

González-Stephan's contribution is interesting in that it manages to be both compelling and unnuanced. The piece focuses, with plenty of digressions, on the first Venezuelan National Fair of 1883, where the main exhibition hall was a Gothic palace. It is full of interesting comment on the use of this tropical Gothic as an attempt to lend the nation distant, civilised origins and camouflage its Hispanic past – to sculpt a whiter, more virile, more military, more Christian aesthetic. The chapter's consummate use of a certain contemporary critical idiom seduces and irritates in equal measure, however: we must take on trust the 'new techniques of seeing', since we are not told what the old ones are. The lack of nuance can be heard in telltale expressions such as the 'logics [sic] of the cultural matrix' (p. 122), an extension of Foucault's one-sided, paranoid vision of power-knowledge from *Discipline and Punish*, with its corresponding simplifications. In González-Stephan's words, 'Travelers and artists thus worked quickly to amend [sic] an esthetic of emptiness while philosophers were occupied with fine-tuning the universal categories of metaphysics' (p. 109). A pithy statement, but is that it on nineteenth-century art and philosophy? The problem with the argument that culture is not merely epiphenomenal is not that culture is brought into too close contact with larger forces (that is what cultural studies does best), but that it ends up being 'read off' as an undifferentiated part of the historical tableau.

While González-Stephan focuses on the disciplinary apparatuses of culture, Chasteen's emphasis on its subversive aspect highlights the reverse side of the equation. The transgressions allowed during carnival *may*, he says, have emboldened middle-class women to redefine the limits of permissible behaviour in general. This may or may not have been so, but whenever carnival stands analysed by itself, removed from the larger social, economic and religious context, we cannot know how significant it was. Similarly, because the chapters are on different topics and countries, the book's stated aim, 'to communicate an organic view of society' (p. 4), is difficult to achieve. The editors write that the chapters 'present snapshots of these components [of the nation-building process], grouped together in thematic sections that facilitate the linking of individual parts to create a vision of the whole' (p. 4). The best snapshots here are in focus and do not overreach themselves in their conclusions: Acree is persuasive on the reciprocal relationship between independence and print culture, and on the creole elite's efforts to create a new set of symbols; Rugeley is good on the various kinds and subterranean pathways of Catholic sensibility, which explain the survival of religion into the revolutionary era in Mexico, long after its official death knell has been sounded; Conway shows convincingly that the *pollo* figure in Mexico was much closer to the dandy of eighteenth-century Europe, an effete and effeminate ('clothes-wearing') man, than to the common twentieth-century Mexican image of a pathologised sexual deviant. Some of the chapters remain snapshots, while others do offer new and interesting visions of the (impossible) whole.

*University of Nottingham*

ADAM SHARMAN

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10001835

Hilda Sabato, *Buenos Aires en armas: la revolución de 1880* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2008), pp. 333, pb.

This important work is centred on the revolutionary process led by the governor of Buenos Aires province, the *autonomista* Carlos Tejedor, together with the Nationalist

Party under former president Bartolomé Mitre, in June 1880. What led the *conciudados* to revolt was their opposition to the presidential candidature of General Julio A. Roca, who had skilfully established a network of alliances with the governing elites of the provinces of the interior in order to triumph in the presidential elections of April 1880. The revolutionary forces in Buenos Aires challenged the election result by taking up arms, invoking the use of fraud and violence on the part of the provincial governors allied to Roca, in connivance with the federal government under Nicolás Avellaneda. Tejedor and Mitre managed to mobilise significant sections of society in the name of defending civil and political liberties which, by its own self-indulgent perspective, of course, only the province of Buenos Aires was capable of protecting. Although the mobilisation was popular and widespread, the rebel forces were forced to surrender on encountering federal troops after hard combat on the outskirts of the city of Buenos Aires.

This military defeat saw the province pay a high price. The city of Buenos Aires was finally established as the federal capital of the republic, the provincial militias which had been the grassroots of military resistance were outlawed once and for all, and the political opposition in the city was rendered irrelevant for the rest of the decade. The consequences are well known, as Hilda Sabato acknowledges, and mark the 1880 revolution as a sea-change in the political history of the country (p. 19). Less curiosity has been aroused, however, by the dynamics of the revolutionary mobilisation process, and especially the use of violence as a legitimate resource for the resolution of political conflicts. Sabato proposes problematising this recourse to violence, revealing its historical roots in the political culture of nineteenth-century Buenos Aires alongside the particular circumstances obtaining in the 1880s.

