

The most interesting chapters in the book are those which describe the relations between the town governments and the civil service, with its *corps d'élite* of intendants. It is a story of frustration, of local resistance—not always passive—to centralized reform, and above all of governmental penury. Most *cabildos* could not govern effectively because their *propios* were inadequate, and because they lacked power to raise local taxes. On the other hand, they would not, because, being self-perpetuating oligarchies of place-owners, they could not be held to account. The crown would not authorize them to raise taxes, because it did not trust them. Yet it could not reform them, because it had not the money to compensate their members for the loss of their proprietary places. “Judged by the canons of nineteenth-century liberalism and democracy,” Moore concludes, “the *cabildo* was woefully lacking” (p. 243). No doubt; but why should it be judged by those canons? As an institution, it was representative of its time; and on the whole it did its job. In the later eighteenth century, viceroys and intendants succeeded in prodding many *cabildos* into constructive activity. Many of the eighteenth-century towns of the Indies were architecturally splendid, well laid out, and (if Humboldt is to be believed) reasonably well run. Moore does not explain these accomplishments.

His book contains a great deal of miscellaneous detail about eighteenth-century *cabildos*, much of it interesting and new. There are a number of inaccuracies, especially in the translations of technical or legal terms, and a sprinkling of typographical errors. It is misleading to translate *examinadores de oficios* as “examiners of officials,” *villas de órdenes militares* as “towns under military orders” (p. 12). A more general and more serious criticism is that the political constitutions and the legal rights of town councils are here studied in isolation from the general life of the towns and their citizens. The privileges of regidores have little meaning unless we know, in some detail, what kinds of citizens became regidores. For better understanding of the life of the Indies we need more studies not merely of town governments, but of towns.

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*La Intendencia en España y en América.* By GISELA MORAZZANI DE PÉREZ ENCISO. Caracas, 1966. Universidad Central de Venezuela. Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humanístico. Notes. Appendix. Bibliography. Indices. Pp. 593. Paper.

The basic character of this work is legalistic; that is, Morazanni is

primarily concerned with the legal expressions given to the initiation, formulation, and continuous growth of the intendancy system. After briefly considering the origins of the system in France and in Spain, she follows the method of examining the developing nature of the system as revealed by successive legal enactments. She does not attempt to handle all aspects of the system in one continuous exegesis, but instead uses the organizational device of function, breaking her study into divisions which are concerned with such things as the nature of the intendant's job, the method of administration, the meaning of the superintendancy, the attributions of the intendant, and the responsibilities of the intendant.

The prologue does not exactly prepare the reader for a work of the nature described above. Instead it suggests that the author will concern herself with explaining why the system was applied differently in Spain and in the diverse parts of the Empire. She asserts that this is a necessary and realistic task if one is to understand why the system was not as consistent and monolithic as seems generally to have been assumed. However, she explicitly does not concern herself with analyses or descriptions of these several areas, or even of the one—Venezuela—which seems to be her principal focus. As a consequence, the reader feels that he is being told only part of a story or is being given only half of an equation.

This is not meant to suggest that the work lacks merit. Most notably it represents a lengthy and painstaking job of compiling, digesting, assorting, and presenting an impressively vast amount of documentary material, overwhelmingly legal in nature, which, when put together, describes the intendancy system in a dynamic, not a static situation. The work has clearly required great patience and dedication.

The result is an institutional study which commends itself to any student of the Spanish Empire. Its particular use will lie in its utility as a reference for virtually all legislation bearing on the intendancy system. This is especially true when one considers that, of the nearly 600 pages in the book, only 221 are used for prologue, introduction, and text. Most of the remaining hundreds of pages consist of a documentary appendix, made up principally of royal cédulas and instructions of clear importance in the evolution of the system, extending in time from 1689 to 1812. Virtually every colonialist will find this work of value.

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