

result, this monograph will long be accepted as the definitive study of the Afro-American fight for equality between 1860 and 1920 in Florida and will be of much value for readers concerned with Civil Rights history in general.

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*The Criminals of Lima and their World: The Prison Experience, 1850–1935.*

By Carlos Aguirre (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. xi plus 310 pp.).

Many historians and most Latin Americanists will find this book engaging even if they lack interest in criminology. Although the book primarily focuses on the prisons of Lima, Peru between 1850 and 1935, the title is misleading as to its scope. Carlos Aguirre addresses much more than the criminals of Lima and their world, giving readers an understanding of Peruvian society far beyond the walls of its prisons.

A synopsis of the book demonstrates this point. The introduction examines Peru's contradictory and exclusionary road towards modernization, as well as the country's oligarchic state and authoritarian tradition during the time period analyzed. Then, the first part of this three-part book delves into the evolution of Peruvian criminology, formed through an eclectic selection of philosophies originating in Europe and the U.S. and colored by Peru's colonial past. In Part Two, Aguirre looks at how authorities and intellectuals viewed Indians, blacks, emancipated slaves, Chinese immigrant workers (*coolies*), vagrants and the working poor, and he argues that class and racial biases affected interpretations of criminal behavior. This is hardly surprising, but Aguirre's careful examination of such views vis-à-vis the particular matrix of Peru's heterogeneous society illustrates many of the attitudes toward race and class generally found throughout Peruvian society.

Part Three finally analyzes the world of prisoners, guards and prison authorities—a topic that on the surface seems narrow. However, here too Aguirre's analysis illuminates many aspects of wider Peruvian society, including friction between *criollos* (residents of urban and coastal areas) and *serranos* (people of indigenous background) and the prevalence of paternalistic and clientelistic relationships. Aguirre concludes that from the beginning, a system of corruption, negotiation and arbitrary violence thwarted criminologists' programs of prisoner rehabilitation and that this system in many ways reflected how power and domination were exercised and contested in Peru's authoritarian society as a whole.

Aguirre develops the useful concept of the "customary order," which describes the informal characteristics of prison operation. These characteristics resulted "from the series of negotiations, transactions, and mutual accommodations between inmates and prison officials and guards" (p. 144). However, it should be noted that when Aguirre mentions this "customary order" several times in the introduction, its meaning is unclear. Once Aguirre defines the "customary order" much later on page 144, his analysis becomes particularly fascinating. Above all,

the “customary order” was informal, fueled by a cash economy within the prisons and by the authorities’ need to avert major eruptions of violence and unrest, especially since funds to maintain prison order were chronically insufficient. The result was a system that at times enabled prisoners to ameliorate the most oppressive aspects of their incarceration, but at other times was punctuated with arbitrary violence. Many prisoners—especially those without financial resources or special influence—found themselves largely left out of the benefits of the customary order, and some, such as a group of inmates who called themselves the “Prisoner Friends of Order” (*Presos amigos del orden*), actually denounced the loose discipline.

Other insightful analyses involve the honor of *faites* (bullies) and the effeminate image of *rateros* (petty thieves), in addition to the intolerance and abuse of vagrants and lower-class men whom authorities found it convenient to classify as vagrants. Aguirre also examines various subcultures of Lima’s male prison population. He found that tattooing, although “among the most common markers of identity among prisoners,” did “not seem to have enjoyed widespread popularity among the Lima prison population” (pp. 165, 167). However, the chewing of coca leaves and the use of prison jargon were common elements of prisoner subculture. Coca-leaf chewing provided a pleasing stimulant for the prisoners, while prison authorities believed that tolerating its use reduced prisoner violence and unrest. In between prison authorities and coca-leaf-chewing prisoners stood the prison employees, who profited from the sale of coca leaves and used coca as a means to exert power and control over the prison population. Prisoners’ development of a unique jargon was not a phenomenon particularly unique to the prisoners of Lima; similar to contemporary U.S. society, many terms and expressions invented by prisoners eventually entered into non-criminal parlance, especially in dialects of the lower classes. Also similar to prison subcultures found in other parts of the world was the alleged prevalence of homosexual relations among prisoners. Frequently reflective of power relationships, homosexuality probably often resulted from coercion and physical abuse. However, Aguirre concedes that his conclusions on prisoner homosexuality might be less than solid, since his sources on the matter nearly all reflect the views of observers who were hostile to the inmates’ sexual practices.

Aguirre’s thematic organization at times leads to repetition and abrupt leaps in chronology. In some instances, specialized terms are used before they are defined or long after they are defined, making the reading difficult on occasion. A glossary would have been helpful. Nevertheless, these quibbles do not detract from the value of this work. Examining a wide variety of documents collected by the *Dirección General de Prisiones* and currently housed in Peru’s National Archives, Aguirre has produced a work of impressive research. He analyzes a variety of topics, both broad and narrow in scope, and the completion of this difficult task merits commendation. This book contributes significantly to the understanding of Peruvian criminology, the penal system and Peruvian society in general.