

Spanish America since 1542, the magnitude of the task initially overwhelmed the authorities and the viceroyalty was suppressed in 1723 only to be reestablished in 1739. Improvement in the economy resulted, but it was gradual, and New Granada rarely produced a surplus for Spain. The main outlines of the economy did not change in the course of the eighteenth century.

The limits of "reform," or what could be extracted economically, came with the far-reaching changes of José de Gálvez, Charles III's minister for the Indies, and his visiting regent, Juan Francisco Gutiérrez de Piñeres. Their measures produced the *comunero* rebellion in 1781. McFarlane correctly maintains that the revolt did not seek to overthrow the colonial regime and was not a social conflict. It did slow change, however, and some of the main features of Bourbon reform elsewhere in Spanish America, such as the *intendants*, were never introduced in New Granada. Yet the botanical expedition and enlightened ideas backed by Archbishop-Viceroy Antonio de Caballero y Góngora led creole patricians to reexamine their *patria* and reformulate their expectations of the Bourbon monarchy. Spain, enfeebled by war and the succession crisis, was unable to meet creole demands. The collapse of the colonial regime and the emergence of the independence movement inevitably followed.

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CARLOS AGUIRRE. *Agentes de su propia libertad: Los esclavos de Lima y la desintegración de la esclavitud 1821-1854*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. 1993. Pp. 335.

Carlos Aguirre's book is a reworking of his master's thesis for the Catholic University in Lima, Peru. This might raise concerns in some quarters about its scholarly merit, but Aguirre's analysis and extensive historical detail should dispel any worries. Based largely on court cases and notarial records from the national archives in Lima, the book examines slavery in the Peruvian capital in the years between independence and abolition. Its argument is encapsulated in the title: that it was the slaves who were the major force in the disintegration of Peruvian slavery.

Aguirre begins by describing the socioeconomic framework of the slavery system in Lima. The slave population of the area was not large: in 1821 there were around 8,500 slaves; by the 1840s the number had fallen to 4,500. Of these, over half were urban based. Most were owned by small proprietors, with a handful of sugar planters the only large-scale owners. Ownership was, thus, spread through society, a fact that Aguirre uses to explain why no abolitionist movement appeared in Lima and why abolition in Peru was a gradual process. His discussion of slave life indicates that Lima's rural slaves had to contend with

harsher conditions than their urban counterparts. Yet violent resistance in the rural sector was rare, partly because the slaves enjoyed some degree of self-control, partly because they were divided between field hands and foremen, and partly because the conditions that produced violent agitation elsewhere were not present here, except on a few estates where some unrest occurred. Another important factor that prevented violent resistance was the declining number of slaves, which prompted owners to offer concessions in order to maintain their property. This produced some leeway in the system that the slaves, particularly urban slaves, used to their own advantage.

The actions taken by the slaves to undermine slavery constitute the second part of the book. Slave resistance was largely of the nonviolent sort, with manumission the most effective and favored means. Using several tables Aguirre shows that purchase, either by the slaves or by third parties, was the usual form of manumission. Between 1840 and 1854 only one quarter of Lima's freed slaves were manumitted by their owners, who were unwilling even to free slaves born into their households. Manumission may have been the decisive element in slavery's disintegration, as Aguirre argues, but it was also weakened by other forms of slave resistance. For example, flight was common, with many of the fugitives joining the bandit gangs that infested the Lima area. About 90 percent of these gangs were black, explaining in part why slaves were drawn to them. The book concludes with the requisite examination of slave rebellions—more often conspiracies than rebellious acts and restricted to a few estates—and some final words on abolition and its immediate aftermath.

Although some of Aguirre's points have been discussed elsewhere, his focus, numerous examples, and statistical tables make this book a useful addition to the literature. There are some weaknesses. The picture is rather static as the changes occurring over time are not well developed. The discussions of prominent theories about slavery that begin each chapter indicate Aguirre's awareness of the broader issues, but their relevance to his case studies is not always clear. His assertion that the slaves' "supreme ideal was not necessarily absolute independence" (p. 212) is not entirely convincing and seems to be contradicted by his evidence. And other factors played a more prominent role in the abolitionist pressures than he is prepared to accept. Nonetheless, his book lays out in impressive detail the nuances and complexities of slavery in early republican Lima and marks the beginning of what should be a very fruitful career.

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EDUARDO SILVA. *Prince of the People: The Life and Times of a Brazilian Free Man of Colour*. Translated by MOYRA ASHFORD. New York: Verso. 1993. Pp. xii, 219. \$34.95.