PEASANT WARS IN BOLIVIA

Making, Thinking, and Living the Revolution in Cochabamba (1952–64)

José M. Gordillo

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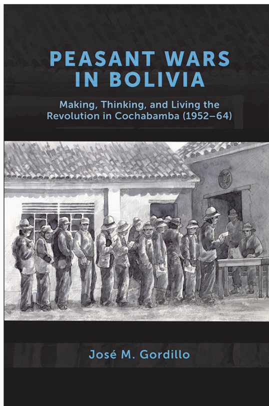

PEASANT WARS IN BOLIVIA: MAKING, THINKING, AND LIVING THE REVOLUTION IN COCHABAMBA (1952–64)

by José M. Gordillo

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Peasant Wars in Bolivia

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To Niña, my endless love.

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Abbreviations

ACSJC	Archivo de la Corte Superior de Justicia de Cochabamba
AHPC	Archivo Histórico de la Prefectura de Cochabamba
AJIC	Archivo del Juzgado de Instrucción de Cliza
AJIP	Archivo del Juzgado de Instrucción de Punata
AJIT	Archivo del Juzgado de Instrucción de Tarata
AJPC	Archivo del Juzgado de Partido de Cliza
AJPP	Archivo del Juzgado de Partido de Punata
AJPT	Archivo del Juzgado de Partido de Tarata
CDM	Comando Departamental del MNR
CNRA	Consejo Nacional de Reforma Agraria
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana
COBUR	Central Obrera Boliviana de Unidad Revolucionaria
COD	Central Obrera Departamental
CPM	Comando Provincial del MNR
FRC	Federación Rural de Cochabamba
FSAB	Federación Sindical Agraria Boliviana
FSB	Falange Socialista Boliviana
FSTCC	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba
FSTMB	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia
FUN	Frente de Unidad Nacional
MAC	Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario
MNRA	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario Auténtico
MPC	Movimiento Popular Cristiano
PAN	Partido Agrario Nacional
PIR	Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria
PL	Partido Liberal
POR	Partido Obrero Revolucionario
PRA	Partido Revolucionario Auténtico
PRIN	Partido Revolucionario de la Izquierda Nacional
PSC	Partido Social Cristiano
PSD	Partido Social Demócrata
PURS	Partido de la Unión Republicana Socialista

Preface

The fieldwork supporting this book was done in the mid-1990s, when I was preparing my doctoral dissertation. Based on the research findings, I published a book in Bolivia (2000) regarding revolutionary peasants' political experiences in Cochabamba. When looking back at the academic and political context in Bolivia two decades ago, I can better discern now why it was then that my book was so controversial. In fact, I was swimming against the tide, for an "ethnic wave" meant the popular political imagery of the peasantry in Latin America became derogatory again, while simultaneously idealizing that of the indigenous people. This happened as a result of the end of the Cold War in the world and the military dictatorship era in Latin America, during the 1980s. Therefore, when analyzing and projecting social change forwards into the coming twenty-first century, both scholars and politicians at that moment distanced themselves from the previously canonical Marxist concept of "class struggle" and replaced it with the premise of "ethnic conflict."

Twenty years later, however, the pendulum of history has again oscillated. The initially pristine representational image of the *indígena originario* (original indigenous people) has lost its luster in Bolivia. Nowadays, both in symbolic as well as practical political terms, the powerful *cocalero* (coca-leaf producers) unions are at the head of Bolivian politics and its economy. How academics and politicians will react in the future to this shifting political reality is still uncertain, but the fact is that peasants are again back on top of the central political stage. My book is an updated version of the genesis of the *campesino* (peasant) identity and the consolidation of the peasant movement that fought for unionization and political autonomy during the revolutionary period (1952–64) in Cochabamba. Thus, it will not only contribute to the specific understanding of current

cocalero unions' political behavior in the sub-tropical lands of Chapare, but also to the general discussion of the peasants' revolutionary role in Latin America.

I am grateful to Hendrik Kraay for encouraging me to write this book. He has always been generously present, both as colleague and friend, during the ups and downs of the writing process. Language barriers had been especially challenging when writing this book, because it was necessary first to transit from Quechua and Aymara to Spanish, and subsequently to English. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work done by Joe Trigueiro, who went far beyond his task as proofreader to make the text compelling to the English-speaking reader. The institutional support I had received from Pablo Policzer, the former director of the Latin American Research Centre at the University of Calgary, was invaluable. My appreciation to Brian Scrivener, Helen Hajnoczky, and Melina Cusano at the University of Calgary Press. I am also grateful to Rogelio Velez, Isabel Fandino, and Andrés Lalama, who contributed as research assistants during the initial phase of the writing process.

The book's text was enhanced by wonderful drawings, photographs, and maps. I want to express my admiration for the artistic work by Rene Gamboa Iporre, the Bolivian artist that contributed with the drawings. The fairly unique photographs of the revolutionary actors were provided by Teresa Chávez Vidovic and José Antonio Quiroga, director of Plural editores in La Paz (Bolivia), from the collection of Sinforoso Rivas Antezana. The maps were elaborated by William Gillies. Finally, I want to thank the two anonymous readers of the manuscript for their wise comments and editing suggestions.

José M. Gordillo
Bow Island (Canada), Winter 2022

Introduction

Before the 1952 revolution in Bolivia, the word *campesino* (peasant) was rarely used to designate rural folk living in the countryside. Instead, rural workers were still called "Indians," a term coined by the colonial state to differentiate the native people from European "Spaniards." The persistence of the word Indian in the Bolivian lexicon was indicative of how ingrained segregative practices were in social behavior, as rural workers were excluded from fully exercising their rights as citizens due to their alleged position as Indians, at the bottom of the social structure. This study explores the genesis and evolution of the peasant movement in the Cochabamba valleys (see map 1.3), and follows peasants as they struggle to develop their own campesino identity as part of a fight for unionization, access to land ownership, education, and political representation and autonomy during the revolutionary era (1952–64).

In April 1952 the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR) seized power in Bolivia, supported by militias composed of urban workers and miners. The revolution initiated a period of transformation in Bolivian society that lasted until November 1964, when the military seized power through a coup d'état. During the revolutionary period (1952–64), rural workers unionized and asserted a more active role for themselves in national politics. In Cochabamba, rural workers achieved an extraordinary political power that allowed them to first occupy and later on distribute lands belonging to the large estates of the valley and the highlands. As a result, former *colonos* (estates' tenants), *piqueros* (smallholders), and peons were incorporated into the modern nation as campesinos.

The historiography of the Bolivian revolution during the 1960s and 1970s focused either on state institutions or on political parties and their

ideologies, and portrayed the proletarian mineworker as the central revolutionary actor. Historians considered the role of the peasants as marginal, because they, allegedly, did not pursue any revolutionary aim. Peasants were also perceived by these authors as a premodern group that had to be educated to fully participate in national politics.[1] Although still depicting the *altiplano* (highland) and valley rural workers as Indians, historians in the 1970s utilized a short-term historical vision when analyzing the rural society of Cochabamba, asserting that cultural boundaries in the region were the weakest in the nation and that the valley Indians were by far the most mobile. In the late nineteenth century, market pressures had stimulated the Indian population to take up wage labor in the highland mines, and many remained in the highlands to work there. Those who returned to the valley, however, brought with them their intercultural experience and their savings, which allowed them to buy land and socially "transform" themselves into peasants.

Scholars in the 1970s were influenced by developmentalist ideas, a conceptual framework that perceived change in the third world as a transition from traditional society to modern society. This structural transition was considered parallel to a process of ethnic evolution from the original Indian to *mestizo* (a person of mixed biological or cultural background), and finally to white. These were rigid conceptual models that obscured a wider understanding of ethnic changes as fluid processes, processes linking identity and politics. Instead, the prevalent idea in the 1970s was that a "caste" system had been inherited from the colonial era—a system which separated Indian, mestizo, and white cultures from one another—and wherein the rural environment was the natural habitat of Indians whereas mestizos and whites resided in the towns and cities. When mobilized rural workers in the Cochabamba valley began to challenge the landlords and central powers, the "caste" system model became a deficient analytical tool to interpret the complexity of rural revolutionary change and the political role played by the insurgent peasant leaders. As posited by historian James Malloy: "Still, it is very important to note that these mobilized Indians did not become citified, 'cholofied,' or 'mestizofied' … an entire new pattern of acculturation was already under way in the valley before 1952."[2] What was this "new pattern of acculturation" about? According to Malloy, acculturated Indians who transformed themselves into mestizos

(and later on into whites) simply followed a path along stages of civilization that ends in modernity. Acculturated Indians who did not follow that road (who were not "mestizofied") suffered an involution process, a process that scholars such as Malloy thought would lead them back to barbarism. Although Indians were unionized, their "movement was a violent process which stirred general revulsion and fear in white and mestizo Bolivia."[3] In the *Valle Alto* (Upper Valley) of Cochabamba, *caciques* (Indian leaders) emerged from the rural population and began fighting among themselves in search for local power. From the perspective of scholars like Malloy, Cochabamba's revolutionary-era peasant wars were no more than local feuds among embattled rural strongmen with parochial visions.

Furthermore, the 1959 Cuban revolution and the reaction of the United States to that event preoccupied many scholars so completely during the 1960s and 1970s that the impact of the nationalist Bolivian revolution was eclipsed. When writing about Bolivia, the Cuban revolutionary experience was employed by scholars as a pre-set referential parameter for evaluating all revolutionary ends. The prominent and frequent use of adjectives such as "uncompleted" or "restrained" to modify the perceived extent of Bolivia's revolutionary transformation in scholarship indicates the intelligentsia's dismissive attitude concerning domestically lead social change in this historical moment. In the end, this academic trend meant that the Bolivian revolution was widely ignored by scholarship.[4] Che Guevara's failed guerrilla experiment and his death at the hands of the Bolivian army (1967) further disinclined the intellectuals' interest to study the Bolivian revolution. Finally, the internal support for a guerrilla movement—especially the support coming from the peasantry—was weak in Bolivia, because Bolivians were experiencing their own nationalist revolutionary agenda.[5]

The Ethnic Turn

The 1980s and 1990s were witness to what might be called an "ethnic wave" in Latin America, if not a tsunami. Workers' unions globally and in Latin America, suffered under prolonged attack and were practically dismantled, as a consequence of the broad application of neoliberal policies. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the end of the Cold War, diluted the significance of the proletarian class as a major political force in the

eyes of the global elites. Social analysts reacted by abandoning the concept of class struggle and replaced it with the conceptual web of ethnic confrontation. As a result, workers and peasants (and their political agendas) were not interesting anymore, rather it was the "indigenous" people who emerged as the new icon of social conflict and revolution.

In contemporary Bolivia, national politics is still colored by ethnic movements that began in the early 1980s and the political projects these movements advanced through their agency. According to James Dunkerley, the process of writing the history of the Bolivian revolution was interrupted by the repressive military coups of generals Hugo Banzer (1971) and Luís García Meza (1980). The cohort of intellectual exiles that returned to the country in the late 1970s, after the end of the Banzer regime, was exiled again by García Meza. This kind of political gatekeeping has prevented the Bolivian revolution from "becoming historical" until quite recently: "The exiles were thereby obliged to reflect afresh upon a range of compacted experiences, many of which upset the standard Marxist-Leninist paradigm as much as those of liberal democracy and radical nationalism."[6] The interpretive vacuum created by the lack of Marxist, liberal, or radical nationalist interpretations was filled up by ethnic rather than class interpretations of the Bolivian revolution, and these were quickly picked up by altiplano intellectuals who had recently migrated to the city of La Paz from the countryside.

International scholars during the 1980s published some interpretations of the Bolivian revolution, although these were minimal in number relative to those published on the Mexican revolution.[7] When addressing the peasants' role in the revolution, these scholars continuously downplayed the political autonomy of the peasant movement and overestimated its alleged subordination to either middle-class urban revolutionaries or proletarian vanguards. The political relevance of peasant leaders was diminished when they were held up in comparison to urban politicians or proletarian leaders. Herbert Klein, for instance, asserts that young urban political radicals, not the peasant leaders, were who triggered the unionizing process in the countryside, thus unleashing a scourge of rural violence similar to the "Great Fear" period of the French revolution (July to August, 1789). However, he argues that when the agrarian reform decree was enacted, the political behavior of the peasants changed: "With

the elimination of the hated hacendados and many of their *cholo* [citified Indian] middlemen, and the granting of land titles, the Indians became a relatively conservative force in the nation and actually grew indifferent if not hostile to their former urban worker colleagues."[8] Klein simply ignores the revolutionary role that was played by the peasants, claiming instead that by 1964—when the peasant-military pact was already signed and a military coup completed the ouster of the MNR from power—rural workers were no more than a "passive peasantry."

In a similar vein, Dunkerley states, in an analysis of peasant struggles in the Cochabamba valley, that "this region was again to be the scene of prolonged and violent disturbances during the late 1950s and early 1960s as a result of market conflicts between Cliza and Ucureña and a struggle between local leaders of the peasant *sindicatos* [unions]."[9] Once again, Dunkerley places the emphasis on parochial quarrels and shortsighted feuds between local "caciques." According to this perspective, peasants lacked their own political goals and were prone to manipulation by urban politicians. When considering the negotiations between peasants and the military to end the *Champa Guerra* (1959–64) between Cliza and Ucureña in the Valle Alto of Cochabamba, Dunkerley asserts that the truce was only possible due to General René Barrientos' charm, which had seduced the peasant leaders.[10]

During the 1980s, however, the pendulum of history again shifted towards the end of the Cold War era and—as mentioned before—social analysts reacted by abandoning the concept of class struggle and replacing it with ethnic confrontation. The implications of this analytical shift went far beyond academic circles and into political activism, as the new analytic framework was predicated upon the idea that indigenous movements and leaders were the only people capable of legitimately leading Bolivians to a prosperous future. The awakening of new historical eras, however, always requires a revisitation of established histories. In 1984, Silvia Rivera published a book on the political fights endured by the Aymara and Quechua peasantries during the twentieth-century in Bolivia.[11] Based upon three case studies (Ucureña, Achacachi, and northern Potosi), she reflects on "the role of collective memory in the contemporary peasant-Indian movement."[12] Rivera claims that revolutionary politicians had coopted valley peasants in Cochabamba by their incorporation into the revolutionary

state, through the union apparatus of the MNR. Peasants had lost their collective memory in 1952, and the new peasant identity that emerged, alongside the revolution, had fully wiped out all the previous aspects of their original Indian identity. In fact, Rivera advances the idea that the peasants' adscription to the state-sponsored mestizo project was the mechanism used to erase all vestiges of "Indianness" in the minds of the Quechua population of the valley. In contrast, Rivera concludes, the incorporation of the altiplano Aymara population into the revolutionary state was incomplete due to the persistence of a communal mentality, which led to the impossibility of implementing any kind of smallholding system in the highlands. These ideas also laid the inspirational grounds for the emergence of an ethnic movement named *Katarismo* in the Bolivian altiplano, which based its political demands on long-term historical self-perceptions of oppression.

In an article published in 1987, Xavier Albó echoes Silvia Rivera's position by asserting that the agrarian reform was launched by the MNR regime and that peasants were incorporated into the agrarian reform process solely as subordinated actors[13] Both Albó and Rivera share a premise: that peasants were always subordinated—either actively or passively—to the state's hegemonic agenda. More specifically, they claim that the Cochabamba valley peasants did not have the communal shield to protect themselves from the MNR's hegemonic domination. This position of "inherent subjugation," a position that had motivated the peasant leaders to sign the peasant-military pact in 1964, allowed the peasants to actively participate in the conspiracy against and the eventual ouster of the revolutionary MNR by military coup. As peasants had proved to be manipulable—both authors conclude—only ethnic movements could succeed in the future. The history of the revolutionary valley peasants was, therefore, irrelevant and would be forever relegated to the back burner, if not completely abandoned.

