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Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History (Review)

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Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History. Edited by JEREMY ADELMAN. New York: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xii + 318. \$22.99 (paper).

In 1995, a gathering of historians at Princeton celebrated the silver anniversary of the publication of Barbara and Stanley Stein's *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America*. The book, widely read in survey courses on Latin America in the 1970s, introduced a generation of students to some basic historical arguments in support of dependency theory. The celebratory conference produced this collection of essays.

Students of world history will find the opening chapters of interest, as the authors reject Eurocentricism in favor of an Atlantic view embracing the complexities of three diverse continents. Building on the "ecohistory" of Alfred Crosby, Philip Curtin wrestles with African origins of disease and revisits his own work on the plantation complex in an effort to demonstrate that—beyond their seafaring abilities—Europeans did not obtain structured hegemony in the West until after the Industrial Revolution. Robert Tignor convincingly argues that, even after the Industrial Revolution, European views of Africa were at least partly defined by the "otherness" of the American encounters centuries earlier. Barbara and Stanley Stein themselves recount how New World silver financed Imperial Spain's wars, even while the silver itself filtered into the broader European economy.

Two of the collection's essays address historiography. After an overview of the structuralist interpretation that has dominated Brazilian colonial historiography, Stuart Schwartz examines new trends and challenges in the subfield. The dominant paradigm, with its emphasis on commercial capital, African slavery, and mercantilist trade, rested on the works of Gilberto Freyre, Roberto Simonsen, and Caio Prado Júnior, and lent itself naturally to the emergence of economics-oriented dependency theory. More recent social and cultural histories have churned up the historiographical waters, however, with their focus on interior Brazil and heretofore neglected social groups, such as women. The theoretical notions underpinning colonial Brazilian history have also changed, as a younger generation of historians grew frustrated with the "inability of the dependentista paradigm to incorporate local human agency" (p. 189).

That original paradigm is further explored by Joseph Love who reflects upon the work of Brazilian economist Celso Furtado. Influenced by economists Raúl Prebisch and John Maynard Keynes, Furtado provided insightful analysis of colonial Brazil's economy, then concerned himself with cyclical patterns of development into the mid-twentieth

century era of Brazilian industrialization. He also tackled questions of uneven internal development, owing an intellectual debt to Hans W. Singer as he sought to explain the lagging conditions of the Brazilian northeast. Love's contribution elevates Furtado's historicism to a par with that of Prebisch's work as a precursor to dependency theory.

Other essays round out the collection and pull it in different, but generally appropriate, directions. Tulio Haperín Donghi sweeps through the breadth of Argentine intellectual history in a beautifully written piece that reflects on how thinkers have weighed the meaning of their nation's distinctive past. With grinding logic, Richard Salvucci bases an analysis of rural development in Bourbon Mexico on the admittedly less-than-certain assumption of low agricultural productivity. Robert Patch nuances the origins of dependency by weighing social factors in a revisit of Mayan domains. And Steve Stern questions simplistic linear notions of time by presenting a half-dozen theses regarding our understanding of the historical significance of Latin American colonialism.

Reasonably cogent, this anthology still does not escape some of the pitfalls of using conference papers as inspiration for a book. While its editor, Jeremy Adelman, provides an adequate introduction, it lacks a conclusion. The final piece, by twentieth-century historian Michael Jiménez, is stimulating in its own right, but quite disconnected from the rest of the volume. Jiménez stresses the importance of the decline of the middle class in understanding the present critical juncture of world history. He contends, rightly, that modernization theorists neglected meaningful analysis of "middle sectors" in Latin American studies; his essay does not, however, connect effectively with what proceeds it. A conclusion, in addition to Jiménez's essay, would have better served the reader.

Dependency theory died a well-justified death in the 1980s, and this collection of essays will not revive it. It is, of course, in the interest of colonial historians to see deep temporal roots to Latin America's contemporary problems. Unlike some original *dependentistas*, these astute colonialists do not link contemporary phenomena (which remain largely unaddressed) to the distant past—which is good, because critical elements like the International Monetary Fund and the globalization of security apparatuses have no significant historical precedent. But the problem with the notion of persistence in Latin American history lies in its *suggestion* of contemporary relevance. As historians we can state it plainly: There are many reasons to study colonial Latin American history, but doing so to get a grasp on contemporary realities is really not one of them.

It is plausible—as indicated on the jacket—that this book may be of use in some Latin American history classrooms. Some of its essays, however, are rather complex and abstract for entry-level undergraduates at most universities; the collection itself is too broad for most advanced courses as defined by topic or geographic interest. Jiménez's contention that the U.S. middle-class is shrinking may be questioned, but there is no doubt that scholarly book sales continue to recede. Dissemination of worthy conference papers by electronic and other means increasingly makes sense for scholars and publishers alike.

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Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States. Edited by LAURA HEIN AND MARK SELDEN. Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2000. Pp. 287. \$59.59 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

As the human race marches into the new millennium, the past seems to loom larger than ever. The end of the Cold War has reopened many old wounds, often along ethnic lines. Newly democratized countries have to confront the old regime. Conflicting visions of war and internal strife not only create problems inside a nation-state, but also increasingly affect the state of affairs among them. Governments are pressured to make apologies for past wrongs, while private companies are sued over alleged wartime abuses. How textbooks portray the past has become a matter of major importance.

On the heel of their book *Living with the Bomb*, which addresses Japanese and American efforts to cope with the atomic blasts at the end of the Second World War in Asia, historian Laura Hein and sociologist Mark Selden team together to bring out another timely book. It began largely as a response to the ongoing controversies over textbook depiction of World War II that have been brewing since the early 1980s in Japan and have picked up steam again recently. Seven of the ten essays have been published as "Textbook Nationalism, Citizenship, and War" in a special issue of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 30, 1 (April–June 1998). Although the primary emphasis of the book is on Japan, several essays deal with Germany and the United States as well as international interactions.

In the introduction, Hein and Selden place their collective endeavor in a broad perspective and address two central questions: first, the relationship between citizens and the state; second, a nation's con-