

REFORM, TRADE, AND INSURRECTION IN THE SPANISH EMPIRE

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- SPAIN AND THE LOSS OF AMERICA*. By TIMOTHY E. ANNA. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. Pp. 343. \$26.50.)
- THE POLITICS OF A COLONIAL CAREER: JOSE BAQUIJANO AND THE AUDIENCIA OF LIMA*. By MARK A. BURKHOLDER. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980. Pp. 184. \$20.00.)
- INSURRECTION OR LOYALTY: THE BREAKDOWN OF THE SPANISH AMERICAN EMPIRE*. By JORGE DOMINGUEZ. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980. Pp. 307. \$29.50.)
- ATLANTIC EMPIRES: THE NETWORK OF TRADE AND REVOLUTION, 1713–1826*. By PEGGY K. LISS. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983. Pp. 348. \$29.95.)
- EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY REFORMS IN THE CARIBBEAN: MIGUEL DE MUESAS, GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO, 1769–76*. By ALTAGRACIA ORTIZ. (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983. Pp. 258. \$27.50.)
- GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY IN CENTRAL AMERICA, 1680–1840*. By MILES L. WORTMAN. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Pp. 374. \$27.50.)

During the past fifteen years, the reorganization of the Spanish empire by the Bourbon monarchy and the subsequent revolt of Spain's American colonies in the early nineteenth century have attracted substantial interest among historians. Many recent works have focused on the "Bourbon Reforms" that followed the accession of King Charles III in 1759, stressing in particular the military and administrative changes implemented in response to British successes in the Seven Years' War.¹ Other scholars, however, have placed greater emphasis on the international economic context of the Bourbon Reforms and Latin American revolts, often in an effort to explain the region's continued economic difficulties after independence.² Still others have sought to elucidate the complicated series of events leading to the colonial revolts.³ The books

under review here make contributions to each of these lines of inquiry. Taken together, these new works refine, rather than revolutionize, our understanding of the Bourbon Reforms and Latin American independence, either by filling gaps in the existing literature or by underscoring the connection between the British industrial revolution and the political changes that swept Latin America during the first third of the nineteenth century.

Continuing the emphasis on political and military change after 1763, Altagracia Ortiz and Mark Burkholder provide useful illustrations of trends already identified in previous research. In *Eighteenth-Century Reforms in the Caribbean*, Ortiz concentrates on the administration of Miguel de Mueas, governor of Puerto Rico between 1769 and 1776, although her introductory chapters survey the history of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean during the centuries preceding the reign of Charles III. Mueas's projects spanned the predictable agenda of Bourbon reformers; he supervised improvements in the island's fortifications, attempted to curtail contraband, chastised long-entrenched officials for corruption and inattention to duty, fretted over delays in the arrival of defense subsidies from New Spain, and tried to stimulate the local economy. Little about his intentions or his difficulties will surprise students of the Spanish empire in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, Ortiz offers fresh detail on a portion of the empire that has been relatively neglected by recent scholarship.

The Politics of a Colonial Career is Mark Burkholder's fascinating study of José Baquíjano, longtime *pretendiente* and eventual native-son appointee to the Audiencia of Lima. It skillfully illustrates the frustrations of ambitious creoles in the late colonial period. Born in 1751 of a prosperous *gachupín* (Spanish) father and an aristocratic creole mother, the young Baquíjano's aspirations were encouraged by the remarkable success of native sons in attaining positions on the Lima court, a tendency well documented in earlier publications by Burkholder and other historians.⁴ As Baquíjano reached adulthood, however, the Bourbon monarchy moved to staff American *audiencias* with larger numbers of *peninsulares*. Burkholder paints an essentially unflattering portrait of Baquíjano, who was nearly obsessive in his pursuit of an *audiencia* post. Even his participation in the Lima Society of Friends of the Country and his writing for the *Mercurio Peruano*, which reflected Baquíjano's genuine intellectual interests, were carefully calculated to advance his career prospects.