In the late 1980s, Brooke Larson published a regional history book that transformed the scholarly perception of the Cochabamba peasantry.[14] Her pioneering, long-term analysis of the cyclical mercantile forces linking the silver mining industry in Potosí to the agricultural production of the haciendas in Cochabamba unveils a parallel peasant class-formation process in the valley.[15] According to Larson, during the first sixteenth-century

silver cycle, as Indians fled their ayllus and hid in the haciendas to avoid paying tribute, landowners sheltered and protected them from state tax collectors by enlisting the newcomers in their hacienda records. Indians did not enroll as such in the hacienda records, rather they used different fiscal identities to hide their Indian identity, initiating a process of shifting socio-cultural identities that culminated in the emergence of mestizos, a self-identifying group who did not consider themselves to be either Indian or Spanish. In the second nineteenth-century silver cycle, Bolivian liberals opened up the country's markets to international trade, and increased their exportation of silver and importation of staples. Cochabamba's landlords suffered in these new marketplaces, and their businesses languished as they were unable to compete with the foreign, mass-produced agricultural products that had flooded the market and forced down prices. Meanwhile, the mestizo labor force rushed into the mines and, upon their return to the valley—cash in hand—they purchased plots of land from bankrupt landlords. By the mid-twentieth century, the valley mestizos had started building links with urban intellectuals and political activists to demand local education and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the modern nation of Bolivia for all peasants.

Previously canonical, these essentialist conceptualizations of closed ethnic groups with immutable cultures, living separately in the altiplano and the valleys, were called into question. Ethnic identities were indeed fluid, for people were able to trespass ethnic boundaries if it was in their social or political interest to do so. When colonial Indians fled their communities and reappeared as mestizos in the valleys, they were not betraying their Indian culture but rather resisting colonial oppression through the means of a newly created identity.[16] Scholarly interest began to focus upon peasant consciousness, as peasants were now perceived as active subjects in creating their own history rather than passive recipients only capable of reacting to external stimuli. It might have made more sense if this shift had indeed meant an open scholarly debate over the political roles of both the Indian and mestizo in revolutionary Bolivia, but this did not happen in the 1990s. There are several reasons for this—among them the politization of ethnicity—and the "ethnic debate" never really took place in academic circles, but instead a monochromatic focus on Indians developed, generally silencing any analysis of mestizos.

In the first two decades of the twenty first century, indigenous people in Bolivia have been at the center of widespread academic and political interest. Previous interpretations of the Bolivian revolution have been revisited under the lens of indigenous revolutionary experience.[17] When reassessing the revolution and its legacy, however, the most prevalent idea put forward was that the MNR regime and its urban intellectual operatives were the ones who initially designated the rural workers as "campesinos" instead of Indians, as part of their push for cultural change, leading them towards modernity.[18] Therefore, it was assumed, the altiplano Indians were defending their culture when they rejected the imposition of the revolutionary regime, while the valley mestizos were largely cooperative with the MNR cultural project. This assumption implicitly denied the campesinos a role as active agents in their own history and redirected the focus of social research towards the history of indigenous altiplano societies, while campesinos in the valleys received far less attention.[19]

During the first two decades of the twenty-first century, few authors published books on the political experience of the Cochabamba peasantry. Historians José M. Gordillo and Laura Gotkowitz did, however, publish studies during this period, and their studies emphasize an active role for peasants during both the revolutionary and the pre-revolutionary eras. In 1998, Gordillo published the proceedings of a round table attended by four high-ranking peasant leaders who debated crucial aspects of their political experience in the revolution.[20] In 2000, Sinforoso Rivas, one of the top revolutionary-era peasant leaders in the Cochabamba valley, published his own memoirs.[21] Shaped by their own words and voices, a new image of the valley peasant leader came to blossom, so to speak. The revolutionary-era valley peasant leaders were neither the previously abhorred *caciques campesinos* (peasant union bosses), nor the currently idealized *indígenas originarios* (original indigenous), rather they were seasoned politicians who deftly analyzed and masterfully argumented the revolutionary experience in Bolivia as real power brokers and actors.

In 2000, Gordillo published a book analyzing the peasants' revolutionary struggles against landlords and central authorities in the Cochabamba valley, arguing that peasants were dynamic political actors fighting for their rights.[22] Meanwhile, published in 2007, Gotkowitz's book focuses upon indigenous peoples in the altiplano area of Cochabamba and stresses

"the forces of law" as a central player undergirding the rural political mobilizations in the pre-revolutionary era.[23] Both studies challenged the Katarista outlook of the revolution, which depicts peasants as subordinated actors before the state, as well as minimizing the role played by memory and identity.[24] In a 2017 article and 2021 book, Carmen Solíz argues that even the altiplano *comunario* (community) leaders negotiated with the MNR regime their own agrarian reform project, thus also challenging the Katarista interpretation of the comunarios' political agency during the revolutionary period. [25] Chiefly among this interpretation was the conceit that the MNR's nationalist agenda had simply silenced the demands of indigenous communities and imposed a top-down land reform.

More recent studies by Bridgette Werner[26] and Sarah Hines[27] have further expanded the time frame and scope of peasant and popular movements in the political history of Cochabamba. Werner not only analyzes the active role of the peasant leaders when negotiating with the revolutionary state, but also extends chronological reach of her historical research on the crucial post-revolutionary era to include the *Masacre del Valle* (Valley Massacre) in 1974, when the military dictatorship bloodily confronted its former campesino political allies. Hines focuses on popular struggles over the control of water sources in Cochabamba. Although the 1952 revolution redistributed land through agrarian reform, the control of water sources was (and still is) a divisive issue in the valley. The peasant unions revolutionary experience proved to be useful for an understanding of contemporary popular movements' negotiations with the state, such as the *Guerra del Agua* (Water War) in Cochabamba in 2000. Both of these studies reinforce the validity of studies concerning the peasant revolutionary experience in Cochabamba as a means to understand current popular movements and their political agendas.

The Aim and Structure of the Book

This book reveals the active political role played by the Cochabamba valley peasants during the revolutionary period (1952–64), but from a non-state-centered perspective. Rather than looking for causes or outcomes, emphasis is placed on the revolutionary experience of the peasants. Based on contemporary research on social, political, and cultural issues in Latin America, the book goes beyond the recognized contexts

of central power and focuses instead on geographic, generational, ethnic, class, and gender informed aspects of the socio-cultural human-matrix in places where local power is situated.[28] This study was also inspired by research on revolutionary Mexico, research that often argues that popular participation and agrarian mobilization were central in the shaping of the revolutionary state. Therefore, far from being a hegemonic state, central power in revolutionary Mexico was weak and was frequently forced to negotiate power with a politically mobilized Mexican society. Influenced by European social history and comparative peasant studies on peasant agency and resistance,[29] and inspired by cultural theorists such as Michel Foucault, Raymond Williams, and Joan Scott, among others, regional case studies were conducted about the peasant experience in Mexico that challenged the widely held academic conceptualization of peasants as passive and solely economic human beings. Instead, these studies decentered the hegemony of the Mexican revolutionary regime and mainly employed a gender-based approach in their analysis of identity, subjectivity, and power under that regime.[30]

The central argument of this book is that the Cochabamba valley mestizo population of rural workers forged their own collective "campesino" identity alongside their revolutionary struggles against regional elites and the state. Their newly created identity allowed the campesinos entry into the Bolivian national political arena as dynamic actors, transformed their subjectivities, and modified the extant political culture of Bolivia.[31]

Chapter one examines the regional long-term historical narrative in order to situate the context from which the Cochabamba valley peasant revolutionary movement emerged in the mid-twentieth century. This chapter describes the process of class-formation and *mestizaje* (process of shifting ethnic identities or mixing cultures) in the valley of Cochabamba, beginning with the Inca state and the organization of a maize enclave in the *Valle Bajo* (Lower Valley), under Inca Wayna Capac. This enclave was established through the relocation of original pre-Inca ethnic groups and the redistribution of agricultural lands. The imperial Inca state reallocated these lands to colonizers from other parts of the Inca empire, such as the current Bolivian altiplano area and Peruvian Cuzco. When the Spaniards arrived in the Cochabamba valley, they established colonial Indian territories only in the Valle Bajo, while Spanish owned haciendas were

established in the remaining lands of the valley. Throughout the colonial period, haciendas were sanctuaries where a great number of altiplano Indian people took refuge, a sociological self-performative identity-shift to avoid state cash and labor tribute. A process of mestizaje began, which lasted until the mid-twentieth century. As a result, the mestizo population in the valley gained access to the agricultural real estate market, a market that had been formerly monopolized by the regional landed elite. During the pre-revolutionary period in the Cochabamba valley, hacienda colonos and piqueros led a struggle for unionization, land ownership, and education, and they were supported by Chaco War (1932–35) veterans, intellectuals, and political activists from several nationalist post-war political parties. During the 1940s, rural workers in Cochabamba challenged the local officials' and the landlords' power by demanding both land and education. Both *comunarios* (community members), in the altiplano, as well as hacienda peasants, in the valley, employed different strategies to fight with the elites. For instance, comunarios resorted to violence in the Ayopaya upheaval (1947), while at the same time peasants peacefully negotiated with the local elites to allow for the organization of their peasant union and rural school center in Ucureña, Valle Alto, (1946). Based upon their own historical experiences, comunarios and peasants assumed dynamic and shifting roles in their fight for the rights of full modern citizens in Bolivia.

Chapters two, three, and four chronologically analyze the process of "making the revolution" (political action) as parallel to the process of "thinking the revolution" (public discourse) in Cochabamba. In the first stage of the revolution (1952–53), a process of peasant unionization began at the same time as the seizure of hacienda lands by revolutionary peasants. The government took control of the process of land redistribution only when the agrarian reform decree was enacted in August 1953. The peasant movement in the valley, however, was not monolithically composed or conceptualized. In the Valle Alto, peasants demanded "agrarian revolution," which meant a grassroots-controlled distribution of land. The Ucureña peasant center led this faction, under the influence of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers' Party, POR). In the Valle Bajo, meanwhile, peasants supported the official "agrarian reform," which was a state-controlled distribution of land. In August 1953, the regime

issued the agrarian reform decree amid intense peasant mobilization. The landlords reacted by supporting a reactionary coup in November that failed in the end. In this initial stage of the revolution, the landlords, peasants, and MNR politicians debated amongst themselves the meaning of the words "Indian" and "peasant," attempting to assign a concrete character to the revolution.

In the second stage of the revolution (1954–58), peasant struggles intensified due to the MNR's first left and then right-wing policy shifts. Initially, the party's left-wing distributed estates' lands to mineworkers and peasants. Later on, the MNR's right wing reformulated populist policies, instigating confrontations between workers and peasants. Unionism was weakened as peasant leaders were replaced by political mercenaries. The conservative government of the time sought to modify the spirit of the agrarian reform by allowing former landowners to benefit from the process. Peasants resisted the government's attempt to centralize power in the hands of official urban organizations to the detriment of their peasant unions. In this second stage of the revolution, the regime monopolized the press in Cochabamba and public discourse focused on the antagonistic relationship between *vecinos* (town dwellers) and campesinos.

Finally, in the third stage of the revolution (1959–64), the Champa Guerra between the peasant militias of Ucureña and Cliza erupted. Over and above the MNR's internal factionalism, ethnic conflicts between vecinos and campesinos had even further exacerbated peasant confrontation in the Valle Alto. The plan of the right-wing faction of the party aimed towards the centralization of political power into urban organizations and this triggered human perceptions of domination and subordination in terms of both territory (city versus countryside) and society (vecinos versus campesinos). Urban revolutionaries—despite their calls for social homogeneity and the incorporation of peasants into the nation—elaborated a scapegoat representational image of the *cacique campesino* (peasant union boss) and equated him to the earlier rural oppressor, the landlord, in an effort to keep peasants as subordinate political actors. Contradictions unleashed as a result of the Cold War ideological confrontation further influenced regional politics by promoting the presence of the Bolivian military in rural areas. The military took advantage of the MNR's factionalism to negotiate power with the peasant union apparatus and gain

support for the Víctor Paz and General René Barrientos binomial ticket in the 1964 national presidential and vice-presidential election. Peasant pacification by the military transferred political action from the countryside to the city, allowing the military to overthrow the MNR regime through a coup d'état. In this later stage of the revolution, the peasants, MNR politicians, and the military debated negative representations of the cacique campesino in the hopes of further institutionalizing the revolution.

Chapter five analyzes the character of the Cochabamba valley peasantry. After the 1952 revolution, peasant leaders with grassroots support started a long struggle against landlords, politicians, and the military, and through these battles they also forged their campesino identity. Throughout this process, peasant subjectivities were transformed, and a new political culture was created in the nation. Interviews with peasants are used herein to explore their revolutionary experience and political culture. This portion of the analysis focuses on the interrelations of gender, ethnicity, and class in order to interpret and reconstruct the local contexts of power at the time. The peasants' testimonies included illustrate the patriarchal character and strong sexual content of perceived images of authority and power in the Bolivian revolutionary context. Moreover, testimonies display the subtleties of the peasants' negotiations to contest the colonially defined Indian identity and their efforts to impose their own campesino identity vis-à-vis their political opponents.

Revolutionary peasants in the Cochabamba valley actively shaped the outcome of the 1952 Bolivian revolution. Revolutionary changes were profound and irreversibly transformed the Bolivian social-matrix, its economy, and its politics. That is the reason why—as argued in the conclusion of this book—the Bolivian revolution is roughly comparable to any other revolution in Latin America or anywhere else in the world. Close to the seventieth anniversary of the Bolivian revolution, the time has finally arrived for a fresh reflection upon both its limitations and its achievements.

Sources and Methods

As the purpose of this study is to analyze peasant power in the Cochabamba valley during the revolutionary period, regional sources were privileged when searching for local information. To revisit the regional history of Cochabamba, locally published secondary sources are incorporated into

the bibliography. The documents stored in the *Archivo Histórico de la Prefectura de Cochabamba* were crucial to the understanding of regional politics and backstage political deals included herein. Judicial records in the *Archivo de la Corte Superior de Justicia de Cochabamba* and in local justice courts in the Valle Alto contained information regarding local peasant societies, power networks, and the observed patterns of political behavior of the peasants. Information in the Cochabamba newspapers has been employed in this study for a dual purpose: First, to reconstruct the sequence of political events in the revolutionary era; and second, to recover the interpretations of the events through the eyes of players who acted in the political arena. Finally, the interviews with peasants, politicians, and intellectuals—who were witness to or participated in the revolutionary events—are examined to interpret the character and political experience of revolutionary peasants.

Peasants in Bolivia in the mid-twentieth century were mostly illiterate; therefore, their direct voices can barely be found in the written sources. Intermediaries such as government officials, politicians, intellectuals, and journalists, among others, used to tell or write statements "for" or "about" the peasants. Even judicial court records that provide direct statements of peasant witnesses require precautionary measures when attempting a historical interpretation of their voices. In general, it is necessary to be aware that language and power structures indeed affect an intuitive, immediate understanding of the peasants' voices. More specifically, peasants at that time were either Aymara or Quechua language speakers with limited command of the Spanish language, which was the language of the power elite and their institutions. Once peasants' voices were finally printed in the Spanish written sources, additional problems emerged if those sources were published again in the English language. In order to ameliorate the language and power burdens, the criterion that has been employed in this study is one of an effort to quote the voices of peasants into the text narrative as extensively as possible. This solution, however, posits some methodological worries, because historians usually prefer interpreting peasant voices instead of directly exposing them to the reader.

Peasant voices in this study do not only come from written sources, but have also been generated by peasants in their interviews. It is important to realize, however, that during the revolutionary era, peasant societies

were particularly patriarchal and women were not allowed to participate in politics. The public was a male-dominated sphere, where women were banned. As a consequence, women are utterly invisible in the main sources (newspapers and archives) of information. When interviewing peasants to explore their revolutionary experience, however, some women's voices finally emerged, either confirming the authoritarian character of the male-dominated peasant society, or expressing their feeling of frustration over their constrained wish to participate in politics due to the perilous political context that was monopolized by aggressive male actors. The men interviewed were former peasant leaders, *chicheros* (chicha producers and sellers), and vecinos. The women were wives of leaders, *chicheras*, and vecinas. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the discourses generated at the peasant union (public sphere) and at the tavern or *chichería* (private sphere). Both the union hall and the tavern were places where the peasants lived out their everyday, ordinary social experiences during the revolutionary period. When interviewing people, anthropological methods were applied to gather, process, and deliver information, as such, this study crosses the established border between history and anthropology.

