

religion, the poor, base communities, and the like. Thomas Kselman and Charles Reilly introduce the concept of popular religion and religious populism with its impact on Latin American populism.

The country studies represent a synthesis of materials that have been previously published. Each author is faithful to the same methodological perspective. I found the chapter on religion and ritual in Bolivia by Susan Rosales Nelson particularly interesting. She emphasizes the importance of popular religious ritual in understanding the church. In this she provides a pleasant complement to (one could almost say relief from) the more conventional perspectives on religious institutions, power, and politics of the other authors.

This book represents a significant contribution to the growing literature on the role of religion in society. It will be especially useful for specialists in the field. And it provides a sympathetic and critical analysis for church practitioners who are looking for a better understanding of the institutions, values, and processes which constantly require their professional attention.

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*The Military and the State in Latin America.* By ALAIN ROUQUIÉ. Translated by PAUL E. SIGMUND. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1988. Tables. Notes. Index. Pp. ix, 468. Cloth. \$37.50.

Much like the Bible which undergirds the doctrines of widely varying Christian sects, this book will for a decade or so provide illustrative material for individuals, whatever their perspective, with an interest in the political behavior of the Latin American military establishments. At the outset, the author declares that he has little time for those who tend toward typologies in their efforts to explain military/state relations in the region. He writes:

With the help of angry participant observers, ingenious and unverifiable theories appeared. These universally applicable explanations or keys to the universe are merely more or less coherent extrapolations based on fragile or spectacular evidence. They serve to set out some guidelines in an area in which great confusion reigns, precisely because of the lack of serious empirical study; however, they also reassure those who accept them. Successive interpretations emerge at each stage, adjusting themselves to the contemporary situation. Models bloom and fade. A new orthodoxy eliminates an earlier one, which in turn reemerges a little later in a more sophisticated and equally convincing form that is both coherent and applicable, but often neither true nor false (p. 2).

His own scholarly predilections and his objective in writing this volume are laid before the reader in no uncertain terms.

We do not believe in historical determinism or in any sort of historical, economic, or geographical fatalism. We are not looking for a single thesis that explains every situation. If we are determined to disprove the grand conceptions of Latin American militarism, it is not to add our own theoretical grain of salt to what is already an ample discussion. We propose, instead, to carry out in this book a realistic empirical examination of military power in all its diversity, taking into account the fact that we are talking about *military* power and that from the moment it usurps constitutional authority, it cannot be considered a “passive” or a negligible actor (p. 9).

This sweeping approach permitted Rouquié, as of 1985 French ambassador to El Salvador, to examine the historical relation between the military and the state in the nineteenth century and to comment on the army in each of the nations in contemporary Latin America. As he seeks to cover so much territory, it is perhaps understandable that there should be some unevenness in his discourses and that statements appear that invite disagreement.

At the most generalized level, I found the author to have a good grasp of military/civilian relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but that he increasingly lost control of his subject, until in the post-World War II era he was engaged in little more than journalistic writing. In his nation-by-nation treatment of the militaries, he is at his best in dealing with those of Argentina, Brazil, Chile (except during the presidency of Salvador Allende), and Uruguay. His analysis of the military situation in Colombia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela leaves much to be desired.

Dropping down to what might be called the personal preference or nitpicking level, I found the volume faulty in several areas, of which I propose to identify only five. (1) The study is in essence limited to the armies and, more specifically, to the officer corps of those institutions; noncoms receive short shrift. This is a serious gap in the study, especially because the author foresees the armies becoming more democratic and/or populist. The navies and air forces, meanwhile, are nowhere given more than incidental notice. (2) An all-encompassing volume such as this one purports to be should include a discussion of how military officers reach political decisions, an aspect of military/civilian relations that Robert Potash’s distinguished studies of the Argentine military cover so well. (3) The author did not seem to enhance his stature as a scholar when, in presenting his view of U.S. influence within the Latin American military establishments, he resorted to such statements as “[h]is dictatorship was again the poisoned fruit of Yankee occupation” (p. 127) or that a “gorilla” is a Latin American military man who rejects change and supports “a continental anticommunist crusade under the aegis of the United States” (p. 310). Such representations are particularly disconcerting since the author ultimately discovers that the military “Esprit de Corps overcomes ide-

ology" (p. 333). A further point: Rouquié, in writing about what he conceives to be the U.S. influence in Latin America, endorses a view that was popular a quarter of a century ago, but now is outdated. There are too many examples of Latin American armed forces going to the Soviet Union, Israel, and France for equipment, contrary to the wishes of the United States, to claim much Pentagon influence other than in some of the Central American/Caribbean nations. (4) The author is unclear on "the concept of middle class(es)," which he asserts "is too vague to aid our understanding" (p. 89), but he then proceeds to use the term, or its equivalents, throughout the volume in discussing the background of officers and their civilian clientele. (5) The author failed to explain how his analysis of developments in Latin America led him to present a basically pessimistic future for the area in the text and an essentially optimistic one in the epilogue (written only a half decade later). At this point, the reader should be warned that what I see as faults in the volume may be exaggerated because of the fact that the author, to me, seemed at pains to make his work appear more original than it really is. After 30 years of research and writing on the Latin American armed forces by a relatively large number of respected scholars, the main areas have been pretty well identified. But as Rouquié has shown, there do remain, as the saying goes, "different ways to make a pudding."

To conclude, this is a thoughtful and readable book. It will better serve the interests of the lay person and the undergraduate than the needs of the serious scholar of military/state relations, irrespective of disciplinary orientation. In all truth, the volume does not push back the frontiers of knowledge very far.

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*The Political Economy of Central America Since 1920.* By VICTOR BULMER-THOMAS. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Acronyms. Tables. Map. Graphs. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Indexes. Pp. xxii, 414. Paper.

This book is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on Central America. In the preface, the author states the book's ambitious purpose: "to examine the nature of economic development in Central America and to resolve the confusion over the part played by economic factors in the current crisis" (p. xiii). Even with this strongly presentist orientation, however, pre-World War II decades, like the postwar years, are analyzed in extensive, solidly documented chapters with suggestive interpretations.

The book is an invaluable compilation of economic data, much of which the author has pieced together from primary sources. Perhaps more impressive, however, is the author's success in analytically integrating aspects of historical change that too often are kept separate or treated in a misleading framework of linear causality. One important example is the relationships between external influences