

exploration of the intersections between indigeneity, nationalist politics, and visual culture.

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BOLIVIA AND THE CHACO WAR

¡Vamos a avanzar! The Chaco War and Bolivia's Political Transformation, 1899–1952.

By Robert Niebuhr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021. Pp. xii, 330. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$60.00 cloth.

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Niebuhr's book is ostensibly about war-making and state-making in the central Andes. It revolves around the Chaco War, the bloodiest interstate war in the Americas since the late nineteenth century. Between 1932 and 1935, Bolivia and Paraguay fought over the control of the Chaco, a giant, hot, arid plain to Bolivia's east. The war caused an estimated 86,000 to 100,000 deaths from combat and disease on both sides of the conflict, from a Bolivian population estimated at 2.0 to 2.5 million and a Paraguayan population estimated at 900,000.

The war was a disaster for Bolivia. In 1931, President Daniel Salamanca led Bolivia into a war for which it was manifestly unprepared. "His government had barely enough money to pay the salaries of its workers" (69), Niebuhr writes, even if many Bolivians believed that they could easily assert their control over disputed territory in the Chaco. By late 1933, poor logistics and battlefield losses promised a huge defeat. The military deposed Salamanca in November of the following year, four years after it had brought him to power in a coup. The new Bolivian government, led by José Tejada Sorzano, Salamanca's vice president, agreed to a cease-fire in 1935. Three years later, Bolivia and Paraguay signed a formal peace agreement that left Bolivia smaller than it was at the outset of the war. Niebuhr concurs with other researchers that it was incompetence and hubris that led to an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 Bolivian deaths.

This is a curious book, whose contributions to existing scholarship are unclear. Niebuhr's notes that "nearly 10 percent of the total population served in uniform" (60), but avoids discussing the progress of the war, its battles, and its political calculations. He seems to assume that his readers know more than a few facts about the Chaco War and its conflicts and consequences. Basic facts, however, are scarce; I had to consult Elizabeth Shesko's 2015 article in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* for population and war-related estimates. Like most Bolivianists, Niebuhr is more interested in the war's impact on Bolivia than the war itself.

Even with regard to his central concern, however, Niebuhr's book remains distant from key events and processes. Historians agree that it was President Salamanca's "jingoism," to use Niebuhr's term, that led to the Chaco War. But Niebuhr does not disentangle the toxic brew of political calculations and overconfident patriotism that led the president, and many Bolivians, to start a war with Paraguay, nor does he unearth new findings about, say, the logistics of the war. Information about the size and readiness of the Bolivian military, for example, is scattered throughout the text. If war builds or destroys states, then a history of political transformation in Bolivia requires documenting and analyzing the bureaucratic procedures and decisions that led to the nation's defeat. All too often, Niebuhr substitutes paragraphs about war-making in Europe or the United States for detailed analysis of the multiple failures of the Bolivian state.

Niebuhr seems to suggest that the 1952 Revolution was inevitable after the Chaco War. As authors from Herbert Klein (1969) and James Malloy (1971) to James Kohl (2021) have emphasized, Bolivia's defeat did turn its citizens against its political establishment. Support for Salamanca's Genuine Republic Party and other parties of the pre-war period disintegrated as urban male voters cast ballots for the populist and left-wing parties that would also gain control of the street. Military officers, veterans of the war, overthrew governments in 1936, 1937 and 1939. An uprising in 1946 ended with President Gualberto Villarroel, a Chaco War veteran, hanging from a lamp post in the square in front of the presidential palace. But to imply that the 1952 Revolution was unavoidable requires the analysis of these and subsequent events to show how rural and urban rebellions exploited the opportunities of a weak and delegitimized state to liquate the old order in 1952.

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MULTILATERALISM IN THE AMERICAS

The Southern Cone and the Origins of Pan America, 1888–1933. By Mark J. Petersen. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2022. Pp. 344. \$65.00 cloth; \$51.99 e-book. doi:10.1017/tam.2022.130

The matter of American multilateralism (as in the Americas' multilateralism) has been the subject of only a handful of deep, well-researched books, despite the fact that notions of a unity of values or purposes have existed and played a role in the history of the continent almost since the wars for independence from European powers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Therefore, Mark Petersen's book is a much welcomed contribution to a field that should receive more attention from scholars of international relations and the international history of the Americas.