contributor to speak for him or herself. The cumulative effect by the end of this book vindicates Matthew Brown's declaration in his introduction that the debate over informal empire remains worthwhile. It will be interesting to see over the next few years what historians influenced by these essays end up writing about Latin America.

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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **41** (2009). doi:10.1017/S0022216X08005257

Ignacio Klich (ed.), *Árabes y Judíos en América Latina: Historia, representaciones y desafíos* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editora Iberoamericana, 2006), pp. 409, pb.

This book arises from a conference held in Buenos Aires in December 2004 which considered the history of immigration and relations between Arabs and Jews in Latin America during the last century. The conference aimed to de- mythologise this history, to uncover hidden parallels and relations of cooperation between the communities, and to facilitate dialogue and cooperation as ways of combating religious and cultural intolerance of any kind. For the editor and contributors to this volume, anti Semitism has its parallel in 'Islamophobia', particularly after the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States and the consequent identification of 'Islamic terrorism' as a problem in international politics.

The book aims to uncover a hidden history of shared experiences, cooperation and common institutions between Arabs and Jews, much of which has been pushed into the shadows by continuing Arab Israeli conflicts. As many of the authors points out, Zionism had little initial appeal among the Sephardic and Arab-Jewish communities, who saw it as a secular political movement of the Ashkenazim. It was only after 1948 and the creation of Israel that Zionism becomes a key dividing line between Arabs and Jews and in any case that dividing line took time to consolidate.

The authors show that the very terminology of 'Arabs' and 'Jews' is problematic, and obscures considerable heterogeneity within each 'group'. Most of the immigrants referred to as Arab in Latin America come from what are now Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, with smaller contingents from other parts of the old Ottoman empire. Most Arab immigrants in fact are Christian, not Muslim. The Jewish community contains Sephardim from North Africa and the Levant, 'Oriental' Jews from Ottoman realms, and Ashkenazim from Eastern and Central Europe. With the exception of Argentina and Brazil (and to a much lesser extent Cuba and Uruguay) the numbers involved are small. In the Americas, by an overwhelming margin the largest number of immigrants went to the United States.

The various contributions to the volume are driven by a desire to collect and present data that document personal and community histories of migration, mobility, inter community cooperation, as well as public attitudes and state policies towards immigration and towards classes of migrants viewed as undesirable. Many countries saw immigration as a way of improving (whitening) the population, and a public discourse often identified the nation with Catholic and militarist elements. In this context, Jews and Arabs were clearly undesirable and classified as such in law and public policy. The contributors furnish a wealth of historical and biographical material and underscore parallels between the migration experiences of the two communities, including patterns of economic activity, social mobility, institutionalisation and prejudice. Arabic speakers (mostly Christian with smaller numbers of Muslims and Jews) began arriving in the region in the 1890s, along with 'Oriental' and

Sephardic Jews. The surge of Ashkenazic Jews from Eastern Europe occurred later with the rise of the Nazis. One notable difference between the communities is that the Christian character of most of the Arab immigrants to some extent eased integration into the dominant Catholic culture of the region, for example removing the need to establish separate networks of schools.

The pattern of recovering hidden histories and forgotten common elements is echoed in most of the case studies, which cover Argentina in the first half of the 1900s (Ignacio Klich), the northeast of Argentina (Alberto Tasso), Sao Paulo (Oswaldo Truzzi), Rio de Janeiro (Paula Ribero) and Chile (Lorenzo Agar Chirinos and Abraham Magendzo). The papers on Mexico adopt a different approach. Zidane Zeraoui provides a rich and detailed account of the history of Mexico's legislation governing immigration and how it evolved up to and through the Second World War. In general, Mexican policy favored 'racial and cultural assimilation' (p. 204) which made for openness to migrants from Spain and obstacles to Jewish refugees from the Nazis who were classified as migrants, not refugees and thereby subjected to greater difficulties. Zeraoui also details the insertion of immigrants in Mexico (where they settled and what activities they engaged in). Judit Liwerant's article on 'Semites in Mexican Public Space' focuses on Mexican immigration codes and on the images they reveal of *Mexicanidad* and accompanying stereotypes and prejudices about Arabs, Jews, *turcos* and 'Orientals'. Acceptance of pluralism was late in coming to Mexico and does not begin to take hold until a combination of democratisation and the growing presence of a vigorous and open civil society made possible the acceptance of pluralism as ideal and reality in public discourse as well as in the prevailing norms of private life (p. 237).