While hardly denying the importance of the post-1763 reforms, Peggy Liss's important new book, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713–1826*, embraces a much broader chronological and topical scope. The most ambitious of the works presently under review, *Atlantic Empires* surveys the political, economic, and intellectual

history of the British, Spanish, and Portuguese empires from the Peace of Utrecht through the Latin American wars for independence. A brief review can touch only a few aspects of this richly detailed synthesis. Although Liss covers much ground that is familiar to specialists in colonial Latin America, one finishes reading *Atlantic Empires* with a sense that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Most important of the author's contributions is her emphasis on the strong ideological and entrepreneurial links among participants in the Atlantic trading world, ties that transcended political boundaries and mercantilist regulations. During the period following the Peace of Utrecht to the Pan American conference of 1826, a transnational network of entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and patriots (and many leading figures throughout the Atlantic world easily fit into more than one of these categories) worked simultaneously for their own and their homelands' economic and political betterment, seeing "a felicitous juncture between the social advantages of national development and their own profits and prestige" (p. 241). Regardless of nationality, such individuals shared a common vision of the possibility of human progress.

Like Geoffrey Walker's recent study of Spanish trade in the eighteenth century, *Atlantic Empires* stresses the importance of international political and economic events during the half-century preceding the Seven Years' War. In particular, the conflict that erupted between England and Spain in 1739 triggered dramatic changes in commercial relations between the Spanish and British empires. By ending the annual fleets to South America, Admiral Edward Vernon's capture of Puerto Bello in 1739 opened the continent's markets to British contraband and to an expanding legal trade from Spain, while it also prompted the Spanish crown to promote the growth of South American centers other than Lima.

These events coincided with, and to some extent facilitated, the rapid growth of British industrial output and the equally impressive development of Britain's North American colonies. According to Liss, the brief period of peace from 1748 to 1756 brought a particularly notable expansion of British and British North American trade with Latin America. As a result, more Anglo-Americans traded directly with Spanish territories, rather than through intermediaries in the British West Indies. Because such illegal channels supplied essential commodities to Spain's colonies, local officials had little choice but to condone the trade. Meanwhile, Latin American exports grew steadily during the second half of the eighteenth century, reaching boom proportions by the 1790s.

Trade with Spain and its colonies provided a major stimulus for the development of Anglo-American shipping and the remarkable growth of the middle colonies. The economic expansion of the emerging nation to the north clearly threatened the continuation of Latin American

growth. As early as the 1760s, for example, North American flour was supplanting that of New Spain in the Cuban market. After 1783 the United States competed actively with Britain and France for commercial advantage in Latin America. Liss observes that this international rivalry for access to the region's trade contributed to the maintenance of Spanish hegemony in the hemisphere because each of the contending nations preferred to allow the colonies to remain Spanish rather than see them fall to a commercial rival. Yet by the late 1790s, many Latin American leaders had begun to lose their earlier faith that their buoyant hopes for economic progress could be fulfilled by remaining subject to Spain.

Following the independence of Latin America, Great Britain quickly cemented its economic hegemony in the region, to some extent edging out the trade of the United States. In a segment sure to provoke spirited comment from *dependistas*, Liss expresses substantial sympathy for the Latin American elites who watched and sometimes abetted this growing economic dependence. Such leaders were neither unsophisticated dupes nor treasonous *vendepatrias*, as they are sometimes depicted. Those who cooperated with the penetration of foreign capital belonged to multinational entrepreneurial groups, linked by kinship, business association, or ideological affinity with their counterparts elsewhere in the Atlantic world. Many saw some dangers inherent in British economic advance and in the rapid development and territorial expansion of the United States, but they nonetheless clung to their idealistic hopes for the progress of their homelands.

