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GARCÍA JORDÁN Pilar, *Cruz y arado, fusiles y discursos. La construcción de los Orientes en el Perú y Bolivia, 1820-1940*, Institut français d'études andines/Instituto de estudios peruanos, Lima, 2001, 476 p., bibl., ill., tab., cartes

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- 1 *Cruz y arado, fusiles y discursos* introduces a much needed comparative perspective into the processes of take-over, occupation, and incorporation of Amazonian and other tropical territories into South American nation-states. Until now, such studies have focused on specific regions – e.g. Southern Pará (Schmink and Wood 1992), the Llanos of Colombia (Rausch 1994), Loreto (Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000, 2002) – privileging a micro, rather than a macro-historical approach. In contrast, García Jordán examines the evolution of state policies and actions on a broader scale, focusing on the « Orientes » of Peru and Bolivia, an apt term she uses to describe the environmentally and socially diverse tropical areas located in the peripheries of these two countries. The time-frame she employs covers a rather long and poorly known period, from 1820 to 1940. Her analysis displays a thorough acquaintance with both primary and secondary sources, as well as a keen understanding of the political transformations undergone by Bolivia and Peru from the date of their independence from Spain to the mid-twentieth century.
- 2 To make her intellectual task more manageable, García Jordán concentrates on six aspects of governmental action with respect to tropical peripheries: colonization, communications, missions, land, indigenous labor, and politico-administrative demarcation. Not surprisingly, these were primary areas of concern for post-colonial

Peruvian and Bolivian governments. Whether liberal or conservative, most elected post-colonial governments were committed to modernizing their countries by applying a basic plan that endorsed free trade, greater national integration through improved communications, increase and « improvement » of the native population through European immigration, development of agriculture as the most important source of wealth, and transformation of marginal « savage » indigenous populations into productive workers.

- 3 The formula to incorporate the resources and peoples of tropical areas into the national economy derived from this larger political paradigm. Although García Jordán attempts to highlight governmental changes in the visions and policies designed for their tropical territories throughout the 1820-1940 period, she has a hard time doing so. For it is the case that changes, if they occurred at all, were very minor, while continuities – as the author herself is aware of – were pervasive. Basically, the Peruvian and Bolivian governments of the time tried to integrate their tropical peripheries by connecting them to highland economic centers through roads and railroads, by stimulating international trade through regular steam navigation to the Atlantic Ocean and the European markets, and by promoting European (and sometimes national) immigration through offers of free or cheap land and other economic incentives.
- 4 The Catholic Church and its missionary orders played a key role in this integrationist agenda. As García Jordán clearly demonstrates, from the 1840s onwards Bolivia and Peru always included missionaries in their schemes to integrate their tropical peripheries, despite an initial rejection of the Church by radical, liberal post-independence governments. I would suggest that in doing this they were following the much older model applied by the Spanish Crown beginning around 1650, when it realized that military conquest was not a successful option for subjugating the stateless, highly dispersed, and fiercely independent tropical indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, much as this model had failed in the past, so it did in its post-colonial version; and, as the author aptly shows, for the very same reasons. Missionaries were always given a crucial role throughout the 1820-1940 period as spearheads in state colonization schemes, but the truth was that the political classes never fully trusted them. The grounds for this distrust resided in the mission's excessive influence over indigenous converts, a fact that allowed them to control their labor force. National and regional elites were prepared to grant the missionary orders a large degree of autonomy in the conversion of tropical indigenous populations. But once they succeeded, they wanted to profit from the new labor pool. As internal frontiers expanded thanks to missionary activity, so did the conflicts between missionaries and landed regional elites.
- 5 The above, I would suggest, was not a new phenomenon. The same thing had happened during colonial times, when the Jesuits, and to a lesser extent the Franciscans, were seen as disloyal rivals for an indigenous labor force. However, the missionary model of colonization failed not because it was unsuccessful but, on the contrary, because it was successful. In fact, when missionaries were struggling with scarce resources, poor communications, and native resistance they were, as García Jordán rightly points out, very much left on their own. Only after they had consolidated their presence, and « pacified » the native inhabitants of a given area, did landowners, traders, and government authorities follow in their steps, attempting to take advantage of new sources of labor and novel economic opportunities – as the author skillfully demonstrates in her analysis of the Guarayo missions of Bolivia (pp. 414-434).

