Many scholars are growing increasingly frustrated by studies of revolution that rely upon structural conditions such as land tenure, poverty and inequality. Despite decades of effort, social scientists seem no closer to predicting or explaining revolution. What we need to do is to go back to the drawing board and find additional variables that may yield more satisfying results. Social injustice is nothing new in Latin America. Conversely revolts, and especially full-fledged revolutions, are few and far between. This suggests that political variables must be analysed more seriously, something that students of the 'Great Revolutions' (France, Russia and China) have understood sooner than Latin Americanists. Furthermore it should not mean focusing only on the state, as in the old dichotomy 'civil society' versus 'the state'. It also means studying the agents of social and political change, their beliefs and ideologies, the particular structure of incentives in their environment, and so on.

In this path-breaking work, Yvon Grenier, one of the leading younger-generation Canadian political scientists, offers a new interpretation of the civil war in El Salvador, one that also appears promising for the understanding of other countries in the region and beyond. He focuses on the role of ideology, especially as it relates to activists within revolutionary parties, universities and the church. He demonstrates convincingly that, in the case of El Salvador at least, ideas matter and actors matter. As Grenier asserts in his conclusion: 'Central American political actors are power seekers, not solely social class spokespersons. Their political agenda is shaped by a variety of conditioning factors: not just those derived from some compelling socioeconomic "reality".' In short, the point is to 'bring the actor back in'.

This is undoubtedly a controversial book, one that questions the dominant paradigm in the area. I have no doubt that many scholars will take issue with some of the ideas
developed in this study. This being said, all serious students of
social movements and revolutions should read this important
new book.

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List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADUES</td>
<td>Asociación de Docentes de la Universidad de El Salvador (Association of Professors of the University of El Salvador)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGEUS</td>
<td>Asociación General de Estudiantes Universitarios Salvadoreños (General Association of Salvadoran University Students)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANDES</td>
<td>Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños (National Association of Salvadoran Educators)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANEP</td>
<td>Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada (National Association for Private Enterprise)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARENA</td>
<td>Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (National Republican Alliance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTUES</td>
<td>Asociación de Trabajadores de la Universidad de El Salvador (Association of Workers of the University of El Salvador)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPR</td>
<td>Bloque Popular Revolucionario (People's Revolutionary Bloc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPUES</td>
<td>Consejo Administrativo Provisional de La Universidad de El Salvador (Provisional Administration Council of the University of El Salvador)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEB</td>
<td>Christian Base Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CELAM</td>
<td>Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana (Latin American Conference of Bishops)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONIP</td>
<td>Conferencia Nacional de la Iglesia Popular (National Conference of the Popular Church)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Comisión Político-Diplomática (Político-Diplomatic Commission)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Coordinación Revolucionaria de las Masas (Revolutionary Coordination of the Masses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRU</td>
<td>Directorio Revolucionario Unificado (Unified Revolutionary Directorate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPL</td>
<td>Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Army of Liberation)</td>
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