In chapters two to four, the description of political action (making the revolution) comes parallel to the analysis of political discourse (thinking the revolution). The premise considered is that "acting the revolution" and "thinking the revolution" were both linked processes which were produced simultaneously, but they were not mere reflections of each other. Public discourse is not limited to reflecting reality, but rather constitutes an active part of that reality. More than being just a vehicle for communicating ideas, language functions as a system of meanings and as a process of signification. Therefore, the multiple operations of public discourse are political acts, because they are framed and undergirded by concrete power relations.[32]

To examine public discourse during the three consecutive revolutionary periods, chapters two, three, and four consider newspapers' editorials, communiqués, denunciations, and commentaries upon peasant issues. Direct peasant voices that were published in the newspapers increased in number gradually as the peasant leaders' political autonomy evolved. The Champa Guerra (1959–64), which happened in the third revolutionary period, was the pivotal event that hoisted peasants as independent

interlocutors in the political arena, unleashing a rhetorical explosion within the upper echelons of the peasant cadres. According to Jerry Knudson, the success of the Bolivian national revolution was only possible because of the influence of newspapers and literature upon the middle-class.[33] After the initial revolutionary events of April 1952, as the peasants took an active role in regional politics, the local press devoted more and more space to publishing news about peasant political activities. The media-based process of inserting representational characterizations of peasants into the political consciousness and public discourse of Bolivia was intense. In the months preceding the revolution, for instance, *Los Tiempos* newspaper published around three-monthly news items concerning the peasants. One year later, this number saw a twenty-fold increase, when it reached an average of sixty items per month. Additionally, the number of editorials, articles, greetings, commentaries, communiqués, and images related to peasant political activity also steadily increased over the course of the revolutionary era, reaching a climax in the early 1960s when peasant wars broke out in the Valle Alto.

In chapter five, peasant voices, coming from both men and women in the Valle Alto, describe intimate aspects (living the revolution) of the everyday life experience of the revolutionary generation. Their testimonies showed how sexualized the perception of authority and power had become among members of this revolutionary cohort. Their testimonies also illustrate the way in which ethnicity and class were intertwined as issues, something that happened when peasants confronted urban dwellers to impose their own campesino identity. Their vivid narratives regarding the "liberating" market forces that allowed their fight against the oppressive power of the landlords was in stark contrast to their unpleasant memories of political turmoil in the Champa Guerra. The underlying message of their narratives was that even though painful, the revolutionary experience was worth living. They believe that the revolution opened a window of opportunity allowing them to fully integrate themselves into the modern Bolivian society.

In the conclusion of the book, there is an analytical reflection upon the historical status of the nationalist Bolivian revolution, the revolutionary role of the mestizo peasantry in the Cochabamba valley, and the political as well as subjective transformations that were endured by the

revolutionary campesinos. This final reflection on the Bolivian revolution itself and the role of revolutionary campesinos is situated within the context of academic and political debates during the first two decades of the twenty-first century in Bolivia.

1

Cochabamba: Bolivia's Breadbasket

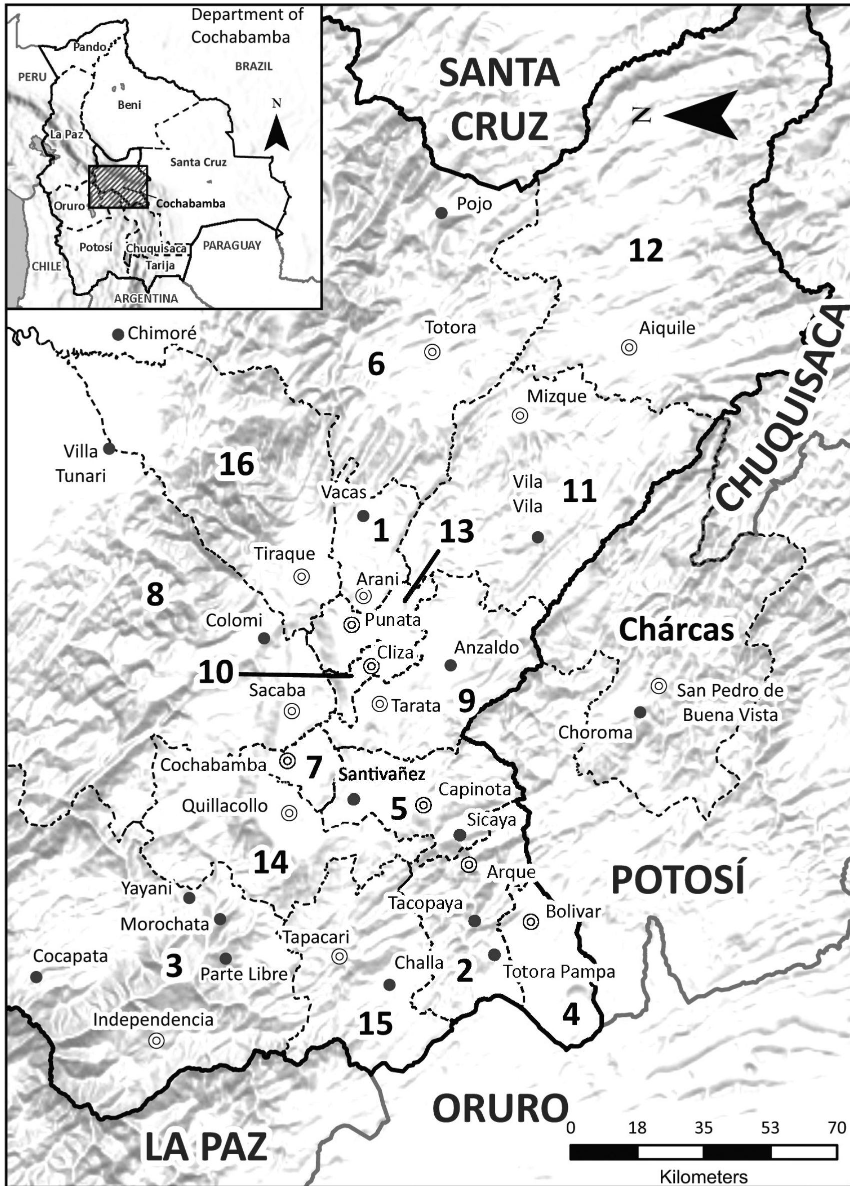
Popular wisdom claims that bad luck never arrives alone. Simultaneous to the initial combats of the War of the Pacific (1879–83)—which pitted an alliance of Bolivia and Peru against Chile—a severe drought decimated the Bolivian population; war and famine raged against the livelihood of the popular classes. Coincidentally, world market prices for silver soared, initiating a mining boom in Bolivia that spanned three decades. However, what was excellent news for the Bolivian government and the mine owners, was a bad omen for the Indian communities of the *altiplano* or highlands. The main source of government revenue shifted from Indian tributes to taxes in the mining industry. Therefore, the fate of Indian communities was sealed—at least from the liberal elite's perspective—and the government initiated a process of forced privatization of communal lands.

Indian *comunarios* (indigenous community members), in the highlands, fiercely resisted the redistribution of their territories, but the final result of the government effort for privatization was the expansion of the haciendas at the expense of communally held lands. In the Cochabamba valley, however, both Indian communities as well as haciendas owners partitioned their lands, and put-up plots for sale on the land market. Thus, while highland comunarios—led by their ethnic representatives or *caciques apoderados*—launched a judicial campaign to recover their lands during the first half of the twentieth century; the Cochabamba valley smallholders or *piqueros*—together with the hacienda *colonos* or tenants—organized peasant's unions to instead negotiate with the state for public education and social integration into national society. Leading up to the 1952 revolution, political cultures in the altiplano and the valley were strikingly distinct: an ethnic Indian comunario identity persisted in

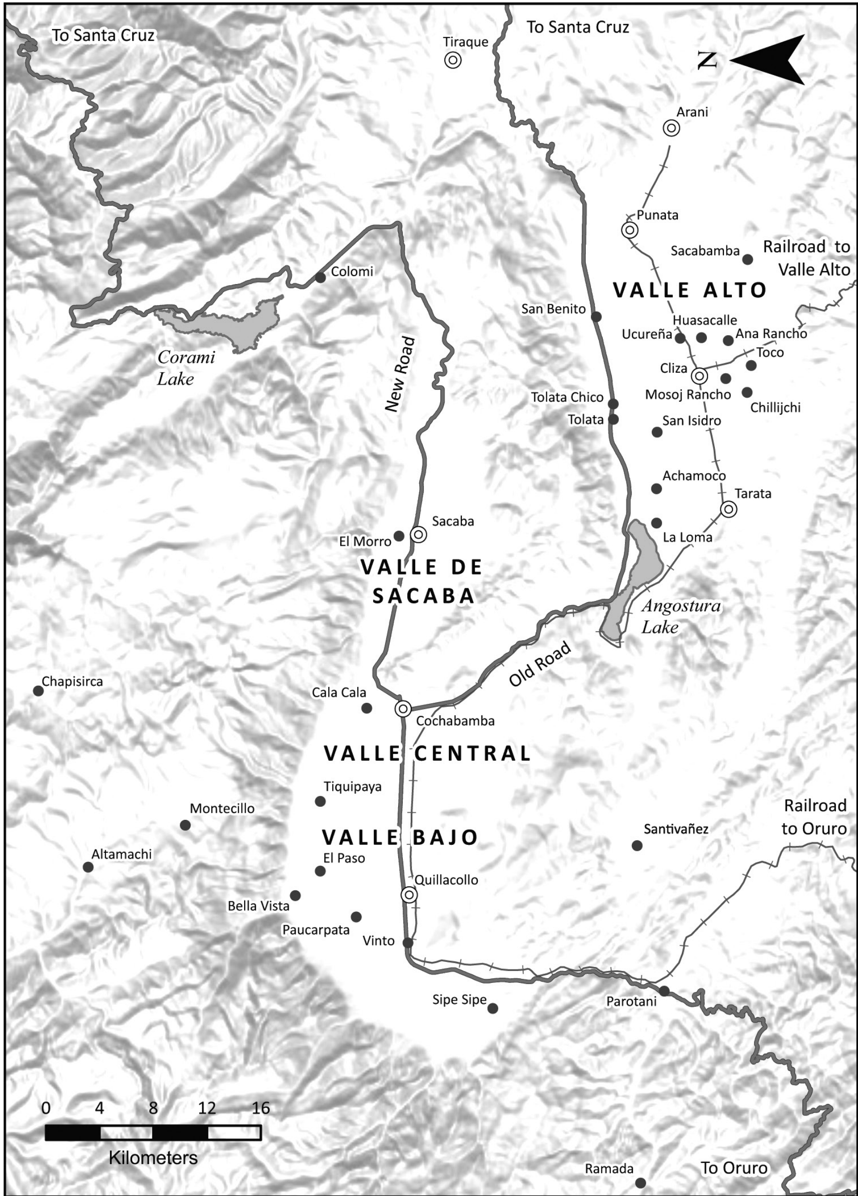
Map 1.1 Bolivia: Departments & Capitals.

the highlands, while in the valley an ethnically defined class based (peasant *mestizo* or *campesino*) identity emerged.

How did a peasant-based society come to emerge in the Cochabamba valley? What long-term historical characteristics of the valley dwellers produced a smallholding campesino society? Why was this peasant society in the Cochabamba valley so different from the comunario society of the highlands? What role did market forces play in shaping Cochabamba's peasant society? How were ethnic and class identities forged alongside the historical development of a campesino identity in the Cochabamba



Map 1.2 Department of Cochabamba: Provinces & Capitals. Provinces: 1. Arani; 2. Arque; 3. Ayopaya; 4. Bolívar; 5. Capinota; 6. Carrasco; 7. Cercado; 8. Chapare; 9. Esteban Arze; 10. Germán Jordán; 11. Mizque; 12. Narciso Campero; 13. Punata; 14. Quillacollo; 15. Tapacarí; 16. Tiraque.



Map 1.3 Cochabamba Valleys.

valley? As a sort of preamble, before jumping right into historical analysis aiming to answer these queries, let us first sketch a territorial profile of Cochabamba as it sits in Bolivia today. Geography and population mobility have always defined regional social structures and cultural differences in the Andes, and any historical account of Andean people must have its foundation in these two factors.

Cochabamba is at the center of Bolivia (see map 1.1). From this privileged geographical position, Cochabamba has direct access to four ecological niches: the western Andean highlands or altiplano; the central inter Andean valleys; the northeastern Amazonian basin; and the southeastern subtropical lowlands or y*ungas*. In the western departments of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosi, the altitude of the altiplano averages 3,750 meters (12,300 feet). Meanwhile, the altitudes of the inter Andean valleys of Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, and Tarija averages 2,094 meters (6,872 feet). In the lowland, eastern departments of Beni and Santa Cruz, the altitude averages 285 meters or 937 feet. Historically, people from the highlands were forced to temporarily colonize territories in the valleys and lowlands in order to cultivate some specific products to complement their diets, for example, maize in the valleys, and coca leaves in the yungas (see map 1.2).

Although the Cochabamba valley is relatively small compared to the department's total territory, it has always played an important economic role in the region due to the fertility of its land. The capital city of Cochabamba is located in the Central Valley (*Valle Central*). West of the city, the Lower Valley (*Valle Bajo*) contains the most fertile land, as it is irrigated by mountain streams. To the east, the Sacaba valley is also an irrigated area, but the soil is rocky and less fertile. To the southeast, the Upper Valley (*Valle Alto*) has limited natural irrigation and agriculture depends mainly on seasonal rains (see map 1.3).

Inca Rule and European Expansion

Historically, the Andean population living in what is now Bolivia was concentrated in the altiplano area. In the late pre-colonial era (early sixteenth century), the altiplano population was multiethnic and multilingual. Several autonomous ethnic kingdoms or *señoríos* (i.e., Lupacas, Collas, Pacajes, Soras, Carangas, Charcas, Quillacas, Cara Caras, Chichas, Urus) occupied highland territories and used different languages (e.g., Puquina,

Uru, Aymara). The basic social unit of each ethnically based kingdom was the *ayllu* or extended kin group. Each señorío was ruled through a sophisticated dual system of power based upon two opposed ayllus; one ayllu more prestigious (*anansaya*) and the other less so (*urinsaya*). Altiplano societies at that historical moment were sedentary and people practiced agriculture under harsh environmental conditions. The most important staples grown to support the large pre-colonial highland population were potatoes and quinoa. However, some altiplano colonizers or *mitimaes* also cultivated maize in the inter Andean valleys and coca leaves on the mountain slopes of the oriental yungas, in order to complement the highland's population diet.[1]

In contrast to the densely occupied highlands, the pre-colonial population in the Cochabamba valley was scarce. Only a few local ethnic groups (Sipe Sipes, Cotas, Cavis) subsisted in the Valle Bajo, while others (Cotas and Chuis) occupied lands in the Valle Alto, together with small groups of temporary colonizers coming from the altiplano. In the late fifteenth century, Inca Tupac Yupanqui expanded his Cuzco-based empire to encompass the Cochabamba valley, and redistributed plots of land to his allies. He allowed the Sipe Sipes to stay in the Valle Bajo, but uprooted the Cotas and Cavis to the Sacaba valley and also to areas bordering the lowland jungle region to the east, intending to have them protect the valleys from incursions of the "barbaric" yungas people. It was Tupac Yupanqui's heir, Inca Wayna Capac, however, who transformed the valley society in the early sixteenth century, organizing a maize enclave only a few decades before the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru, in 1532.[2]

Inca Wayna Capac negotiated with the altiplano ethnic lords the amount of tribute they owed to the Inca state, as part of the administrative process involved in that area's incorporation into his empire. As the Andean economy was not mercantile, tributes in the form of labor, goods, and services were required for the fulfillment of this duty to the state. The Inca channeled a portion of the surplus production of the altiplano into his imperial state; surplus that had previously gone to ethnic lords because of their ancestral levy, drawn from the altiplano population, now went to him. Wayna Capac, thus, simply adapted the preexisting tribute system into his wider imperial apparatus. For instance, the *mit'a* (a Quechua word for a required contribution of labor to the state, e.g., community

labor, or rendering services or goods to the ethnic lords) was readapted to benefit the Inca state. When Wayna Capac required the altiplano ethnic lords to send 14,000 *mitimaes* or highland colonizers to Cochabamba, he redistributed lands in the Valle Bajo based on ayllus. He ordered these colonizers to begin cultivating maize, and in doing so, Wayna Capac was, in fact, extending to a larger number of señoríos a pre-Inca practice that some of them (like the Soras in Capinota) already applied and maintained in Cochabamba. The señorío's strategy of exploiting multiple ecological zones to produce a variety of agricultural products and thus complement the diet of the altiplano population, was transformed into an Inca state-controlled project that multiplied production and mobilized people on a significantly larger scale. Cochabamba's maize enclave became, in fact, an integral part of the Inca's campaign to conquer the Quito kingdom to the north, as the fecund maize surplus of the valley was used to feed the Inca army.

