

Extolling Havana's gains in health, literacy and education, the Brigade was the largest pro-Cuba solidarity organisation in the world for many years. Latner reminds us, however, that this love affair had its limits, especially after Fidel Castro endorsed Moscow's invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

Latner believes that the Castro regime's embrace of American dissidents was driven by a mixture of ideological compatibility and realpolitik vis-à-vis its chief Western imperialist foe, the United States. This being the Cold War, however, the other shoe was bound to drop. According to Latner, Carmichael's 1967 trip might have triggered the US government's more aggressive stance toward pro-Cuba organisations, which were seen as being complicit in Cuban-backed acts of domestic terrorism. One US senator, for example, denounced the Venceremos Brigade as 'missiles in human forms' (p. 9). US intelligence agencies became convinced that it was in Havana, and not Moscow, where American radicals would find the most support.

**The FBI in Latin America: The Ecuador Files**

Marc Becker. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. \$26.95.  
322 pp.

Back in the 1980s, Marc Becker volunteered with an international non-governmental organisation working in Nicaragua's mountain highlands to document attacks on civilians by the Reagan administration-backed Contra guerrillas. Roughly three decades later, Becker, now a historian, returns to the topic of US imperial machinations in its geopolitical backyard in this highly readable and lively tome. FBI surveillance in Latin America started under Franklin Roosevelt as a wartime effort initially intended to keep tabs on a swelling Nazi presence in the region. Yet Becker makes the case that FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover used the 700-agent Special Intelligence Service (SIS) throughout the decade to spy on Latin American leftists and communists as well, especially after the Nazi regional threat had dissipated after 1943. The author reminds us that this particular instance of overseas snooping corresponded with a short period in the 1940s during which US officials – especially in the State Department – were inclined to support, or at least not to subvert, leftist political organisations and ideologies. If there were concerns about such groups in Latin America, Becker reasons, it was because they posed a potential threat to American corporate profits in the region, and not simply because they espoused communist ideas. Becker observes that in these pre-CIA years (the agency was founded in 1947), the FBI's intelligence reporting reveals a disconnect between American hysteria about communism and the 'lack of danger' that these parties actually posed to US security interests in the region

(p. 3). In the case of Ecuador, examined in detail in the book, the communist threat turned out to be infinitesimal: by the end of the SIS programme in 1947, the FBI had concluded that the country's communist party was 'one of the weakest and most ineffective' in Latin America (p. 238).

Readers of *The FBI in Latin America* should keep in mind that the author appears to have a Marxist ideological bias that almost certainly influences his depiction of events. He seems to take the arguments and statements of Latin American communists or anti-imperialists at face value, and even to tacitly endorse them, noting, for example, that the history of FBI surveillance 'excited' him 'not because of what it might tell us about U.S. imperial adventures in Latin America ... but because of the insights spying might provide on popular movements' struggles to create a more just and equal society' (p. viii). Contrast this with his characterisation of Hoover's obsession with 'an alleged communist threat' (p. 9), or the FBI's 'fixation on a communist menace that allegedly emanated out of Moscow' (p. 5). Still, there is much to be learned from Becker's account of a little-known episode in the history of America's foremost *domestic* law-enforcement agency in a part of the globe where American influence has an admittedly chequered track record.

**Acting Globally: Memoirs of Brazil's Assertive Foreign Policy**

Celso Amorim. Michael Marsden, trans. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2017. £31.95/\$46.99. 458 pp.

It might as well be ancient history: the tenure of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as president of Brazil, during which he became one of the most beloved leaders in the country's history and effortlessly ushered in steady economic growth, a rising middle class and political continuity – and with that, an assertive and confident foreign policy. Fast forward about a decade to 2018, and Brazilian politics couldn't look more different. Lula finds himself in prison, beginning a 12-year sentence for corruption and money laundering, his political legacy in tatters, and the heady days of Brazil's international assertiveness little more than a distant dream.

Celso Amorim, Lula's foreign minister for eight years and the man behind Brazil's expanded diplomatic reach, attempts to protect his own legacy in this memoir. He explains the behind-the-scenes dynamics of three major foreign-policy initiatives for Brazil: the Iran nuclear agreement, its recognition of Palestine and other diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East, and the Doha round of international trade agreements. Bolstered by diligent note-taking during his time in office, Amorim is able to recreate these episodes with remarkable detail. In so doing, he provides Brazil's side of the story.