

seems to think that works advocated by the second variety of critic can be admitted to the museum. For many years, curators

have unthinkingly applied politicized definitions of the masterpiece, he suggests. Now it is time to apply them thoughtfully.

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## OTHER NATIONS

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### *Debt and Democracy*

"Democracy and Economic Crisis: The Latin American Experience" by Karen L. Remmer, in *World Politics* (April 1990), 17 Ivy Lane, Princeton, N.J. 08544.

Nobody ever seems to say anything about Latin America's new democracies without attaching warning words like "fragile," "fledgling," or "struggling." The assumption among academics and journalists appears to be that the newly elected leaders of Brazil, Chile, and other nations will find it much harder to deal with economic adversity, especially the debt crisis, than did their authoritarian predecessors. Ultimately, the theory goes, the need to placate various constituencies will handicap elected leaders to such an extent that democracy itself may fail.

All of this strikes Remmer, a political scientist at the University of New Mexico, as very curious. Since the debt crisis began in 1982, she notes, not a single South American democracy has fallen, but six authoritarian regimes (notably, in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) have. The story is much the same in Central America and the Caribbean. "It might be more appropriate to emphasize the fragility of 'old' authoritarianism rather than the weakness of 'new' democracy," Remmer says.

Going one step farther, she set out to compare the economic performance of 10 Latin nations between 1982 and 1988. Two (Colombia and Venezuela) were "old" de-

mocracies; Chile and Paraguay were authoritarian during the whole period; six others underwent a transition to democracy. Using such gauges as unemployment, real wages, and inflation, she found no statistically significant differences between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Overall, however, the two "old" democracies were the best performers. They did not get as deeply into debt in the first place as did their authoritarian counterparts.

People who are surprised by the success of the Latin democracies, Remmer says, forget several things. Since 1982, democrats and dictators alike have been forced to rely on aid from organizations like the World Bank, which has limited their freedom of choice. But there are also many varieties of democracy, from Peruvian populism to Ecuadorian conservatism, which produce different approaches to economics—and different results. And finally, few popularly-elected leaders in Latin America feel free—or obliged—to buy popularity. Remmer says that they "are aware that the rise and fall of democracy in Latin America have corresponded less to the whims of the voting majority than to the concerted opposition of business and military elites."

### *A Beur's-Eye View of France*

"The 'Beurs,' Children of North-African Immigrants in France: The Issue of Integration" by Azouz Begag, in *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Spring 1990), Western Wash. Univ., Bellingham, Wash. 98225.

Two centuries after the Revolution, France is facing a challenge that the partisans of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* could hardly have imagined: the integration of some three million people of North Afri-

can extraction into French society.

Until the 1980s, France was able to maintain the fiction that the Tunisian, Moroccan, and Algerian immigrants who began arriving during the 1950s were only