Due to the strategic importance of the agricultural production of Cochabamba the Incas mobilized Quechua-speaking people from Cuzco to perform some specialized tasks there. For instance, close to the Inca's personal lands in Cala Cala (Central Valley)—which were cultivated by his own *yanaconas* or servants—an *acllahuasi* (a selected women's house) was built. The *acllahuasi* was a highly symbolic place ruled by *mamaconas* (Inca's wives), where young *acllas* (virgins) chosen from the local population performed rituals to greet the warriors when they camped in the garrisons at Cochabamba. Periodically, high-ranking officials granted some *acllas* as wives for Cuzco noble men, altiplano ethnic lords, and military commanders, as a means to reinforce loyalties and network links to the state. Thus, a few years before the Spaniards arrived in the Andes, the Incas organized a complex and powerful economic, military, and religious agricultural enclave in the valley of Cochabamba. As a result, a multiethnic and multilingual population settled (where Quechua speakers were clearly a minority) and grew there, producing a large number of artisans, agriculturalists, and warriors, who circulated periodically to fulfill their duties to the Inca state.[3]

The Colonial Order

After the execution of the sitting Inca Atahuallpa by the Spaniards in 1533, the Inca elites were divided on the best response; Paullu Inca allied with the invaders, while Manco Inca resisted the invasion[4]. Thus, when Gonzalo Pizarro (conquistador Francisco Pizarro's brother) marched south of Cuzco in 1538, he found a weak resistance in Cochabamba as Paullu's had ordered Coysara (the garrison commander) to allow Pizarro to enter. The Spanish presence in the valley of Cochabamba initiated a power realignment process, both at the state and regional levels. As the strong pre-European invasion Inca state was weakened by the Spaniards' power, the altiplano ethnic lords started to directly negotiate power with the invaders, bypassing Inca authority. Similarly, as the power networks between the altiplano lords and the local *curacas,* or ayllu authorities, in the valleys were broken, the curacas also engage in direct negotiations with the Spaniards, bypassing the altiplano lords. The incursion of Spaniards into Cochabamba triggered a massive exodus of mitimaes to their original territories. Based on the remaining population, in the 1540s colonial authorities granted three *encomiendas* in the Valle Bajo: Sipe Sipe, Passo, and Tiquipaya. In contrast, no encomiendas were granted in the Valle Central, the Valle Alto, nor the Sacaba valley, due to their scarce population.[5]

The discovery of silver mines in Potosi (1545) precipitated the first mining industry cycle in the colonial era, which lasted until the 1560s. As a consequence, the demand for labor and food supplies sharply increased, resulting in the overexploitation of native laborers and an increase in prices of agricultural products and lands. The members of the *encomendero* class (people granted with an encomienda by the crown) were among the social groups that benefited the most from the silver boom, as they controlled labor and had invested in both the mining and agricultural sectors. In fact, encomenderos were so powerful that they dared to challenge the crown by demanding the perpetuity of their encomiendas. Civil war erupted in the Andes in 1542, and as a result of long negotiations between the crown and the encomenderos that lasted until 1568, the crown finally decided to end the encomienda system and take direct control of the colonies.[6]

Once the encomendero class was defeated, the crown sent Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (1569–81) to reorganize the colonial system in the viceroyalty of Peru. Toledo dissolved the encomienda institution, to begin after the next generation of encomenderos, ruling that all the 614 newly created *reducciones,* or Indian territories, would be state-controlled and that the people of each reducción would be granted with a common possession title of their land.[7] Only territories external to the reducciones could be traded on the land market through the exchange of private land property titles. In 1573, three reducciones were constituted in the Valle Bajo of Cochabamba, based upon the previous encomiendas' population and territories. The reducción of Sipe Sipe was granted to Hernando de Silva, with a total population of 3,591 individuals and 819 *tributarios* or tributaries (abled men of 18 to 50 years of age). The reducción of Passo was granted to Polo de Ondegardo, with 3,298 individuals and 684 tributaries. Finally, the reducción of Tiquipaya was granted to Francisco de Orellana, with 2,573 individuals and 504 tributaries.[8] All these three valley reducciones were multiethnic with ayllus belonging to different altiplano señoríos, local ethnic groups, and also some ayllus from the Cuzco area.[9] Despite the reclamation of valley real estate property by altiplano lords in 1582, colonial authorities were unwilling to accept their request, dismissing an argument that Incas had gifted the lands to the altiplano ethnic lords. Spaniards instead reinforced political bonds with the local curacas by choosing the curacas who would be in charge of the new reducciones, thus further diluting the previous power networks of traditional altiplano and valley ethnic authorities.[10]

Once the total of 614 reducciones had been created across the Andean region and the number of people and tributaries was established, Toledo ruled that each year one of seven tributaries must comply the *mita* or forced labor draft in Potosi. Therefore, some 14,000 *mitayos* (Indian workers serving in the Potosi mita) were mobilized from their highland reducciones to serve for one year in the mines. The only three valley-based reducciones of the entire Andean region required to send mitayos to the Potosi mines were Sipe Sipe, Passo, and Tiquipaya of Cochabamba.[11] Viceroy Toledo's policy triggered a new silver cycle in Potosi, because it forced the native reducciones to subsidize the mining sector. In 1600, when the cycle reached its zenith, Potosi created a three decades long of bonanza for the

mine-owners, but also for the valley hacendados in Cochabamba that provided the market with maize and wheat at profitable, higher prices, as they now supplied a population estimated at 160,000 persons.[12]

In contrast to the people of the altiplano reducciones—who suffered under the harshness of the mita in this initial bonanza period—the people of the Valle Bajo reducciones were thriving. In 1593, the bishop of Quito, fray Luis López de Solíz, made a *visita y composición de tierras* (visit and land titles composition) to the Cochabamba valley. He confirmed the validity of the Sipe Sipe, Passo, and Tiquipaya reducciones land titles, with no change regarding the extension of their territories. Which meant that the valley reducciones could share with the mine-owners and hacendados the blessings of the bonanza period. For instance, as Sipe Sipe's *caja de comunidad* (community treasury) overflowed with profits from agriculture, curacas and local authorities decided to invest the money in the community by extending credit (*censos*) to private individuals to buy their hacienda lands—with the property as collateral—at a fixed annual interest rate.[13] This operation of employing Indian-owned capital to finance Spaniard's land transactions was not only illegal, but also a risky business. More than a century later, in 1717, Sipe Sipe curacas were still asking local authorities to compel ten local hacendados to make payment on 6,194 pesos owed to the caja de comunidad for loans they received between 1577 and 1586.[14] The valley reducciones' good fortune, however, changed after the period of initial boom. In 1645, Joséph de la Vega Alvarado delivered a second *visita y composición de tierras* in Cochabamba. In this *visita*, landowners secured the titles to 870 hectares (2,471 acres) of Sipe Sipe communal lands; 435 hectares (1,075 acres) of Passo lands; and, 683 hectares (1,687 acres) of Tiquipaya lands. As a result of the long-term declining trend that the mining industry at Potosi faced from 1600 to 1750, communities became impoverished while landlords and mine-owners took advantage of colonial state policies and subsidies to consolidate their power and wealth.

Once Villa de Oropesa (Cochabamba city) was founded in the Central Valley in 1571 and the territories of Valle Bajo reducciones were delimited, it was clear what territory remained that could be sold to private landowners. Although landowners had already purchased lands in the valleys, it was only with the royal grants beginning in the 1570s and the *visitas y*

composición de tierras of 1593 and 1645, that private land titles in the valleys were finally legitimized. In 1692, there were twenty-eight registered haciendas in Valle Bajo, eleven in Sacaba valley, and twenty-four in Valle Alto.[15]

The extension of hacienda lands varied depending on land fertility, location, water access, and labor supplies. Valley haciendas were generally smaller—but more productive—than haciendas in the highlands. Valley haciendas were also better connected to the road network and closer to the most important local and regional markets, mainly the mining town markets of Oruro and Potosi. For example, hacienda Paucarpata in the Valle Bajo stands as one of the valley's most successful and long-lasting haciendas. This hacienda originally belonged to Polo de Ondegardo, the encomendero of Passo. In the 1540s, he purchased the land next to his encomienda—at the skirt of the Tunari mountain range—in order to organize his own hacienda. In 1593, his son Gerónimo regularized land titles through a *composición de tierras*; the hacienda at that moment had a surface area of 629 hectares (1,554 acres) of land. In the 1880s, hacienda Paucarpata had already been partitioned into smaller lots and the main proprietors in the area were the members of the Salamanca family, who owned multiple plots of land with a total extension of 749 hectares (1,850 acres).[16]

After the territories of the reducciones were demarcated, Toledo ruled that the people living within their boundaries should be called "Indians," disregarding their previous ethnic identities. In other words, the colonial state invented the identity of Indian by subsuming all local ethnicities into one that was officially defined. Similarly, people living outside the reducciones had to be called "Spaniards," disregarding their original Iberian ethnic identities. Indians and Spaniards were geographically segregated and Spaniards were specifically banned from living within the boundaries of the reducciones. Toledo believed that both Indians and Spaniards should live separately, and not mix genetically, but in the event of a biological mixture, the offspring would be called *mestizo* or a mixed-blood person. In practice, mestizos were defined by exclusion (neither Indian nor Spaniard), but as they were half-Spaniards, they were exempted from rendering tributes to the colonial state.

Toledo's Potosi mita was not replicated in the agrarian sector, instead, hacendados were allowed to register *yanaconas* or hacienda servants in their *padrones* (demographic records in the haciendas) in order to capture rural laborers. Although yanaconas were charged with an annual tribute to the crown, labor was so scarce in the Cochabamba valley at that moment that hacendados offered to pay the tributes for the yanaconas, only if they declared to the authorities that their ancestors and themselves had been serving the hacienda for time immemorial. It was an alluring proposal, indeed. Many Indians fled from their reducciones and registered as yanaconas in the haciendas. On the one hand, hacendados were eager to shelter yanaconas, as with more yanaconas registered in the hacienda *padrón*, the more valuable the hacienda was. On the other hand, however, the migration flow to the haciendas meant a declining number of tributarios in the reducciones. Curacas (and mine-owners in Potosi) became outraged over this situation and began pleading their case to the crown.

The declining Indian population and shrinking silver mining profits further exacerbated the struggle for access to a reliable, cheap labor force between curacas, miners, and hacendados. Several new fiscal identities related to reduced tributes emerged in order to conceal migrant Indians' ethnic status, such as *forastero* (foreigner who rented land to the hacienda or the reducción), *arrimante* (subtenant who rented land to the temporary tenant or arrendero in the hacienda), and *agregado* (subtenant who rented land to a tributary Indian in the reducción). In the late seventeenth century, forasteros already outnumbered Indians in the Cochabamba reducciones by four to one, and a century later by six to one. In 1786, the total Indian tributaries in Cochabamba was just four percent, meanwhile, the rest (96%) were forasteros. According to Larson, "as the forasteros assimilated themselves into the lower ranks of Spanish society, the sociocultural distance between 'indio forastero' and 'mestizo' ('cholo') was diminished, and as reforms in the tribute and mita systems advanced, those boundaries were increasingly crossed."[17]

This long-term process of shifting ethnic and fiscal identities in the Cochabamba valley occurred side-by-side with the biological as well as the cultural mixing of the population, which is known as *mestizaje*. Mestizos, were usually excoriated by colonial (and later on by republican) elites, who felt that mestizos endangered their interests by their unruly

social behavior. In 1730, for instance, Viceroy Castelfuerte ordered a tax on people who were unable to prove that they really had mixed biological ancestry, for he "believed that the 'alleged mestizos' of Cochabamba were simply Indians and cholos who had exchanged their indigenous cultural garb for western clothing and identity."[18] Peasants, artisans, and laborers rebelled against the Castelfuerte policy under the leadership of Alejo Calatayud (a mestizo silversmith), but they were defeated by the colonial power in 1730. In 1788, *Intendente* (Intendant) Francisco de Viedma delivered his detailed description of the intendancy of Santa Cruz de la Sierra (which included the province of Cochabamba).[19] Although impressed by the Cochabamba valley's exuberance and fertility, Viedma believed that the abundance in the region was to be blamed for the people's apathy and laziness. He reported that the Cochabamba valley had a population of 94,471 inhabitants; two of ten were Spaniards, four mestizos, and the other four Indians.[20] It was the ethnic composition of the population that disturbed Viedma the most, for in contrast to his perception of Indians as "the most skillful, industrious, and loyal vassals the king has in his domains," mestizos were thought to "spend their lives in laziness, they are satisfied with a short harvest that barely allows them to survive, and they are prone to the excessive consumption of *chicha* [maize beer]."[21] Although, in that historical moment, mestizos did not have access to land property yet, Viedma was worried that proliferation of the mestizo population was in fact imperiling the Spaniards' authority and power in the region. How was that possible? According to Viedma's socioeconomic diagnosis, the valley was immersed in an overproduction crisis. He argued that traditional markets in the mines were shrinking and there was a surplus of maize yields in Cochabamba that circulated in local markets, the profits of which were in the hands of mestizo traders and chicha brewers. Moreover, unemployed mestizos employed themselves as cotton weavers and a family industry sector of *tocuyo* (homespun cotton cloth) producers was emerging. Both of the above economic activities provided extra income to mestizo families, allowing them to gradually reach towards economic autonomy, in detriment to the landlords' economic power and the local authorities' political control. Before it was too late—Viedma urged local authorities—the regional elites must expand the valley's ecological

borders towards the oriental lowlands, where landlords and entrepreneurs could create jobs and regain control over the mestizo labor force.[22]

The Colonial Legacy in Early Bolivia

Although colonial Bourbon reformers began their attacks on corporate-owned rural properties in the late eighteenth century, this issue remained at the core of debates amongst Latin American elites into the nineteenth century. In Bolivia, the first President Simón Bolívar (1825) and the second, Antonio José de Sucre (1825–28), were both fervent liberals. Bolivar attempted to end the colonial tribute and replace it with an individual tax, as the initial step towards the abolition of the Indian communities. As he faced resistance from the native curacas, he ended up maintaining the old tributes under the new name of *contribuciones* (contributions). In this case, reality proved to be tougher than ideology: the Potosi silver mines were devastated after the War of Independence (1814–25) and the basic source of revenue for the early Bolivian government was now the Indian's contribuciones. In contrast to other Latin American nations that rapidly dismantled their colonial communities, in Bolivia, Indian communities—as a remnant of the colonial territorial redistribution—survived until the 1870s, essentially because they financially sustained the Bolivian government with their contribuciones.

