

SIDNEY CHALHOUB: *Cortiços e epidemias na Corte Imperial, São Paulo*. Companhia das Letras, 1996.

This volume is an updated version of the author's *Tese de Livre Docência* (a thesis after the Ph.D. which is required in certain Brazilian universities for promotion) submitted to his university (Universidade Estadual de Campinas-UNICAMP), one of the most prestigious in Brazil. The book is a social history of medicine, concentrating on diseases such as smallpox and yellow fever in Rio de Janeiro, although tuberculosis is also discussed and some degree of comparison is made with other places and times.

There are three chapters, the first being on the struggle or war against *cortiços*, the title of a previous article on the subject published in Portuguese in "Primeira Versão," a series of discussion papers issued by the History Department at UNICAMP. The chapter begins with a description of the destruction of Rio's most famous *cortiço*, the Cabeça de Porco, in a way which is reminiscent of Foucault's description of a slaughter in the opening of *Surveiller et punir, naissance de la prison*. *Cortiços* are former middle-class housing, with many overcrowded rooms rented to a single family (sometimes with a lodger), or rooms built around a yard in the middle of a block, with access through a corridor, though in the case of the Cabeça de Porco, it seems that the access was larger. The Cabeça de Porco was destroyed in 1893, during Barata Ribeiro's term in office as mayor, the name Barata meaning a kind of insect, the *cucaracha*. Significantly, a cartoon published at the time on the cover of a magazine called *Renascença*, showing a *barata* on top of a severed pig's head, is included among the illustrations. Chalhoub discusses the notion of dangerous classes as used by the English writer Mary Carpenter in the 1840s, in a book on criminality and *infancia culpada* (criminal childhood), stating that this was the nineteenth-century equivalent of the current *meninos de rua* (street children) (p. 20). Although this is an interesting suggestion, one must bear in mind that this kind of statement contradicts recent theoretical developments in the international historiography, namely, the linguistic turn or revolution in history, a subject which has in Gareth Stedman Jones, from King's College, Cambridge, one of its leading exponents. Social constructions of concepts such as the ones at hand take place in precise historical contexts, with precise meanings related to each historical situation. Therefore, although a certain similarity between the two concepts can be and was established, they are not the same.

Chapter two deals with yellow fever specifically. Early versions of it were published in English in the *Journal of Latin American Studies* (1993), as well as in Portuguese in *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* (1993). I read the English version and enjoyed the account, the careful discussion of the mortality demography

of the disease, and the author's style. Chapter three is dedicated to smallpox, with quite a good description of the history of vaccination in Rio de Janeiro. Here, the author provides important information on one of the possible reasons for the Revolta da Vacina (revolt against vaccination) in 1904: the dissatisfaction of the population with the power of the state through its doctors or the doctors and health officials employed by the institution with a concession to vaccinate. Chalhoub discusses previous interpretations of the Revolt, such as Sevckenko, Meade and Carvalho, and offers a very useful explanation for it (p. 162). However, the author could have described in more detail the history of many deliveries of '*pus vacínico*' to different parts of Brazil, a subject about which he says there is ample documentation (p. 210, footnote 51). This could be important to other scholars working in the field.

The so-called "sinuous account" of black cultural roots to explain the traditional fear of vaccination is an interesting one, and there are many riveting passages, such as a visit paid by the chronicler João do Rio to a part of the city where there was *candomblé* and *pais de santo*. The quotation, from a chronicle by Machado de Assis, of a comparison of old newspapers and cemeteries is masterful, apart from being suggestive as a reflection on history (pp. 164-166). The discussion of the political aspects and implications of the medical theories of contagion and infection, as well as the attempt to put it in the context of Brazilian history, is also important and well done (pp. 168-180). For all these reasons, this is a book worth reading.

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PAUL VANDERWOOD: *The Power of God Against the Guns of Government: Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Este cautivador libro narra y analiza la ya famosa rebelión de Tomochic, acaecida entre 1891 y 1892 en un pequeño pueblo mestizo en las sierras al oeste de Chihuahua. Liderados por el enigmático Cruz Sánchez e inspirados por los poderes espirituales atribuidos a "La Santa" Teresa de Cabora, una niña en aquel entonces venerada por su milagrosa capacidad sanativa, una facción disidente de los habitantes de Tomochic desconoció a la autoridad local, decidida a no obedecer ya más ley que la de Dios. Por diez meses Cruz Sánchez y sus seguidores resistieron las presiones y los ataques del gobierno y del ejército, humillando en varias ocasiones a las fuerzas federales enviadas a someterlos. La osadía de estos tomochitecos fue noticia en México y en el extranjero, y tanto el Presidente Porfirio Díaz como las autoridades estatales