

I spent the first three weeks of June 1996 in Bolivia, buying books and working in the National Library and Archives.

It was an exciting time. Delegates are currently writing a new constitution that simultaneously installs a neoliberal social and economic compact and redistributes legislative representation to reflect significant population shifts from highlands to lowlands over the past two decades. There has been much much wrangling over the latter which would give Santa Cruz a large number of new seats at the expense of Chuquisaca and Potosí. Bolivia has also become a member of the global Internet in the past year. E-mail use is now commonplace; ENTEL, the national telephone utility (now Italian and Bolivian owned), has become an Internet provider; and on June 14, Los Tiempos, the Cochabamba daily newspaper, launched an on-line edition at <http://www.nrc.edu.bo/tiempos/hoy/edicion.htm>.

While bibliographic and research developments could not match the excitement of political and telecommunications events, they were not without their significance. The Archivo y Bibliotecas Nacionales (one institution) is now a dependency of the Banco Central and, with financing from its parent, has added staff and computers which provide more and better services to readers. The director has published a brief guide, *Biblioteca Nacional de Bolivia Archivo Nacional de Bolivia, apuntes sobre su creación y desarrollo histórico* (Sucre, 1996). Bolivian publishing was on display at the Feria del Libro in La Paz, which began June 24. The fair featured 150 exhibitors and a remarkably vibrant array of publications.

I spent most of my time in Sucre, researching the history of cinchona production in the mid-19th century, when a particular species of the plant (*Cinchona Calisaya*), found only in the Bolivian montaña, dominated world production due to its high concentration of quinine alkaloids. Records in the national repository document levels of production and changing policies that attempted to regulate and tax the product on its way to European markets. Despite its natural advantages, Bolivian production faced geographical obstacles in harvesting and shipping, depletion of its *Cinchona* forests, and competition from Colombian and Ecuadorian sources, factors remarkably similar to natural rubber production later in the century. Also in the archives were Tom Abercrombie, Erick Langer, Tristan Platt, and Cynthia Radding, whose comments and criticism enriched the experience immeasurably.

Shifting headgear, I used the book fair to discover a number of new Bolivian titles of interest to researchers. *Nueva economía*, now in its fourth year, publishes a weekly account of economic and financial news (Casilla 576, La Paz). *Bolivian Times*, gives news in English, coverage similar to Peru's *Lima Times* (Casilla 1696, La Paz). Other serials of interest, and little subscribed in the States, are *Sopocachi. revista cultural* (?-no.26 is dic1995/enero 1996); *Encuentro. Revista boliviana de cultura* (1988?- ), *Común. Revista de comunicación* (1994- ); *Punto cero*1995- ); and *El tono del pueblo*(1996- ).

Bolivian NGOs continue to publish important scholarly materials in Bolivia. ILDIS and Cedoin (Centro de Documentación e Información) are quite active. Often NGOs publish

in conjunction with government ministries, such as Secretaría Nacional de Participación Popular (SNPP). Among these copublications is *Bolivia, la participación popular en cifras*, which includes two diskettes that hold most of the tabled data. Thus far the Instituto Nacional de Estadística is not making its machine readable files available to the public. But publications such as the Bolsa Boliviana de Valores' *Boletín quinquenal, 1989-1994*, with accompanying statistical diskette, suggests that INE will soon follow suit.

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