In the 1870s, however, prosperity returned to the mining industry and contribuciones from the Indians were no longer indispensable. Thus, the *Ex-vinculación* law was passed by the Bolivian Congress in 1874, legislating that community members must hold individual titles for their lands. In contrast to the altiplano region—where hacendados plundered community lands to increase the size of their own properties—haciendas in the Cochabamba valley did not expand at the expense of former community lands. On the contrary, the privatization of communal lands in the valley favored landless peasants, artisans, and former community members, which led to a growth in the numbers of independent smallholders, who were called *piqueros*.[23] A consequence of the 1870s liberal attacks on communal properties was the preservation of smaller, resilient communities in the highlands and the dissolution of the communities of the valleys because of the partitioning of land into individually owned plots.

Liberalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

In 1900, the first Bolivian census was taken.[24] Bolivia had a total population of 1,633,610 inhabitants; 326,163 (20%) lived in the department of Cochabamba and more than half of them (184,111) were concentrated in the densely populated valley area. The ethnic composition of the Bolivian people showed a preponderance of Indians (48.5%) over mestizos (29.6%) and whites (14.1%). In the department of Cochabamba, things were different, as mestizos were the majority (51.8%), followed by Indians (22.5%), and whites (18.5%). Unfortunately, the second Bolivian 1951 census did not include variable ethnicity in order to make a comparison. It can be assumed that the trajectory of the growth of the number of mestizos, relative to the numbers of Indians and whites continued at pace, at least in Cochabamba. What is certain, however, when comparing the 1900 and 1951 censuses, is that rural property fragmentation in Cochabamba was an unstoppable process.[25]

At the turn of the twentieth century, formidable market forces were at play in the valley of Cochabamba, which reinforced the ongoing process of partition of hacienda lands. Land fragmentation was the basis for social change, which started in the valley but later expanded to the *latifundia,* the large unproductive states that dominated the highlands. The main forces triggering the valley hacienda's partitioning between the 1870s to the 1940s, were economic crisis, debt, and inheritance. Essentially, the hacendado class was financially bankrupt. Thus, when the valley communities simultaneously dissolved, landless peasants, former comunarios, colonos, petty traders, and others took advantage of the growing land market to buy land and accumulate capital. It was through this emerging market that a new class of peasant landowners or piqueros flourished in the Cochabamba valley, at the expense of the weakened hacendado class.

In the late nineteenth century, silver mining production had again decreased and agricultural prices in the mining town markets became unstable. In the early twentieth century silver mining was replaced by tin production, but neither the silver nor the tin mining cycles were helpful to the landowner's interests in the valley of Cochabamba. On the contrary, the construction of railroads between Antofagasta-Oruro in 1892 and Arica-La Paz in 1913, favored the miner's interests, for railroad transport

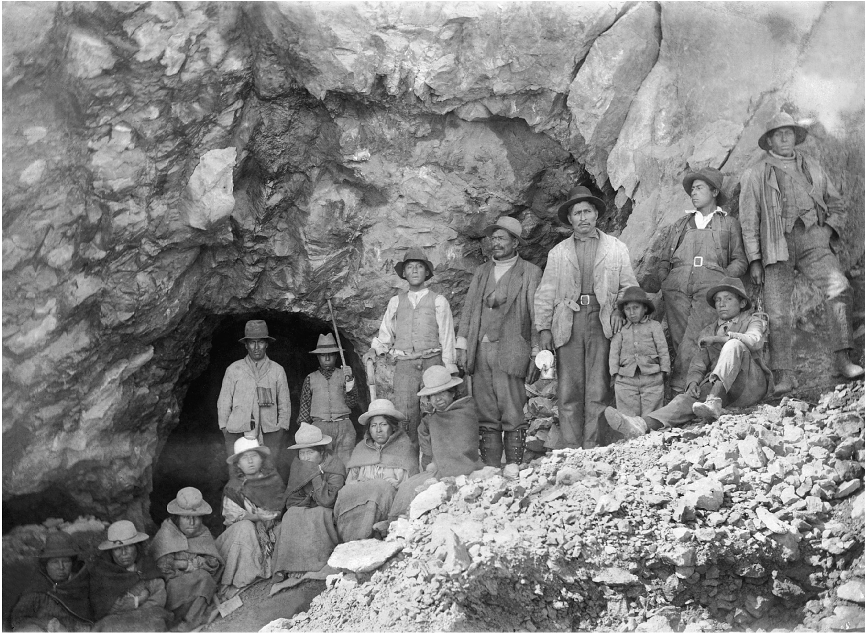


FIGURE 1.1 Peasant-Miners. Sinforoso Rivas, at five years of age, next to his father in the entrance to the tin mine "Bajadería" (La Paz, Inquisivi, 1925).

lowered the cost of exporting minerals to the world market. Landlords in the valleys suffered because of the railroads, as they were unable to compete with the prices of agricultural goods now easily imported.[26] Within this economic context, it was difficult for landlords to keep or sell their entire haciendas intact, thus they began dividing their properties amongst family members. However, even the smaller haciendas were not profitable enough for landlords to continue working directly on them; thus, they started leasing their lands to a growing number of tenant or hacienda administrators. As defined by Jackson, the hacienda administrators were "a class of *arrendadores*, individuals with money to invest in agriculture, but who were unable to break into the ranks of the landed elite."[27] By leasing their haciendas, landlords were able to partially transfer the risks involved with agricultural production to their tenants, although tenants were already risking their capitals by investing into labor-saturated markets that undervalued agricultural prices. Under these tough circumstances, the

small hacienda-owning elite and the emerging hacienda-administrators class found no incentive to modernize agriculture. Instead, both of these economic agents continued practicing traditional *colonaje* or service tenantry in the hacienda, in order to further deflate the cost of production. *Colonos* or service tenants, in exchange for a hacienda subsistence plot, supplied labor for agricultural production on the *demesne* (hacienda lands worked for the direct benefit of the hacienda owner), and in many instances, also paid a modest rent.[28]

Gradually, former colonos transformed themselves into piqueros or smallholders. Other scholars have analyzed the sources of the income that allowed the Cochabamba mestizo peasants to purchase small plots of land from the fragmented haciendas.[29] In general, they have concluded that wage employment in the Antofagasta copper mines, the Potosi silver mines, and the Oruro and La Paz tin mines provided the mobile valley peasantry enough financial resources to afford their own plots of land, thus transcending their servitude to the hacienda and becoming private landholders (see figure 1.1).

Populism at Mid-Twentieth Century

The Chaco War (1932–35) between Bolivia and Paraguay, had a profound impact on Bolivia's society and politics. The defeated Bolivian army was a microcosm of the segregated Bolivian society on that era. A small and corrupt cadre of ethnically white officials controlled the higher ranks of the army, barely interacting with their troops. An intermediate rank of white and mestizo officers and non-commissioned officers commanded the troops on the battlefield, while a large number of Indians, middle-class city dwellers, and urban workers, comprised the soldiery. The majority of Quechua and Aymara-speaking Indian soldiers faced a sort of social paradox, as they were defending a nation that segregated them into second-class citizens.[30] In the post-war era, nationalistic military governments ran the country and new political parties emerged, parties which challenged the segregation-based policies that had kept the indigenous population marginalized.[31]

The post-war era nationalist military regimes—known as the military socialists—advocated for social inclusion and government control of natural resources. This younger generation of military leaders aimed

to reform Bolivia from the top down. Colonel David Toro (1936–37) seized power through a military coup. He nationalized the Standard Oil Company holdings and created the national oil company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB). Colonel Germán Bush (1937–39) ousted Toro and enshrined a new constitution in 1938, which legitimized the legal status of the Indian communities and included a labor code. These military governments were politically weak, but their social policies profoundly impacted the Bolivian society. The urban middle-class was mobilized after the war, demanding the actual implementation of a nationalist agenda and this contributed to the growth of left-wing oriented political parties.

Among the important post-war era political parties was the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR), which had a nationalist multi-class-based populist agenda. It was founded in 1942 by a group of intellectuals—among them Víctor Paz Estenssoro, Hernán Siles Zuazo, and Walter Guevara Arze—who became important political figures in Bolivian history. The Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Party, PIR) was founded in 1940 by a group of Marxist intellectuals, including José Antonio Arze and Ricardo Anaya. The PIR had a Stalinist, pro-Soviet Union international orientation, and had advocated for a democratic revolution prior to the emergence of socialism in Bolivia. The Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Worker's Party, POR) was founded in 1935 by the Marxist intellectuals Gustavo Adolfo Navarro (Tristán Marof) and José Aguirre Gainsborg. The POR was affiliated with Leon Trotsky's International Left Opposition that advocated for a permanent proletarian revolution. Finally, the Falange Socialista Boliviana (Bolivian Socialist Phalanx, FSB) was founded in 1937 by a group of nationalist intellectuals led by Oscar Únzaga de la Vega. The FSB principles were inspired by the Spanish Phalanx, although the FSB claimed to be opposed to capitalism and Marxism, as well as fascism.

Regarding the so-called "Indian question," all the new political parties were in favor of integrating Indians into the nation by educating them in specially created rural schools for the indigenous population.[32] However, differences existed on each political party's particular approach towards agrarian reform. The MNR proposed the expropriation of unused

land on large and unproductive *latifundia*, and the elimination of serfdom on the haciendas by introducing an Agrarian Code or Statute to regulate labor relations in the countryside. The PIR aimed for an agrarian reform designed to liquidate the unproductive feudal estates, to abolish the servitude of the Indian and to convert indigenous communities into agricultural cooperatives. The POR also took part in the agrarian debate and the proselytization in the countryside; it reinforced ties between miners' unions and the peasantry in certain regions.[33]

In 1943, a military coup brought Colonel Gualberto Villarroel and the MNR to power. Villarroel sponsored a National Indigenous Congress, which was held in La Paz in May 1945, with an attendance of nearly a thousand peasant delegates from all over Bolivia. In accordance with the then co-governing MNR's agrarian policy, most of the debate topics and the resolutions passed by the congress focused not on the problem of land and property, but rather on labor relations and servitude.[34] At the recommendation of the indigenous congress, the government issued a decree abolishing *pongueaje* (personal services rendered by colonos to their landlords) and regulating personal services in the haciendas. In the following years, until the 1952 national revolution, peasants, comunarios, and landlords, engaged one another in violent confrontations centered around differing interpretations of the aforementioned decree.

Comunarios and Campesinos as Dynamic Political Actors

Agrarian conflict in the Cochabamba pre-revolutionary era (1930s and 1940s) followed two different paths, each related to the geographical areas where conflict occurred. One area was the Cochabamba altiplano region—next to the departments of La Paz and Oruro in the west and to Potosi in the south—where *latifundia* coexisted with Indian communities (see map 1.2). In this location—mainly in the provinces of Ayopaya, Tapacarí, Arque, and Mizque—community members or *comunarios* confronted the state in legal terms claiming to abolish pongueaje, recover their communal lands, and preserve their culture. The long-term legal and political dynamics—which regulated the Indian's relationship with colonial and national states—were at the core of often-violent negotiations between ethnic representatives and government agents.[35] The second area was the Cochabamba valley region, encompassing the Central Valley, Valle Bajo,

Valle Alto, and the Sacaba Valley (see map 1.3). In this location, as previously discussed, Indian communities did not exist anymore and hacienda lands had been partitioned into small, privately held plots. It was, therefore, an emergent smallholder class that confronted the landlord's and local elite's interests. Initially led by piqueros and hacienda colonos, the Valle Bajo and the Valle Alto peasants organized the first pre-revolutionary peasant unions in Bolivia. Although the Valle Bajo peasants' leitmotif for organizing their rural unions was a demand for access to water sources, while the Valle Alto's was their demand for public education and access to land, the final goal of both peasantries was to insert themselves into the modern nation of Bolivia as citizens, with equal rights and duties vis-à-vis the state. The smallholder, mestizo population of the valleys had emerged in response to long-term market forces and had seized the opportunity to become private landholders, but by the middle of the twentieth century, the time had come for them to achieve true political representation.

During the pre-revolutionary era, a new generation of comunario and peasant leaders arose within the post-Chaco War populist political environment. Both comunario leaders in the altiplano and peasant leaders in the valley, started building new personal and political networks with urban intellectuals, worker's unions cadres, and activists in the nationalist political parties. At this point in time, however, the comunario and the peasant cadres' political experience and cultural backgrounds were completely different, as the former was based on the development of long-term political forces and the latter on the evolution of long-term market forces. The comunario leaders were born in a context of already established ayllus and these were an integral part of the political networks that related long-standing altiplano communities to their landlords and the national state. In contrast, peasant leaders in the valley were born in a context centered on the logic of transitory communities formed within the limits of the haciendas, and which were composed of a mobile population of rural workers. Besides the hacienda curacas or *mayordomos*—who controlled the hacienda labor force on behalf of the landlord's interests—peasants did not have any previous access to political networks that linked them as a social group to the political establishment of broader Bolivia. Whatever the context of emergence, the comunario and the peasant leadership did not surge spontaneously or at random, but rather, as Gotkowitz put it: "the

large-scale struggles for land and justice that Indians and peasants pursued at key historical junctures were not isolated movements. Like their Mexican counterparts, Bolivian peasants intervened decisively in national political upheavals, usually in pursuit of autonomous agendas."[36]

Rural conflicts in the pre-revolutionary era were numerous and varied in the degree of violence they reached, ranging from isolated murders and assaults at manor houses, to labor strikes broadly interrupting hacienda agricultural production, to judicial trials against abusive landlords. To illustrate the prevalent political environment during the pre-revolutionary era and the active political role that the comunario and peasant leadership played, two study cases in the altiplano (Ayopaya) and the valley (Ucureña) areas of Cochabamba are discussed below.

Altiplano Uprisings: Ayopaya

The Ayopaya rebellion has been documented by scholars from both historical as well as anthropological perspectives.[37] Thus, this synopsis focuses instead on the political experience resulting from the rebellion. The Ayopaya upheaval lasted from 4 to 10 February 1947, and affected many estates in the Ayopaya province (see map 1.2), resulting in several wounded peasants and the death of two landlords. Sources documenting the rebellion include statements from witnesses that were registered in the records of the criminal trials held against the rebels, which were conducted in the judicial courts of Oruro and Cochabamba.[38]

Peasants at that era were mostly illiterate and their direct voices can rarely be found when analyzing political struggles. Although judicial courts records provide us with direct statements made by peasant witnesses, some precautionary measures are required when interpreting their voices. In this specific case, we must be aware of how language and power structures affect a direct reading and understanding of the peasants' assertions. Firstly, peasants in Ayopaya provided declarations in the Quechua or Aymara language. Police agents then translated the witness' statements into written Spanish; and, then, those statements were translated for an English-speaking reader. Secondly, the peasants made their statements with the implicit intention of avoiding self-incrimination for the crimes. The judicial courts agents' transcriptions were influenced by the political environment of that moment and so they sometimes "put words" into the

peasants' mouths. The translator sometimes altered the peasants' statements to fit in within the most acceptable political codes that are used in the English language. Therefore, only after surmounting all these filters, could peasants' voices (or murmurs) be audible and comprehensible enough to allow reflection upon them.

