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Review

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guiding principles such as the development of popular and democratic institutions and workers' power exist, each government must work out the exact way to foster them.

Harris argues that in non-Latin American cases, socialist principles were either abandoned or deformed, leading to the growth of new elites, bureaucratic states, and/or a lack of true socialist participation. Real worker control, for example, was never implemented anywhere. Similarly, in the Latin American and Caribbean cases, revolutionary regimes and movements have either not gone far enough in encouraging transitional institutions and practices or else never even tried to implement a truly socialist program, as in Grenada or Nicaragua. Harris thus distinguishes between governments committed to a transition to socialism and ones dedicated to a nationalist, anti-imperialist platform.

Harris recognizes that given the present neo-liberal hegemony and the dominant position of the United States in the world, socialist revolution is not on the immediate agenda. Socialists must therefore build the basis of democratic organizations at the grass-roots level and at the point of production. They must organize among the "lower and middle classes" and form coalitions and popular front movements. Armed struggle is not now a viable option, although it should never be discarded entirely. At this point, electoral means and popular protest or insurrection seem the most fruitful avenues.

Harris has clearly done his homework in Marxist theory and practice. He also evokes his own personal experiences. Many will object to his basic assumptions. Others will disagree with his mostly negative assessments of every transitional situation and a holier-than-thou tone that occasionally creeps into the work. Nevertheless, this is a book that anyone interested in alternatives to dependent capitalist development should read and think about. Many of the themes and topics raised remain important not only because they grapple with the issue of development with social justice but also because they inform an important part of the current debate inside of Latin America among both intellectuals and political activists.

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NOBLE DAVID COOK and W. GEORGE LOVELL, editors.  
*"Secret Judgments of God": Old World Disease in Colonial Spanish America.* (The Civilization of the American Indian Series, number 205.) Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1991. Pp. xxiii, 285. \$28.95.

This book is a well-edited collection of eight essays on the catastrophic impact of Old World diseases on Indian populations in colonial Spanish America. Perhaps 90 percent of native peoples were destroyed

within the first century after European contact, the greatest loss of human life in history. Before the discovery of the germ theory it seemed that these inexplicable plagues must have been a "secret judgment of God."

No single author or discipline could have produced a work of such depth and diversity. The authors include historians, geographers, and anthropologists. Regionally, five of their essays deal with Andean countries (Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, and two on Ecuador), and there is one each on Guatemala and Mexico. The authors have done much archival research, using *cabildo* and court records, baptismal and burial rolls, tribute lists, traveler's accounts, and so on. To their credit, they have discovered much new information, but even so, with rare exceptions, the surviving documentary record is so sparse that conclusions, especially for the sixteenth century, are often speculative.

Woodrow Borah's introduction provides a general classification of epidemic studies and an overview of sources, approaches, and methodologies. Insightful suggestions are offered for future research strategies. Hanns J. Prem's essay on "Disease Outbreaks in Central Mexico during the Sixteenth Century" describes and tentatively identifies epidemics of smallpox, typhus, and measles. Prem argues for an abrupt population decline in Central Mexico starting with the great smallpox epidemic of 1520–21 rather than "the gradually increasing course assumed earlier by [Noble David] Cook and Borah" (p. 48).

W. George Lovell, in "Disease and Depopulation in Early Colonial Guatemala," suggests that the central question in Latin American historical demography is no longer how many Indians there once were, or might have been, but what caused so many to perish so quickly (p. 49). Thus, he downgrades the sometimes acrimonious scholarly disputes over "high count" and "low count." Furthermore, he states that most scholars now accept that it was disease, not "Spanish action"—Bartolomé de Las Casas notwithstanding—that was the critical factor in Indian depopulation, not that other nonbiological variables should be ignored.

Linda A. Newsom's "Old World Epidemics in Early Colonial Ecuador" identifies some nineteen epidemics between 1524 and 1618. Her analysis of fragmentary data is imaginative. She finds evidence of seven or eight possible Old World diseases present in Ecuador in those years, and suggests also that scholars should take more heed of the impact of epidemics on fertility rates.

In "Epidemic Disease in the Sabana de Bogotá, 1536–1810," Juan A. Villamarín and Judith E. Villamarín offer a useful disease chronology, chiefly of smallpox, measles, and typhus. Little social or economic context can be provided since the surviving documentation is so sparse. In "Death in Aymaya of Upper Peru, 1580–1623," Brian Evans offers a community-level examination of patterns of birth and

death in one Andean village. He offers brief but suggestive associations between demographic trends and the local economy.

