

Indian militia, while the growing social extremism of the comuneros characteristically drove many property owners out of the revolt to make common cause with legitimate authority.

The book does justice to social and economic factors, but would have been improved by a more careful definition of terms. The word “comunero” has been used by observers and historians to describe rebels against Charles V in Spain, dissident settlers in Paraguay, and mestizo protesters in New Granada. What, if any, were the common factors? When the Jesuits in Asunción demanded by what authority they were ordered out, the rebels replied that they spoke in the name of the “común.” But who precisely were the comuneros? The author locates their ultimate power base among the poor people of the province. “Slowly, the rebellion which began as a movement against an unpopular governor was turning into a war of the poor against the rich, of the countryside against the city” (p. 144). But these poor whites, or poor mestizos, remain shadowy figures, difficult perhaps to document.

In other respects, however, Professor López dissipates the obscurity of Paraguayan history. No doubt the revolt of the comuneros was an extreme case, but it illustrates the careful balance of forces and interests upon which Spanish colonial rule rested. And in explaining the one this book helps us to understand the other.

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*Rebeliones indígenas de la época colonial.* Compiled and with an Introduction by MARÍA TERESA HUERTA y PATRICIA PALACIOS. México, 1976. Sep/Inah. Maps. Pp. 366. Paper.

Thirty Indian revolts which took place over 250 years, which erupted from Chiapas to Chihuahua, from Quintana Roo to Guerrero, present a bewildering range of circumstances and cases to ponder. The revolts are described by some thirty different reporters—Spaniards and, for the most part, eyewitnesses—with extracts of works previously published. The compilers have included as many revolts as possible using as their main criterion the condition that the uprising be more than merely local rioting. Thus, for example, the leaders of the Tzetzal revolt of 1712 in Chiapas formed a confederation grouped around their own avenging Virgin (p. 153) and the Yopes in coastal Guerrero were joined by ancestral enemies when

they combined against the greater threat of Spanish rule in 1531 (p. 14).

Grouping the revolts into south-central and northern New Spain, the authors in their introduction catalogue a familiar list of "causes" for insurrections when Spaniards subjugated and congregated Indians and appropriated their labor, lands, and resources. It would be more accurate, however, to propose not that revolts were caused by such circumstances but that they may be correlated with them, that such irritants were necessary but not sufficient "causes" since identical conditions were also common enough in communities that did not revolt.

Why then do such conditions become intolerable to one community but not to another? One possible conclusion to be inferred from this collection is that communities which revolted had leaders able to expropriate Christian religious symbols in syncretized form or to conjure up pre-hispanic rites and deities as a rallying point to reject Spanish authority and to set up independent districts or republics. What is important here is the form revolts take, that communities are rallied not by socioeconomic arguments but by mythico-religious symbols and explanations.

A perusal of these accounts, however suggestive in general ways, must be tentative and cannot become the basis for generalizations which may give a greater understanding of the phenomenon of peasant revolts. For that we shall need serious, sustained investigations into the history of these communities in order to check the reliability of highly synthesized chronicles by religious or military observers; and if they can be turned up, we must examine more documents in the Indian languages. Such research should help establish more deeply-rooted motivations for the revolts, the significance of the forms that they take, and the connections between religious interpreters and socioeconomic conditions. The compilers, then, are to be congratulated for producing a convenient, wide-ranging primer containing standard but frequently inaccessible accounts of a large number of Indian revolts. At that level the work may stand alone as an intriguing sampler. But it also points to further reading with short bibliographies listed after each revolt and suggests some larger questions which will require further research.

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