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Cocaine: Global Histories (review)

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*Cocaine: Global Histories*. Edited by Paul Gootenberg. New York: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xvi, 213. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. \$90.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

Initially claimed for its medicinal and stimulative virtues, cocaine was widely used as a local anesthetic and became the basic ingredient in a host of patent medicines and beverages during the late nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, the successful transplanting of Andean coca in Asian colonies enabled Dutch and Japanese entrepreneurs to establish a flourishing cocaine commerce. Simultaneously, European and North American pharmaceutical firms and commercial enterprises, such as Mariani & Company and Coca-Cola, marketed various coca and cocaine preparations. Positive opinions concerning cocaine became increasingly challenged in the aftermath of the 1909 and 1912 international opium conferences. In these meetings, outspoken opponents claimed that cocaine, like opium, was a dangerous narcotic that required binding international sanctions. Subsequent League of Nations conventions included cocaine among those drugs whose production, distribution, and sale were to be reduced to levels needed only for medical purposes.

While surveying international aspects of the rise and development of the cocaine industry, the chapters in this informative study edited by Paul Gootenberg consider drug control policies and issues as they evolved during the twentieth century. Contributors to the volume draw their essays from original archival research in the government files of nations concerned with cocaine regulations, available records of pharmaceutical companies in the producing countries, and contemporary journalistic accounts. They focus on the shortcomings in the efforts of international organizations to gain universal agreements limiting cocaine production, distribution, and sales. Several authors relate the negative reactions of European policy makers to the nagging demands of Harry Anslinger and his agents in the United States Federal Bureau of Narcotics that they implement more stringent penalties for cocaine violations.

While the essays generally provide context for understanding the global dimensions of cocaine both as a beneficial and harmful drug, those more specifically focus-

ing on hemispheric issues are of particular interest for Latin Americanists. In a chapter that complements David Musto's *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotics Control* (1973), Joseph Spillane delineates factors that changed attitudes regarding coca and cocaine during the Progressive Era in the United States. He explains that concerns among physicians, social reformers and bureaucrats in federal, state, and municipal agencies, as well as the assertions of muckrakers, enhanced the opinion that the unregulated sale of coca and cocaine products was a threat to public health and the social order. His insightful analysis serves as an important background for the supply-side strategy of the United States in its war on drugs.

Basing his essay on extensive archival research in Peru and the United States, Paul Gootenberg narrates the Peruvian reluctance to comply with League of Nations control recommendations affecting cocaine. Although sympathetic to reform demands for curtailing coca-leaf consumption among the indigenous population, several advocates promoting national development urged the establishment of a major cocaine industry. Led by Dr. Carlos Paz Soldán, they contended that such an industry promised to give Peru an appropriate share of the world market and hasten modernization. As Gootenberg emphasizes, this promotion influenced the Peruvian government's resistance to the League's proposed cocaine sanctions. He indicates that the attempts of the Odría regime to strengthen ties with the United States during the early Cold War proved significant in revising Peruvian resistance to a position that would give increasing support to the North American "anti-cocaine crusade."

Drawing several of her conclusions from close study and personal observations, Mary Roldán analyzes societal changes arising in Medellín with the emergence and growth of the Colombian cocaine traffic. She argues that the activities of Pablo Escobar and lesser local narcotraffickers have had enduring effects in transforming traditional social and cultural values in historically conservative Medellín. Luis Astorga presents an overview of Sinaloa's role in the flow of cocaine from Mexico to the United States. Long experienced in drug smuggling across the border, Sinaloan drug dealers gained further notoriety when they established agreements with their Colombian counterparts during the 1980s. Alliances were formed as Colombian drug lords diverted much of their trade from Florida to Mexico to avert interdiction by United States drug agents. Astorga summarizes reasons for the failure of Mexican and United States authorities to halt or even appreciably contain the Sinaloan narcotraffickers.

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