

be systematically forgotten and the country would move forward with an agenda that was not driven by an overwhelming memory of the 1964-85 era. One story that might be told is how that allowed for the agents of extremist repression to become vibrant actors in recent Brazilian history (including the rather minor actor Jair Bolsonaro, who is now president), and even to speak of the need to return to the policies and practices of the dictatorship. A former, deeply involved leftist guerrilla, Dilma Rousseff, was able to become president as a consequence of the story that Serbin chooses to focus on. The collapse of her presidency and the considerable damage done to the leadership of her mentor, former President Lula da Silva, by charges of ordinary nonrevolutionary corruption underscore the complications of the left's participation within a system that it once worked so hard to destroy.

Yet, Serbin ends on a strikingly positive note: the view that the effective charges against even politically mythic figures like Lula and, indirectly, Dilma, demonstrate that the reinforcement of democratic institutions, toward which they evolved following the 1979 amnesty that re-legitimated them as Brazilian citizens, has been, after all, a lasting contribution. Serbin's account, then, is essentially redemptive: not only does he argue eloquently for not calling the ALN a terrorist group, preferring insistently to focus on their broad revolutionary principles, but he also essentially reinforces Yanucchi's avowal that in the end the Left was the winner.

Professional historical studies such as Serbin's usually enjoy prompt translation into Portuguese: Brazil is always keenly interested in foreign views on its social history. However, Serbin's redemptive view toward the Left is hardly integral to the prevailing political discourse in the Bolsonaro era, at least from the presidential bully pulpit. The reception of Serbin's book in Portuguese may have something to say about the author's argument that Bolsonaro's election had more to do with a public repudiation of gross corruption than it did any ideological rejection of the Left.

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## CHILE

*Beyond the Vanguard: Everyday Revolutionaries in Allende's Chile.* By Marian E. Schlotterbeck. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018. Pp. 248. \$34.95 paper. doi:10.1017/tam.2020.30

Marian Schlotterbeck's book presents a nuanced narrative of the experience of members of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) at the grassroots level and the tensions that beset their relations with the national leadership of the movement in the years of its greatest influence in Chilean politics and society. By exposing the memories of MIR

militants in their own terms, Schlotterbeck successfully portrays the meanings attributed to political action by those who concentrated their participation in social organizations and mobilization at the grassroots level. Those meanings differed significantly from the way the revolutionary politics of the MIR was conceived and conducted by the national leaders of the movement, especially in the last two years of the Allende administration.

The greatest strength of Schlotterbeck's book is its exposition of the experiences of MIR members through the prism of their own memories, which are not shaped fundamentally by the events and course of Chilean national politics, but by their own agency in social organization and mobilization. As Schlotterbeck correctly points out, the literature on the political history of Chile in the 1960s and 1970s has focused mostly on events and processes at the level of state institutions and national political parties. Furthermore, the traumatic overthrow of Salvador Allende and the military dictatorship that followed have become a seemingly teleological horizon to the course of Chilean politics in the years prior to 1973, thus shaping the retrospective views of contemporary actors and numerous scholarly assessments of the period.

The memories of the MIR members interviewed by Schlotterbeck, none of whom occupied high leadership posts in the movement, tell a story that, although not bereft of a natural sense of defeat, emphasizes the hopes and perception of empowerment that the conduct of revolutionary politics at the grassroots level gave them. Students, workers, and women in search of a place to live, among others, found recognition and a sense of purposeful belonging in assemblies, unions, and associations because the ideology and strategy of the MIR promoted horizontal participation at the grassroots level, even as its leaders conceived the movement as a Leninist vanguard of revolution at the national level.

The positive side of the memories evoked by Schlotterbeck's interviewees, however, poses the question as to why the MIR and its own understanding of revolutionary politics failed to obtain a more massive following and become a more significant actor in Chilean politics, beyond Santiago and Concepción. Schlotterbeck characterizes the instances of social organization and mobilization in which her interviewees participated as experiences in radical or participatory democracy, mostly because they remembered those experiences in that key. The brief conceptual discussion of the notions of democracy and revolution from below offered in the introduction (5-6) falls a little short of providing a satisfactory explanation of why the MIR, even considering the content of the memories of its members, was such a singular conductor of the sort of radical democracy that the author extolls in her account. After all, one of the outstanding features of Chilean politics in the 1960s and 1970s was the considerable politicization of many forms of social organization at the grassroots level, from peasant unions, to student federations, to mothers' centers, all of them promoted and exploited by parties across the political spectrum. The lack of a wider conceptual discussion about these forms of democracy at the grassroots level, which clashed with the more rigid

Leninist structure and views of the MIR's national leadership, makes it a little difficult to understand whether there was something especially democratic in the revolutionary project of the movement. The MIR's foes, who constituted a majority in Chile and were distributed across the entire spectrum of institutional politics, certainly did not see it that way.

The question about the meanings of democracy goes to the core of the conflicts that engulfed Chilean politics in the years of the Allende administration, and the MIR was a disproportionately important actor in these conflicts. Consequently, a more schematic discussion of the interplay between concepts such as 'revolution' and 'participatory or radical democracy' would have made even better this excellent contribution to the study of the social experiences underlying the crisis of Chilean democracy in the years before 1973.

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SEBASTIÁN HURTADO TORRES

*Ghosts of Sheridan Circle: How A Washington Assassination Brought Pinochet's Terror State to Justice.* By Alan McPherson. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2019. Pp. 392. \$34.95 cloth.  
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Alan McPherson has written a fast-paced book clearly aimed at a mass audience. He revisits the 1976 assassinations of Orlando Letelier, former minister of the Salvador Allende government in Chile, and his US coworker Ronni Moffitt, in a car bombing in Washington DC. As an act of state-sponsored foreign terrorism in the US capital, this double assassination was a major event. McPherson, a historian and professor of International Studies, eschews theoretical frameworks or scholarly analysis in favor of accessibility; the book reads like a thriller.

Letelier was a prominent socialist diplomat who had served in the Allende government in several posts. After the military coup of September 11, 1973, Pinochet's forces had detained him and shipped him to the icy Dawson Island prison camp, with other former high-ranking government figures. Eventually freed due to international pressure, Letelier moved to Washington with his family and began working with the Institute of Policy Studies. Letelier was a fierce critic of the human rights atrocities and iron military control in Chile. He cultivated a broad network of contacts, including a number in the US Congress. On September 21, as he drove to work with Michael and Ronni Moffitt, a recently married couple, a remotely detonated explosion destroyed the car and killed Letelier and Ronni Moffitt.