There were three main ringleaders in the Ayopaya rebellion: Hilarión Grágeda (a Yayani hacienda colono); Antonio Ramos (a colono from the Parte Libre hacienda); and Gabriel "the Miner" Muñoz (a political activist and MNR militant). Hilarión Grágeda, like many other peasant leaders in that era, started his political career litigating against abusive landlords. The first time he travelled to Cochabamba city in 1940 was to defend his brother, who was imprisoned after filing a suit against the landowner and the hacienda overseer, based around a labor-related incident. Hilarión Grágeda and other colonos presented a formal complaint against the Yayani hacienda owner at the Ayopaya court; later on, they arranged to carry out the lawsuit both in Ayopaya and Cochabamba city. The trial ended in 1946, and during that period Grágeda made contact with lawyers, workers, and peasant leaders, including Luís Ramos Quevedo, the general secretary and principal agent of the National Indigenous Committee, who was in charge of preparing the 1945 National Indigenous Congress.[39]

In January 1947, the Yayani comunarios delegated a mission to Hilarión Grágeda, sending him to La Paz for the purpose of making a request to the state authorities to set up a school in the area. Once in Oruro—on his way to La Paz—Grágeda met Antonio Ramos, who took him to Gabriel "the Miner" Muñoz's house. According to the Miner's police record, he was a 24-year-old man, a miner by occupation, and a former employee of the Potosi's United Mining Company. The police record identified him as an "active MNR militant and amply dangerous for agitating the native elements."[40] Hilarión Grágeda's initial statement in the trial—which started in late February 1947, immediately after the upheaval—asserts that he and Antonio Ramos were annoyed at the time they met the Miner, because the government had shut down the free defense office which had supported the natives during Colonel Gualberto Villarroel's regime (1943–46). They both listened to the Miner who—while pretending to read some papers—let them know deceptively that,

> Juan Lechín, as vice-president, had decreed and ordered that there be a civil war in the nation between landlords and labor tenants, so that the Indians should declare a strike and within sixty days they could kill all the landlords and if they did not do so, the landlords were going to kill the Indians … the three of us agreed to bring the whole Indian mass together and attack the hacienda houses to avoid the landlords killing us.[41]

Clearly, the Miner's story was factually inaccurate and was told with the intention of misleading Grágeda and Ramos into taking revolutionary political action. The fact that both peasants were illiterate and thus unable to read the Miner's documents facilitated the Miner's intention to agitate the peasantry in Ayopaya through these men. Antonio Ramos, for his part, declared that in the days before this meeting, he had already talked with the Miner, complaining about the absence of the state's support for the Indians and protesting that he personally had been pursued and threatened with death by his landlord. This was the reason why Ramos had decided to join the Miner in buying dynamite, "to put to death my landlord Germán Garnica, for having been badly abused by him and his wife." When both peasants met the Miner at his house,

> He said to us that, in the press and by the authorities, civil war had been declared in the country, and that an order had come out to kill all the landlords, and that after that they were going to hand out all the land among the Indians, and that he as an informed person was going to make all the Indians understand the orders the authorities had given, and to that end it was necessary that Hilarión Grágeda and I should collaborate with him with all efficacy to take on this task, so that afterwards we would be the highest people among the Indians.[42]

The three ringleaders immediately returned to Ayopaya and mobilized the peasants. The Miner's harangues to the crowds in Ayopaya insisted that civil war had been declared between landlords and peasants.

Meanwhile, Hilarión Grágeda's discourse focused on the idea of reclaiming land for the natives. Both discourses were engraved in the peasants' minds as different, but nonetheless complementary, for their legitimacy was not contested until the peasants felt the weight of the state's repression. For instance, a peasant woman witness, Hilaria Silvestre, declared in the trial that one day, "a strange man who called himself 'the Miner' appeared in my house, without telling his name, with his wife as well, who indicated that an order to sack, attack, and kill all the landlords had arrived."[43] Another witness, Ángel Chambilla, stated that, "we rose up advised by Hilarión Grágeda who made us believe that we were going to be the owners of the land and that we would become community members [*comunarios*]." [44]

After attacking the Yayani hacienda, the crowd headed for Parte Libre hacienda, and the peasants led by the Miner shouted political slogans which livened up their march. As Martín Zenzano, a peasant witness, declared: "on the night of the attack on the house [in Yayani, the peasants] shouted '*vivas*' to Bolivia and communism and said that the PIR had won and will share out land to us."[45] Another witness, Macario Luna asserted that, "the Miner said: 'well, our comrades are waiting for us in Parte Libre, anyone who stays behind will be hacked up [killed].' Facing these threats, we all went to Parte Libre shouting '*vivas*' to the PIR and down to the '*rosca*' (clique, an exclusive group of powerful people)." [46]

Once the peasants had assaulted all the local manor houses—leaving two people dead and many wounded—the Miner decided to return to Oruro with the aim of contacting his comrades before continuing the uprising. However, on his way to Oruro, the Miner tried in vain to get the nearby ayllus to join the upheaval. As stated by Hilarión Grágeda in his declaration:

> After these sacking and murders, the Miner said that we should go to Oruro with the aim of collecting arms from the worker comrades. He also said to us that on the way to Oruro, we would consult other community members about the measures we had taken. Effectively, in Andacaba he asked the community members for their support, but they

> did not support him and refused to help, so then the Miner said that these community members were against us.[47]

The Miner may have intended to set up a meeting with Juan Lechín in Oruro. Lechín was the head of the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers, FSTMB) and an important MNR leader. Nevertheless, according to Grágeda's testimony, when the Miner could not find Lechín, he gathered the peasants, who had followed him from Ayopaya, and told them that everything was going well and that in a short time another new law to carry on sacking would come out. However, since the police forces were after them, the Miner suggested to peasants go home and wait until Carnival to return. The only peasant who stayed in Oruro was Hilarión Grágeda, and together with the Miner, they consulted a young single woman in a black dress who said she was a doctor,[48] and who advised them "to visit the Federation [of Bolivian Mine Workers], where we immediately presented ourselves. There they indicated to us that the measure we had taken was very well done, that Lechín also agreed with us and that he would support us at all times."[49]

Finally, exhausted by the events, both rebels decided to send a letter to Lechín explaining the urgency of the situation they were in. The original letter, which may have been written by the Miner, was attached to the judicial case file:

> Oruro, 12 February 1947. Mr. Vice-President Juan Lechín. My much-respected father: Comrade, your children salute you, that is to say the peasant comrades. According to the law, last week we asked authorization in the press on the fatal slavery [sic] and assault (*saltío*) and that the decrees are never complied with nothing, it was carrying on personal service and mule service and a portion of sales (*vendinas*), and giving cheese and eggs and tax land surveys and fines without any reason and mistreatment to death. They [landlords] are content with nothing, they make us cry a lot over everything, they have gone too far, there is no patience anymore, and luckily there was a public decree for there to be a revolution against exploitation and against misery. And

> for the reason that they committed abuses we have made a revolution for our rights and the truth we don't abuse anybody without order … while we were advancing, attacking against the settled farmers (*afincados*), fifty and more soldiers have entered our territory to commit abuses … we are ready to struggle, but let there be help. We beg you that you give an order to the miner comrades for them to help us and to carry on struggling against the oligarchy … we don't want exploitation any more, nor do we want to suffer all our lives. We are united and they have full armament. … Please do us the favor of providing us with armed people … I ask the favor of sending us support. … I await your answer from hour to hour, I am the comrade from the Ayopaya Province and the Ayllu Yayani. (Signed) Gabriel Barrios. (Signed) Hilarión Grágeda.[50]

What is striking in this letter is the asymmetrical political position between the MNR politician and miner leader, Juan Lechín, in relation to the Ayopaya peasantry and its leader, Hilarión Grágeda. In ideological terms, both nationalist as well as left-wing pre-revolutionary Bolivian politicians shared the assumption that the mine workers were the political vanguard that would lead the people towards a revolution. Peasants, in general, were not considered as a revolutionary class, if a social class at all. However, the peasant's political situation in Bolivia was even more biased in the eyes of revolutionary politicians and intellectuals, for both were influenced by negative ethnic perceptions regarding the peasantry. Certainly, the abject social conditions of the peasants in that era contributed to the paternalistic postures towards peasants from the urban elites, especially their self-appointed role as saviors in their efforts to redeem the peasantry from misery.

After President Gualberto Villarroel's murder in 21 July 1946, the political right and the new (PIR backed) regime clashed with the MNR and the political left for the next six years (*sexenio*). The subversives not only agitated the political environment but also launched several attempts at a general uprising, the unrest reaching a climax in April 1952. Whether the Ayopaya rebellion was part of a greater planned insurrection,

or whether the subversive political context had led its leaders to launch a disconnected political action is a question still under debate. However, a few weeks after the uprising, three important peasant leaders associated with the MNR, Francisco Chipana Ramos, Antonio Mamani Álvarez, and Antonio Loza, caused agitation in the area of Uchu Uchu (Ayopaya). They were introduced to the peasantry by N. Soto from Yayani, who supposedly was Hilarión Grágeda's heir. A peasant witness to the gathering, Modesto Mamani, recalled the discourses of the activists:

> Telling us that they are the lawyers (*doctores*) and that the government had sent them, so that we would join up and form a union. This union, they said to us, would have the mission of making a great mass or making a unity of the laboring tenants, and we will all be **indigenous workers**. Once we were united, within a little while we would all be **communists,** and then we would be free, without depending on anybody, and the land would belong to all of us … You will have to face the landlords and the troops of the army as well—that's what they said to us. They would direct the movement, and would send us arms, guns and abundant ammunition from the city of Oruro … And, for this uprising the day of Palm Sunday was chosen, the date which we should wait for, to strike all the troops who were to be found on different estates … You will have support from soldiers in grey colored (*ocre*) uniforms who would come from Argentina, they told us.[51]

In contrast to Oruro, Cochabamba's judicial authorities took a different approach to the trial. While the latter characterized it as a criminal case emphasizing the landlords' murders, those in Oruro picked out its political and subversive character and tried to link peasant leaders with the opposition parties. For example, when they asked Hilarión Grágeda if he knew any MNR leaders, and what his relations with that party were, Grágeda replied:

> I do not know any, nor do I have relations with any, but I must state that I continually heard the miner Gabriel Muñoz say that within a short while Víctor Paz Estenssoro would be president of the republic and [Juan] Lechín would be president of the supreme court. All the weapons, that is to say, rifles, machine gun, bombs, grenades, and airplanes, will be sent from Argentina by Paz Estenssoro to arm the natives and the miners.[52]

It is important to point out that all rebellious peasant leaders in Ayopaya were illiterate. This fact of illiteracy in the comunario and peasant revolutionary cadres is not emphasized enough when scholars write about and discuss the origins and evolution of peasant consciousness in Cochabamba, although there is evidence that points to its importance.[53] The aim here is not to reproduce the prejudice of considering the literate person as civilized and the illiterate as primitive, but rather to stress the importance of what it means to be illiterate from a historical, social, and political point of view. Theoretical positions aside, peasant leaders interviewed in this study (see chapter five), always highlighted the importance of reading and writing to reach political autonomy. They were convinced that literate peasant leaders did not need intermediaries to negotiate with the state or any other political actors. In other words, they understood that the capacity of reading information and writing their own ideas were both vital activities to attain political independence, either as leaders of a social class or an ethnic group.

After the April 1952 revolution, everything changed rapidly in rural politics. On 22 July 1952, the MNR's revolutionary regime issued a decree, which granted total amnesty to all persons who had been involved in strikes, uprisings, or other acts of social protest during the "*sexenio*" (1946–52).[54] The Federación Departamental de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (Union Federation of Peasant Workers of Cochabamba, FSTCC), was founded on the 6 August 1952, in the town of Sipe Sipe (Valle Bajo), next to the Ayopaya province. Hilarión Grágeda and Miguel Carrasco—among other peasant leaders—were released from prison on 14 September 1952, and continued organizing peasant unions in the area (see figure 1.2).[55]

FIGURE 1.2 Peasants Released from Prison. Peasants accused of rebellion and murder released from the San Sebastian Penitentiary in Cochabamba. Peasant leader Hilarión Grágeda—with his hat lopsided—is standing up at the center of the second row. To his right is Miguel Carrasco, another released peasant leader. (Cochabamba, September 14, 1952).

Valley Political Struggles: Ucureña

The Chaco War (1932–35) was the catalyst that allowed the Cochabamba mestizo rural population to start building its campesino identity, by initially organizing their own pre-revolutionary peasant unions and—after the 1952 revolution—actively participating in the agrarian reform process.[56] Although the valley peasantry already had access to small plots of land and the group of smallholders was steadily increasing its numbers, pre-revolutionary piqueros did not have any political representation. The valley rural society—much more open than rural society in the altiplano—was nonetheless segregating; rural workers were the despised Indians, while vecinos or town dwellers were the decent people (*gente decente*). The valley mestizos enlisted in the army in relatively larger numbers than the

highland Indians, who were tightly controlled by the landlords. Mestizo soldiers on the battlefield got in touch with political activists and urban dwellers, who transmitted their political ideas to the soldiers.[57] Thus, veterans returning to Valle Alto became the change-makers in the late 1930s. They started building their own power networks with urban workers, politicians, and intellectuals, and helped to organize the peasant union and the construction of a school center in the hamlet of Ucureña in the late 1930s (see map 1.3).

In the late nineteenth century, the hacienda Cliza was owned by the Santa Clara convent. The hacienda extension owned by the convent was estimated at 2,700 hectares (6,672 acres), however, some 1,974 hectares (4,878 acres), or 71 percent of the area of hacienda Cliza, were sold between 1891 and 1940.[58] The remaining land in the property was leased every five years to a group of wealthy tenants, who colluded to keep rent prices low. During the Chaco War, the most important tenant was a priest, Juan de Dios Gamboa, who mistreated the hacienda colonos. After the war, many colonos returned to work in their hacienda plots hoping to be respected as veterans, but they found even harder working conditions imposed by the tenant. In 1935, the lease contract expired and had to be renovated for the next five years; Gamboa was ready to apply for the tenancy. However, a group of colonos from Ana Rancho (a colonos' hamlet in the Cliza hacienda), led by Francisco Delgadillo and other war veterans, opposed the return of the previous hacienda tenant.[59]

The colonos' logic was simple: if the tenant was to pay a lower rent for the hacienda leasing, why not lease the land themselves as a colono group by paying a higher rent? After all, the colonos' had been living in their usufruct plots for generations and fulfilling their personal services to the hacienda owner. Moreover, many of them were also piqueros and had fought in the war as loyal soldiers, which demonstrated their responsibility as hard-working citizens. From their war experience, veterans knew that help was needed in building their own power network to confront their enemies, mainly the rural elites who believed that the Indians were lazy, liars, mean, and nobody could trust them.[60] In June 1936, at the initiative of the colonos, they met with a Cliza teacher, a Cliza lawyer, and Antonio Revuelta—the son of a landowner and brother of Walter Revuelta, a MNR militant and future Cochabamba prefect—to discuss

the possibility of organizing a union and leasing the hacienda lands. The colonos were advised to meet with Eduardo Arze Loureiro, the secretary of the Department of Peasants Affairs in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, in La Paz. Eduardo Arze was the son of a Valle Alto landowner and the cousin of two important politicians: José Antonio Arze (the PIR founder), and Wálter Guevara Arze (an MNR co-founder). Additionally, he was close to Elizardo Pérez and a group of *indigenista* intellectuals, that were working to find a positive solution for the natives' problems and education.[61] Eduardo Arze was a POR militant and—together with Alipio Valencia—they were the only Bolivian revolutionaries who ever met Leon Trotsky, at his house in Michoacán, Mexico, in 1940.[62]

Initially, the Ana Rancho colonos organized their union based on a decree of mandatory unionization issued in August 1936 by Colonel David Toro's government (1936–37).[63] A commission of three union representatives went to La Paz to meet secretary Eduardo Arze, who introduced the unionists to President Toro. The colonos explained that the union was willing to lease the convent land in 80,000 Bolivianos, while the previous tenant's offer was only 50,000 Bolivianos. President Toro was so impressed that he issued a decree officially recognizing the Ana Rancho union and instructing municipalities and religious orders with rural properties to give preference to the unions of colonos when leasing their lands. Once recognized as a legal peasant union by the government, the Ana Rancho union won the bid for the land tenancy and signed the new lease contract for 40 hectares (99 acres), accommodating fifty families in plots of 0.8 hectares (2 acres) extension per family. The plots were assigned to each family individually.

The following year, the Ana Rancho union decided to focus on its school building program. Once again, Eduardo Arze—now the inspector general of rural education in the newly created General Direction of Indigenous and Peasant Education headed by Elizardo Pérez—advised the colonos to widen their goal towards the organization of a central school (*escuela central*) which was to be connected to a group of sectional schools (*escuelas seccionales*) in the neighboring hamlets (*ranchos*). The purpose was to teach first grade in the sectional schools, and the next grades in the central school, until completing the elementary cycle. This experiment was already in progress in Warisata, a central school program in the altiplano

region, and it was the purpose of the government to expand the program to other rural areas. The project was approved by the government in May 1937 and the first school director was a renowned *indigenista* teacher, Leónidas Calvimontes, who had already collaborated with Elizardo Pérez in Warisata. Colonos from the nearby La Loma hamlet decided to join the Ana Rancho project and began working together with the common aim of building the school. In order to construct the Ucureña Central School building, the Santa Clara convent donated a 3 hectares (7.5 acres) plot in a place named Ucureña. Other local landowners also contributed by donating plots of land to build the sectional schools, and colonos bought one plot for that purpose. In the late 1937, one third of the central school was built, while sectional schools began provisionally functioning in private colonos' homes. The construction of the buildings was partially funded by the government and colonos paid the rest.

