

Conquest and Commerce: Spain and England in the Americas. By JAMES LANG. New York, 1975. Academic Press. Maps. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. vii, 261. Cloth. \$12.95.

This book is a stimulating and evocative comparison of English and the Spanish colonial societies from the beginning of settlement until independence. It belongs to the series of Studies in Social Discontinuity under the consulting editorship of Charles Tilly and Edward Shorter. The author is a young, historically oriented sociologist trained at Michigan and now teaching at Vanderbilt. Although a separate section is devoted to each colonial society, the concluding chapter concisely highlights the dramatically divergent contrasts between the two. Among those patterns analyzed are: How effectively did organized colonial groups challenge metropolitan authority, and what form did resistance to royal power take? What sources of wealth did each central government aspire to dominate?

Spain sent bishops, priests and bureaucrats to the New World; the English dispatched customs officials. The Spanish crown created an elaborate bureaucratic system whose universal jurisdiction embraced all phases of life from salvation in the next world to mundane minutiae in this world. The bureaucratic weakness of the English crown is sharp foil to what happened among the Spaniards. Wealth, status and power were bureaucratically based in Hispanic society, whereas in English America wealth, status and power came not from official office but rather from an individual's position in a locally based community. The wealth of the Spanish empire was silver and Indians in contrast to that of the thirteen colonies which was based on tobacco, sugar, fish and rum. Both systems were profoundly decentralized in quite different ways. Spanish decentralization was bureaucratic, whereas Anglo-American decentralization was legislative. The administration in Hispanic America was the broker between the local elites and non-elites and the central authorities in Spain. The final decisions were a complex compromise between what the central authorities ideally wanted and what local conditions would realistically permit. The imperial bureaucracy balanced in different ways and in different places and at different times the fiscal concerns of the crown, the religious mission of the church and the economic interests of the colonists. In English America, on the other hand, the colonial assemblies with their power over the purse effectively restricted the power of the crown and thus allowed local interests a wide latitude of autonomy.

The British empire was a commercial one; the Spanish empire was territorial. England's economic might was derived from her role as the entrepôt for colonial products and the supplier of manufactured goods. The decline of the Indies trade by the middle of the seventeenth century did not cause any noticeable weakening of the ties that bound colonial society to the royal government. Between 1650 and 1750 the domestic economies of Mexico and important areas of Peru were more self-sufficient and industrially productive than the thirteen colonies. Professor Lang quite correctly reminds us that the pattern of economic underdevelopment and dependency of contemporary Latin America do not have their historical roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The American historians will have to pass judgement on Professor Lang's interpretation of English America. His one hundred pages on Spanish America is a creative and lucid synthesis with few equals in current historiography.

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Mexico Under Spain, 1521–1556: Society and the Origins of Nationality.

By PEGGY K. LISS. Chicago, 1975. University of Chicago Press. Map. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 229. Cloth. \$12.50.

The first three and a half decades of New Spain formed the most dynamic and complex period in Mexico's history. While those years have been studied from the standpoint of special topics or in terms of the roles of prominent individuals, Peggy Liss presents a synthesis of the young colony's turbulent beginnings during the rule of Charles V.

The author conceives of her work as "an inquiry into the origins of some of the sentiments and symbols early associated with being Mexican . . . a discussion of the attitudes and institutions they brought to bear on establishing control over Mexico" (p. xi). The essential theme of the book, it seems to me, is the examination of the struggle between the conquistador-encomendero faction and the crown for control of the land and Indians. To set the background for the Mexican drama, the author discusses the ways in which Spain increasingly came under royal control in the decades prior to the conquest, in the course of which certain attitudes and policies emerged, later to impinge on the course of events in the Indies.

If the men of Cortés were avid Spanish nationalists in 1519, within a short time they formed a "military aristocracy" with distinctly dif-