Miles Wortman's *Government and Society in Central America, 1680–1840*, although based on new archival research, for the most part confirms the findings of other scholars.⁵ Like Liss, Wortman concludes that the brief interval of international peace following the War of Jenkins' Ear was a crucial turning point. Prior to 1748, most Central American indigo was shipped overland to Veracruz and then to Europe. After midcentury, however, the growing British demand for dyestuffs altered this pattern; indigo shipments now proceeded directly to Europe from ports on the Bay of Honduras. A concurrent expansion in mining and regional trade further quickened the pace of economic activity in Central America. Rising tax revenues financed the enlargement of the governmental bureaucracy that had been implemented by the reforming monarchy after 1763. Consequently, eighteenth-century Central America attained a degree of political and economic unity that stood in sharp contrast to the earlier colonial period and to the years after independence. Not surprisingly, the economic changes of the late colonial period had profound effects on the Indian communities of Central America. The boom in commercial agriculture heightened pressures on village lands. Much later than in New Spain, Indians were at this time required to pay tribute in coin rather than in kind. Meanwhile, new sources of tax revenues

diminished the relative importance of Indian tribute in financing government.

Central America's economic growth deteriorated markedly during the final three decades of colonial rule. War with Britain in 1798 interrupted the flow of indigo to its most profitable market. Locusts then damaged crops in 1802 and 1803, preventing Central America from regaining its former share of the trade during the short period of peace in Europe in those years. Decline in quality standards and competition from Caracas and India further undercut Central American indigo. Meanwhile, cattle producers in Nicaragua and modest miners in Honduras lacked sufficient capital to sustain operations at eighteenth-century levels.

The most powerful merchants of Guatemala City, who owed their positions to the late colonial expansion of international and domestic trade, weathered these difficulties with relative ease. The Aycinena family and other merchant clans seized lands belonging to impoverished indigo farmers to whom they had extended credit. The merchants also continued to profit from the importation of foreign textiles; after 1793 local manufacturers were deprived of the *repartimiento* as a means of recruiting cheap labor and consequently could not compete with foreign textiles. Like Liss, Wortman points out the international ties of these merchants, whose close associations with counterparts in Jamaica, Boston, and Philadelphia undermined their loyalty to the Spanish empire. Even before the proclamation of political independence, the Guatemalan merchants won *de facto* economic independence from Spain. In 1817 King Ferdinand absolved the Aycinenas and other leading merchants of all violations of tax and trade regulations; the following year, a compliant captain-general further eased trade restrictions. Shortly thereafter the city's merchant-dominated *cabildo* triumphantly proclaimed that "absolute liberty of commerce no longer is a problem as in earlier times" (p. 217).

A brief expansion in indigo production followed independence from Spain in 1821, but it lasted less than a decade. When the boom collapsed, long-smoldering resentment against the domination of Guatemala City contributed to the region's political fragmentation. Wortman claims that Central America then reverted in part to the "Hapsburg" institutions and economic self-sufficiency that had preceded the more centralized polity and economy of the Bourbon era. By 1850 the region's foreign trade patterns closely resembled those prevailing before the major changes of the eighteenth century. Maritime trade gravitated more toward the Pacific Coast, and the economic hegemony of Guatemala City crumbled.

Eighteenth-century economic changes also figure prominently in Jorge Domínguez's recent study of the independence period in New

Spain, Venezuela, Chile, and Cuba, *Insurrection or Loyalty: The Breakdown of the Spanish American Empire*. Drawing almost exclusively on secondary sources, Domínguez seeks to explain why Cuba remained loyal when other colonies revolted in the early nineteenth century. Following the British seizure of Havana in 1762, Cuban sugar production rose dramatically, while subsidies from New Spain, which were intended to finance fortifications, also stimulated the economy. The island's strategic importance prompted local officials to yield to the emerging planter elite, who demanded greater freedom of trade and in particular an end to restrictions on the importation of slaves. Quite simply, concludes Domínguez, elites in Cuba remained loyal to Spain because representatives of the imperial government allowed them to "nationalize decision-making."

