
In this brief study of the Comunero Rebellion, Inés Pinto Escobar offers both description and analysis. The first three chapters are broadly introductory to late eighteenth-century New Granada in that they describe major ethnic groups, economic regions, and the fiscal structure of the colony. Chapter 4 is a brief narrative summary of the rebellion, several facets of which are analyzed individually in succeeding chapters. Finally Pinto Escobar compares 1781 with 1810 and offers some general conclusions. Passing reference is made to uprisings elsewhere, but this is a study of the rebellion in Socorro.

This volume originated as a thesis at the University of Paris in 1969 under the direction of a professor who believed in the interdependence of historical and economic analysis. While the Comunero Rebellion is congenial to such an approach, much of the economic data presented in this study, especially in the chapter on fiscal structure, is poorly integrated into Pinto Escobar’s analysis.

Pinto Escobar has reached plausible general conclusions. That there were economic motives for the rebellion and that the actions of the participants on both sides were motivated by economic self-interest cannot be gainsaid. Royal fiscal policies were often damaging to local economic development. The people were susceptible to manipulation by their presumed betters and especially by an archbishop. Her explanation of individual roles and the local context is less satisfactory. In some respects that defect may be remedied by reading John Leddy Phelan, The People and the King (1978), but neither Pinto Escobar nor Phelan offer a completely convincing explanation of some issues such as the role and fate of José Antonio Galán and the Marquis of San Jorge.

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The origin of Spanish American liberalism is a much debated subject. Some scholars maintain that liberalism was an alien ideology