 1935. The book is divided into three sections; the first part, extending from 1908 to 1916, focuses on Gómez's rise to national power in the wake of his ouster of ailing predecessor Cipriano Castro. The second part, from 1917 to 1928, explores the consolidation of the regime's hold on power, while chronicling the steady stream of conspiracies and uprisings by those seeking to topple Gómez. The third part examines the last years of the Gómez era and centres on the most significant attempt to overthrow him, the famous *Falke* raid of 1929. It also narrates the waning years of the regime, culminating with Gómez's death in December 1935, and the complexities of succession. A series of useful

appendices provides the reader with biographical information about key personalities in Juan Vicente Gómez's Venezuela, as well as key financial information for the regime.

The book is based heavily on archival research; given its focus, it is perhaps not surprising that the main sources of information are Venezuelan government archives, particularly the presidential archive at the Palacio de Miraflores, as well as the private archives of major players in the Gómez regime. The author also makes extensive use of foreign government sources, particularly diplomatic and consular correspondence from US and British archives, to tell the complex tale of intersection between Gómez's government and its opponents inside and outside of Venezuela.

McBeth's work represents a major scholarly achievement in Venezuelan history. It provides the reader with a comprehensive reassessment of the Gómez era in addition to a convincing demonstration of the tenacious opposition that the regime faced. But the very volume and detail of the study cannot help but raise a question: to what extent, how realistic were the perceived threats to the regime? Intentionally or not, McBeth demonstrates very clearly that the obstacles facing those challenging Juan Vicente Gómez for power were very nearly insurmountable. Still, this is an essential book for anyone interested in modern Venezuelan history, and provides interesting insights into the contemporary political dynamics of that country.

*New Mexico Highlands University*

PETER S. LINDER

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 42 (2010). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10000593

Angela Vergara, *Copper Workers, International Business, and Domestic Politics in Cold War Chile* (University Park PA: Penn State University Press, 2008), pp. xii + 222, \$60.00, hb.

Angela Vergara's book is an important contribution to our understanding of a crucial variable in Chile's life. It is no wonder that in the mid-1960s President Eduardo Frei Montalva deemed copper the country's main tool in its quest for economic and social development, and that a few years later President Salvador Allende referred to the metal as Chile's wage. Indeed, copper represents at least 40 per cent of total export volume and is the main source of foreign exchange. As far as public revenue is concerned, copper is the mainstay.

Copper has been, and still is, a major factor in Chile's economic life, while socially it has formed the backdrop to complicated demographic and labour developments as well as intense debates and major political decisions. It was for some decades a source of complicated negotiations between the Chilean state and large corporations based in the United States. Chilean copper mining comprises three sectors, according to the size of the mine and scale of the mining operations. Medium- and small-scale mines (and some mines are *very* small) are owned and exploited by Chileans, with rare exceptions. Large mines (*gran minería* – that is, mines producing more than 25,000 tons of copper per year) were, until the nationalisation of 1971, operated by large foreign corporations, the most important ones being Anaconda Copper Company and the Kennecott Copper Company. Vergara's book analyses the evolution of two large-scale copper mines, both owned by the Andes Copper Mining Company, a subsidiary of Anaconda.