

Apogeo y crisis de la república aristocrática. Oligarquía, aprismo y comunismo en el Perú, 1895–1932. By MANUEL BURGA and ALBERTO FLORES-GALINDO. Lima: Ediciones “Rikchay Perú,” 1979. Tables. Graphs. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 235. Paper.

In late 1979—roughly half a year before the overwhelming electoral victory of Belaúnde Terry—the option between a “disciplined aprismo” and a heterogeneous Marxist left inspired by Mariátegui still remained as fundamental for Peruvian society as it had been in 1928, when the paths of Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui parted over their interpretations of the social structure and the impact of imperialism in Peru. This conviction constitutes the guiding interest for Manuel Burga’s and Alberto Flores-Galindo’s analysis of the economic, social, political, and intellectual forces that, within the short period of thirty-five years, saw the rise and fall of the oligarchy’s undisputed domination over Peruvian politics and society.

In three parts of five chapters each, the authors first deal with some of the major economic structures of early twentieth-century Peru (the “feudal” hacienda of the southern sierra, the mercantile capital of the Arequipa export houses, agrarian capitalism on the north coast, and imperialist penetration of mining and oil production). The second part discusses the oligarchy’s political domination until 1919, the “oligarchic” mentality, *gamonalismo*, and the cycle of peasant rebellions against it in the southern sierra between 1915 and 1923, as well as the socioeconomic base and the politics of Leguía’s *oncenio*. The third part focuses on the rise of mass-based political movements in Peru (the trade unions, APRA, the communists), the intellectual ferment of the 1920s characterized by the reception of Marxism and the blossoming of indigenismo, and climaxes in the confrontation between Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui in 1928 and the formative phase of the Peruvian Aprista party during the 1931 electoral campaign and up to the 1932 Trujillo rebellion.

What emerges from the authors’ interpretation is a tragic or frustrated view of Peruvian societal development: the oligarchy unwilling and incapable of formulating a “project” of Peruvian society, which in the style of bourgeois ruling classes incorporates all groups of society; the intellectual and working-class leaders of the mass movements against oligarchic control, a “vetoed generation,” locked out from power through violent repression during the 1930s; and, most significant, the unsatisfactory alternative between APRA and communists, both of which groups seemed incapable of presenting a political strategy that could unite all popular classes in challenging the oligarchy. This point is a lament on the untimely death of Mariátegui, whom the authors apparently considered competent to develop such a strategy.

The book contains some unacceptable interpretations and contradictions. The authors' view that during the rebellions in southern Peru between 1920 and 1923 there developed something like an alliance between peasants and petty wool traders is untenable. Under conditions of rapidly falling wool prices in 1920, the peasants' wrath was directed precisely against the exploitative trade practices of the traders, whether petty or large. Contradictory appears the statement, e.g., that under Leguía the oligarchy's economic base remained intact (p. 139), while showing how the president proceeded to infringe seriously upon the sugar barons' control over water distribution on the north coast.

One also may wonder whether the focus on the alternative Apristas-communists as options for political representation of Peru's popular classes is adequate. Why did a majority of voters in 1931 choose not to vote for either group? Surely these 160,000 voters cannot be dismissed as lackeys of the oligarchy simply because they voted for the latter's favored candidate, Sánchez Cerro. It appears that Burga and Flores-Galindo have not taken sufficiently into consideration the distinction between new middle-class groups (bureaucrats, technicians, industrial entrepreneurs), who were interested only in political reforms, and marginalized groups, from the old petty bourgeoisie (small traders) to the rural proletariat on the north coast and the serrano peasantry, who needed (and still do today) much more than the political franchise—namely, fundamental economic redistribution.

Nevertheless, Burga and Flores-Galindo have presented a very able and at times novel interpretation of early twentieth-century Peruvian society and politics. The way they manage to interweave the various layers or areas of historical evolution is especially admirable. Their meaningful treatment of collective mentalities and of intellectual currents, both well-connected to the socioeconomic milieu from whence they arose, constitutes a rarity in works on Peruvian history.

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Mobility and Integration in Urban Argentina: Córdoba in the Liberal Era. By MARK D. SZUCHMAN. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980. Tables. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 236. Cloth. \$19.95.

With this impressive study of late nineteenth-century developments in Argentina's major interior city, Szuchman adds significantly to a small, but growing, bibliography on the new urban history of Latin America.