

BOLIVIAN HISTORY

LA VIDA COTIDIANA EN LA PAZ DURANTE LA GUERRA DE LA INDEPENDENCIA, 1800–1825. By ALBERTO CRESPO R., RENÉ ARZE AGUIRRE, FLORENCIA B. DE ROMERO, and MARY MONEY. (La Paz: Edit. Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, 1975. Pp. 278.)

DAMASO DE URIBURU, A MINING ENTREPRENEUR IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOLIVIA. By WILLIAM LOFSTROM. (Buffalo, New York: State University of New York at Buffalo, Council on International Studies, Special Studies No. 35, 1975. Pp. 66.)

The authors of these two books and this reviewer, among others, participated in 1976 in a unique colloquium in La Paz sponsored by USIS. The purpose was to bring together in an academic atmosphere U.S. and Bolivian historians who had published recognized books or monographs about Bolivian history. It was a very useful experience. Alberto Crespo, main author of the *Vida Cotidiana* and originator of the idea of this colloquium, is the Librarian of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz, Bolivia's largest university. He also holds the chair of Professor of History. He is one of the first professional historians in Bolivia and started the first serious program there to train professional historians, an enterprise that already has brought many results, including this book done in cooperation with his students.

Lofstrom previously published (in offset) his M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation through Cornell University; both deal with Bolivia. His thesis sketches the powerful pressure group known as the *Asociación de Industriales Mineros de Bolivia* of the early twentieth century. His dissertation deals with the presidency of Marshal Sucre, Bolivia's first president (1825–28). This newest study, also in offset, draws on his two previous subjects: mining and the Sucre period. Lofstrom's work is always first-rate research. Now with the U.S. embassy in Lima, he has had extensive experience in the Andean countries, especially Bolivia. He lived a considerable time in Sucre next to the Bolivian archives, he married a local lady, and his children were born in Sucre. Bolivian scholars consider this dashing Anglo-Saxon gentleman as one of them, and rightfully so.

The works, though different in subject, style, and presentation, have two things in common. They cover contiguous periods of time and they do not deal with heroic subjects: leaders, wars, revolutions. The Crespo et al. book describes the everyday aspects of colonial life in La Paz. The Lofstrom monograph is built around a minor business figure, Damaso de Uruburu, who would not even have made a footnote in Bolivian history had not the author used him to sketch the incipient mining policy and problems of the newly created Bolivia. It is not a biography, as even Lofstrom failed to find much personal data about this Argentine gentleman of Basque ancestry. He was born in Salta, a town in northern Argentina that was always important in Upper Peruvian (later Bolivia) history. He apparently was middle-aged when he came to Bolivia, several months before

its independence day of 6 August 1825, to speculate in mining as a representative of a Buenos Aires concern. Lofstrom's study starts in 1825 and Crespo's book ends in 1825, beginning in 1800, nine years before the officially claimed date for Upper Peru's revolution. Naturally both studies do touch upon well known political events and leaders such as Bolívar, Sucre, Murillo (who raised the initial rebellion in La Paz), but just enough to enhance the clarity of the central theme of the books.

Both works are thoroughly documented: Lofstrom's nearly all from archival material of the Bolivian National Archive in Sucre; and the other, maybe a bit less in number but more diversified, mostly from local archival material in La Paz, such as the cathedral and archdiocesan archives, other church depositories, and documents from the university library. The Bolivian National Archive and the National Library were not used in the Crespo book. It should be mentioned that the National Archive in Sucre by its content, organization, direction, and service is one of the best, if not the best, in Latin America. The use of local archives in Bolivia presents the usual, maybe even more severe, problems. Therefore, the La Paz book is commendable for that aspect alone. It is also a presentable book; good printing, paper, cover, and some illustrations. The excellent Lofstrom monograph is presented in a bad quality offset, but I do not doubt that soon it will be translated into Spanish and published in an acceptable book form in Bolivia. This reinforces my belief that it is more pleasant, with more editorial flexibility and more readership, to publish in Latin America as a Latin Americanist than in the United States, although it might be less prestigious for academic advancement.

The research for the La Paz book was done under the supervision of Crespo by René Arze Aguirre, Florencia Ballivián de Romero, and Mary Money. This is the first such venture in Bolivia. The final products were fused or editorialized into one book without identifying the authorship of the chapters or sections (I assume that Crespo did the editing). It is good research, with a clear presentation and fine, readable style. I am sure that the research in the local archives was not exhaustive but quite adequate.