Elites elsewhere met frustration when they voiced their own demands, which varied from colony to colony. Venezuelans were extremely sensitive to Spanish inflexibility on the issue of freedom of trade. Because cocoa plants do not bear fruit until about five years after planting, Venezuelan planters were unable to respond quickly to changes in international prices. They therefore needed greater liberty to find markets for their produce. Creoles in Venezuela also opposed royal decrees permitting blacks and mulattoes to purchase certificates "proving" purity of blood, which opened channels of upward mobility for these groups. Chileans wanted readjustment of the economic balance of power with Peru, while elites in New Spain desired greater opportunities for jobs that were being increasingly awarded to peninsulares, as well as more local control over economic policy.

Reviewers have faulted Domínguez for "pigeon-holing" information in his effort to test the importance of such variables as social mobilization, ethnic rivalries, and political and economic "modernization" in determining the behavior of the four colonies under study.⁶ Historians Peggy Liss and Timothy Anna have also criticized his implicit search for a single hypothesis to explain the history of what he himself portrays as four distinct colonies. Therefore, they have been disappointed with the rather meager common denominator that Domínguez was able to find, his conclusion that "political bargaining between government and elites shaped elite decisions to revolt or remain loyal" (p. 254). The chief value of Domínguez's study lies in its compact, if not novel, presentation of the different circumstances facing each of the four colonies under review during the opening two decades of the nineteenth century.

Timothy Anna has also chided Domínguez and other writers on Latin American independence for their failure to recognize the strength of imperial constraints that hampered Spanish officials in their efforts to deal with the insurgents. Anna has produced a companion volume to his earlier works on the independence of Mexico and Peru, *Spain and the Loss of America*, a work that provides a lucid and solidly researched account of

Spanish political history during the two decades following the Napoleonic invasion. Anna stresses that throughout these troubled years, Spanish policymakers, liberals and absolutists alike, were often preoccupied with questions other than the "pacification" of America. Their inability to deal successfully with colonial concerns can also be attributed to the rapid turnover in persons responsible for American affairs. This confusion permitted the merchants of Cádiz to assert a decisive influence on policy formation, especially after the resistance government retreated there in early 1810. Thereafter, the Andalusian bourgeoisie worked persistently and effectively to stifle any concession to American demands for free trade.

According to Anna, the petitions put forward by creole elites might have formed the basis for a political settlement had the succession of Spanish governments between 1808 and 1823 been willing or able to compromise. Creoles generally wanted freedom of international trade, help in stimulating their economies, equality of opportunity with peninsulares, and equitable representation in the Cortes. Most also sought some form of local autonomy, or what Domínguez might term the "nationalization of decision-making." Anna believes that even as late as 1818, despite the notable successes of insurgent movements in many colonies, a compromise solution might still have been reached. Several key policymakers, including members of the Council of the Indies and the Ministry of State, had accepted the necessity of some form of trade liberalization; however, other advisors feared that any such concessions would simply hasten the empire's dissolution.

In November of 1817, Minister of State José Pizarro, long a proponent of conciliation rather than military repression, was entrusted with full responsibility for advising on American affairs. Even though he had already voiced his belief that independence could not be prevented, Pizarro nonetheless formulated a far-reaching plan for pacification, in Anna's view "the most imaginative approach taken by this otherwise stultified and hidebound regime" (p. 190). He suggested military reconquest only for Buenos Aires, which if successful, might thwart insurgent efforts in Chile, Peru, and Upper Peru. Pizarro's proposals also included opening all loyal colonies to foreign trade and immigration, together with a general amnesty for Spanish dissidents then living in exile. He further suggested that even if independence were inevitable, Spain might follow the example of Great Britain and forge valuable commercial ties with the former colonies.

