

of this type is needed for Japanese communities throughout Latin America. Now, particularly after more than 300,000 Latin American *Nikkei* have migrated to Japan where they have been received coldly, careful assessments of the troubled *Nikkei* communities left behind is essential. Much of the diaspora remains discontented, but it is no longer in Brazil. It is in Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya and other Japanese cities.

*U.S. Naval Academy*

DANIEL MASTERSON

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Luiz Bernardo Pericás, *Che Guevara e o debate econômico em Cuba* (São Paulo: Xamã VM Editora, 2004), pp. 235, pb.

This work examines the ‘economic debate’ on the industrialisation of Cuba from 1959 until Che left the country. Pericás thus provides a wider historical context for the ‘gran debate’, instigated by Che in 1963, on the role of finance in the island’s economic development that is often linked with Liberman’s 1962 Pravda article on planning, profit and incentives.

The preface by Moniz Bandeira, a potted history of the Soviet economy (using two of Kautsky’s most anti-Soviet texts as prime sources) can be passed over. He takes a cue from Pericás’s previous book, *Che Guevara and the Revolutionary Struggle in Bolivia* (1997), which argued that the image of Christ permeated his life, to dismiss Che’s revolutionary humanism as quasi mystical. Here Pericás actually mentions ‘mysticism’ only once, when reporting Lwy’s work on Che (p. 154).

Pericás’s stated concerns are the discussions on centralisation and decentralisation, the different approaches to management and the influence of reformist economists in the period. His ‘Introduction’ gives a fair account of the Cuban economy from the 1930s, although ‘imperialism’ is not explicitly spoken of. What is useful is the account of the trade and aid immediately offered by the socialist states as the USA chose to undermine the new government and nationalisations had to be made. Chapter one starts with Che’s role as head of the National Bank from November 1959 and chapter two describes Che’s activities as head of the Ministry of Industries from February 1961. However, Che’s use of the ‘Budgetary Finance System’ is suddenly introduced without any explanation of its nature or intellectual origins (p. 70). We are told that it had previously been introduced into INRA (Department of Industrialisation), unremarked when Pericás first discusses it on page 49. The reader is left to puzzle over precisely what this system was. Guevara’s ideas of planning and budgeting are said to parallel those of Bukharin and Preobrazensky, whereby society is considered to be a single cooperating producer. Lenin’s contributions, and Che’s many references to them, are ignored here.

Chapter three describes important debates in the USSR, Poland and Yugoslavia on planning, the financing of enterprises, market experiments and material incentives. Their influence on Cuban administrators is discussed. Che’s regular reflections on Lenin’s contributions are left to one side. Che’s concern in 1959 that allowing financial independence for enterprises would (and by 1964 had) lead to the reestablishment of capitalism in Yugoslavia, is shown to have been anticipated by Poland’s Gomulka. Next a description follows of the debate in Cuba about planning, industrial management, the budgetary system of finance, Soviet financial practices, incentives, the role of the banks, the theory of value, emulation and

voluntary work as a means of raising social consciousness, and labour productivity. A clear chance is missed to explain Che's ideas on the budgeting process. Pericás gives more cover to Che's critics, Rodríguez, Font and Mora, and especially the French writer Bettelheim (who used Stalin as a theoretical ally). Che's response to Bettelheim, with its long quote from Lenin, is ignored. Bettelheim countered Che's view that the law of value was obviated within the state sector but not in outside trade. Mandel sided with Che. Bettelheim later changed his views.

Pericás briefly describes the '*Manual of Political Economy*' from the USSR, (pp. 116–7) to note that Che believed that the law of value could be 'ignored' in setting certain prices in a socialist state. Che's *Apuntes Críticos a la Economía Política* (2006) which contains the full script of Che's incisive 1963 criticism of the Manual, was unpublished when Pericás was writing, obliging him to use only the quotes from this work in Borrego's *El Camino del Fuego* (2001). Pericás does provide a short history of Cuban *sindicatos* from 1866, before covering Che's dealings with them, referring to Che's use of Lenin's arguments and including the polemic with Trotsky over the role of trade unions. The book fairly presents Che's concern that disputes were resolved by discussion and that trade unions contribute to the state production plan whilst defending the interests of the workers.

Chapter six on socialism and the 'new man' is the longest chapter. Pericás examines the relation between Che's ideas and the circumstances in which they were argued. He proposes that the three 'moments' that compose Che's idea are the system of incentives, voluntary labour, and socialist emulation, are treated separately in the second half of the chapter. More the pity then that this discussion was not better integrated into the earlier brief account of the budgetary finance system, especially since the author recognises them as intrinsic to Che's political-economic project (p. 156). (An integrated discussion is treated in Helen Yaffe's forthcoming book on Che's Budgetary Financial System, Palgrave.) Pericás correctly states that speaking about one without the other destroys all sense of either, converting the idea of the new man into something abstract and romantic. He refers to earlier debates on the 'new man' from Marx and Engels to the contemporary Soviet ideas, noting that, '(f)or its political-economic implications in a determinate historical period, the observations of Lenin closely approach those of Guevara', that communist morality arises from the class struggle (p. 160). Che's ideas on incentives and motivation lost force from 1965, and Pericás traces the changes that Fidel then introduced. A useful detailed account is given of the relative successes and limits to emulation and voluntary work.

Finally, Pericás considers whether Che was influenced by other 'Marxist Tendencies'. Until 1953, Stalin is supposedly the principal influence. The Bolivian Revolution of 1953 and the influence of communists, Stalinists, Trotskyists and China on Latin America are discussed. Che's openness is demonstrated, and various claims about his Trotskyism and Maoism are dismissed. The attacks by Trotskyists on Che and Fidel are accurately recounted. Che's responses are noted, including his statement that certain of Trotsky's concepts were 'fundamentally erroneous' (p. 195).

Pericás concludes that '... the Cuban leadership continues giving importance to the use of the image of Guevara to new generations as a stimulus to continue the socialist system in the country' (p. 213). Essentially a 'descriptive' account, the book lacks an independent economic analysis of the significance of the law of value for Cuban economic development. However, this is a useful short text for newcomers.