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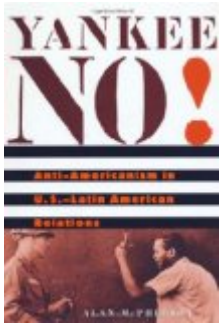
Alan L. McPherson. *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003. 272 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-674-01184-7.



Reviewed by H. Matthew Loayza

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Alan McPherson's monograph on the role of anti-Americanism in inter-American relations is a timely one. As the author correctly observes, the events and aftermath of September 11 added new urgency to the task of unraveling and understanding the roots of anti-Americanism throughout the world. Scholars and laymen alike have struggled to provide compelling answers to the question posed by the president shortly after the September 11 attacks, "Why do they hate us?"

McPherson contends that when posed as such, the question attributes uniform and enduring qualities to anti-Americanism that are simplistic and misleading. Instead, anti-Americanism in Latin America was (and is) a multifaceted phenomenon whose specific manifestations varied according to time, place, and circumstance. Rather than a monolithic force, anti-Americanism was an ambiguous one that was often found alongside genuine expressions of affection for the United States. As the author puts it, Latin Americans could reserve a soft spot in their hearts for "America," but still raise a clenched fist against "El Yanqui." "*Americanos* created jobs for Latin Americans, for instance, but *gringos* took their land" (p. 7).

Yankee No! opens with a brief, but valuable introductory chapter that discusses anti-Americanism as a subject of historical inquiry. McPherson then provides an overview of anti-U.S. movements in Latin American history up through the 1958 anti-Nixon riots in Venezuela. The next three chapters examine case studies of episodes in inter-American relations that in some way featured anti-American sentiment: the rapid deterioration of U.S. relations with Havana after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the 1964 Canal Zone riots following Panamanian outrage over the refusal of "Zonians" to fly the Panamanian flag alongside the Stars and Stripes, and the indigenous hostility following Lyndon Johnson's 1965 decision to send troops to the Dominican Republic. In each case, the author argues, policymakers in Washington were alarmed by a common thread of "a mass based, cross-class, verbally or physically violent rejection of U.S. power that spoke to others in the developing world who seethed with similar resentments" (p. 3).

Yankee No! exhibits both solid research and strong writing. In regard to the former, McPherson has examined manuscripts from archives in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Panama, as well as U.S. presidential libraries and the National Archives. The author draws upon a wide range of periodicals, ranging from the *New York Times* to *Redbook*, to gauge American reactions to events abroad. Personal interviews with Latin American (most notably Panamanian and Dominican) contemporaries provide a much needed popular perspective on the episodes in question. In addition to the impressive breadth of primary source materials, the author has drawn upon a broad array of English- and Spanish-language secondary literature.

As far as McPherson's writing is concerned, his prose is at once concise and engaging. The author has a good eye for the compelling quote, and the title of the first chapter, "The Road to Caracas: Or, Richard Nixon Must Get Stoned," combines humor and compelling historical analysis. Although the book is somewhat brief (170 pages of text), McPherson makes persuasive arguments and explains complex events and issues without resorting to jargon. In short, the book is both intellectually provocative and a good read.

The work clearly succeeds in demonstrating the complex, inchoate nature of anti-Americanism. Anti-Yanqui sentiment, McPherson tells us, drew strength from a variety of economic, cultural, and political roots. Yet the same roots that flourished in one locale might languish in another. Thus the anti-Americanism that eventually defined Fidel Castro's regime was of a far different variety than that articulated by Panamanian elites in 1964. Fidel Castro, the author shows, deftly tapped both moderate and radical strains of opposition to American hegemony as he constructed a successful political movement. Since Castro's early criticisms of Washington avoided excessive vitriol and systemic, radical critiques of American dominance of Cuba, he simultaneously demonstrated his independence from Uncle Sam while evading serious reprisals from U.S. officials, who were more mystified than terrified by the Cuban revolutionary. Only after coming to power did Castro definitively break from an ambivalent stance to take up a radical one, seizing upon anti-Americanism as both a means of silencing internal opposition to his rule and of approaching the Soviet Union from a position of strength. Instead of coming to the Kremlin as a supplicant, hat in hand, Castro gambled that standing up to Washington would enable him to approach the Kremlin as an equal.