In order to achieve this, the author explores the evolution of this process of revolutionary mobilisation from the start of the presidential campaign in June 1879 to the clash of arms that took place a year later. The attention to detail, the richness of the sources deployed, and the erudition with which the narrative is presented enhance our understanding of this process in a multitude of ways. One point that deserves stressing is the fact that the support provided to Roca by the national government was much slighter than the general's enemies in the city of Buenos Aires were willing to admit. Sabato shows how President Avellaneda, his cabinet, and many autonomistas opposed to Tejedor were disposed on more than one occasion to forsake their initial support for Roca in the hope of ensuring peace and not bringing upon themselves the wrath of Buenos Aires public opinion. On the other hand, Sabato confirms the extraordinary political capacity of the then youthful General Roca. If some of the most remarked upon skills of General Roca throughout his career were his prudence, his capacity for negotiation and his pragmatism, the detailed description by Sabato of the positions he adopted during the course of this difficult year reveal him to have been an extremely bold politician who was totally undeviating, even at moments when the pressure from the mobilisation within the city made his candidature virtually unsustainable.

The analysis of this process provides, in part, a concrete example of the ways in which the *porteño* political culture of the 1860s and 1870s, analysed by the author in a previous study, *La política en las calles* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1998), merged into action at this particular historical moment. We are again shown the key role of newspapers, pamphlets, electoral clubs and public meetings alongside clientelism and coercion in the mobilising of the city's population. But to these are added a detailed study of the fundamental part played by the city militias organised by the

rebel forces. The citizen battalions – among them the *Rifleros* (Riflemen), *Tiradores del Sur* (Southern Sharpshooters), *Defensores de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires Defenders), *Ciudadanos Armados* (Armed Citizens) and *Bersaglieri* (Marksmen), the latter made up of hundreds of Italian volunteers – not only constituted an important segment of the rebel military forces, but also inspired extraordinary popular fervour among the population of Buenos Aires. This identification was channelled into a range of activities – festivals, parades, collections and donations – that enabled the effective incorporation of a large proportion of the city's inhabitants into the revolutionary cause. Although it never achieved the unanimity that the rebel forces claimed, support for the 'cause of Buenos Aires' did succeed in mobilising broad sectors of civil society that did not usually participate in regular politics.

Interspersed among the narrative chapters that focus on the political and social elites of the city, the author provides brief analytical chapters ('intervals') that offer a deeper insight into the main features of this process. Of particular interest are those in which Sábato explains convincingly how the porteño revolution was legitimised by a discourse that harked to the right and the duty of 'citizen-soldiers' to rise up against a government perceived as tyrannical. This discourse also adhered to a potent self-image of the porteños as the sole significant defenders of political freedom in the face of despots and barbarians from the provinces who aspired to take possession of the federal government.

The rich narrative and original and powerful analysis make Sábato's work an essential addition to the study of Argentine politics in this period. Although, with *La política en las calles*, the author has already made an original contribution in showing aspects of nineteenth-century porteño politics that look beyond the violence of caudillos, civil wars and fraudulent elections, *Buenos Aires en armas* reintroduces violence into Argentine politics of the period with a dense richness and historical sensibility. As such, all those with an interest in the study of nineteenth-century Latin American politics should be encouraged to read this essential work.

*IES Buenos Aires*

ARIEL S. YABLON

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10001847

Nara B. Milanich, *Children of Fate: Childhood, Class, and the State in Chile, 1850–1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. xv + 355, £77.00, £18.99 pb.

'Children of fate', according to Nara Milanich, were not just products of chance, as indicated in a Chilean treatise denouncing illegitimacy, but rather the consequence of relations involving questions of class and family that perpetuated social inequality during the liberal republican period, despite formal equality before the law. The relationship between legal status, family and childhood reveals forms of exclusion replicated by social hierarchies. The regulatory intervention of the liberal state in the private sphere, contradicting the orthodox view that has regarded that intervention as a progressive process, is, she maintains, more ambiguous. At the same time the state consolidated its authority by taking on functions previously delegated to the Church, 'privatising' the private sphere through the regulation of issues of parentage by giving fathers the freedom to acknowledge children born outside marriage, so reproducing the colonial tenet of family honour in the language of personal freedom and privacy. Charity towards poor children was left unregulated and in private hands. This encouraged practices that saw the handing around of these children