

*Historia de la rebelión popular de 1814.* By JUAN USLAR PIETRI. Caracas, 1962. Ediciones Edime. Notes. Bibliography. Appendix. Pp. 225. Paper.

The Venezuelan *rebelión popular* in 1814, in which more blood was spilled than in the French Revolution (p. 101), cannot be interpreted as a rebellion in favor of the royalists. The *pueblo venezolano* were not capable of being champions of the king. Those who inculcated love of the king and authority of the monarch were the clergy. In places like the llanos or distant *campos* the voice of the clergy was seldom heard and llaneros had only the vaguest if any notion of Christianity. The rebellious hordes of Boves who plundered and destroyed property, terrorized and killed whites, bloodied altars and committed sacrilege in churches were not able to be royalists nor to represent order and religion. They embraced the royalist banner as a pretext to satisfy their hatred of class. So the patriots had two wars to fight: one against the king and the other against the *negraje*.

Uslar Pietri begins his study by analyzing the social situation in Venezuela in 1811. He says there were four divisions of society. They were: (1) Spanish landowners, small merchants, Spanish and criollo employees in the different administrative branches—this small group wanted to maintain the colonial system in which it had some importance; (2) great landowners and businessmen linked with the national production—this small group wanted independence without war but with submissive slaves; (3) rebellious young men of the noble and middle class like Bolívar and Ribas who were impregnated with the philosophy of the French Revolution; and (4) el pueblo or el *negraje* which included free and slave, Negro, Indian, and mestizo.

This fourth group was by far the largest, including 95% of the *castas*. Submerged in ignorance and spiritual isolation, it had no notion of what the patria, the family, or religion might be. It was "a group that in theory is human but in practice is considered as animal or as midway between man and beast" (p. 17).

The author points out that the *Sociedad Patriótica* contributed greatly to the destruction of the colonial system and to the downfall of the Second Republic when it proposed dissipating the ignorance of the people and elevating their ideas to the dignity of free men. The streets were filled with slaves and men of color who heard speakers in the club ask for Rousseauan rights for slaves.

Boves was not the cause of the popular rebellion. He was the leader for whom the masses, surfeited with hate, were waiting. He led them in exterminating the possessors of all the wealth of Venezuela. Their

systematic destruction frightened the royalists. The king sent Morillo to pacify the royalists, not to conquer the patriots.

When Boves held Caracas he carried into effect his theory of social equality, yet he was uneasy, and not because the social pyramid was inverted. He saw that with peace would come a return of royal authority. Only in conflict could he maintain his supremacy, so he returned to the battlefield, and was killed at Urica.

When Morillo arrived with his 11,000 troops—all white—the real fight for independence began. Morillo's officers made fun of the ragged llaneros, treated them as inferior humans, forgetting that it was they and not Spaniards in brilliant uniforms who had destroyed the republic of Bolívar. The troops of Boves little by little joined the patriots and fought against the Spaniards.

One cannot read this study of Uslar Pietri without being profoundly disturbed. What is its lesson for the present?

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*Peru.* By R. J. OWENS. London, 1963. Oxford University Press. Royal Institute of International Affairs. Notes. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 195.

The small but presentable books on Latin American countries written under the sponsorship of the Royal Institute of International Affairs are unquestionably useful. Naturally some are better than others and the reviews in the *HAHR* are of varied enthusiasm. For example, the Mexico tome by Cline has sparked a powerful review by Simpson (*HAHR*, May, 1963). The Cline book and the Simpson review are exciting. I am afraid that the Peru tome cannot excite the same response. The author is a Lecturer in the English Department at the University of the West Indies. From 1950 to 1956 Dr. Owens taught in Lima at Markham College and St. Paul's College.

One can find only a minor number of factual errors, which is to the credit of the author. Some interpretations are controversial and APRA enthusiasts might not like the statement, "The old role of APRA . . . has been taken over by a new movement, called Acción Popular and led by Fernando Belaunde Terry . . ." The historical part is far too sketchy, which leads to dangerous oversimplification. One wonders if a good Latin American history textbook is not a better source for acquaintance. As in many of the other volumes the economic part—development, finance, production, trade, investment, communications—is heavy with statistics. We all know the shortcomings of statistics when dealing with Latin America. Furthermore,