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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Brian Loveman, Thomas M. Davies Jr.., eds. *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America.* Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1997. 426 pp. $30.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8420-2611-6; $84.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8420-2609-3.

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Published on H-LatAm (September, 1997)

Politicians on Horseback: Political Soldiers in the Americas

Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., in their revised and updated version of "The Politics of Antipolitics," have produced a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the role of interventionist Latin American military establishments over the last two centuries. This volume, a collection of documents and essays, the latter mostly reprinted from journals, rather than a new selection based on primary research, will make a useful addition to college libraries. While one may argue about their choice of six countries on which to focus–Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru–their thorough examination of each of these cases, as well as broader trends affecting the region, make "The Politics of Antipolitics" a successful effort.

After the editors' two introductory essays in Section I on *caudillos* and other military figures in the Independence era and its aftermath, contributing writers Frederick Nunn, Rank McCann, Jr., and Robert Elam turn their attention in Section II to the relationship between the new Latin American republics and their respective military establishments. The contributors to this section make a clear case that the professionalization of Latin American militaries, through higher educational standards, instruction by foreign military missions, and improved technical and tactical training, bore unexpected fruit. Instead of diminishing the role of the military in national politics, increased professionalization actually increased not only the ability, but also the eagerness of soldiers to intervene in government affairs. Far from encouraging generals to focus on problems of an exclusively military nature, their heightened training and understanding of their importance to society led them to see themselves as the guardians of the nation, a most solemn responsibility, and beyond the understanding of petty civilian politicians. As the armed forces of Brazil, El Salvador (the two examples detailed in this section) and other nations believed themselves to be the indispensable defenders of their nation, they began to play a stronger role in politics.

Section III, "The Military and Latin American Politics, 1919-1945," examines six cases–Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, El Salvador and Guatemala–in which the military intervened in Latin American politics. Arguing that new fascist, corporative, and even Nazi ideas had a strong impact on nationalist and anti-political officers, the authors–Robert Potash. Ronald Schneider, Frederick Nunn, Victor Villanueva, Robert Elam and Kenneth Grieb–also demonstrate new anti-political coalitions between the military and elements of the middle- and upper classes, frustrated with corruption and the pettiness of restricted parliamentary systems. This period also witnessed the first attempts by Latin American military establishments to govern, rather than just seizing power to transfer it to less objectionable politicians.

Section IV, "The United States and the Latin American Military,"contains three essays, previously printed in military journals, by present and former members of the U.S. security establishment. These articles explain U.S. interests in regards to Latin America, especially the role of the U.S. military in supporting counterinsurgency in the hemisphere. While more a series of explanations and justifications for U.S. foreign and security policies in the region, the three essays present a clear picture of what Latin American military leaders could expect from the United States: support for ideological anticommunism; tactical and technical training in counterin-

surgency methods, but also concern for economic modernization; and–most unpleasantly for the Latin American military dictatorships–the rule of law and, at least in recent years, insistence on democratic institutions and respect for human rights.

An important feature of the book is Section V, titled "The Military Speaks for Itself," in which the authors have placed speeches, manifestos, and other declarations from Argentine, Brazilian , Chilean, Salvadoran, Peruvian and Guatemalan military officers. These passages, whether excerpted or printed in their entirety, shed important light on the motivations, ideology, and political language of those generals, admirals, and other officers who overthrew democracies, waged bitter counterinsurgencies, and ruled their nations in the name of the *patria*. If nothing else, it is important to remember that even the harshest military dictators of this period, from Guatemala to Chile, hoped to gain at least some measure of popular support and approval for their efforts. In most cases, these officers did believe that what they were doing was best for their nations. We may disagree with their declarations, but in understanding their motivations, we can perhaps understand why they followed the courses they did.

Section VI, "Policies and Consequences of Military Rule," is the longest and most comprehensive in the book. The contributors argue that the post-1964 military governments of Latin America had three main goals: short-term defensiveness against internal security threats, an ongoing commitment to economic modernization, and a long-term goal of institutionalizing centralized and militarized authoritarian rule. By short-term defensiveness, the authors are attempting to explain what the military saw as immediate threats to the nation: communist insurgents, domestic populist movements, and other Leftist or subversive political movements or individuals. Against these enemies, military governments were dramatically successful. Despite decades of effort by the Soviet Union and Cuba, the self-sacrifice of thousands of communists and revolutionaries of every Leftist persuasion, and the obvious conditions of social injustice throughout the hemisphere, since the victory of Castro in 1959 only in Nicaragua did a communist revolution overthrow an established state, and then only after the U.S. refused to support the Somoza regime. Elsewhere in the Americas, the thoroughgoing violence and determination of Latin American military forces to crush the organized Left succeeded to an amazing degree, even if this capability was sometimes in question during the heights of armed uprisings.

