

lic. The conversion of these domestic claims to foreign debt claims, along with corruption, was the main obstacle to improved domestic public funding. And this obstacle lies at the root of the continuing preference among Latin American states for foreign-held debt.

Scholars of Latin America doing research on its early nineteenth-century political, economic, social, and financial aspects will profit handsomely from Millington's useful contributions to the understanding of murky public debt enigmas. Also, students interested in understanding nineteenth-century Latin American history beyond clichés and overly theoretical approaches would gain useful knowledge by reading this book.

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*Eliten und Fortschritt: zur Geschichte der Lebensstile in Venezuela, 1908–1958.* By CLAUDIA GERDES. Frankfurt: Vervuert Verlag, 1992. Notes. Bibliography. 294 pp. Paper.

This is a richly textured cultural and intellectual history of Venezuela in the first half of the twentieth century. Focusing on the elite and the idea of progress as expressed in lifestyles, Claudia Gerdes analyzes the inevitable conflict that arises when traditional values come up against modern ideas. The heart of the study lies in the section titled "Lebensstile zwischen Tradition und Wandel" (sections are not called or numbered as chapters), in which Gerdes describes the interplay between two themes in twentieth-century Venezuela: the impact of economic innovation and the adaptation of cultural values to economic changes. This is not a study of the twentieth-century Venezuelan economy. Gerdes tends to accept the standard interpretations of Venezuela's transition from a land-based to an oil-based economy. Her interest is the consequences of these economic changes: how they influenced or found reflection in the nation's cultural outlook.

After an introduction describing the state of research on current theories of cultural change and social modernization in the framework of Venezuelan history, Gerdes turns to the matter at hand: the debate over the redefinition of *Alltagskultur*. Two sections focus on the rule of Juan Vicente Gómez (1908–1935) and the military governments after World War II (1948–1958). Both periods embraced ideas of progress, though the concepts of what progress should entail and how it should be expressed differed in each period. By the 1950s, the concept of progress and order of the Gómez period had become infused with the idea that economic change could lead to social harmony.

Woven into these chronological discussions is an analysis of nightlife, theater, and sports, among other activities. Germane to these discussions was the question of how imitative Venezuelan culture should become. In this regard, Gerdes' observations on the influence of imported architectural styles are particularly noteworthy.

Modernization, whether economic or cultural, some critics argued, could lead to decadence, rebellion, or other potential disruptions. Throughout *Eliten und Fortschritt*, Gerdes skillfully relates these warnings and fears to the larger historical context of the roles of state and elite, the search for national and cultural identity, and the intrusion of foreign influences on traditional attitudes. In the final section Gerdes speculates on how a more open and democratic system will affect the link between progress and lifestyles. The rise of the bourgeoisie could pose a challenge to the elite as the arbiter of Venezuela's cultural life.

*Eliten und Fortschritt* is written from interviews, newspapers and journal articles, and secondary works on politics, economics, culture, and society. It represents a synthesis rather than an original inquiry. The findings from dozens of interviews with contemporary Venezuelans are used throughout the book. It would have been helpful if Gerdes had explained how the interviews were structured, what questions were asked, and how the responses were weighted for accuracy and relevance. Still, this work offers a challenging perspective on the process and effect of change as traditional societies undergo modernization. It deserves the wider audience that a Spanish translation will bring.

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*La revolución francesa en México.* By SOLANGE ALBERRO, ALICIA HERNÁNDEZ CHÁVEZ, and ELÍAS TRABULSE. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992. Notes. Index. 287 pp. Paper.

The 15 essays in this book, the result of a colloquium on the French Revolution and its influences in Mexico, are of varying caliber. Some of them are mature, others not; some are startlingly innovative, others not; some relate directly to the subject of the book, others hardly at all. There are two opening chapters. The one by Silvio Zavala is mystifying; it deals with various French writers and the author's personal encounters with France, and contains a bibliographical supplement considerably longer than the article. The one by François Furet, on the historiography of the French Revolution, seems a highly significant commentary on modern French authors' views, but it does not relate in any way to Mexico.

The longest section of the book, comprising seven essays, concerns Mexican independence. Nearly all the essays, consciously or not, raise the problem of evidence in any attempt to establish realistic links between the French Revolution and Mexican independence. Carlos Herrejón Peredo admits that there is no direct link between the two events in the subject he is studying (church sermons), but avers that it was on everyone's mind nevertheless. María del Refugio González insists that the main elements Mexico inherited from the French Revolution were the concepts of sovereignty of the nation, constitutionalism, and religious tolerance (though there is little evidence of the third in this period), while arguing that the creole response to the crisis of 1808 was inspired primarily by Hispanic