

This mix becomes apparent in chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 107–77) through Pion-Berlin's treatment of economic issues that affected budget cutting and kept defense reform from succeeding prior to and into the administrations of Carlos Menem (1989–95, 1995–). A solid comparative essay comparing Argentina to Chile and Uruguay in chapter 7 (pp. 179–221) puts the Argentine case and Pion-Berlin's approach to it in regional perspective. Neither Menem nor his appointees, he asserts, have chosen to fully utilize their authority. Moreover, civilians still lack the experience necessary to do so, which in terms of defense reform and alteration of state-military relations only "increases their dependency on the armed forces they are supposed to lead" (p. 176). It would be dangerous to apply this formula as such to other countries; doing so while allowing for national idiosyncrasies would be of great value.

In Argentina, this book informs us, the military still does not accept subordination to institutions of government legally constituted and popularly supported. There remain unsettled issues and undiscovered problems in the corridors of Argentine power. That the same can be said about Chile and Uruguay is clear, though it is never asserted.

In decades to come, those who study the intricate workings of civil-military relations within putatively democratic contexts are going to see issues raised by Pion-Berlin as important elsewhere, subject to peculiar circumstances. Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay are cases in point. If the powers of nation-states diminish and influences of transnational institutions increase, democratization, neoliberalism, and globalization may not prove any more effective in creating civil-military relations acceptable to all parties in Argentina and her neighbors than have yesteryear's ideological, economic, and national paradigms.

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### International and Comparative

*The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850.* By LESTER D. LANGLEY.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Maps. Tables. Notes. Index. xvi, 374 pp. Cloth, \$35.00.

In his most recent book, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850*, Lester Langley has written the sort of deep and wide hemispheric survey that few other historians could attempt with such success. Breaking away from his career focus on the diplomatic history of the United States and Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Langley promises "a portrait of hemispheric political culture," the consequences of which he has illuminated in his many other works. Indeed, he dedicates the volume to Walter LaFeber.

Though he says nothing about the twentieth-century Central American revolutions LaFeber described, Langley does aim to explain the relative success of British American versus Latin American elites in establishing unifying national mythologies and institutions. But his comparative apparatus is relatively light, for he emphasizes the

“particularity” of time and place. Though he is most interested in politics and personalities, Langley is keenly aware of social forces. He reads the United States, as well as Haitian and Latin American revolutions, as events with leaders who were deeply ambivalent about the participation of the lower orders. As he integrates political history and its social background he delivers an admirable overview of scholarship in both the United States and Latin American fields. The book has no bibliography, disappointingly, but endnotes constitute nearly a quarter of its length.

Yet from a scholar of Langley’s caliber, one might hope for more synthesis. Instead, he examines each revolutionary era separately, assuming too much background for most undergraduates to follow his narrative, but devoting more attention to chronology than is necessary for readers who know these periods. Though his accounts and their titles establish his comparative framework—events in British North America are “The Revolution from Above,” in French Saint-Domingue “The Revolution from Below,” and in Spanish America “The Revolution Denied”—there is little sustained comparative discussion. His attention to detail, rather, leads him to offer the “dynamics of chaos” as an overarching explanation of events from 1763 to the 1820s. As the book moves toward 1850, however, his account grows more synthetic. The rise of the national state and its role in the creation of a “rational” economic order throughout the hemisphere brings a satisfying close to his accounts of three chaotic revolutions.

Langley has accomplished much by joining these parallel narratives under the same cover, but one hopes that other historians of his stature will take up this comparative project. For example, though he must be commended for devoting one-third of his volume to the Haitian Revolution, and for mastering much of its French as well as English-language historiography, his treatment of Haiti seems like an afterthought. The rare sections of the volume that are explicitly comparative discuss only the British and Spanish empires, never their French counterpart. Nevertheless, like the rest of the hemisphere, French Saint-Domingue underwent profound reforms after 1763, resulting in the emergence of creole self-consciousness, the expansion of the military and militia, and renewed trade controversies. As in Spanish America, white creoles experienced new political and social anxieties after 1763 that led them to rewrite racial labels, officially dividing themselves from their French-educated sons of part-African descent.

Because Saint-Domingue was a French and not a Spanish colony, because its surviving postrevolutionary creole elite was mulatto, not mestizo, and because the creole leaders of Spanish America resisted comparisons to Haiti, historians have generally set it apart from other American uprisings. Without diminishing the achievement of Haiti’s rebel slaves, this French colony might be seen as the first and most extraordinary of the Latin American revolutions.

Langley acknowledges from the first that elements of his project will frustrate both specialists and comparativists. He has written effective and thought-provoking narratives of three very different revolutions. It is for others to bring these revolutions together.

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