The two papers on the eighteenth century stand out for their depth of research and broader socioeconomic context, reflecting the relative abundance of documentary sources for that era. Suzanne Austin Alchon in "Disease, Population, and Public Health in Eighteenth-Century Quito" offers a solid contribution related to three issues: identification of epidemics, their demographic impact, and the response of local officials. Likewise Fernando Casanueva, in "Smallpox and War in Southern Chile in the Late Eighteenth Century," has excellent sources and effectively relates smallpox epidemics among the Mapuche and other Indian groups to Spanish regional and imperial policy.

One of the best features of this fine volume is the concluding chapter, "Unraveling the Web of Disease" by the two editors, Cook and Lovell. They offer a coherent discussion of the entire range of issues from earlier essays, including brief but useful summaries of the etiology, symptoms, and vectors of the various diseases. The volume features excellent maps and detailed charts, all of which are clearly integrated into the text. On the whole this is a judicious and balanced work, and a model of interdisciplinary cooperation. It represents a substantial advance in our knowledge of Spanish American colonial epidemics and their impact on Indian depopulation.

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JAMES E. MCCLELLAN III. *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue in the Old Regime*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1992. Pp. xviii, 393. \$52.00.

Eighteenth-century Saint Domingue (today Haiti) was the world's leading producer of sugar and coffee as well as France's most profitable colony. James E. McClellan III's study proposes to highlight the pivotal role of Saint Domingue in the world economy by focusing on the fascinating interactions of colonialism and science. Science formed part of and facilitated colonial development; simultaneously, the colonial experience affected science and scientific enterprise (science being, in the author's view, not a monolithic entity, but a dynamic complex of ideas, institutions, social groups, and individuals who embody and define natural knowledge).

Science was an inherent part of French colonialism and was institutionalized in the metropolis' culture and state apparatus. Although in Saint Domingue science served to develop colonial cartography and economic botany, it also supported slavery and the slave system (planters benefited from their slaves' inoculation against smallpox, for example). Moreover, it was promoted by the French mercantilistic

state rather than by individual colonists and colonial enterprises. In other words, in the case of Saint Domingue science was not a force of progress but "an agent beholden to reactionary powers and the entrenched interests of the status quo" (p. 9). Not surprisingly, therefore, colonial science in Saint Domingue vanished in the wake of the French and Haitian revolution.

Although McClellan raises fundamental theoretical questions in his introduction, his study is mostly descriptive. The first part of the book—primarily based on a description of Saint Domingue published in the late 1790s—presents the material setting (geography, climate, diseases, flora, and fauna), the historical development of the colony, as well as eighteenth-century society and economy. A substantial section describes the cities and towns of the colony, where only 8 percent of the population lived but where science flourished.

The second part of the study analyzes science in colonial Saint Domingue, using a variety of archival and published sources. The author shows that science accompanied the French colonial enterprise from its beginning in the 1620s with the naturalist religious missionaries. In the early 1800s the French state promoted astronomical, cartographic, and botanical expeditions. Later, as the colony's importance to France increased, so did science in Saint Domingue. Medicine and medical infrastructure became a state priority in order to guarantee the welfare of colonists and their slaves, thus the prosperity of the colony. Following the model of the metropolis, a highly stratified medical infrastructure was established, supported by a similarly stratified medical profession. Racism and the fear of poisoning by slaves, however, regulated the practice of science, and legislation prohibited people of African descent, free or slave, from manipulating drugs and poisons. State-supported science was also directed toward applied botanical research and development in order to promote the production of useful plants. In particular, the Royal Jardin of Port-au-Prince played a leading role in the beginning of cochineal dye production in Saint Domingue. Meteorology encountered marginal success, but popular science, especially mesmerism or the fad for "animal magnetism," spread among the colony's urban population. Even some planters succumbed to the mesmeric craze and submitted their slaves to ethereal fluids in order to maximize their profits. Here again, racism ruled, and black and mulatto followers of mesmerism were severely punished.

Controversy over the scientific character of mesmerism triggered in 1784 the foundation of the Cercle des Philadelphes, the subject of the third part of the book. McClellan views the establishment in Saint Domingue of this scientific society by physicians and other men of the ruling elite and its rapid transformation into an official colonial institution as a landmark in the history of science and colonialism.