These were alarming developments for the landowners, who bitterly reacted. The Federación Rural de Cochabamba (Rural Federation of Cochabamba, FRC) did not attend the landowners' national congress protesting the government's support to the Santa Clara convent colonos. A group of local tenants and hacienda administrators lobbied at the department of indigenous education to form an administrative board for the Ucureña program, with representatives of the landowners, the Cliza subprefect, and the school's director sitting on it—the program was certainly unfavorable to the colonos interests. In 1939, the local hacienda tenants accused the director of embezzling school funds and threatened their colonos with eviction if they sent their children to school. The government sent an inspector to verify the accusation against the director and found no evidence of mismanagement. As the Ana Rancho lease had a two-year term—instead of the five-year normal term—colonos started to discuss the conditions for renewing the lease. A proposition arose to buy the land, for the school director and teachers explained to the colonos that they had the preference for purchasing the land they worked on for generations. This debate triggered an immediate response employing repressive methods by regional authorities. The police arrested the union committee members and put them in jail. The chief of police warned the school director to avoid interfering in extracurricular matters or otherwise he would be detained under the charge of subversion. Only the intervention of the

prefect temporarily calmed down the tense political atmosphere in Valle Alto. Once again, Antonio Revuelta, Eduardo Arze and other union allies supported the colonos by persuading President Germán Bush to issue a decree authorizing Santa Clara convent to sell its land to their colonos, exclusively. Landlords opposed and later managed to modify the decree, limiting the land transference to colonos to 217 hectares (536 acres) and selling the rest to prominent landowners. After taking possession of their newly acquired lands, landlords changed the status of colono to *pegujalero* (a colono who occupied a pegujal in the hacienda lands), but kept intact personal services to the patrón. Colonos resisted, but police imprisoned some and fined others, finally scaling repression up to a level of terror when two leaders were deported to Chimoré (the penal colony for common criminals in Chapare) accused of plotting against the government (see map 1.2). In 1943, the land transference process culminated when 216 colonos from Ana Rancho (51) and La Loma (165) became the new landowners. Colonos from both hamlets were now piqueros, they were independent smallholders with no obligations whatsoever regarding the hacendado class.

As previously mentioned, the colonos' union was originally founded in Ana Rancho in 1936. The colonos from La Loma were included in 1939, but due to the leaders' persecution, the union was in recess between 1940–41. The school director, Juan Guerra, helped colonos to reactivate their union by strengthening its ties with the school. On 5 June 1941, the Sindicato de Campesinos de Ucureña (Ucureña Peasant Union) committee was elected and, after this, the relationship between the union and the school became much closer.[64] The Santa Clara and neighboring hacienda colonos began a protest movement demanding the end of personal services owed to the haciendas. The Ucureña union and the school sent a commission of colonos to La Paz to support the movement with no positive results, for pongueaje was still not suppressed. However, landowners and local elites were alarmed, for their suspicion that Ucureña was transforming itself into an agitation center in Valle Alto was now apparently confirmed. To protect the Ucureña union from the attacks of the elites, it was reorganized in 1942 under the name of Sindicato de Agricultores y Educadores de Cliza (Cliza Farmers and Educators Union). The newly created union was led by a committee council, whose executive members

were the school director Juan Guerra, two school teachers, and peasant leaders of the previous Ucureña union. In 1946, the Ucureña school center had forty-one sectional schools, sixty-two teachers, and 2,100 students. It was the most important school center in Valle Alto and one of the biggest in the country.[65]

In 1946, José Rojas—a former hacienda colono—was elected for the first time as head of the Ucureña union. During the revolutionary period, Rojas would be one of the most powerful peasant leaders in Bolivia and two times the minister of peasant affairs. José Rojas was born in Ucureña in 1917, he attended elementary school until the fourth grade, but dropped out of school when his father passed away, for he was the oldest son and had to take charge of the family's plot of land or *pegujal*. He was the Ucureña school's gatekeeper between 1939–40 and was in touch with the school director Juan Guerra, who informed him regarding the PIR and its political agenda. He observed Guerra's political role, the emergence of the union, and the long legal process for purchasing the Cliza hacienda's land. He affiliated with the union in 1940.[66]

Rojas and the Ucureña union actively supported the PIR's political campaign in the 1947 national election race. The PIR's platform in Cliza was the expropriation of Santa Clara's hacienda lands to allow colonos the purchase of their pegujales and the creation of an agrarian reform institute to plan an agrarian reform in the country, but both projects failed to gain congressional approval. In 1949, Vice-President Mamerto Urriolagoitia visited the Ucureña school center to donate a banner. He was coldly received by the Cliza peasantry, and PIR militants together with Ucureña unionists publicly rejected his presence. The following day, the donated banner was found hanging upside-down in a tree and Rojas was accused by the authorities as the perpetrator of the offence. To avoid reprisal for this act, José Rojas fled to Argentina and returned to Valle Alto just before the eruption of the 1952 revolution.[67]

Through consideration of the Ayopaya and the Ucureña case studies, the difference between the highland and the valley pre-revolutionary experience is highlighted. In Ayopaya, Hilarión Grágeda's iconic image emerged as product of a rural society where community links still persisted and mediated the political relationships among comunarios, landlords, and the state. In Ucureña, José Rojas' public image represented a

rural society where the peasant union functioned as the binding body of the individualistic pegujaleros or smallholders.

Conclusion

Regional long-term history ratifies the characterization of the Cochabamba valley as a dynamic agricultural society, where the relationships of rural workers with landowners and the state have always been permeated by their geographical mobility and ethnic fluidity. Since precolonial times—when the Inca state colonized the valley to establish a maize enclave in support of its expansionist projects—a multiethnic flow of temporary migrants coming from the altiplano to the valley put rural workers from disparate backgrounds in contact with one another, making for novel cultural exchange.

The Spaniard's arrival to Cochabamba in 1538 destroyed the previous Inca order and forced the return of many *mitimaes* or temporary migrants to their original ayllu territories in the altiplano. However, those who remained in the valley went through a different but nonetheless striking experience: they witnessed the construction of a new colonial order. They observed how their ayllu curacas—who were previously subordinated to the altiplano ethnic lords—were now directly negotiating power with the Spanish authorities in the valley. They also perceived that the power of the valley encomenderos depended on the deals they could reach with the ayllu curacas to mobilize the labor force. They also noted that the curacas were open to negotiating the ayllu worker's labor force with the local hacendados, who were eager to recruit workers for their haciendas. Therefore, when the Potosí mine mita was imposed in the 1560s, they realized that real power was in the hands of their curacas. Curacas who had the ability to allocate the scarce ayllu labor force in the hands of their three demanding clients; the encomenderos, the miners, and the hacendados.

However, when observing the transformation of the power structure in the colonial valley society, rural workers became aware that they could also bypass the curacas' authority and negotiate the use of their labor force with local hacendados on their own. As the Spanish crown allowed hacendados to retain possession of their *yanaconas* or hacienda servants, who were registered in the hacienda records, rural workers found it convenient for their interests to flee from their ayllus and reappear as yanaconas in

neighboring haciendas. It was a good deal for both workers and hacendados. From the worker's perspective, yanaconas avoided paying ayllu tributes to the crown. From the hacendado's perspective, larger numbers of yanaconas increased the hacienda value in the land market, for yanaconas were ascribed to the hacienda land. Curacas and miners were not happy at all with this situation, but the power of local hacendados was the shield that temporarily protected the valley rural workers' interests.

Under similar labor market logic, during the colonial era rural workers went back and forth from their ayllus to the haciendas, switching both their fiscal identities (i.e., tributario, forastero, agregado, arrimante) as well as their ethnic identities (i.e., Indio, Español, mestizo, cholo). Curacas lost control over the ayllu workers' labor force and, gradually, comunarios in the reducciones—as well as rural workers in the haciendas—inserted themselves into the regional labor market as maize traders, cotton weavers, and chicha producers. These alternative economic activities opened opportunities for the creation of new market networks, that competed with the elite's regional markets monopoly. Valley rural workers, however, did not circulate only within the agricultural framework. From the early colonial period, the Potosí mines attracted forced and free labor contingents from the Cochabamba valley. However, beginning in the late nineteenth century, the nitrate-rich Atacama Desert became an additional magnet for the valley labor force. The salaries earned by rural workers in the mining sector proved to be crucial for increasing their purchasing capacity.

At the turn of the twentieth century liberal governments in Bolivia attacked the remnants of Indian communities and privatized their lands; comunarios in the altiplano reacted differently than comunarios in the valley. In the altiplano, comunarios resisted communal land privatization and defended their ayllus. Led by their ethnic authorities or *caciques apoderados*, comunarios fiercely (although generally unsuccessfully) fought to defend themselves from the hacendados' intention to usurp their communal lands. Meanwhile, in the valley, most comunarios favored communal land privatization and put their lands for sale in the land market. Simultaneously, the valley hacendado class—which was confronting a crisis due to declining agricultural prices in their traditional mine markets—was forced to partition their hacienda lands in order to survive. This was a special moment in the valley land market, when the land supply

from communities and haciendas matched the demand created by thousands of former comunarios, petty traders, landless peasants, artisans, and others, who held an effective purchase capacity.

Therefore, in contrast to the altiplano area, where haciendas expanded at the expense of community lands, in the valley both community and hacienda lands were split in favor of a large number of smallholders or *piqueros*. These structural transformations shaped the altiplano and valley societies' political cultures differently. In the altiplano, communal power networks and ethnic authorities remained intact and comunario leaders continued the struggle against the state and the hacendado class, claiming for the restitution of their communal lands. Meanwhile, in the valley, piqueros and landless peasants coexisted on an individual basis. *Colonos* or hacienda permanent tenants were organized in the haciendas as separate units or production groups. In the pre-revolutionary period—between the end of the Chaco War in 1935 and the beginning of the revolution in 1952—returning colonos veterans politically mobilized the peasantry in the valley haciendas.

In the late 1940s, unrest was widespread in the Cochabamba rural area. For instance, the violent Ayopaya upheaval in the Cochabamba highlands (1947) and the more negotiated process of organizing the first peasant union and a rural school center in Ucureña, Valle Alto, (1946). In any event, in both the altiplano and the valley, pre-revolutionary comunarios, as well as peasants, were dynamic actors fighting for their rights in the political arena.

2

Peasant Struggles for Unionization and Land (1952–53)

The April 1952 insurrection that triggered the Bolivian revolution was mainly an urban upheaval. It started in the capital city of La Paz and spread to the mining centers of Oruro and Potosí, where mine workers mobilized to support the movement. After a few days of armed confrontation among the army and popular militias, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, MNR) took control of the situation and organized the first revolutionary government in Bolivian history. The leader of the MNR, Víctor Paz Estenssoro, was named president of Bolivia and he authorized the foundation of the Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers' Central, COB) on 17 April 1952. The head of the COB, Juan Lechín, was a sympathizer of the Trotskyist-oriented Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party, POR).[1] Lechín was also the minister of mines and oil, and through him the POR provided the regime with the additional, and critical, ideological support necessary to conceptualize and create the revolution. Over the next months, the POR's intelligentsia worked hard in the hopes of transforming the government from inside by radicalizing the MNR's left wing to shift the existing regime into "a workers' and peasants' government."[2]

Meanwhile, an already mobilized peasantry in Cochabamba rapidly incorporated itself into the revolutionary process. From April 1952 until November 1953—when the most serious attempt to derail the revolution through a coup took place—intense political struggles occurred in Cochabamba. Both MNR and POR activists competed to guide the peasant movement in Cochabamba, but peasant leaders in the region actively negotiated their own political agendas vis-à-vis the revolutionary

state. Consequently, for the first time in Bolivian history, peasants in Cochabamba emerged as dynamic political actors.

This chapter traces the early revolutionary political conflicts in Cochabamba that initiated a large-scale peasant union movement. The MNR acted as the catalyst for the formation of rural unions in a competitive process among its two internal political wings. The right wing worked from the Departmental Prefecture of Cochabamba, and the left wing from the Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos (Ministry for Peasant Affairs, MAC), in a dispute to control the peasant union apparatus.

The peasants' unionization drive was also divided into camps, each supporting different leaders, all of them ultimately seeking control of the peasant movement. On one side was José Rojas from the Ucureña peasant center in the Valle Alto, who was initially influenced by the POR. On the other side was Sinforoso Rivas from the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (Union Federation of Peasant Workers of Cochabamba, FSTCC) in the Valle Bajo, who was influenced by the MNR's left-wing sector and the COB (see map 1.3).

Similarly, the Cochabamba landlords did not share a unitary position. One sector—which rejected any revolutionary change—was centered around the Federación Rural de Cochabamba (Rural Federation of Cochabamba, FRC). The other, more progressive, sector was led by the Catholic Church—which was allied with the MNR's right wing—and sought a way to forestall any major change from within to the state apparatus.

The political situation was initially so volatile that the character of the revolutionary state was redefined and reconceptualized constantly, on a seemingly daily basis. Some forces rejected any change which would transform the status quo. Others fought for the distribution of hacienda lands. The majority tried to carry out moderate reforms that would not compromise the interests of the pre-revolutionary power groups. It was the political initiative taken by the peasants in occupying hacienda lands that finally pressured the regime to sign an agrarian reform decree on 2 August 1953. The months before and after the signing of the agrarian reform decree were politically intense and culminated in a fundamental rebalancing of forces in the regional political arena. Peasant unrest in the countryside caused the exodus of landlords to Cochabamba city, while

artisans, workers, traders, and public employees in the rural towns fought to fill the power vacuum left by the absentee landlords. Peasant power in the countryside grew so rapidly that it usurped the existing relations and power dynamics of domination and subordination amongst *vecinos* (town dwellers) and *campesinos* (peasants). This shift in the revolutionary power balance in Cochabamba modified the ethnic and class perceptions of the rural population, essentially because peasants in the countryside became empowered at the expense of the town dwellers, who were proportionally disempowered.

This chapter also examines the public discourse in Cochabamba and considers the idea that political action and discourse are both linked and produced simultaneously. Yet, at the same time, they also are not mere reflections of each other. Public discourse not only reflects reality, but indeed constitutes an active part of that representational reality. To examine public discourse in the first revolutionary period, I chose *Los Tiempos* newspaper as a representative source of information for two main reasons: First, it covers without interruption the whole period of study, which ranges from April 1952 to November 1953. In fact, the newspaper's office was looted by a mob during the coup d'état on 9 November 1953, as the newspaper's owner, Demetrio Canelas, was a prominent landowner in the Cochabamba valley. Second, due to Canelas' personal interest in agrarian issues, his newspaper amply covered the news and opinions regarding the agricultural sector in Cochabamba.

In the early years (1952–53) of the revolutionary era in Cochabamba, landlords, peasants, and the MNR politicians implicitly debated and sparred over the meanings of the words "Indian" and "peasant," in an attempt to define the concrete characteristics of the revolutionary transformations. In the analysis of public discourse, I employ some specific journalistic genres: newspaper editorials, commentaries, denunciations, and communiqués on peasant issues, all of which were published in the city of Cochabamba.[3] However, the journalistic information characterizing, representing, and symbolizing the peasants, went far beyond simply reflecting political events. Information printed in the press represented and narrated revolutionary events as they happened, simultaneously creating and shaping the public discourses interpreting the revolution. These public discourses, in turn, influenced the political perspectives of

landlords, politicians, and peasants. All of the political actors involved in Cochabamba during the revolution attempted to rationalize facts through the creation of alternative interpretations of events as the balance of power shifted around them. This balance changed in specific historical moments as a result of the shifting forces competing for power in the regional political arena.