Pizarro's advice regarding amnesty for dissidents and immediate trade concessions doomed any possibility that King Ferdinand's notoriously inflexible *camarilla* of close advisors would give serious attention to his plan. His ouster in September 1818 effectively ended all hopes for a negotiated settlement. King Ferdinand promptly abandoned all but mili-

tary solutions to the American crisis. Nor did the liberals' return to power in 1820 improve the chances that an accord might still be reached. Dependent as before on the merchant bourgeoisie of Andalusia, the liberals remained unwilling to consider any liberalization of trade.

Along with Michael Costeloe's recent articles,⁷ Anna's analysis suggests that whatever the multiplicity of concerns that divided colonies from mother country by the second decade of the nineteenth century, the question of trade played a paramount role in foreclosing any potential solution. Yet a thoughtful consideration of the eighteenth-century economic changes detailed by Liss, Wortman, Domínguez, and other recent authors points to the conclusion that a mutually acceptable settlement could not have been achieved. In a very real sense, the reactionaries who surrounded King Ferdinand were right in asserting that any concessions to free trade would merely bind the colonies more closely to the industrial might of Great Britain. Nor could Spain hope to retain advantageous economic ties with a politically independent Latin America. Spain lacked the infrastructure required to establish with her former colonies the kind of profitable relationship that Great Britain maintained with the United States after 1783. The political independence of Latin America, then, gave formal ratification to an economic transformation that had been under way for at least a century.

NOTES

1. A representative, but by no means exhaustive, sample of recent work emphasizing post-1763 reforms includes Nancy Farriss, *Crown and Clergy in Bourbon Mexico: The Crisis of Ecclesiastical Privilege* (London, 1968); David Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763–1810* (Cambridge, 1971); Christon I. Archer, *The Army in Bourbon Mexico* (Albuquerque, 1977); Leon G. Campbell, *The Military and Society in Colonial Peru, 1750–1810* (Philadelphia, 1978); Allan J. Keuthe, *Military Reform and Society in New Granada, 1773–1808* (Gainesville, 1978); and Jacques Barbier, *Reform and Politics in Bourbon Chile, 1755–1796* (Ottawa, 1980).
2. See, for example, Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America: Essays on Economic Dependence in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1970); Jonathan C. Brown, *A Socioeconomic History of Argentina, 1776–1860* (London, 1979); Brian R. Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750–1821* (Cambridge, 1971); and Geoffrey J. Walker, *Spanish Politics and Imperial Trade, 1700–1789* (Bloomington, 1979).
3. Timothy Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City* (Lincoln, 1978), and *The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru* (Lincoln, 1979).
4. Mark Burkholder and D. S. Chandler, *From Impotence to Authority: The Spanish Crown and the American Audiencias* (Columbia, Mo., 1977); Leon G. Campbell, "A Colonial Establishment: Creole Domination of the Audiencia of Lima in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52 (1972): 1–25.
5. See, for example, Murdo J. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520–1720* (Berkeley, 1973); Ralph Lee Woodward, *Central America, A Nation Divided* (New York, 1976); Mario Rodríguez, *The Cádiz Experiment in Central America, 1808–1826* (Berkeley, 1978); Ralph Lee Woodward, "Economic and Social Origins of the Guatemalan Political Parties (1773–1823)," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 45 (1965): 544–66; and Robert S. Smith, "Indigo Production and Trade in Colonial Guatemala," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 39 (1959): 182–211.

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6. Review by Timothy E. Anna, *The Americas* 39 (1982): 141–43; review by Richard Graham, *American Political Science Review* 76 (1982): 163–64; and review by Peggy Liss, *American Historical Review* 86 (1981): 1177–78. For a generally favorable evaluation of the Domínguez study, see review by Hugh Hamill, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61 (1981): 726–27.
7. Michael P. Costeloe, “Spain and the Latin American Wars for Independence: The Free Trade Controversy, 1810–1820,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61 (May 1981): 209–34; and “Spain and the Spanish American Wars for Independence: The *Comisión de Reemplazos*, 1811–1820,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 13 (Nov. 1981): 223–37.