



Francisco de Miranda: A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution

By Karen Racine

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Before there was Sim-n Bol'var, there was Francisco de Miranda. He was among the most infamous men of his generation, loved or hated by all who knew him. Though his roots are deeply entrenched in Latin America, he was a true world citizen-residing for extended periods in the United States and in Europe. His home was the nexus at which the Old and New Worlds met in the Age of Revolution. Venezuelan General Francisco Gabriel de Miranda (1750-1816) participated in the major political events of the Atlantic World for more than three decades. Before his tragic last days he would be Spanish soldier, friend of U.S. presidents, paramour of Catherine the Great, French Revolutionary General in the Belgian campaigns, perennial thorn in the side of British Prime Minister William Pitt, and fomenter of revolution in Spanish America. He used his personal relationships with leaders on both sides of the Atlantic to advance his dream of a liberated Spanish America. Eventually, the glory days would reach a screeching halt when a fellow revolutionary would turn him over to the opposition, and he would spend the rest of his natural life in a cramped, dank cell at the prison of La Carraca in CODiz.

Francisco de Miranda: A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution is an insightful life-and-times account of Miranda, emphasizing the personal, human, social, and cultural context, and revealing the interconnectedness of the Atlantic World. Author Karen Racine brings the man into focus in a careful, thorough analysis, demonstrating the effect of his political and social savvy on both sides of the Atlantic, and showing how his savvy, firm political beliefs and courageous actions saved him from being the simple scoundrel that his dalliances suggested.

Shedding light on one of history's most charismatic and cosmopolitan world citizens, Francisco de Miranda will appeal to all those interested in biography and Latin American history.

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Editorial Review

Review

Through extensive use of contemporary sources, Professor Racine has brought Miranda and his times to life. She reveals Miranda's considerable faults as well as his unfailing spirit of determination to succeed in the face of overwhelming obstacles. This sensitive and informative volume places Miranda effectively in the context of the final years of Spain's American empire in a highly readable and vigorous text. (Ralph Lee Woodward)

A welcome contribution to the central and timely subject of Latin American independence. This volume's focus is the career of Francisco de Miranda, the remarkable 'Precursor' of the Spanish-American struggle for self-rule. By examining his entire trajectory rather than his culminating—and tragic—role in the Venezuelan revolution, Professor Racine provides us with a captivating view of the transatlantic world of ideas, interconnected events, and personal contacts that shaped Spanish-American independence. The narrative is attractive, the research impressive, and the author's assessments consistently judicious. (Ivàn Jaksic)

Professor Racine's take on Miranda is clear, effective, thorough, and sympathetic. She captures both the man and his times, tracks his quixotic career with care and accuracy, and offers sensible and insightful judgments about his success and failures. This book is a fine addition to our Latin Americanist library. (Lombardi, John V.)

About the Author

Karen Racine is assistant professor of history at Valparaiso University.

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