PROFESSIONAL NOTES

LATIN AMERICAN AND RELATED SESSIONS AT THE 1968 AHA MEETINGS

The following is a summary of the Latin American and related sessions at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association at the Statler Hilton Hotel, December 28-30, 1968, in New York.

At the Conference on Latin American History luncheon meeting on December 28, 1968, Stanley R. Ross, Chairman (University of Texas) announced the winners of Conference prizes. The Bolton Prize was awarded to James W. Wilkie, of the University of California at Los Angeles, for *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change since 1910* (Berkeley, 1967). The winner of the Robertson Prize was William D. Raat, of Moorhead State College, for "Leopoldo Zea and Mexican Positivism: A Reappraisal," in *HAHR* (February 1968). Richard E. Greenleaf, of the University of the Americas, won the Conference on Latin American History Prize for "The Obraje in the Late Mexican Colony," in *The Americas* (January 1967).

Charles C. Griffin, of Vassar College, addressed the luncheon meeting on "Latin American History in the United States, a Retrospective View." It was in the interwar period, he pointed out, that Latin American history came of age as a profession in the United States. College teaching of the subject was widespread; the *Hispanic American Historical Review* was founded; the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* was inaugurated; and the Hispanic Foundation was established in the Library of Congress. But this period was also one of notable professional weaknesses—the concentration of study on Spain and Mexico with heavy emphasis on colonial institutions; the lack of archival research on South America; and general neglect of the era since Independence.

During the Second World War, growth of the profession was rapid, owing largely to U. S. government support of Latin American studies. Latin American historians were broadened by their wartime association in government and universities with specialists in other disciplines. With the outbreak of the Cold War and during the 1950s, however, the morale of Latin Americanists sagged as official attention to Latin America became meager. Since 1960, the profession has reached maturity. Ford Foundation and NDEA grants increased the production of scholars. The number of important centers of Latin American studies multiplied. The Conference on Latin American History became a corporate body administering a publication program. The Latin American Studies Association and its *Review* were successfully launched. In the years to come, comparative studies forcing consideration of Latin American aspects of universal problems will prevent isolation of Latin Americanists from fellow historians here and abroad.

At a session concerned with "Renaissance Europe Views of the World—Turks and Aztecs in European Thought," on the afternoon of December 28, Benjamin Keen, of Northern Illinois University, presented a paper on "The Aztecs in Renaissance Thought." The conquistadores saw in the Aztec realm a well-ordered state on the European model with an admirably smooth-working government. However, the narrative of the Anonymous Conqueror, of questionable authenticity, presented Europe with an image of the Aztecs as a brutish, depraved people. Whatever the image, the mental and geographic horizons of Europe were widened by knowledge of the Aztecs, which demonstrated the infinite diversity of customs and opinions in the world and the extraordinary capacity of a distant people without the word of God. Faith in old certainties weakened, and ammunition was supplied for such critics of the traditional order as

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Giordano Bruno and Michel de Montaigne.

Aztec civilization also served as a prime exhibit in the Renaissance debate over the justice of the Spanish Conquest of America and the nature of the Indian. In Renaissance France the Indian question provoked a "battle of the books." The Franciscan André Thevet, the first Americanist, devoted much space to Aztec civilization in his geographical and historical works and proclaimed Tenochtitlán to be superior to Venice in size and splendor.

Despite the glowing praise accorded to Aztec achievements by such humanists as Peter Martyr and Albrecht Dürer, by late sixteenth century the Aztec had become a victim of the widespread tendency to ignore the cultural differences among the various Indian people and to pass judgment on the Indian as an universal type. The phrases most widely applied to the Indian were "poor barbarian" or "poor savage," thus conveying a mixture of commiseration and scorn. This stereotype ignored the marked cultural differences among Indian groups and attributed to all Indians the aberrations, real or imaginary, that Europeans found most objectionable: human sacrifice, cannibalism, sodomy. Outside Spain and the Indies only a few Europeans of advanced ideas, like Montaigne and Bruno, rejected the notion of the Indian's inferiority and admitted him to equal membership in the family of man. Aztec civilization supplied both Bruno and Montaigne with proofs of the equality and creative capacity of the Indian.

"Class and Caste in Colonial Peru" was the subject of a session on the morning of December 29, with Thomas F. McGann, of the University of Texas, as chairman. A paper on "The Negro" by Frederick E. Bowser, of Stanford University, summarized from the time of the conquest until 1650 the extent to which it was possible for the black man to overcome his alien culture, servile status, and color and to gain equality within Peruvian society. The frequently conflicting roles of Crown, Church, and slaveholder were discussed with regard to linguistic and religious instruction and the closely related issue of slave marriages. Distinctions were also made between the quality of religious experience open to the urban black and that of his rural counterpart. The relatively high status of the free mulatto in Peru was traced to the paradoxical Spanish attitudes toward race mixture: the practice was scorned by society at large, yet the mulatto—other socioeconomic factors being equal—was considered a better man for his white blood. More often than the free Negro, the mulatto could use this attitude and his Spanish connections to rise in Peruvian society.