The study deals with the city of La Paz; its physical aspects; the inhabitants; living quarters; political officials and offices; municipal services including the royal mail service; fun and leisure; economy and taxes; the written and also the printed word; the law; and finally, the Church during this period, meaning its attitude toward the War of Independence. Each of these topics brings interesting material, to be sure some known already to colonial specialists, with some additional novel and interesting information. For example, there is the sketch of the illegal gambling activities, apparently a favorite pastime of all classes. There were occasional raids to satisfy the law. The authors describe one in colorful terms, on a respectable private house on the main square, where they caught a host of high officials including influential priests. Protestations of rank were useless; they were arrested and heavily fined. The Spanish empire was proud of this equality before the law! In another chapter we are told of the fines and punishments for women lawbreakers. Here the heavy hand of the law was truly unequal. Punishment for women was most benevolent even in felonious cases—

service in nunneries or hospitals rather than jails or the garrote. A specific first-degree murder case is cited; the woman was sentenced to four years of hard service in a hospital. It was appealed to the Audiencia in Chuquisaca and there the sentence was raised to ten years. It was argued that if the murderer had been a man he would have been executed. Equality before the law certainly did not apply to the sexes and man was severely discriminated against!

There are some missing matters. Sexual and other sensitive moral behavior is not discussed, whether because of remaining taboos or the lack of documentation. As a matter of fact, the whole subject of moral attitudes and behavior is omitted, and I would like to have seen a description. There is another curious absence. La Paz is one of the highest cities in the world; the highest world capital. Altitude sickness is a common occurrence for visitors to the city and is a topic of everyday conversation and debate. Nothing is said here about it. After all, La Paz was an important intermediate point between Lima and Buenos Aires, both at sea level. To be sure, some people several hundred years ago must have been afflicted by the altitude when coming from lower levels; this certainly has not changed with time. Professor Crespo reported to me that it is not discussed because there was no information in the documents. He, too, is puzzled.

Lofstrom's monograph is set in Potosí. This is an even higher city than La Paz, probably the highest city in the world; again, no mention of the altitude. But there is a lot about mining, especially silver. Once the silver from Potosí had been the Spanish empire's main income; but by 1825, abandoned or near-abandoned mines of all types, not only silver, were everywhere. Newly independent Bolivia was determined to set up a dynamic mining policy. Bolívar and Sucre were basically dedicated to free enterprise; they wanted foreign investment but with careful supervision. Lofstrom writes that the mining law "was carefully conceived and executed but unfortunately never achieved the effects desired by mine owners and government officials alike." The English were the most active in recently independent Latin America, including Bolivia, but the panic of 1825 put an end to most of their speculative ventures. Other smaller concerns or speculators, mostly from South America, showed keen interest in Bolivia; Uriburu represented one of those from Buenos Aires that were set on acquiring abandoned silver mines.

Damaso de Uriburu arrived in Potosí in May 1825. With energy and great zest, he made rapid progress in the face of many obstacles, including the new government policy drafted with the aid of Bolívar and Sucre and the sharp competition from other speculators. The abandoned or near-standstill mines became the target of many rapacious gamblers as well as more serious business people. Uriburu acted with a certain ruthless efficiency and apparent experience, with swift results to his employers and probably to himself. After a time and with a good network of contacts, including Bolívar himself, he expanded from the role of mine speculator to that of merchant. This was basically to avoid government control over silver exports, which had become strict. Uriburu was suspected of illegal exports and of hoarding silver; he decided to turn profits into goods to avoid tracing and taxes. He had his hands in cattle, mules, imports

of European goods, and export of bark from which quinine was extracted. In some of these ventures he was moderately successful and in others he lost heavily. Lofstrom ends the story in December 1826.

The Uriburu transactions for the short period are certainly complex, but Lofstrom untangles them and describes them clearly. I think he gives the best picture to date of the start of mining and commerce and their problems, and of Bolivia in its first year as a republic. Using Uriburu as the central theme is most welcome.

The monograph does have its shortcomings, due mainly to the lack of information that, perhaps, a trip to Salta or Buenos Aires for further research might have provided. The ending is too abrupt—what happened after 1826? I am also mystified about who were Uriburu's bosses—did the speculating concern have a name? I also cannot seem to separate his private business from that of the "group of porteño capitalists." Furthermore, was he their representative, their employee with a fixed salary and/or a commission, or a stockholder or shareholder?

It is a valuable monograph and it proves the richness of the Bolivian National Archive and the National Library as the La Paz book demonstrates the wealth of local archives. At the same time the two works do reflect some slight differences often noted between American and Latin American researchers. Crespo and his associates present us with a provocative, philosophical introduction. It focuses on the problem of local versus world history and, in the case of Bolivia, regional versus national history. Their style is better; it is better literature. Lofstrom's introduction is shorter, more technical, and has some clear and precise conclusions. It is unadorned, plain, and citations are like that of a dissertation.

A recent trip to Bolivia convinced me that excellent history is being written there today and that Bolivians have accepted with sincerity, not condescension, foreign research about Bolivia. The two works are testimony to this.

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