But while Castro came to see anti-Yanqui tactics as a means of transforming Cuban society, Panamanian elites used anti-Americanism for more modest purposes, wielding popular antagonism against Washington to gain small concessions from the United States. Where Castro directed anti-American harangues with relish, Panamanian leaders tended to be followers rather than standard-bearers. McPherson explains that by the late 1950s, Panamanian students were more outraged than Panamanian leaders over the absence of the Panamanian flag in the Canal Zone. Panamanian officials co-opted the flag issue in 1959, allowing anti-American riots to continue while privately resolving to keep a lid on demonstrations, "'demonstrat[ing] emotion' without offending the U.S. government" (p. 91). McPherson shows that while this course reaped immediate rewards (Eisenhower responded to the 1959 riots by recognizing Panama's "titular sovereignty" and right to fly its flag over the canal) it also earned Panamanian officials the contempt of their American counterparts. After a renewed, more serious outbreak of violence in 1964, U.S. officials--particularly Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Mann--resolved that Panamanian elites would not play U.S. officials for fools. At the same time, the Johnson administration recognized that Panamanian hostility was more rhetorical than real. Ironically, U.S. officials ultimately chose to negotiate with the Chiari administration, "keep-

ing quiet about the collaborationist impulse of conservative anti-Americanism" to avoid the prospect of dealing with a more radical and dangerous alternative (p. 102).

American officials, the author contends, were initially taken aback and slow to react to vigorous displays of anti-Americanism. Hence Eisenhower and Kennedy alike mustered reactive, hesitant, and ultimately ineffective responses to Castro. Yet if the learning curve was steep, it was not insurmountable, and Johnson soon overcame the "diplomatic rigor mortis" that had afflicted past administrations (p. 50). In the author's estimation, Lyndon Johnson's efforts to contain and isolate Dominican radicals (whom Johnson recognized were few in number and short on organization) signaled a maturation and sophistication in Washington's response to anti-Americanism.

McPherson's case studies confirm that U.S. officials learned to counter Latin American hostility with clever and pragmatic strategies. But although Lyndon Johnson may have contained anti-Americanism in the Western Hemisphere with more skill and resilience than his predecessors, one wonders if Johnson's recognition that an "ideological touch up" (p. 106) could paper over more significant grievances was a significant advancement over the advice of John Foster Dulles to President Eisenhower in 1953 to "pat them [Latin Americans] a little bit and make them think that you are fond of them."[1] In other words, although U.S. officials became more adept in crisis management over time, to what extent were they willing and able to scrutinize and alter the basic economic, strategic, and ideological foundations of inter-American relations? To what extent did the power disparity between the United States and the other American republics make such revisions irrelevant and thus undesirable?

These questions, while largely unanswered, extend beyond the purview of the book, which ends with a call for historians of U.S. foreign relations to treat and analyze anti-Americanism as a concept worthy of serious and rigorous scholarly inquiry. As is all too evident today, anti-Americanism is neither particular to Latin America nor the early to mid-1960s. But as McPherson points out, if anti-Americanism soon "existed everywhere, so did pro-Americanism" (p. 166). Fortunately, scholars have already answered McPherson's call to arms. Darlene Rivas's *Missionary Capitalist* (2002) and Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman's *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (2000) are but two examples of recent works exploring the interplay of culture, economics, and ideology in inter-American relations. *Yankee No!*, like these works, stands out in terms of the depth of research, sophistication of analysis, and readability. For both scholars and interested laypeople, it should be considered essential reading.

Note

[1]. Dulles quoted in Stephen G. Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 33.

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