



The Bolivian Revolution and the United States, 1952 to the Present

By James F. Siekmeier

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This is a story of David vs. Goliath in international relations. *The Bolivian Revolution and the United States, 1952 to the Present* recounts how Bolivia, after its Revolution of 1952, interacted with the United States. In the wake of its victory in the Second World War, the United States had started to undertake ambitious nation-building projects in the Third World using the tool of economic aid, as it had successfully done with the Marshall Plan for Western Europe. Bolivia represented the first of these experiments, and its process and outcome have much to tell us about the limits of U.S. power. Bolivia proved capable not only of achieving compromises in reaction to U.S. initiatives but also of influencing U.S. policy through its own actions. Unlike most other studies of the Revolution, this book follows the story through the early 1970s and traces the shifting relationships between the two countries over a longer span of time. Anyone who wants to understand the significance of the election of Evo Morales in 2006, which represented a return to the original revolutionary spirit of 1952, and the nature of Bolivian-U.S. relations today will find this book to be essential reading.

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Editorial Review

Review

“James Siekmeier has produced a model of scholarship in this concise analysis of U.S. relations with Bolivia from the Revolution of 1952 to the present. With superb multi-archival research in Bolivia and the United States, Siekmeier demonstrates the multifaceted nature of the bilateral relationship. The United States deployed economic and military aid to contain the Bolivian Revolution, even as Bolivian officials skillfully channeled the aid for their own purposes. Siekmeier’s fascinating discussions of the joint campaign to capture Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara in 1967 and Bolivia’s decision to expel the Peace Corps in 1971 further reveal the complex nature of U.S. interactions with Bolivia.”

—Stephen G. Rabe, University of Texas at Dallas

“This book is a welcome update to the history of Bolivian-U.S. relations. . . . [It] updates scholarship on Bolivian-U.S. relations in three ways. First, it takes advantage of more recent scholarship and declassified documents to examine foreign relations in the 1970s. Second, it does an excellent job of treating the cultural, social, and political transformation of Bolivia between 1952 and the present. Finally, this book gives perhaps the definitive word on the Bolivian Revolution and shows how that seminal event affected relations between the United States and Bolivia through the 1970s.”

—Robert O. Kirkland, *American Historical Review*

“Siekmeier reveals how the Bolivian leadership shrewdly played on Washington’s desire to demonstrate that it could partner successfully with socially progressive governments and manipulated Washington’s anticommunist impulses by warning that the new government’s collapse could create opportunities for unpredictable far-left forces. Siekmeier’s narrative includes an interesting profile of the charming Bolivian diplomat Victor Andrade, who cunningly translated his nation’s politics into terms that Washington officials and pundits could comprehend.”

—Richard Feinberg, *Foreign Affairs*

“The book is a valuable contribution to the historiography on the Bolivian Revolution, US–Bolivian relations, and US relations with Latin America, and should compel a rethinking of several long-held assumptions.”

—Kevin Young, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*

About the Author

James F. Siekmeier is Assistant Professor of History at West Virginia University.

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