On other fronts, the military governments were far less triumphant. While the 1960s and early 1970s brought some economic progress, by the early 1980s, with the notable exception of Pinochet's Chile, the foreign loans acquired to stimulate further growth began to be a burden, along with the massive, and largely inefficient, role of the state in nationalized enterprises. As the economies of Latin America began to suffer under inflation and other difficulties in the early 1980s (made worse by evidence of corruption of officers at the highest levels) it became difficult to claim the military was more honest or efficient. On the final front, the attempt to institutionalize military rule, the armed forces achieved spotty results. For most Latin Americans, the only political reforms which could gain legitimacy would also undermine real power of the military, making these changes uncomfortable and unlikely for the military to champion.

Section VII, "The Persistence of Antipolitics," features the two concluding essays by the editors, which are simultaneously the strongest and most troubling. The authors argue that the celebrated transition to democracy in this hemisphere over the past fifteen years, which has left only Communist Cuba without a democratic government, remains in most of Latin America an incomplete process. Despite the existence of elected governments, the military still maintains an inordinate amount of influence over civilian politicians. The efforts by the military to institutionalize their rule did succeed, but in a less overt way than perhaps the generals and admirals initially considered. The authors argue that, because of the rules and conditions under which the military tolerated democratization, it maintains, in effect, a veto over the policies and ambitions of elected leaders. Loveman and Davies use as a clear example of this power the lack of trials on human rights violations committed under military rule. Aside from few limited efforts in Argentina, long since ended, there have been no real efforts to prosecute military officers for these crimes. While there have been no successful military coups in recent years, this is largely because the military in Latin America has a guaranteed place in almost all questions of national policy. Why overthrow the government when you can tell it what to do?

Although the editors and contributors of this volume focus their attention on Latin America, their argument implicitly raises global questions about the role of the military in politics. In Latin America, the military created for itself a greater role in politics, gradually (or suddenly, in cases of military coups) taking over civilian political and state institutions. In the United States, a peculiarly

parallel development may be in the offing, but driven by a different engine. In recent years, despite dramatically decreased budgets and personnel, the U.S. military has been proposed by civilians politicians as an institution capable of taking on more domestic responsibility. From security duty at the Atlanta Olympics to drug interdiction at the border the armed forces of the United States have been given an increasing number of non-traditional duties. Recent years have seen politicians calling for the armed forces to be used to police inner cities, embark on tutoring programs for the illiterate, and rebuild Los Angeles after the riots. These new missions, at odds with the historical employment of the U.S. military, typically sent into action outside the borders of the U.S. except in times of national crisis, might signal a disturbing trend. If the military continues to receive the message that it is the only institution capable of saving society, would we have the right to be surprised to see it enter forcefully into national politics as an apolitical institution? Might we learn the wrong lessons from the Latin American experience?

A few minor defects detract from the strength of the volume: on a technical note, both an index and a comprehensive bibliography would have been useful tools to add. Conceptually, it might also have been useful to present counterexamples in a bit more detail. The cases of Costa Rica, which deactivated its military in 1949, and Mexico, which co-opted its armed forces into the governing coalition after the revolution period of 1910-1917, could have made for interesting comparison. The role of the United States in creating, and later destroying, the Panamanian Defense Force could have illustrated in detail the relative importance of U.S. training and doctrine in the political involvement of Latin American militaries. The unique cases of Haiti and Cuba might also have provided engaging contrasts with the rest of the Latin American military experience.

Despite these secondary issues, this is an excellent book and is recommended for historians, political scientists, graduate students, upper-division undergraduates, and courses on nineteenth and twentieth century Latin American history and politics, military history, and Western political thought.

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Citation: Wayne H. Bowen. Review of Loveman, Brian; Jr.., Thomas M. Davies, eds., *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America.* H-LatAm, H-Net Reviews. September, 1997.

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