Karen W. Spalding, of Rutgers University's Newark Campus, in a paper on "The Indian," evaluated the patterns of social differentiation in Colonial Peru during the first half of the Colonial Period, viewing those patterns from the perspective of the Indian who remained a part of Indian society. In order to deal with changes in those patterns, the author first examined the social structure of Indian society prior to the Spanish conquest. She found that while highly stratified, the Indian society was not one of social classes, but rather one of a series of graded ranks and statuses which ranged more or less evenly from rich to poor, powerful to weak, and high prestige to low. Birth was the major reference point for assignment of status.

The Spanish conquest introduced new avenues to wealth and power which substantially altered the internal structure of Indian society. The Conquerors created new power groups, such as the Indian cabildo and the hierarchy of lay assistants to the priest which countered the power of the traditional Indian leaders. The Indians who enjoyed a new status used their power to amass wealth for themselves or to exercise legitimate or illegitimate authority among their own people, though a parallel structure of Indian power continued to exist in both the religious and economic sectors. But both the traditional holders of power and prestige and the members of the new Indian power group imposed by Spanish law

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found themselves pinched between the demands of their masters and the inability of the Indian community to meet those demands. Under these pressures, their power, wealth, and prestige declined.

James M. Lockhart, of the University of California at Los Angeles, said that he felt too much solidarity with his colleagues to stand aside as a commentator; therefore, he included himself in the same group as the authors of the papers and set out to characterize in a general way their work on Colonial Peru, drawing out some of its broader implications and speaking about related research needs and priorities in this relatively unstudied place and time. He said that a new "school of scholars is forming, devoted to the study of the broad-gauge social history of Peru." He rejected sterile politics, theoretical constructs, and definitions, including those implied in the title of the session itself. One over-arching generalization that emerges from the work of the Peruvianists, he said, is that Spanish American colonial society was characterized by infinite fine distinctions and gradations rather than by sharply defined blocks, whether European-style economic classes or North American-style racial groups. He found tradition to be far more important than innovativeness in the founding of the new Peruvian society—tradition whether Indian, Spanish, African, or that derived from the general movement of European expansion. After illustrations of his thesis, he closed with an appeal for a dual approach to social history which would combine broader topics with detailed primary research.

On the afternoon of December 29, a joint session was devoted to "Cuba: A Decade of Revolution, 1958-68," with Robert F. Smith, of the University of Connecticut, in the chair. Maurice Zeitlin, of the University of Wisconsin, in his paper "Social Structure and Social Revolution in Cuba," asked why the Cuban revolution became a "socialist revolution." He offered several working hypotheses. The Cuban revolution is the first socialist revolution to occur in an unquestionably capitalist context, the dominant economic class having been capitalist and the largest class the working class. Cuban workers had for about three decades a socialist political culture and a vision of the future abolition of capitalism. Such a political culture combined with the force of nationalism produced a waiting revolutionary force. Because Cuba was in many respects a developed country, it had a reservoir of resources that could be tapped by the revolutionary leadership which, with income redistribution and an increase in the welfare of the masses, was able to cement a mass base early in the revolution.

Richard R. Fagen, of Stanford University, was unable because of illness to present his scheduled paper, "Revolutionary Ideology and Practice: Are There Constants?" The paper was to have been a shortened version of the first chapter of his forthcoming book, *Toward the Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba* (Stanford, 1969). With no paper at hand, the chairman read various excerpts from the typed manuscripts. According to Fagen, different methods of political socialization have been developed in Cuba, one of the most effective being active participation in several organizations and activities. The core of the new symbol system is composed of two intertwining themes: the theme of struggle and the theme of utopia or the millenium.

At the morning session of December 30, "Colonial Bureaucracies in the Americas," two papers dealt with the Portuguese and Spanish Empires in America. Stuart B. Schwartz, of the University of Minnesota, discussed "Magisterial Bureaucrats in Colonial Brazil." Government and society in Colonial Brazil were ordered and structured by two interlocking systems of organization. On one level, a metropolitan-directed administration tied the individual or corporation to the political institutions that constituted the formal table of organization. Parallel to this was a system of interpersonal,

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primary relations based on kin, shared status, and common interests.

Schwartz' paper concentrated on the professional magisterial bureaucrats (*letrados*) and particularly on the 167 *desembargadores* who served in the High Court of Bahia from 1609 to 1759. These specially trained professionals were considered loyal and dependable by the Crown and in many ways were the guardians of the formal bureaucratic structure. The Crown hoped to make these men powerful and disinterested representatives of royal policy by raising them above society and eliminating all extra-professional contact. As men, however, these officers often entered into personal relations that tied them to colonial society. These extra-professional relations were viewed as dysfunctions by the Crown in terms of expected behavior. Functionally, however, these relations provided much flexibility to the system of government. Of the 167 *desembargadores* 10 were Brazilians, 22 married Brazilians, 35 had served previously in Brazil, and others were related to important officials in the colony. Government in Brazil was never simply a matter of royal fiat and bureaucratic compliance. Instead the bureaucracy was simply another source of power liable to alliance or cooptation. These connections between formal and informal government reduced the divisions between colonials and peninsulars and provided flexibility in the resolution of difficulties.

