

## **8. RESISTANCE AND REBELLION IN COLONIAL LATIN AMERICA (3/02/04)**

At initial conquest, resistance variable: Maya held out longer than Aztec, famous Inca state held out at margins of Peru 1536-72. Other regions only partially subdued or not at all. But in core areas, thought for long time that no rebellions.

Question of resistance in history and social science: romanticized and politicized. Question of whether oppressed accept lot. Notion of hegemony. Challenge from James Scott. In Americas little true hegemony, but people adapt to lot, accommodation as well as resistance.

### **Village Rebellions**

Study by William Taylor in colonial Mexico, shows that local uprisings did occur. Local, spontaneous, limited: attack tax collector or priest. Sometimes got a little improvement.

Must imagine self in situation, think of balance of power. Usually only small local militia, suppression expensive, hearing complaints sometimes cheaper. But regional troops available as backup for major uprisings. So both sides know limits of game.

Why no wider rebellion? Parochial outlook, little common feeling with neighbors; colonial system encouraged parochialism. Grievances particular. Hard to organize wider rebellion.

But also partial knowledge so far of how often rebellion *did* occur. Now know there were riots and mini-uprisings all across empire. Problem of charting when and why.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Century: Age of rebellion**

One cause increased exploitation. In first two centuries, buffered by low population, free land. By 18<sup>th</sup> really pinched.

Even more, escalation of demands, tightening of system. Had been corruption, bargaining with exploiters, some slack. In imperfect way, Crown did protect a bit, wanted Indians to survive.

Late 17<sup>th</sup> century on, monarchy tightens up system. Also growth of economic activity, resulted in more demands on Indians. With fading of *encomienda*, more emphasis on forced purchases and tribute to state and church. Also more emphasis on individual obligations. Relentless. Local authorities often worst exploiters.

Then in 1760s major "reforms", Bourbon monarchs. New officers, system. In 19<sup>th</sup> century, rebellions would be about land; in 18<sup>th</sup> about tax and tribute.

Rebellions provoked not just by injustice but by increased exploitation and threat to survival.

### **Revolts in 18<sup>th</sup> century Peru**

Serious rebellions occurred in southern Mexican highlands, other areas, but especially in Peru. Typical that even there, disagreements, uncertainty about nature and causes.

Two major episodes:

-1742, man claiming Inca descent, called self Juan Santos Atahualpa, revolt in *montaña*, jungle foothills. Mixed area, local Indians, displaced highlands, mestizos. Stalemate: never defeated but boxed in, could never spread to rest of Andes. Still much to learn about what happened.

-1780-1782, massive rebellion, shook whole Andes.

Most famous leader José Gabriel Condorcanqui, also claimed Inca descent, took name Tupac Amaru II. Killed hated tax collector November 1780, gathered followers.

Defeated May 1781. Other regions continued until 1783. Perhaps 100,000 lives lost.

Difficulties of understanding. Some rebellions spontaneous, others, like one in 1730, carefully planned. 1780 rebellion seems to have involved both in different areas. Not one unified rebellion, but several in different regions, starting to link up.

May not have been just Indians against non-Indians. In early stages, some white officials on both sides, local power politics. Mestizos also allied with Indians in some cases. Even in later stages, some Indians on side of Spanish authority.

So, why Peru? Think like historian, try out different hypotheses. Many intuitively fairly obvious.

1. Indians may have been squeezed esp. hard. tribute seems to have been larger part of economy than elsewhere.

2. Andean Indians not as divided. Spoke two regional indigenous languages, unlike Mesoamerica where dozens. Nonetheless getting things going on regional level was a huge challenge.

3. Native nobility may have survived more than in other areas. Mixed role. Sometimes helped exploit followers or themselves exploiters. But in crisis, source of potential leadership.

4. Inca empire remembered more fondly than Aztec. Could draw on the Inca myth as rallying point.

5. Pagan religion may have survived more in Andes, less mixed, syncretism, than in Mesoamerica. So symbols, consciousness important, just as material conditions are.

Can see no final answers, ongoing inquiry.