



## Americana: The Americas in the World Around 1850

By James Dunkerley

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The Americas of the 1850s provides James Dunkerley with compelling material for this majestic and unorthodox book. Drawing on a range of contemporary sources, from Walt Whitman to Charles Darwin, Anthony Trollope, Karl Marx and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, he adopts a fully Atlanticist perspective to reappraise the first steps in American modernity. *Americana* is arranged around major themes: time and space, culture, political economy and international relations. Between these more general discussions are edited transcripts and commentaries on three court cases from the period which both divert and illuminate: John Mitchel's 1848 conviction for treason in Dublin which led him through Bermuda, Tasmania and Nicaragua before joining the Confederate cause in the US Civil War; Myra Gaines' suit for the return of her legacy which reveals her Sligo-born father to have conspired against Jefferson and treated with Napoleon's agents in the sale of Louisiana; Mariano Munoz's trial for releasing a prisoner on Good Friday in the style of Pontius Pilate which draws the curtain back on Francisco Burdett O'Connor, prefect of Tarija, elder brother of the Chartist leader Feargus and Simon Bolivar's chief of staff.

*Americana* seeks simultaneously to savour the language and sensibilities of the nineteenth century in the Americas and to provide a pleasurable critique of contemporary vanities over globalisation and the complex sophistication of modernity.

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#### Review

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#### About the Author

**James Dunkerley** is Professor of Politics at Queen Mary, University of London, and Director of the Institute for the Study of the Americas. His books include *Rebellion in the Veins*, *Power in the Isthmus* and *The Long War*, all published by Verso.

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