- 6 García Jordán devotes much of her book to the description and analysis of numerous road and railroad-building projects, diverse schemes for the attraction of European immigrants, ambitious projects to connect tropical rivers to Atlantic ports, and various proposals to explore, measure and distribute tropical lands. In fact, much of the book is concerned with the analysis of the plans, policies and legislation passed by post-colonial Bolivian and Peruvian governments. In a way, it can be said that the book under review is an exercise in political history, aimed at examining developments in the political and social thinking of Peru's and Bolivia's political elites, rather than chartering the course of what actually went on in the Orientes. Since most of the state projects failed, much of the author's discussion of particular projects ends up with phrases such as: « nada se aprobó al respecto » (p. 71); « acuerdo que, como tantos otros, quedó sólo en el papel » (p. 92); « el plan... no fue aprobado » (p. 112); « la realidad desmintió tal discurso » (p. 267); « el proyecto... fue finalmente desestimado » (p. 273); « los contratos... constituyeron un absoluto fracaso »; or, what represents the maximum expression of the failure of the legislative efforts of Peru's and Bolivia's national elites, « la trasgresión fue la norma » (p. 352). In short, the book deals with the aspirations, illusions, and hopes of the Peruvian and Bolivian educated elites, who envisioned themselves as bearers of rationality, progress, and enlightenment. As the author herself asserts, « el proyecto colonizador había sido hasta entonces más "ilusorio" que real » (p. 365).
- 7 One would be tempted to conclude, as does Jean-Claude Roux (1994), who also relied heavily on the analysis of national and local legislation for his study of Peruvian Amazonia, that post-colonial Peruvian and Bolivian governments lacked the political acumen and economic capacity necessary to integrate their tropical peripheries. A more comprehensive, subtle, and comparative approach, however, allows García Jordán to identify important differences between the Peruvian and Bolivian examples. Thus, she concludes, first, that even though many of the grand colonization schemes promoted by Peru may have failed, the Peruvian elites did possess the political will to implement their policies, something that was lacking in Bolivia. And, secondly, that, in contrast to Bolivian elites, which were reticent to appropriate the necessary funds to implement their initiatives, the Peruvian political classes made large investments in money and administrative resources at key points in time that allowed its tropical regions to profit from specific international economic junctures such as the rubber boom. I would add as a third crucial factor that whereas in Bolivia governmental colonization initiatives never gave rise to important economic and political centers, in Peru the town of Iquitos very quickly – in only twenty to thirty years – became the hub of a small but active civil society with a strong regional identity and federalist inclinations that made its voice felt loud and clear in the country's political centers (cf. Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000, 2002).
- 8 A much richer picture could have been obtained if the author would have expanded the comparative analysis of these two cases (pp. 435-448). One aspect that would have profited from detailed comparison was the differences underlying the diplomatic approaches and actions of both countries. Whereas as early as the 1840s, Peru developed an Amazonian geopolitical strategy – alliance with Brazil and, later on, with Colombia in detriment of Ecuador and Bolivia – that was maintained with few lapses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Bolivia's diplomatic actions with respect to its tropical peripheries were less consistent. Another neglected aspect is the role of military force – the *fusiles* of the title – in the pacification of peripheral territories. The author

does note that the area in which Bolivia's integration efforts were most successful was the Chiriguanía. But she fails to mention that this was finally achieved after the military defeat of two large Chiriguaná uprisings in 1875 and 1892, which resulted in the killing of thousands. The same thing could be said of the prolonged war and eventual defeat of Yanesha and Ashaninka peoples in the Selva Central of Peru. Finally, although there are striking parallels in the types of laws issued, policies designed, and colonization schemes devised in both countries – with similar steps taken at almost the same time – the author does not address this intriguing synchronization. I would guess that this simultaneity is probably connected to whatever Brazil – who was the dominant player in the region – was doing at the time, with Peru and Bolivia following in the steps or reacting against it ; but this is an issue that deserves a closer examination.

- 9 Despite the observations made above, which are more indicative of my particular interests than of any failings in the book, *Cruz y arado, fusiles y discursos* is an important landmark in the study of Andean Amazonia. Its macro-historical and comparative approach provides new insights into the complex processes underlying the « construction » of the Orientes. The book demonstrates that differences in the levels of success of Peruvian and Bolivian efforts relate, not to an alleged lack of interest or capacity on the part of their governments, as some authors would have it, but from a combination of complex factors. Only the kind of detailed and rigorous analysis undertaken by García Jordán can factor out the interactive role played by these multiple causalities.

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