As a primarily intellectual history, Turda and Gillette focus on the leading Latin eugenic thinkers and their interactions at conferences and within societies and organisations. One is left to wonder what specific impact these Latin eugenic programmes had on ordinary people within the different countries examined. Since the analysis is mostly at the level of discourse and policy, there are few examples of how eugenic ideas affected various populations. As an addition to current national and regional studies of eugenic programmes, unpacking this transnational movement's impact on national populations would be a worthy future project. Another area that Turda and Gillette open for further research is the connection between these Latin eugenic programmes and the formation of the post-1945 welfare state in Europe (p. 240). In the conclusion, Turda and Gillette claim that Latin eugenics dissolved into a series of national programmes that became the basis for the modern European welfare state, although this point is not developed throughout the book.

Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective is a laudatory effort that shows that Latin eugenics was a distinct intellectual and transnational movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This book should be of interest to intellectual historians, scholars of science, medicine and public health, and anyone interested in the mobility of ideas across world regions.

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Sandra Kuntz Ficker (coord.), *Historia mínima de la expansión ferroviaria en América Latina* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2015), pp. 361, pb.

The literature on the economic history of railways in Latin America has usually been confined to national boundaries. As so often happens in Latin American historiography, most works have focused on the largest and richest economies, and some excellent books have been published over the last few decades on the history of railways in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Cuba. This volume edited by Sandra Kuntz is exceptional in that context, since it adopts a regional approach and brings together eight national studies with a similar structure, with the explicit objective of offering a general picture of railway expansion in the region.

As is pointed out in the introduction, the most direct precedent of this book is the volume edited by Jesús Sanz in 1998 with the title *Historia de los ferrocarriles de Iberoamérica (1837–1995)*. The *Historia mínima de la expansión ferroviaria en América Latina* represents a clear step forward over that previous book, benefitting from the accumulation of high-quality research during the last twenty years. The new book (unlike Jesús Sanz's edited volume) is not exhaustive, but covers just seven country cases and a study of the Caribbean, in which a detailed analysis of Cuban railways is completed with information about the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Jamaica and a few references to the Lesser Antilles. However, the chosen countries have historically accounted for at least 95 per cent of the railway mileage of the whole region and, thus, the book provides a rather complete picture of the main features of Latin American railway expansion. On the other hand, the lack of exhaustiveness and the absence of an extensive dataset (like that included in Jesús Sanz's book) is actually consistent with the fact that this volume belongs to the series of 'minimum histories' published by El Colegio de México. It is therefore designed to provide an accessible introduction to the topic, which also explains the

absence of footnotes and references within the text, although all chapters include an up-to-date bibliography.

However, these features do not affect the rigour of the different studies that make up the volume, in which some of the best-known national specialists have offered a generally high-quality up-to-date state of the art. The national studies are preceded by an introduction where Sandra Kuntz gives a summary of the main conclusions of the national chapters and an excellent global approach to the features, benefits and challenges of Latin American railway systems in the long run. In this regard, this volume is an essential reference for all those interested in the history of railways in the region.

The book focuses on the period of railway expansion, which lasted until the first decades of the twentieth century. The importance of railway expansion for the economies of Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be exaggerated. Due to the absence of cheap transport alternatives in most countries of the region, railways were often indispensable for the take-off of exports, integration into the world economy, economic growth and state development. The successive chapters show how railways performed a quite different role across the countries of the region. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba and Chile stand out as successful cases, where the construction of large railway systems was one of the main drivers of export growth and economic expansion, although in Chile excess construction ended up negatively affecting net operating revenues. Uruguay also built a relatively dense network, but railway impact was reduced there by the availability of water transport and the specialisation of the country in livestock production. In Peru and Colombia, finally, railways might be characterised as relative failures, largely due to slow construction and the small size of their railway networks. This diversity of experiences is well reflected in the national chapters, which have tried to cover in all cases the following topics: the situation of transport before the railways, the process of railway expansion (including investment, construction costs and government policies), the characteristics of each railway system (layout, operation, traffic, etc.), and the impact of railways on the economy. Beyond this common structure, some chapters pay more attention to certain specific aspects, such as rates and transport costs in Mexico, the social savings in Peru, backward effects in Brazil, regional effects in Argentina and private and social returns in Uruguay, largely reflecting the latest advances in each national historiography. However, beyond those particular approaches, one of the main virtues of the book is the common approach and topics covered across the different studies, from railway construction to operation, business structure, returns, government policies and the effects on the economy.

