

interconnections with economic elites. These links were too strong for Porfirio Díaz to overcome. According to Razo, the dictator ruled only at their pleasure.

*Social Foundations of Limited Dictatorship* persuasively buttresses the emerging historiography that maintains that Porfirio Díaz was neither the omnipotent dictator nor the evildoer portrayed by the official Revolutionary party during its seven-decade rule from 1929 to 2000. He was in many ways a political genius, in other ways just very fortunate. He built a regime based on the very weakness of the previous sixty years of unsuccessful Mexican governments: regionalism. Razo asserts that the balance of power lay with the entrepreneurs/regional bosses, for Díaz really served at their pleasure. The claim rings true up to a point. It was a close contest. The dictator and the elites need each other. As the Revolution of 1910 would prove (as the period between 1821 and 1880 had already proven), contesting power was ruinous to themselves and the nation.

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**EDUARDO SÁENZ ROVNER: *The Cuban Connection: Drug Trafficking, Smuggling, and Gambling in Cuba from the 1920s to the Revolution***. Translated by Russ Davidson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

The pithy title of Saénz Rovner's 2005 book, *La conexión cubana*, now available in a fine English-language translation by Russ Davidson, alludes to the famed police thriller involving a heroin shipment on its way from Marseilles to New York. The reference is apt; much of the study deals with the rise of Havana as a transshipment point in drug trafficking networks that linked European and Andean middlemen and producers, including some in the port city of Marseilles, to markets in the United States. But, given the prominent role that Sáenz Rovner assigns to immigrants, and given his efforts to untangle connections between the drug trade, gambling, and corruption, *The Godfather II* (1974) may come to readers' minds more readily than other films. Indeed, Michael Corleone's foray into Havana illustrates some of the author's surprising findings: contrary to the popular perception, mobsters based in the United States learned to avoid the drug business in order to concentrate on gambling at luxury hotels and casinos. Cuban authorities allowed this in part because the mafia ensured the integrity of gaming, a concern in the early 1950s when allegations that Havana's croupiers were crooked threatened the tourism business.

The volume consists of twelve chapters that follow Cuba's presidential succession from the 1920s to the early 1960s, albeit with some detours. One chapter addresses the opium trade and Chinese immigration to the island and the Ameri-

cas. Another focuses on Lucky Luciano and the diplomatic conflicts surrounding his peripatetic career. Although both chapters enrich an account that abounds in vignettes of enterprising criminals and venal politicians, these pages are not crucial to the argument. At its core, *The Cuban Connection* offers a wealth of empirical data culled from national archives in the United States, Cuba, and the United Kingdom. The sources run the gamut from police intelligence and trial records, to diplomatic and corporate correspondence, to newspaper reports. The author uses these materials to show that neither geographical proximity to the United States nor neocolonial impositions explain why Cuba's capital emerged as a key node in trafficking in the decades between the First and Second World Wars, a period marked by the upheavals that ousted Gerardo Machado in 1933 and the failure of the nationalist, democratic reformism that followed.

Sáenz Rovner offers a persuasive and layered explanation (depth varies by layer) for Cuba's position in the drug trade. When considering long-term causes, he cites the island's centuries-long tradition of contraband, its political climate, and its waves of immigration. But the immediate causes for Havana's twentieth-century involvement in drug trafficking have to do with Prohibition (1919-1933) in the United States. This development encouraged Americans to travel to the island in pursuit of pleasures that were harder to satisfy at home. Prohibition also spurred Cubans, migrants, and foreigners to smuggle to the United States alcohol produced in Cuba. Similar actors soon launched an illicit trade in narcotics, the bulk of it purchased in Europe for alleged medical use. The nascent drug traffic, the author notes, shadowed commercial and travel routes, often relying on the very personnel that made legal trade possible. Further, Sáenz Rovner maintains that Cuba's political instability, official corruption, and the reportedly limited allegiance of some immigrants to "the main currents of society" were pre-conditions for large-scale trafficking. Poverty, he asserts, was not a driving force; on the contrary, Cuba's "climate of social fluidity and economic growth and openness" promoted the pursuit of illicit wealth. Most traffickers were relatively well off and cosmopolitan, possessing skills and contacts equal to the challenges of their transnational business.

Throughout the study, Sáenz Rovner comments on both half-hearted and earnest efforts by Cuban and US authorities to curtail contraband and drug trafficking. Some of the most revealing discussion on the subject appears in the final chapter, which shows that after the Cuban Revolution, the prosecution of traffickers, already politicized, succumbed to the exigencies of the Cold War. Officials with the US Federal Bureau of Narcotics denounced Cuban revolutionaries as communist plotters intent on plying the population of the United States with drugs. Cuba's prominence in the cocaine business of the late 1950s lent some credence to this fundamentally specious claim. The new Cuban leaders, for their

part, pilloried Americans for fostering Cuba's moral degeneration, as if gambling and other vices were mere imports. The fact that American mobsters controlled most of Havana's gambling establishments during the final years of Batista's dictatorship served the revolutionaries' purposes, according to Sáenz Rovner.

Though detailed and prone to occasional digressions, *The Cuban Connection* is highly readable. The chapters are short, free of jargon, and filled with cinematic episodes. Nevertheless, readers interested in re-tracing the conditions that precipitated shifts from one connection or drug to another may require more assistance than the volume offers. Although Sáenz Rovner includes a useful bullet-point summation of his claims in the introduction, signage can be difficult to spot along the route. References to the historiography are brief, and so are passages addressing the reach and relative transparency of the sources. Cuba specialists and scholars interested in commodity chains, migration, and transnational approaches will welcome this necessary contribution. Students unfamiliar with Cuban history will require guidance.

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GILBERT M. JOSEPH and DANIELA SPENSER: *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Despite the global turn in Cold War scholarship, the dialogue between U.S. diplomatic and Latin American historians has remained limited. With *In From the Cold*, editors Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser have assembled new scholarship that seeks to make that connection. The result is a fine collection that shifts us away from traditional crisis-driven analysis and reveals the agency of Latin Americans in shaping their Cold War. Following an introduction by Joseph and a fascinating essay on truth commissions and Latin American memory by Thomas Blanton, Spenser offers the first case study with her chapter on the impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Drawing upon U.S., Soviet, and Cuban documents, she argues that "the Caribbean crisis was a watershed for Soviet policy concerning Latin America" (p. 77). Humiliated by the United States and challenged by the Chinese, Soviet leaders felt compelled to support Cuban efforts to export revolution in order to shore up their revolutionary credibility. At least until Che Guevara's death in 1967, it seems, the Cuban tail often wagged the Soviet dog.

According to Piero Gleijeses, Moscow had even less control over Cuban activities in Africa. Building upon his superb *Conflicting Missions* (2002), Gleijeses emphasizes the unique nature of Cuba's activism. "During the Cold War,"