

debate among Jewish historians. One need not be a partisan of either position in order to realize that, since 1966, no historian can tackle the subject of marranism without responding to Netanyahu's challenge.

This, Lieberman fails to do. His account of the personal tragedies of individuals caught in the toils of the Inquisition never rises above the level of bathos. Missing entirely is the sweep of political, economic, and social forces that brought the captives and their captors to this historic confrontation. Most of Lieberman's sources date from the 1950s or earlier. Netanyahu's work is not mentioned in the bibliography. Neither is the equally important work of Albert Sicroff, who traced the concept of *limpieza de sangre*, the legal means by which Spanish society contrived to keep its central institutions free of the Catholic descendants of Jews (thus rendering conversion a mockery). It is true that these authors are mentioned in an appendix, but in a polemical context only, and without expounding their ideas or, more important, dealing with them. In fact, throughout the book, Lieberman reveals that his own conception of who the marranos were is rather mushy. "New Christian' (read crypto-Jewish) . . ." (p. 156) is an equation that is not historically defensible, blurring as it does the distinction between seeming Catholics who practiced Jewish rites in secret (crypto-Jews or *judaizantes*), and believing Catholics who were torn from the bosom of the church through the accident of having had a Jewish grandmother.

Readers will recognize much of the material contained in this book, for it has appeared previously in other books and articles written by this prolific author. The prose is choppy and awkward; a good copy editor would have been invaluable.

In his long career, Lieberman has performed a service by retelling the lives of the marranos (now more properly called conversos) and demanding a place for them in the historical record. It is left to others to analyze what that record means, not just for Jews but for Latin American societies that were founded on the utter physical, cultural, and moral destruction of dissidents.

Latin American Jewish Studies Association     JUDITH LAIKIN ELKIN

*The Population of Mexico: Trends, Issues, and Policies.* Edited by FRANCISCO ALBA. Translated by MARJORY MATTINGLY URQUIDI. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1982. Tables. Notes. Figures. Index. Pp. xii, 127. Cloth. \$24.95.

As Alba points out in the preface, “this book was intended for a broad, nonspecialized public,” in this case for English-language readers. Given this stated goal, there is little doubt that the book provides a valuable and concise overview of the main characteristics and trends of the Mexican population.

The work begins with a brief history of the demographic evolution of Mexico since the time of conquest and colonization. More detailed figures are given for the end of the nineteenth century, but the central focus of the book is the period 1930–70. During this time, the level of mortality fell sharply, while the level of fertility remained constant. As a result, the rate of natural increase rose in accelerated and sustained fashion, from 17.6 per thousand in 1925–29 to 35.1 in 1970–74 (Table 2.2, p. 26). Furthermore, it led to a very young age structure. In 1970 persons under 15 years of age constituted more than 46 percent of the total population. Properly, the author reminds us that this kind of change strongly influences many aspects of the social process, such as those related to education, employment, housing, health, and so forth.

The above-mentioned rise in the rate of population growth has been accompanied by a spatial redistribution of population, or the concentration of people in urban centers. Alba states clearly this point: “An analysis of relations established among cities shows that there is a single giant, Mexico City, which dominates national life and around which all other cities and the country as a whole gravitate” (p. 72).

Chapter 5 is devoted to the analysis of the characteristics and changes of the economically active population from 1950 to 1970. It shows a pronounced decline in male activity and a slow rise in female activity, with widespread unemployment and underemployment among both sexes. Future prospects, analyzed in chapter 6, are of little interest because more recent information has become available since the book was written. In fact, the projections here presented were made some five or six years ago, before the 1980 census. Since then, fertility has shown a sharp decline. At present population projections of 115 million for the year 2000 sound more suitable than the 123 million given in the book.

Chapters 7 and 8 are useful as brief overviews of the socioeconomic framework and the attitudes and policies on population in Mexico; they complement the preceding demographic analysis. As Alba clearly states in the last paragraph of the book: “demographic action would probably reduce tensions and abate pressures, but to solve conflicts and problems and step up development, population policies should be made part of the overall socioeconomic policy and coordinated with the process of decision making and national planning” (p. 121).

On the whole, the book deserves to be read as an introduction to the dynamics of population in Mexico.

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*Estado boliviano y ayllu andino: Tierra y tributo en el norte de Potosí.*  
By TRISTAN PLATT. Preface by HERACLIO BONILLA. Lima: IEP Ediciones, 1982. Maps. Notes. Tables. Appendixes. Bibliography. Pp. 197. Paper.

In each of the Andean countries, the *ayllu* is an institution that looms large in the popular image of history. This fact might lead one to imagine that it had been studied in great detail and was understood in various ways at different times. Ironically, there are strikingly different views about what the *ayllu* was and is, but they are generally vague caricatures that have little grounding in historical or ethnographic research. The widespread image of the *ayllu* in Inca times as an idyllic communal kibbutz is as inaccurate in many respects as the equally widespread image of the *ayllu* in the late eighteenth century as a hotbed of nativistic revolutionary fervor. Both of those views differ markedly from twentieth-century imagery, which tends to emphasize either the analogy of a kin-based clan, or supposed continuity as a communal land grant that had been specially chartered by the crown. As is usually the case with popular interpretations of social institutions, there is an element of accuracy in each of those, and yet none comes close to doing justice to the complexity that is revealed by a case study.

Tristan Platt's approach to the study of the *ayllu* is different, and his findings are fresh, impressive, and important. Not only does he look at this generally neglected institution in detail, but he does so in a region that has been neglected by historians; and he focuses on a period about which macrolevel historical writing is abundant but microlevel studies are exceedingly rare. In so doing, he illuminates not only the changing nature of the *ayllu*, but also our understanding of some of the impacts that national independence had on a plural society, and the ways in which laws and economic policies impinge on small communities. Although it is not explicitly couched in these terms, Platt's work is a fascinating case study of internal colonialism in an earlier era.

The northern half of Bolivia's Potosí Province had been a richly productive agricultural area throughout the period of Spanish domination; but it became impoverished as the newly independent nation-state emphasized