

abundant labour and scarce land and work, “the great transition which has dominated the history of the poor in every continent”.

This is meticulous and pioneering scholarship in a noble cause, most worthily awarded the Herskovits Prize of 1988 by the African Studies Association, setting the appalling story of African poverty, so relevant to questions of the cultural and racial status of African peoples in the world, in a balanced context of time and place, although the author warns that “a comprehensive history of the African poor is still decades away”.

*Aidan W. Southall*

LARSON, BROOKE. *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia, Cochabamba, 1550–1900*. Princeton University Press, Princeton (NJ) 1988. xv, 376 pp. \$ 65.00. (Paper: \$ 25.00.)

In the flow of historical studies on Latin America during the last two decades the most astonishing is the high quality of so many books and articles. Most of them deal with Mexico (New Spain) and Peru, but Brazil, Guatemala and Bolivia (Alto Perú) are not forgotten. The ethnohistorian Murra was the initiator and stimulator of a new view on the history of Incaic Peru and Bolivia. He studied the Spanish documents of the sixteenth century in research of the vestiges of old Incaic institutions and social relations. He emphasized the importance of the “vertical control”, the system by which villages or tribes possessed and used land in the various climatic zones from the low tropical or subtropical valleys to the arid and cold *puna*, high in the mountains. Typical for this form of economy was the self-sufficiency and the absence of trade and markets.

Murra’s ideas have been elaborated by a multitude of scholars, both anthropologists and historians, like Spalding, Stern, Pease, Platt, Golte, Sempat Assadourian, Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, Espinoza Soriano and Málaga Medina. Now this long list is continued by Brooke Larson, again with a standard book.

Meanwhile the model of the vertical control has been combined with the theory of the moral economy, the reciprocal rights and duties of the authorities on the one hand and the ordinary people on the other hand in the prae-Incaic and Incaic age. From this base Mrs. Brooke Larson studied the history of the political, social and economic development of a densely populated region, the district of Cochabamba in central Alto Perú.

During the Inca-period the original inhabitants were privileged warriors in the army, while other tribes were settled in the valleys to produce maize for the government and the army. An ingenious irrigation system turned the valleys into the granary of the Inca-empire. After the Spanish conquest the fortune of the Indians in the valleys became closely connected with the ups and downs of the silver mining in Potosí. The adult men were coerced to work in the mines and on large haciendas wheat and maize were grown to feed the more than 100,000 inhabitants of the *Villa Imperial*. During the decline of the silver production the hacienda-system disintegrated into small-scale farming; the increased population lived well by special-

ization in textile industry, trade and transport. The Bourbon reforms and the creation of the viceroyalty of La Plata in 1776 brought prosperity to a close. The burden of taxation became heavier, caused by high expenses for military defense. The textile industry had to compete with the officially promoted products from Spain and a flood of British contraband goods. The nineteenth century began with a general crisis. The history after independence forms a rather unspectacular epilogue.

The general theme of the book is the transition from the moral economy of reciprocal rights and duties through a second stage of hacienda-monopoly of labour and grain into a third stage of small-holding and varied market economy. It is a development typical for what I have called the *Spanish Sierra* in contrast to the *Indian Sierra* where the moral economy continued for a longer time. In reality the history of Indians and Spaniards is a meeting of two civilizations, not always peaceful, with resistance in various manners. The author has stressed the economic transitions with the social consequences, but it was also a process of hispanization of parts of the Indian population. It is a pity that Mrs. Brooke Larson has not treated her subject in this broader perspective.

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ROSSWURM, STEVEN. *Arms, Country, and Class. The Philadelphia Militia and "Lower Sort" During the American Revolution, 1775–1783.* Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, London 1987. xv, 373 pp. \$ 40.00.

This well-researched, judiciously-argued, and thoughtful volume adds considerably to our knowledge of the political and social dimensions of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. More than a decade ago, Richard Ryerson and Charles Olton showed how the timidity of Pennsylvania's traditional political leaders after the late 1760s led to a palpable downward shift in the social basis of political authority during the crisis of independence in 1775–76, as the wealthy landowners, merchants, and professionals who had long dominated the colony's public life either withdrew from politics or reconciled themselves to sharing power with the middling property holders who took the lead in pushing for independence. By providing a close look at the part played by still less affluent social groups, Steven Rosswurm significantly deepens our understanding of this development, and not just during the movement for independence in 1775–76 but throughout the war years.

Rosswurm's study centers on the rise and decline of Philadelphia's lower sort as a class-conscious political force. Previously rendered politically inert by a highly restrictive system of social relations, this group, Rosswurm argues, contributed significantly to political developments in 1775–76 and thereby both acquired a sense of group solidarity as a "class-for-itself" (p. 226) and inaugurated a successful four-year "struggle out of dependency and subordination and into self-activity and assuredness" (p. 225). But this struggle turned sour with the Fort Wilson incident in October 1779. Upset by rising prices and the sabotage of price fixing measures by merchants, some of the lower sort took to the streets, became involved in an attack