John L. Phelan's paper, "The Spanish-American Colonial Bureaucracy under the Habsburgs," focused attention on six areas: 1) the nature of sovereignty; 2) the general character of the bureaucracy; 3) the relationship of the colonial bureaucracy to the larger administration of the Empire; 4) recruitment and social origins; 5) the degree of professionalism; and 6) the relationship of the colonial bureaucracy with the local elites. The data and the conclusions were derived chiefly from the author's recently published *Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century: Bureaucratic Politics in the Spanish Empire* (Madison, 1967).

The Crown's legitimacy derived from institutionalized charisma (to use Max Weber's terminology). The bureaucracy, on the other hand, was halfway between a patrimonial bureaucracy in which officials were paid in kind, in tips, and in outright graft, and modern administration with regular monetary salaries paid by the state. Because the bureaucracy saw themselves as a group apart from the rest of society, they sought to play a mediating role in the political process. They fought to maintain professional standards against the tendencies toward favoritism on the part of the king and his immediate entourage. Both the conciliar and audiencia administrations sought to mediate between the goal of the kings to increase royal revenues and the desire of the traditional ascriptive to maintain the fiscal status quo.

The audiencias in the New World performed several mediating roles. One was to provide in a paternalistic fashion some protection to the non-elites against the excessive demands of the upper classes. Yet the Creole elites did try to coopt the audiencias, though their success was never complete. The audiencias actually played the difficult role of seeking to reconcile the point of view of the Creole elites with that of the central authorities in Spain in an endless series of compromises. In the Spanish colonial administration there was some balance between the principles of authority and flexibility. The highly centralized decision-making, vested in the king and his immediate circle, had a counterbalance in the substantial measure of decentralized decision-making exercised by various bureaucratic agencies from the Council of the Indies downwards. What enabled the viceroys and audiencias to play a creative role vis-à-vis both the king and the council in the ultimate formulation of policy was the formula, "I obey but do not execute." If officials in the New World thus had some room in which to maneuver, the *visita general* periodically reinforced the principle of centralized authority.

Sigmund Diamond of Columbia University was commentator. He praised

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each of the papers, but argued strongly for a more general approach to the topic, with more attention to theoretical considerations, and greater concern for systematic analysis and conceptual clarity.

Also on the morning of the 30th was a session, "The British Informal Empire in Latin America (1850-1940): Two Cases," with Robin W. Winks, of Yale University, as chairman. The two papers examined the applicability to Latin America of the notion of informal empire espoused by the British historians, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher. The first paper, by Peter Winn, of Princeton University, treated "British Informal Empire in Uruguay, 1806-1914." During the first British essay in Uruguayan informal empire (1806-1848), he said, Uruguay was seen as a great entrepot to the trade of half a continent. Independence was England's answer to the problems of entry and a suitable political framework for economic integration; the creation of an independent Uruguay, through British mediation, was its ultimate statement. When independence proved an insufficient guarantee of economic expansion and political stability, free access to the mythical markets of the interior replaced it as a panacea. Within a context of severe economic depression, the importance of these potential markets was magnified, and England blundered into intervention in a vain attempt to restore a disintegrating informal paramountcy and the possibility of an expanding commercial intercourse. Britain's first attempt at informal empire in Uruguay failed because of relative weakness and lack of commitment of her local collaboraters.

England's second attempt at Uruguayan informal empire replaced Brazil's faltering ascendancy, relying upon the greater surplus of capital and entrepreneurial experience. With the support of influential Uruguayans, England consolidated an ascendancy which was a dominant Uruguayan reality until 1914. In this second informal imperial vision, Uruguay was seen not as an entrepot, but as a country of rich resources that was a worthwhile prize for economic integration in itself. British enterprises dominated transportation, utilities, banking and finance, insurance, and meat processing. Failing British powers, the competing expansion of the United States, and the emergence of an Uruguayan economic nationalism presaged the decline of British informal empire during the years preceding World War I. The effect of British informal empire on Uruguay was to structure it as an import-export economy and to inhibit a diversified economic growth. The political effects were less direct, but equally significant.

Richard Graham, of the University of Utah, argued in his paper that the Gallagher-Robinson thesis fits very well the Brazilian case. Britain had a preeminent trade position in Brazil, and Brazil even served as an agent of British interests in the Río de la Plata area. The opening of the Amazon River to world trade was in furtherance of British imperial ambitions. Another evidence of informal empire was extraterritoriality—the right of British businessmen to be tried by a British judge—which was abandoned in 1845 because it was no longer needed to maintain British control, as free trade ideals were permeating Brazil. Further testimony of British informal empire in Brazil was the extent of loans made by private bankers to Brazil. Millions of pounds sterling were lent to Brazil before World War I, almost all of it from the House of Rothschild. Asking why British informal empire was not converted into a formal one, Professor Graham pointed to the rise of the United States as an imperial competitor by the end of the nineteenth century, blocking any British move in a formal direction. The overall impact of the British influence in Brazil was the shattering of traditional society.

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