

Coca Prohibition in Peru: The Historical Debates. By JOSEPH A. GAGLIANO. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994. Map. Notes. Bibliography. Index. x, 245 pp. Cloth. \$24.95.

This well-written and well-researched book is long overdue. For many years, scholars concerned with the historical contours of the debates over coca in the Andes have had to rely on a few key journal articles, two of which Joseph Gagliano himself published some time ago (“The Coca Debate in Colonial Peru,” 1963; “La medicina popular y la coca en el Perú: un análisis histórico de actitudes,” 1978). His new book focuses on the recurrent and often rancorous controversies over the cultivation and consumption of coca from the early colonial period to 1961, when the Peruvian state firmly committed itself to coca’s eradication. While it focuses on these controversies in the context of present-day Peru, the discussion is also enormously relevant to Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia.

Gagliano does a fine job of pinpointing the elite social actors who engaged in these debates, stressing their ideologically charged stances as well as their shifting political, economic, and cultural constituencies. He also traces important changes in the key terms of discourse. Mine owners, church officials, and representatives of the colonial state often couched the pros and cons of coca in terms of religion and economics—the need to convert Andeans to Christianity and the importance of coca and mining to the colonial economy. These arguments mirrored the bitter struggle over the minds and bodies, the culture and labor of Andean populations. By the turn of the twentieth century, the debates among *indigenista* leaders, missionaries, and leaders of the new nation-states centered on the problematic relationship between the coca leaf, the “problem” of “assimilating” the Indian populations into national life, and the cultural “vices” thought to afflict Andean peoples.

Specialists will discern here many, if not most, of the arguments on both sides of the Peruvian (and, more generally, Andean) coca debate. For example, colonial missionaries, apparently dismayed by the extent to which coca was still entrenched in Andean culture, “attempted to dissociate coca from pre-Christian rituals by identifying its original use with the Virgin Mary” (p. 92). Yet what is especially refreshing about this book is that it provides a poignant reminder of the historical continuity in which the contemporary struggle over coca in the Andes should be studied and approached. Direct analogues of currently fashionable coca crop-substitution programs in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia (and the alleged reasons for their dismal failure) can be found in the early colonial period. The skillful reinterpretation and manipulation of a mythical (especially Inca) past to legitimate ideologically charged claims and positions have been considered worthy strategies not only by colonials but also by today’s peasants and the Bolivian state.

The book has three main shortcomings for this reviewer. First, it devotes almost exclusive attention to elite voices and actions and virtually marginal interest to how the common Andean peoples interpreted and shaped coca controversies. Second, it

is not clear why the book should end in 1961. A great deal has been published on coca since then, and an additional chapter on the contemporary relevance of the different arguments would have been quite useful and entirely appropriate.

Finally, Gagliano repeatedly assumes—like some of the chroniclers and prohibitionists who loom prominently in his book—that nutritional deficiencies or unstable, inadequate food supplies are the primary reason for coca-leaf consumption in the Andes. Unfortunately he does not directly address this important issue, on which a great deal has been published that seemingly disproves the assumption (see Roderick E. Burchard, “Coca Chewing and Diet,” *Current Anthropology* 33:1, 1992). He thereby may have unwittingly played into the hands of contemporary prohibitionists.

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En pos del tributo: burocracia estatal, elite regional, y comunidades indígenas en el Cuzco rural, 1826-1854. By VÍCTOR PERALTA RUÍZ. Archivos de Historia Andina, 13. Cuzco: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos “Bartolomé de Las Casas,” 1991. Graph. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 159 pp. Paper.

The persistence of Indian tribute in Cuzco following independence, argues Víctor Peralta Ruíz, illuminates Peru’s failure to form a national commonwealth. At independence José de San Martín abolished tribute, and Simón Bolívar granted citizenship to the Peruvian Indian. Yet these liberal initiatives quickly failed, and tribute appeared under a variety of names (*contribución voluntaria*, *contribución única*). Several factors in the old Cuzco intendency helped tribute survive. The indigenous population preferred to pay one rather than many taxes; more important, tribute payment conferred a right to agricultural land, the “moral economy of the Andes.” Only in 1854 did tribute officially end.

In this book’s most original part, chapters 3 and 4, census data for Cuzco show that indigenous communities prospered during the two decades after independence, in contrast to nonindigenous haciendas. Half as many haciendas existed in 1845 as in 1786, and they controlled only 15 percent of indigenous labor. Bolivia’s restrictions on trade disrupted the haciendas’ commercial ties to Potosí. Meanwhile, to pay tribute, Indians continued producing for the regional economy. Tribute constituted two-thirds of Cuzco’s fiscal income but less than one-fifth of national revenue. By midcentury, tributaries outstripped available land. Mestizo tribute collectors embezzled taxes and aggravated the land shortage by taking communal property for themselves. The moral economy broke down. Tribute’s abolition removed any bureaucratic power capable of defending indigenous rights to land. The haciendas somehow recovered, and latifundios dominated the region.

Based on secondary literature and published primary sources, the other three chapters show the consequences for Peru of indigenous tribute and creole racism.