

Colonial Latin American Historical Review

Volume 14

Issue 3 *Volume 14, Issue 3 (Summer 2005)*

Article 4

6-1-2005

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Timothy E. Anna

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Recommended Citation

Anna, Timothy E.. "Patricia H. Marks, Deconstructing Legitimacy: Viceroys, Merchants, and the Military in Late Colonial Peru." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 14, 3 (2005): 313. <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr/vol14/iss3/4>

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Book Reviews

Deconstructing Legitimacy: Viceroy, Merchants, and the Military in Late Colonial Peru. By Patricia H. Marks. (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007. x + 403 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth.)

Now and then one encounters a book based on such extensive research that it immediately accords its author substantial authority. This is such a book. The product of many years of research in nineteen archives and repositories in Peru, Spain, Britain, and the United States, this treatment by Patricia H. Marks of the disputes between merchants and the viceregal government and between factions of merchants and military officers in the last years of colonial Peru carries impressive weight. Roughly the first half of the book is about disputes between peninsular and Peruvian factions of merchants in Lima and the deterioration of trade; the second half is about the political disputes leading to the overthrow of Viceroy Joaquín de la Pezuela in January 1821, which was the work of factions in the military and the merchant community.

Starting with the introduction of the 1778 *Reglamento de Comercio Libre*, an intense struggle broke out in Peru between those merchants primarily engaged in the Atlantic import and export trade who were closely linked to merchant houses in Spain, and those primarily involved in the coastal, Pacific, and internal Peruvian trade who were linked to landowning elites within the country. Marks argues that the Bourbon reforms were intended to bankrupt the Lima *Consulado* in order to break the Peruvian merchants' control of the "submetropolitan *entrepôt* trade," and that this set Peru apart from other viceroyalties where the reforms were meant to stimulate both domestic and international trade. Lima was thrown into a profound economic depression from which it was unable to recover up to independence. The historiography has been aware of this struggle, but Marks provides the most solid treatment so far. Sometimes burdened with detail, Marks' presentation is probably as complete as extant evidence permits. There are a number of specific issues concerning which no documents have been found.

The argument about the loss of legitimacy gravitates around two men—Viceroy Pezuela, who proposed to open the port of Callao to foreign trade in 1818 as a means of raising desperately needed funds to resist the independence movement, and Gaspar Rico, perhaps the major figure among Lima's merchants involved in the Atlantic trade and an outspoken critic of viceregal policies for twenty years. The approach almost takes on the feel of a political biography of these two, raising the possible criticism that Marks is placing too much weight on the Rico-Pezuela clash as an explanation for the fall of the royal government. Even so, this is the most thorough treatment of Gaspar Rico available and serves to draw attention to him for perhaps the first

time in the literature. Overall, Marks is outlining the inexorable change in political culture from 1795 to 1821, and to do this she highlights in very clear terms the conflicts between the Cinco Gremios Mayores de Madrid, representing the Atlantic trade, and the Filipinas Company, which was linked to the coastal Pacific trade.

In the end, one is left to wonder at the hard-headedness of those Lima merchants like Rico who believed that preventing any foreign trade at a time when Spanish trade had ceased to exist, particularly after the loss of Chile in 1818, would somehow assure the survival of Spanish power in Lima. When José de San Martín took Lima in 1821, all the merchants in question were ruined anyhow because the port was immediately opened to foreign shipping. The coup that overthrew Pezuela in 1821 placed in doubt the legitimacy of colonial government, although by then it was already severely battered. Peru was left with a prevailing model of praetorian politics, Marks argues, which made legitimacy uncertain for a long time after independence. Though specialized, Marks has produced a possibly definitive monograph on these issues.

Timothy E. Anna
Department of History
University of Manitoba

The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba. By Lisa Yun. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008. xxiii + 311 pp. Illustration, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$37.50 cloth.)

Other than Denise Helly's introduction to the 1993 English edition of *The Cuba Commission Report*, her book *Idéologies et ethnicité: Les Chinois Macao à Cuba*, and a chapter in a forthcoming book titled *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture*, little critical attention has been paid to one of the most important testimonials in Latin American history: *The Cuba Commission Report: A Hidden History of the Chinese in Cuba* (1874). Lisa Yun's timely and well-written book is undoubtedly the most complete study to date on this jewel for the study of race relations, labor migration, and the international division of labor. Her outstanding analysis of the testimonial is complemented with other testimonies related to the so-called coolie trade in Cuba. In this sense, the book rescues from oblivion the abuses committed against southern Chinese indentured laborers who were, for the most part, taken to Cuba by fraudulent means.

Yun's study begins with an introduction to what she terms "the coolie counternarrative," in which she emphasizes the transnational nature of coolie history and the literary tropes they used in their depositions. She also makes acute remarks about the importance of the contract itself in framing the trade as a "voluntary" movement and in turning these men into "mobile slaves." She