

a number of groundbreaking findings but also opens up further avenues for linguistic, ethnographic and historical research.

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STEPHEN G. RABE: *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

*U.S. Intervention in British Guiana*, Stephen Rabe's most recent foray into mid-century U.S. relations with Latin America, offers nothing less than an insightful, and profoundly disturbing analysis of Anglo-American efforts through the 1960s to destabilize British Guiana. In addition to illuminating and illustrating the significance of one of the more egregious but less well-known Cold War intercessions, Rabe has woven a powerful narrative that balances the economic, strategic, bureaucratic, and military aspects of the "old" diplomatic history with the race and gender implications of the "new."

Relying heavily upon U.S. and British archival sources, Rabe traces the evolution of Guianese independence starting in the 1950s. Cheddi Jagan and his white, North American-born wife, Janet Rosenberg Jagan, represented the party of the Indo-Guianese majority, the PPP, while Forbes Burnham's PNC had the backing of the Afro-Guianese minority. The Jagans' leftist leanings perturbed the Eisenhower Administration, but terrified John F. Kennedy's. Kennedy, fearful that Jagan could become "another Castro" and begin a South American domino fall, therefore launched a concerted effort to coerce his British allies to prevent Jagan's accession. The British were to do this by withholding Guianese independence until power could "democratically" be handed to Burnham. Rabe illustrates, as well as currently declassified documents permit, how Kennedy, the CIA, and the AFL-CIO went much further, destabilizing the Guianese economy, exacerbating racial violence, suborning majority rule, and ultimately foisting the ruthless, despotic Burnham upon the new nation for the better part of the next thirty years. That Burnham eventually created a quasi-communist "kleptocracy" is only the final irony. (167)

There is much to recommend in this stinging indictment of the Kennedy Administration. As U.S. corporations had almost no interest in Guiana, it is almost impossible to question his thesis that a visceral, simplistic brand of anti-communism and hollow partisan politics motivated the Kennedy Administration's ill-informed, hypocritical, and unsavory approach. U.S. diplomats regularly denigrated Janet Jagan (who incidentally served as the leader of Guiana this year) with sexual innuendo and slanderous rumors, often accusing her of dominating

her Indo-Guianese husband. They further based a good portion of their policy on crude racial stereotypes, as they never bothered to reasonably assess whether the Jagans were communist or not. Kennedy, Rabe argues convincingly, preferred to destabilize Guiana rather than risk being accused of “losing” it. The British, after Labour’s return to power, were generally more realistic and well-informed, but nonetheless were forced to acquiesce to U.S. anti-communism.

Perhaps the most startling revelation is the almost inexplicable importance that the Kennedy Administration attached to this seemingly minor Cold War conflagration. The author repeatedly and convincingly illustrates the depth of Kennedy’s preoccupation with Jagan. While it is not clear that British Guiana ever posed “a mortal threat to the Western World,” Cold Warriors behaved as if it did, even if they could not be troubled to undertake a close study or dispassionate analysis of Guianese politics. (46) Finally, Rabe’s treatment of the CIA/AFL-CIO subversion campaign in Guiana is excellent and delicate, reaching firm conclusions where the documents are available and drawing strong, reasonable inferences where they are not.

There are, however, several shortcomings to this excellent study. While the author has made a conscious effort to avoid the “pothole” of presenting a “view from Washington,” his sources have made it almost inevitable that *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana* is, to some extent, a view from Washington and London. (10) Using Guianese sources, including Jagan’s papers, Robert Waters and Gordon Daniels, have, for example, illustrated that there was at least some merit to U.S. claims that the Jagans were pro-Soviet, if not communist, in their recent article in *Diplomatic History*. Further, Rabe rarely ventures too deeply into Guianese politics, beyond the Jagan-Burnham and PPP-PNC rivalries, focusing understandably more upon the international contexts. So although it is almost impossible to find fault with his analysis of the international aspects of this crisis and the Anglo-American interaction, a deeper examination of the Guianese internal politics could have strengthened the conclusions.

Probably the aspect of this study that will stimulate the most historiographical debate is the actual impact of U.S. intervention. For example, it might exaggerate the role of U.S. provocateurs, who it claims “organized and financed” the pivotal 1963 general strike against Jagan’s proposed labor law. Rabe demonstrates clearly that the AFL-CIO funneled money from the CIA to the strikers and thereby bankrolled the unrest, but it is not at all clear that North Americans organized the Afro-Guianese opposition, who indeed had much to lose if the law was enacted. While the act may well have been “modeled on the Wagner Act of the United States,” there were major differences that would have at once strengthened Jagan’s faction, threatened PNC union strongholds, and established state supremacy over independent unionism. (111) Indeed, the AFL-CIO had

opposed laws such as this one, which granted the government a whip hand over unions, for decades.

There are several intriguing avenues of research that Rabe has left open for elaboration by future scholars. The first is the role of Christian churches in the ethnic struggle between Hindu and Muslim Indo-Guianese and the Christian Afro-Guianese. The second involves the U.S. Civil Rights movement and African-American leaders who used their influence to support Burnham. Although this work discusses both of these phenomena in some detail, clearly both subjects are worthy of further and deeper study, as the exact nature and scope of their role remains an intriguing mystery.

In the end, Rabe has succeeded in artfully weaving a narrative that almost seamlessly balances a number of separate and complex conflicts. Not only was this a clash between the Kennedy Administration and Jagan, but it also pitted North Americans against the British, Jagan against Burnham, Afro-Guianese against Indo-Guianese, Labour against Tories, and even the British Foreign Office against the Colonial Office. Simply put, *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana* deserves to be, and should become, the standard text for the U.S. subversion of British Guiana for the foreseeable future.

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**DALE TORSTON GRADEN: *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil, Bahia 1835-1900*. New Mexico University Press, 2006.**

Dale Torston Graden has tackled the large topic of Brazilian abolitionism, wisely seeing it as a bundle of multiple stories, each with its own causation. The reality is complex and can only be unraveled by a careful exploration of these stories. This is all the more difficult in a book that is part of a "series of course adoption books on Latin America," because of the need to give the exposition a certain clarity that may perforce simplify to some degree the complexities of the reality behind the stories. The result is well worth the effort the author clearly devoted to it.

The first story is the familiar epic of foreign pressure to end the slave trade. This was a long process which involved the grudging collaboration of the Brazilian imperial government with the British. The Brazilian slave holders had an enormous stake in their millions of African slaves and readily recognized their indispensable role. Indeed, the Brazilian national economy depended substantially on the African trade, of which slave labor was an essential element, because it was a truly national institution, rather than restricted to one region of