Although the main focus of the book is on the period of railway expansion, all chapters provide an epilogue that summarises the evolution of railway systems from the end of their expansion until the present. In contrast with the diversity that characterised national railway histories until the interwar period, those epilogues tell a rather similar story of decadence. In most countries, the end of export-led growth and the diffusion of the motor car brought about traffic reduction and the worsening of returns, and these were usually accompanied, first, by the nationalisation of the systems and, later on, by a new privatisation in the last years of the twentieth century (with the exception of Cuba). Neither of those two changes brought significant relief to Latin American railway systems, which have been characterised in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by the closure of lines and the gradual reduction of their economic role. The book perfectly shows the stark contrast between the

centrality of railways in the region during the First Globalisation and their current marginal existence. This approach to the whole life cycle of Latin American railways is another reason why this book is essential reading for all those interested in the past and present of rail transport in the region, and a very interesting reference for world railway historians in general.

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Kevin Coleman, *A Camera in the Garden of Eden: The Self-Forging of a Banana Republic* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016), pp. 312, $80.00, $27.95 pb.

From their inception at the dawn of the twentieth century, the sprawling US banana companies that dominated the economic and political life of Central America have inspired a vast literature. The earliest accounts were self-serving histories upholding the United Fruit Company (UFCO, now known as Chiquita) as a bulwark of American ingenuity and benevolent Manifest Destiny in the tropics. Numerous authors have since challenged these congratulatory readings of the American presence, focusing on the myriad ways in which United Fruit carved out monopolies in production and transportation from the farm to the consumer. Known throughout Central America as *el pulpo* (the octopus) for its tenacious grasp over all aspects of national societies, UFCO brazenly engaged in predatory pricing, bribery, labour repression and even mass murder, an incident García Marquez adapted to the fictional Macondo of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Newer scholarship has revealed the complex ways in which workers, independent growers and occasionally state actors resisted the demands of banana companies. Loosely centring on the 69-day strike of Honduran banana workers in 1954, historian Kevin Coleman's *A Camera in the Garden of Eden* joins this more nuanced literature on the fruit company in Central America.

What makes this contribution distinctive is that it draws on an extensive visual record of one of UFCO's operation centres, the Honduran town of El Progreso. Events leading up to the strike are revealed in several photographic archives, foremost of which was a private collection of prints and negatives that Coleman encountered (serendipitously) in the course of his research. Rafael Platero Paz, the Salvadoran/Palestinian immigrant whose photos are featured in this book, devoted a half-century to documenting the prosaic and occasionally remarkable aspects of life in El Progreso. The images reproduced here range from the photographer's carefully-composed self-portraits, to the stock photos from which he earned a living, to events both newsworthy and transformative. Platero Paz was on hand to record masses of striking workers commandeering a UFCO freight train, forming orderly queues for rations, and attending an outdoor Mass celebrated by a supportive priest. The photographer died in 1984, leaving behind relatively little information about his images, or himself, for that matter. Coleman learned of his work through a surviving daughter, but the images and text render the photographer a knowable and sympathetic collaborator in this account of life in the banana enclave.

If Platero Paz's photographs suggest how Progreseños viewed themselves and the cause they joined in 1954, others reveal company and governmental views of the strike. Some of the most telling recent historiography on United Fruit has been