

MCEVOY, Carmen, 2013, *En pos de la República. Ensayos de historia política y cultural*, Lima, Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, Municipalidad de Lima Metropolitana and Asociación Educacional Antonio Raimondi. 398 pp.

This book consists of ten essays that are connected by the time period and the issues they cover. Though some of them have been published previously, here, in an interesting exercise in methodology, the essays dialogue with each other within the framework of the long 19th century, starting in the 1820s and ending at the beginning of the last century. In this eventful century, McEvoy searches out a republic that does not yet contribute to its own maturity, still disentangling itself from the viceregal system, sometimes tensely and, on not a few occasions, with tragic consequences. The republican order is the subject and the driving force of this suggestive book about political discourse, cultural practices and the coordinated biographies of politicians and intellectuals.

The strand that unites the various essays is the literary city, the locus of debates about the new political order and the place where some of its protagonists live. In exile, traveling or recently arrived after long absences, these politicians and intellectuals – for better or worse – do their thinking from and for Lima, the center where the final decisions are made. Lima provides the necessary conditions for cultural circles and institutions but it also establishes relations of opposition and rejection of these ideologues who are interested in becoming connected to spheres of power. At the beginning of the republic, the former court and monastery city had an enormous population devoted to religious life, which determined its sacred ceremonial space and its Thomistic hierarchical identity that was opposed to the liberal vision. Lima produced cadres of experts in canon law and theologians who used the nascent regime of Monteagudo, San Martín and Bolívar, who arrived in the city lacking the vices of the courts-convents that existed behind its political operations. The frustration of Monteagudo is evident: he called Lima the «city of hypocrisy» because its bourgeois liberalism was aborted in a courtly political scenario. However, the Protectorate scored a pyrrhic victory: it launched new actors onto the political arena.

These included Juan Espinosa, a soldier who aspired to make the entries in his republican dictionary into government decrees. He, José Arnaldo Márquez and Abraham Valdelomar arrived in Lima to «create the republic» as they challenged the hierarchical order that survived as a result of two foundations that were quasi antagonistic: the economic liberalism of the guano boom and the militarized republic. The author rightly points to the importance of the episode of political schizophrenia in 1854 when president Castillo had to take the oath of office while pledging to uphold a constitution that represented the end of corporations, only to then repudiate it three years later with the blessing of his most important ideological operator, Bartolomé Herrera, and the opposition of the intellectuals

who had inspired it. The militarized republic used intellectuals and discarded them when they were no longer useful. Even so, they dreamt of having an impact on readers, about technological advances and massification of communications, about defining government policies and spreading information about the novelty of the Peruvian literary republic abroad, where, paradoxically, they were seen as remote exponents of the exotic, as Francisco García Calderón complained. Valdelomar mocked the prudish city when he danced with Rouskaya in the cemetery, desecrating it in so doing. García Calderón, first during his exile in Paris and then during his internal exile, reproached Lima for its mediocre culture; his pen was insufficiently strong against Leguía's «New Homeland» but he was able to erode it. This is the genealogy of the contemporary Peruvian intellectual: the journalist, the writer, the university professor. This cultural republicanism and this dissidence preceded them.

The tension that the survival of colonial corporations signified for the republic is another theme that unites several of the essays. The republicanism of the 19th century – because of its learned genealogy – related badly to the viceregal heritage, which it labeled as anti-modern. Nevertheless, the state funerals which Bernardo O'Higgins received in Lima, Valparaíso, and Santiago reveal the way that republicanism used the viceregal funeral ceremony to promote ideological cohesion and relaunch the national project. It is in the former court where the religious bureaucracy, possessed of the required expertise, still resided where the body of O'Higgins was symbolically transformed from that of a general of the struggle for independence to a founding hero of modern Chile. It is on the «relic of O'Higgins» that the altar was erected on which the ex-captaincy general blessed its maturity as a nation.

But the greatest challenge of 19th century liberalism was not its manipulation of the Church but its difficult relationship with indigenous communities. This tension began with liberal measures such as the abolition of indigenous tribute by the liberals of Cadiz and the suppression of the communities by Bolívar. The juridical status of the indigenous corporation was eroding without indigenous communities being fully incorporated into the republican order despite the latter's inclusive discourse, as McEvoy points out. Republicanism accused indigenous people of being the cause of economic backwardness despite the fact that tribute was not abolished until 1854 by the liberal constitution that eliminated another colonial remnant – slavery. But this liberal spring revealed that the badly balanced treasury could not discard tribute as fiscal income. It is no surprise that in the 1860s, Manuel Prado requested that tribute be reinstated in order to endow indigenous communities, which were being «negligent», with republican responsibilities. At various times, the author touches on the contradictions of our 19th century liberals, who in their struggle for progress wanted to create citizenship by decree, peering through the lens of U.S. liberalism, denying that the rural population possessed the virtues of work and morality and not defending this population from the abuses of landowners. The reintroduction of tribute, on the one

hand, and denying communities access to the wool market, on the other – as occurred in Puno in the 1860s – was an apartheid-style project. Once republican ideologues, influenced by the social Darwinism of the era, invoked racialized differences to justify their discouragement with the same native population that they had once called «the noble sons of the Sun», the conditions were created for tragedies such as that of Huancané. As Sarmiento had done before, Márquez praised the republican tradition of the United States – a tradition that deprived indigenous people of that country of authentic citizenship – and Pardo promoted the immigration of Europeans as a recipe for development, describing Indians as «unwilling workers». Well-intentioned but ambiguous in the way they used the viceregal legacy, the liberals did not understand that the corporations could coexist alongside technological, political, and commercial modernity and be co-opted until they dissolved.

Paradoxically, sometimes it was the caudillos who understood the need to negotiate, employing viceregal representative traditions, as occurred after the pronouncement of the old cabildos – “the republican” peoples in the interior of the country – in the context of the liberal revolution of 1854. Equally as powerful as religious symbolism in the establishment of alliances between the masses and the caudillo state was the recognition of long existing political traditions, such as the provincial pronouncement against Echenique in favor of the liberal agenda. The hegemonic hierarchicalization of the cabildo was supported by Castillo, but this endorsement of regional power understood as the continuation of a tradition of viceregal representation in which the establishment of a dialogue between the people and the king helped to strengthen the link between them while reinforcing the idea of justice. This was to be expected of the militarized republic of Castillo and that is why there was a provincial alliance with a project that did not favor the consolidation of liberal republicanism. The relation between the pronouncement of the provincial cabildos and the populist strategies of the military caudillo strengthened the latter to the detriment of progressive sectors.

The visionary minds of our 19th century republicans could not create a modern state but they were able to imagine it and this foreshadowed the future. The social hierarchicalization and corporative viceregal jurisdictions took time to disintegrate and collided at various times with the civic teachings of republicanism, but the old order was finally eroded by the power of this discourse in the process of being implemented. This tension could not but produce casualties: intellectuals suffered long agonies and politicians, like our compatriots in Puno, violent deaths. We have built our history on their tombs and once more the author masterfully reminds us that – as Basadre wished – the republic is still a promise.

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