Five chapters on 'representations' detail how Arabs and Jews have been portrayed in literature, film and public discourse. Two examples suffice here. Daniel Lvovich examines *La Bolsa*, a book which first appeared serialised in the newspaper *La Nación* between August and September 1891, and which has since republished in many editions. The title refers to the Buenos Aires stock exchange and to the economic crisis of 1890. The economic crisis is attributed to corruption and moral decay which themselves are traced to the presence of immigrants of inferior culture, especially Jews. Another chapter by Theresa Alfaro Velcamp reviews the portrayal of Arabs and Jews in Mexican films with emphasis on their 'outsider' character, and on problems of assimilation and fit with the ideal of *Mexicanidad*. Velcamp also shows how these portrayals meshed with Hollywood influences and changed over time.

A closing section on 'challenges' presents instances of dialogue and ideas about tolerance. There is a lengthy moderated dialogue two Argentines: Daniel Goldmann (a rabbi) and Omar Abboud (described as an Argentine Islamic leader). The discussion gets into sensitive areas of mutual distrust, prejudice and the inescapable linking of local relationships to world politics. In the closing paper, Nilton Bonder reflects on a model of tolerance of built on *valoración*, which seems to mean valuing the other at least in part through experience, such as visiting synagogues, mosques, churches, creating spaces for encounters of low tension which will contribute to converting all to a practice of toleration.

Árabes y Judíos en América Latina is a rich and varied collection that sheds light on a topic that is relatively under-studied, even within the broad genre of immigration studies. Both the contributions themselves and the very existence and goals of the volume are of interest. If, as Croce maintained, all true history is contemporary

history, then ethnicity must be to historians today what social class was to historians of a generation or two ago. Along with gender, it provides a set of guidelines about what to study, and a source of assumptions that make us see and understand the world the way we do. Particularly now, when so many identities are widely seen as 'constructed', it is important to look closely at how that construction is carried out, by whom, under what conditions and with what effects. To be sure, no single concept can ever fill that role for very long: each generation brings its own problems and sensitivities to the research agenda of the time, but this volume affirms the value of research on ethnicity and immigration.

There is an extensive bibliography which will be of use to scholars and students. There are many acronyms, but unfortunately no glossary.

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J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **41** (2009). doi:10.1017/S0022216X08005269

Justin Wolfe, *The Everyday Nation-State: Community & Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Nicaragua* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), pp. xi + 272, £22.00, hb.

In this book Justin Wolfe studies the process of state formation in Nicaragua in the nineteenth century using as his main source documents from the prefecture of Granada. He does away with the standard historiography that identifies the administration of José Santos Zelaya (1893–1912) as the turning point for the consolidation of the Nicaraguan state, and demonstrates the importance of the years between the end of the 'National War' (the war that expelled American filibuster William Walker in 1856) and 1893.

Wolfe sees the National War as a catalyst for an elite state project. The easy usurpation of political power by a foreign adventurer was a sobering experience for Nicaragua's divided elites, who finally began to show some unity of purpose. Of course the end of the National War was not the only catalyst; the thirty years of unprecedented political peace that followed the expulsion of Walker coincided with a significant expansion of export and commercial activities all over Latin America. The consequences of the export-led growth of the second half of the 19th century have been the subject of a significant body of historiography on Nicaragua as well as on the rest of Latin America. In fact, Wolfe explicitly builds on excellent recent local studies on the impact of coffee production in Nicaragua such as the works by Julie Charlip on Carazo and Elizabeth Dore on Diriomo. What sets this book apart is a specific focus on state formation approached from the perspective of the cultural turn.

The book begins somewhat traditionally addressing some of the major themes in state formation including elite ideology, tax collection and the organisation of a coercive apparatus. Wolfe also describes how as commercial agriculture gained in economic importance the interests of local and national elites coincided. Ultimately the state that the Nicaraguan elites pushed forward was a version of the Latin American liberal blueprint that promoted property ownership, regulation of labour, cultural homogenisation and respect for the state (p. 40).

But the projects conceived under the shade of the verandas of Granada's mansions had to be implemented in a land of diverse peoples. At the end of the National War Nicaragua's vibrant Indian communities, with access to land, their own traditions and hierarchies of authority, located in areas suitable for export production, were