

Respected but difficult to work with, Cotton was removed from his position after the fall of France, when his unit was formally integrated into the RAF. Cotton and his team “had laid the fundamental principles of aerial reconnaissance, principles which held good the rest of the war” (56). The RAF continued to rely on fast, high altitude aircraft, particularly Spitfires and Mosquitos, for aerial photography. It also recruited and trained a growing number of people, many of them women, to analyze and interpret photographs. Their number included several archeologists from Cambridge and one of Winston Churchill’s daughters.

At their peak, photo interpreters examined one million photographs per month. Downing recounts many successes of aerial photography during the war, including identifying the gathering of river barges in Channel ports for an invasion of England and their later dispersal; locating and following the *Bismarck* and other German warships, which contributed to their interception and destruction; providing battlefield intelligence; planning the Normandy landings; and supporting the bombing of Germany. In 1941, aerial photographs demonstrated that only one in three British bombers managed to drop their bombs within five miles of their targets. Photographic reconnaissance and interpretation became an essential tool for planning raids and assessing their success. The team at Medmenham also located the Peenemünde research site and V-1 launch sites under construction along the English Channel, which led to successful bombing raids on these facilities.

Downing’s entertaining narrative includes numerous anecdotes. He captures the personalities of many of the people who worked at Medmenham, particularly the pilots, and adds to our understanding of its mission and operations. The book would have benefitted from more analysis, though. The author repeatedly returns to the idea that eighty percent of wartime intelligence resulted from photographic reconnaissance, a figure attributed to American General Claire Chennault. Aerial photographs were certainly the most readily available source of information about the enemy, but their importance to the war effort requires more analysis, and this figure more interrogation.

Downing concludes with a comparison of RAF and Luftwaffe

photographic reconnaissance. Mirroring the rest of the German intelligence system, the Luftwaffe was rigid, adapted poorly to changing situations, and was poorly integrated with other intelligence-gathering operations. This point is worth more discussion, as are the activities of the photographic interpretation field units.

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Gledhill, John, and Patience
A. Schell, eds.

**New Approaches to Resistance
in Brazil and Mexico**

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For the past three decades, the idea of resistance has been a central theme in academic research on Latin American societies. The question of ordinary people’s ability to influence, shape, or oppose state modernizing schemes was central to the intellectual formation of anthropologists and historians of Latin America who came of age during the 1980s. For this reason, John Gledhill and Patience A. Schell’s edited volume, *New Approaches to Resistance in Brazil and Mexico*, constitutes a welcome assessment of a major intellectual trend in the contemporary academic world.

Theories of resistance were deeply rooted in the political context of the 1980s, in which projects of the left, whether the supposedly really-existing socialism of the Soviet Union or leftist insurgencies in Latin America, were in crisis and defeat. The relative decline of those projects produced a productive reassessment of theories of social hierarchies and the nature of power. Foremost among those reassessments was the work of James Scott, whose *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1985) served as a theoretical rupture with previous work in its insistence on identifying subtle acts of resistance to social hierarchies and state power. Part and parcel of this intellectual milieu was the rise of the field of subaltern studies, developed initially through work on the Indian subcontinent. This volume’s editors, Gledhill, a respected anthropolo-

gist, and Schell, an accomplished historian, have assembled an impressive collection of essays revisiting resistance studies.

The contributors to *New Approaches to Resistance in Brazil and Mexico* take resistance studies as a starting point, but they share neither a commitment to defending resistance studies nor a unified critique of it. Rather, they use the debates originating in resistance studies to productively think through their own research—in this case, historical and anthropological research on Mexico and Brazil. The volume covers a wide period, from the sixteenth century to the present, and is divided into three parts: historical studies covering the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the relationship between theories of resistance and religion, and contemporary ethnographies. The contributors, drawn from both anthropology and history, include a number of scholars based in Latin America and, thus, provide an effective dialogue across disciplines and borders. One of the many strengths of the volume is its focus on indigenous peoples, as well as religion and religious institutions. Juan Pedro Viqueira’s chapter on an eighteenth-century indigenous revolt in Chiapas stands out for its focus on historical contingency in a highly polarized and unequal society, and Luis Nicolau Parés offers a compelling analysis of the politics of the practice of Candomblé in contemporary Brazil.

John Gledhill provides an excellent theoretical assessment of resistance studies within anthropological research in the volume’s introduction. Gledhill’s survey includes not only the relevant Latin American scholarship but also non-Latin American case studies. Gledhill also identifies key questions within resistance studies, such as the fraught relationship between theories of resistance and varying conceptualizations of hegemony. In the volume’s conclusion, Alan Knight, a historian of the Mexican Revolution, offers a penetrating analysis of the central concepts that have defined resistance studies debates, such as the notion of *intent* among those actors identified as resisting and the perennial question of false consciousness and perceived interests. Although the volume’s wide scope may pose more questions than it can realistically answer, the chapter case studies

are well suited for introducing undergraduate students to questions of interpretation in history. The volume's insistence that "the study of resistance should be embedded in more

complex accounts of the practices of power" is borne out through the nuanced case studies (3) and should be of interest to specialists regardless of discipline.

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