

the press unambiguously spoke for some shared national, class, or community consciousness, and not just for the men (and the occasional woman) who actually wrote those words.

But this is a quibble. Most of Hiatt's flights of speculation show considerable insight, and together with his admirable storytelling skill they make for an entertaining and thought-provoking read. This is a book that I would very much like to use in my advanced undergraduate social history seminar, so I would urge Oxford University Press to proceed without delay to the paperback edition.

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CARLOS AGUIRRE & PAULO DRINOT (eds.): *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment Under Military Rule*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017.

On October 3, 1968, Peruvian military officers led by Army chief of staff Juan Velasco Alvarado overthrew elected president Fernando Belaunde and proclaimed the "Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces" (RGAF). Velasco announced that the new government aimed to radically transform Peruvian society, combat social injustice, end foreign domination, redistribute land and wealth, and put the destiny of Peruvians in their own hands. Within a week the RGAF expropriated the International Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil, a powerful US corporation. This bold move was followed over time by measures affecting much of Peruvian society: education, labor rights, concepts of property and land tenure, forms of political participation, the state's role in the economy, the rights of indigenous persons and cultures, and Peru's foreign policies.

The unexpected left-nationalist thrust of the RGAF aroused strong international political and scholarly interest. Many acclaimed Peru's groundbreaking reforms; some attributed to them a depth of purpose and a degree of popular support that turned out to be quite exaggerated. Others belittled the RGAF as just another military coup designed to protect the entrenched power structure and/or decried its impact on Peru's economic prospects. A few scholars suggested that Peru's experiment was innovative but deeply contradictory, an "ambiguous revolution" (Lowenthal), a top-down "revolution by fiat" (Jaquette), with inherent limitations.

These contradictions and limits became more evident over time. Economic constraints, especially the reticence of foreign and national entrepreneurs, produced financial pressures and undercut funding for projects. Velasco's health

deteriorated from 1973 and he was deposed in 1975 by senior military officers uncommitted to his project and determined to extricate the armed forces from government. By 1980 former president Belaunde returned to the presidency; many RGAF reforms had already ended or been attenuated and others soon gave way. Today, Velasco Alvarado remains a polarizing figure among those few who remember this period, but lacks critical attention. International social scientists have moved on to other countries, and Peruvian social scientists mainly concentrate on broad topics such as Peru's social and political fragmentation, the Shining Path and its defeat, and Peru's role in a globalized economy.

This rich multidisciplinary symposium aims to rethink the Peruvian experiment with five decades of hindsight. In 13 chapters and a context-setting introduction, Aguirre, Drinot and their collaborators have summarized earlier work on the RGAF, anchored in political science, anthropology and economics, and have both drawn upon but departed from that literature to focus on social and cultural processes and issues pertaining to the Velasco regime and to its legacy, and on the RGAF's impact at the local and regional levels.

Carlos Aguirre shows how in 1971 the RGAF used the 150 year celebration of 150 year celebration of Peru's independence to portray the military "revolution" as a "second emancipation" (26). Aguirre and Charles Walker both discuss how the RGAF cast the rebellion against the Spanish, led by Túpac Amaru in Cuzco in 1780, as the precursor of its commitment to freeing Peru from foreign domination. Iconic images of the mestizo hero were a ubiquitous reminder of the RGAF's expressed commitment to social justice.

George Philip surveys economic factors that were key to the RGAF's failure and observes that because the military was divided and never popular, Velasco had to rely on "surprise and tactical advantage," leading to arbitrary rule (204). Drinot's study of present day internet responses to videos of the Velasco period shows that the comments posted by Peruvians are highly polarized. Some blame Velasco's 1969 agrarian reform for the rise of Sendero Luminoso; others believe that it inoculated the peasants against Sendero's Maoist appeal. Adrián Lerner vividly describes Velasco's funeral in 1977 as a "massive popular mobilization around a charismatic leader" (75), but thinks that it had little lasting impact. Lourdes Hurtado notes that the military buried the memory of Velasco and erased the word "revolution" from its lexicon.

Patricia Oliart documents how the commission planning the RGAF's education reform drew on international expertise. Its 1970 report criticized Peruvian education as "elitist, alienating and dependent" (129) and fundamentally altered basic educational concepts. But some of the resulting measures were met with opposition from urban middle classes and from the teachers' union, SUTEP, which galvanized leftist opposition to military rule. The Chavimochic agro-irrigation

project in the northern province of La Libertad barely got off the ground under the RGAF, but eventually provided the infrastructure for non-traditional agricultural exports; Mark Carey concludes that this would not have been possible had the agrarian reform not wrested control of land from the oligarchy.

The parallel organizations that the RGAF launched to channel popular participation were often met with resistance. Jayme Patricia Heilman looks at the effects of the RGAF's establishment of National Agrarian Federation (CNA) on the existing *campesino* organization, the Peruvian Peasant Confederation (CCP). The CCP split into factions; some dismissed the agrarian reform as "bourgeois," while others favored cooperation, believing that they could shape the reform in a more radical direction. Efforts to unite the CPP factions failed, however; Heilman concludes that infighting prevented the Left from confronting the military. Nathan Clark argues that the government's use of force against the 1973 strike in the fishmeal port of Chimbote destroyed the image of the RGAF as acting for the people and contends that the *chimbotazo* was "another example of the nation's rejection of the RGAF's attempt to coopt the labor movement" (284).

Anna Cant defends the work of SINAMOS, the national organization designed by the RGAF to channel "full participation." (Peruvian sociologist Julio Cotler famously described the RGAF's concept of participation as "a military parade.") She contrasts SINAMOS's role and impact in promoting the agrarian reform in Tacna, Cuzco, and Piura, three very different regions, and concludes that SINAMOS brought "mass politics to remote areas" and helped make regions a salient factor in Peruvian politics (234).

Stefano Varese's concluding essay describes his efforts in SINAMOS to bring state-guaranteed territorial titles to Native Communities. He admits that he and others who worked for change under the RGAF could have been more effective, but asks whether those who, "with their condescending abstention, critical sidelining, or socialist perfectionism, have contributed in any tangible way to the betterment of the peoples of Peru" (334).

In the end, Peru's "peculiar revolution" was undermined more by the apathy of the bourgeois middle class that it was intended to represent, the internal divisions within the Peruvian military, and skepticism from the critical left than by opposition from the "oligarchy" it succeeded in displacing to a considerable extent. The other structural, cultural, socioeconomic and institutional challenges that the RGAF sought to confront largely remain.

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