Two Conflicting Projects inside the MNR

Due to the decision of the revolutionary regime to concentrate its attention on the tin mining sector—which was finally nationalized on 31 October 1952—there was no clear agrarian policy in the early months after the revolution. Only in March 1953 did the government form a commission responsible for studying and elaborating the agrarian reform decree, which was promulgated on 2 August 1953.[4] Consequently, the government's initial policy actions regarding the agrarian sector consisted of a few symbolic support signals to appease the demands of the peasants and encourage the organization of rural unions. For instance, the government declared an amnesty for peasants imprisoned for political reasons, allowing the release of Hilarión Grágeda and other leaders of the Ayopaya rebellion on 14 September 1952 (see chapter one and figure 1.1).[5]

Behind the regime's popular image, however, a struggle developed among two internal factions of the MNR. The factions disagreed over the strategies the government should apply to integrate the peasantry into the national society and the role that rural unions should play in this process. According to Jorge Dandler, the right-wing sector of the ruling party considered unions to be mediators between the landlords and his tenants first, and a political instrument second. In contrast, the left-wing sector proposed an armed mobilization of the people, as they considered unions, whether composed of workers, miners or peasants, to be an essential political instrument.[6] Beneath this ideological divide in the MNR, however, there was a broader debate in the left about the peasant's class position and role in revolutionary societies. In Bolivia, the Stalinist-oriented PIR and the Trotskyist-oriented POR, both espoused a version of Marxism that characterized peasants as petit bourgeois due to their ownership of—or desire to own—small plots of land. This dismissive "petit bourgeois" term, used to refer to the peasantry, was a concrete denial of peasants as a full

social class. Moreover, as discussed in chapter one, the PIR and the POR had different perceptions regarding the role of the peasantry in the revolutionary process. The PIR thought feudal estates ought to have been transformed into capitalist agrarian cooperatives, thus assigning the peasantry an economic, rather than political, role in the revolution. In contrast, the POR believed that the peasants were nothing more than subordinated political actors, and, therefore, they should be led by urban workers towards a future socialist government, a government that was to operate in the interests of both groups.

In practice, however, the differences between the MNR's divisions were less deep. On the one side, the right-wing faction sought to minimize the political role of the peasant unions and centralize its control through the party's power apparatus. On the other side, the left wing sought to limit the role of peasant unions within the broader workers' movement, centralizing its control in the proletarian power apparatus. Consequently, both sectors of the MNR converged when it came to their perceptions of the peasantry, perceptions that had ultimately originated in the liberal doctrines that emerged in the late nineteenth century. In essence, these perceptions led both factions to attempt to restrict the autonomy of the peasant unions. The pretext for restricting the political autonomy of peasants was based on these commonly held perceptions that peasants were intrinsically incapable of participating in politics because they lacked formal education. In this initial period of the revolution, therefore, both the right and left ideological factions of the MNR failed to anticipate the immense political power the peasant unions would achieve in the near future.

The two sectors of the party soon found themselves competing to organize peasant unions and to recruit teams of loyal peasant leaders. While the right-wing worked from the departmental prefecture with the support of the Catholic Church, the left-wing did so from the MAC with the support of the COB. President Paz encouraged the competition between both sectors of the party by supporting the policies of the left-wing minister of peasant affairs, Ñuflo Chávez, while at the same time naming right-wing prefects in Cochabamba.[7] This political strategy allowed Paz to administer their disagreements over the exercise of power in the region. In this way, the MNR initiated a process of interaction with political activists and peasant leaders that transformed the political culture in the region.

Early Peasant Political Struggles in Cochabamba

After 9 April 1952, both peasants and landlords were forced to readapt their political strategies in dealing with each other and the revolutionary state. Although, as Steve Stern has demonstrated, Andean peasants already had a long historical experience of dealing with non-local political authority from their relations with the colonial and republican states. This political experience allowed peasants to deploy several adaptive strategies of resistance vis-à-vis the revolutionary Bolivian state.[8] This was the case when—for the first time in Bolivian history—the 1952 revolution opened channels for direct peasant political participation. How the rural workers of Cochabamba's altiplano and valley areas actually acted politically varied according to their context and their historical political experience. The level of organization of the unions reached also varied based on these criteria, alongside their capacity to link up with other sectors of regional and national societies.

Peasants in the Altiplano

The Cochabamba highland or *altiplano* region, as discussed in chapter one, is next to the departments of La Paz and Oruro in the west and to Potosi in the south. In this area, *latifundia* (large unproductive estates) coexisted with Indian communities—particularly in the provinces of Ayopaya, Tapacarí, Arque, Mizque, and Campero. It is not surprising then that revolutionary political conflict in the highlands of Cochabamba was concentrated in the aforementioned provinces (see map 1.2).

The MNR's right wing sought to control both the peasants' and the landlords' demands through a network of administrative and party authorities, the composition of which changed depending on the prefecture and the particular Comando Departamental del MNR (MNR's Departmental Commando, CDM). Under this right-wing power scheme, the autonomy of peasant unions was severely limited. The union was restricted to mediating between the peasant base and the party's local power networks. Meanwhile, in order to preserve their power, many landlords decided to insert themselves into the party's network. In practice, these right-wing control schemes were only applied with limited success in the western and southern altiplano provinces that surrounded the valley areas. Peasants in

those highland areas had no previous unionization experience due to the iron-fisted control that the local elites had always exercised over them. The party's right-wing policy in regard to the peasantry in these altiplano areas fostered political confrontation, which eventually led to the development of unequal and short-lasting alliances between landlords, MNR officials, and peasants.

For instance, in the highland areas of Ayopaya and Arque, the MNR formed an alliance with local landlords to block peasant political organization. In Ayopaya, the subprefect had acknowledged some denunciations brought forth by landlords regarding an alleged plot planned by peasants, which was to include an uprising under the banner of the redistribution of hacienda lands.[9] In June 1952, the prefect of Cochabamba traveled to Ayopaya to verify these claims. Once there, he listened to the accusations of the peasants, who wanted him to end the mandatory *pongueaje* (labor owed to the hacienda) that had been imposed by the landlords. After hearing the peasants out, the prefect took no action except to exhort them to fulfill their labor obligations. He found no trace of the landlords' original complaints.[10] In fact, it was the landlords' reluctance to comply with President Gualberto Villarroel's 15 May 1945 decree abolishing *pongueaje* in the haciendas that had created the now permanent friction between peasants and landlords initially.[11] As the subprefect of Ayopaya supported the interests of local landlords, they began to compete with one another to occupy public offices in the capital and main provincial towns, enabling them to maintain the status quo: the oppressive extraction of labor from the peasants there. Peasants in Ayopaya were excluded from the MNR's right-wing power scheme long after the 1952 revolution, thus the landlords' fears of an indigenous rebellion remained latent in this area during the early revolutionary period.

In May 1952, just a month after the revolution started, the subprefect of Arque—who was linked to the landowners and operated in their interests—was severely criticized by the prefect of Cochabamba for abuses committed against the peasantry in his jurisdiction.[12] After this, the peasants in Arque reacted against the landlords and began to resist their control, whether through spontaneous local initiatives or through political tactics that they were induced to take by non-local political activists. The Arque subprefect denounced the use of these tactics to the central

authorities as "proof of the serious situation which is being created in this province by numerous communist agitators, who in an exaggerated desire to enrich themselves, are creating a situation at the point of exploding into violence with the indigenous taking up arms against the landlords."[13] The regional press even printed sensationalist articles recounting these complaints. In the end, the so-called "communist agitators" that the subprefect had denounced turned out to be two political activists working for the MAC. Activists who were attempting to inform the Arque peasants of the government decree abolishing pongueaje.[14] Peasants in Arque adopted several resistance strategies in response, including: first, issuing complaints against landlords in the Oruro prefecture, one of the areas of overlapping jurisdiction with Cochabamba, forcing the prefects of both jurisdictions to exercise caution in their alliances with the landlords by making sure not to appear too partial to their interests; second, teaming up with lower-level local authorities and pushing them to challenge those higher up in their hierarchy, thus putting pressure on local power networks; and third, choosing to deliberately ignore local authorities, and linking themselves directly with peasant political activists in the valley. In concert, these methods allowed the peasants in Arque enough power to reach greater autonomy in their local political situation.[15]

In contrast, in the Campero and Mizque provinces, the MNR's local power network allied with the peasants to form a political front against the landlord's power. For instance, in Campero, the subprefect and the chief of the Comando Provincial del MNR (MNR's Provincial Commando, CPM) were both members of the same family. Emilio and Franklin Román (father and son) wove a web of local power, attracting peasant support, to challenge the provincial elite. In order to resist the challenge of the Románs, the landlords organized a Centro Rural de la Provincia Campero (Campero Province Rural Center), which was a corporate-structured institution, to defend their interests. However, the 1952 revolution had weakened the landlords' power and opened a power vacuum that was filled by upwardly mobile residents of rural towns, who promptly enlisted in the MNR rolls. As there was no autonomous peasantry capable of defending their own interests in this region, the Románs fashioned themselves into the "protectors of peasants," against the excesses of the local and provincial authorities. The Campero MNR leaders were the prototype

representatives of the social control model the regime's right-wing sector outlined and sought.

The prefect of Cochabamba backed the Román family, who in turn reinforced the Románs' power base. Thus, the landlords decided to rely on the Fiscalía General de la Nación (Attorney General Office), whose seat was in Sucre, to neutralize the power of the prefectural office in Cochabamba. The attorney general supported the landlords' claim that the revolutionary changes had imperiled the nation's laws, and this undermined the social justice argument that the Románs advocated for on behalf of the peasantry.[16] Emilio Román informed the Cochabamba prefect that the attorney general in Sucre was infringing on Cochabamba's jurisdiction and threatened to submit an accusation against him to the Ministerio de Gobierno (Ministry of State). The landlords continued to pressure the Románs, and managed to get a district attorney from Cochabamba to inspect Aiquile (Campero's capital) to witness the riotous assemblies there that the Románs had set up. The report of the district attorney stated that, "in the locality of Aiquile there is a pitched battle between the bands who form the chorus of the subprefect and the faithful of the cause of the Campero Province Rural Centre, and they are on the road to real belligerence between each other."[17] The district attorney's report on the riots led to the removal of Campero's subprefect, Emilio Román, which reinforced the local landlords' power in the end.

In the case of Mizque, the subprefect handled the political situation by adding two peasant leaders to the CPM's board. Through these leaders, he managed a degree of control over the agrarian unions there. The Mizque subprefect reported to the Cochabamba prefect: "I made contact with the peasant leaders and we agreed that the demonstrations were disturbing the town and should be suspended, two peasant elements joined the CPM, whom, together with yours truly, will provide guarantees for the safety of the urban residents of this province."[18] Wherever the MNR's right-wing's strategies for social control predominated, peasant unions functioned with only a small degree of autonomy. It had always been the vecinos who were the dynamic political actors in the towns, the centers of rural Bolivian political life. Whether vecinos acted in their own interests by resisting the peasants or attempting to make alliances with them, they always pursued these actions from a dominant position of power. As a consequence of

this, in the highland provinces that surrounded the Cochabamba valley, class perceptions and ethnic identities were always intertwined, thus reaffirming the traditional social and cultural barriers between town dwellers and peasants.

Peasants in the Valley

The Cochabamba prefect's goal of organizing peasant unions in a firmly top-down hierarchical manner from the top-down was also applied in the valleys, but under very different conditions than those of the altiplano provinces (see map 1.3). For instance, in the Cliza area (Valle Alto), peasants had previous collective political experience going back to the 1930s, when the Ucureña peasants began to struggle to organize their union. Ucureña *colonos* (hacienda tenants) from the Santa Clara hacienda in Cliza were united in their aim to unionize, for it was the initial step towards their goal of purchasing the lands that they were then renting from the hacienda. Following this, the Ucureña peasants developed a strong sense of solidarity with one another, which in turn strengthened their class and ethnic identities, as discussed in chapter one.

The first new peasant union after the revolution was founded in Ucureña on 1 May 1952, officially commemorating International Workers' Day. José Rojas was elected the union's secretary general and the committee was sworn in by the prefect and the MNR's officials.[19] The second peasant union was founded in San Isidro (Cliza) on 27 May 1952, when departmental authorities swore in a MNR right-wing peasant leader for the union, Agapito Vallejos.[20] The process of unionization from the top-down would have continued according to the prefecture's plans, had the Ucureña peasants not initiated a competitive and parallel effort of their own. The previous experience of the Ucureña peasants allowed them to understand the limits of controlled unionization, at a key moment in their struggle against the landlord's power. The Ucureños decided to lead a radical political project that destabilized the regime's attempt to balance the interests of both landlords and peasants. The political initiative of the Ucureña peasant union provoked a confrontation between its "agrarian revolution" (a peasant-union-controlled land distribution) project and the official "agrarian reform" (a state-controlled land distribution) project. In the altiplano, the MNR's right-wing officials ostensibly monitored and

mitigated the peasant unions. In the valleys, there was a lasting and deep confrontation between the Ucureña unionists and the MNR officials.

Meanwhile, in the Valle Bajo, another, different political process unfolded. Sinforoso Rivas, a former mining unionist, began procedures with the MAC and the COB, which allowed him to organize and found the FSTCC in the town of Sipe Sipe on 6 August 1952.[21] The emergence of this new peasant organization put the MNR's right-wing sector on alert. News about "communist agitation" in the rural areas circulated widely and—within this rhetorical context—a fight broke out between the Cochabamba prefecture and the MAC. Both the prefecture and the MAC were seeking to create their own institutional networks and thus control the peasant movement.[22]

Simultaneously, the Catholic Church consolidated the Catholic agrarian unions that had also formed in the Valle Bajo. These unions gathered groups of *piqueros* (smallholders) together, behind the demand that the monopoly on irrigation water held by the hacendados should be broken up. The Catholic agrarian unions gathered the "smallholders of the regions of El Paso, Tiquipaya, Cuatro Esquinas, Rumi Mayu, and Coña Coña … whose institutional statutes were approved in 1945."[23] In the Valle Bajo, landowner's holdings were highly divided, but the piqueros depended upon monopolized irrigation water, which was still controlled by the former estate owners.[24] These progressive Catholic ideas originated from anticommunist doctrines associating peasant rebellion with the stark economic disparities prevalent in Latin America. Some members of the landowning elite assimilated these ideas into their own political ideologies, aiming to procure social change without imperiling their interests. The Catholic Church came to formulate its own doctrine in regard to rural justice, culminating in the Congreso Rural de Manizales (Colombia), held in January 1953. At the congress, the Catholic Church recommended that its members assume active roles in social change so as to prevent the spread of communism.[25]

The MNR's left-wing sector, for its part, practiced its own political strategy through the MAC. The strategy consisted of: first, upholding the legal disposition that abolished pongueaje in the haciendas, aiming for the adoption of a cooperative system to manage agrarian enterprises; second, it supported the process of peasant unionization and implemented the

process of rural education reform, which passed into the hands of the MAC; and, finally, the MNR's left wing did not believe that the peasantry could be a social actor capable of autonomously inserting itself in the political arena, due to the foundational Marxist conceptualization of the peasant as an "inherently politically unconscious" agent in all cases. Accordingly, the minister of peasant affairs, Ñuflo Chávez, asserted in one of his first official statements: "Peasant unionization ought to come after a period of preparations of the Indian and once he really has class consciousness, but the fact that two important national peasant organizations already exist confirms the need for respect of that union organization which will be maintained by my ministry."[26]

The minister's reference to the leading government created and sanctioned peasant unions and the overall message of his speech reflects his then limited enthusiasm for grassroots peasant organizations. This attitude, coming from a prominent MNR left-wing official, begs the question: would the organization of peasant unions have ever moved beyond the stage of theoretical discussion if the peasants themselves had not already organized autonomously, thus forcing the MNR's hand? Ñuflo Chávez was a top leader and founder of the MNR. Like many other prominent members of the party, he was born into an urban elite family, in this case of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. After working as a lawyer and university professor, he was appointed minister of agriculture and peasant affairs in 1952 (until 1955) and became head of the mining and oil ministry beginning in 1960. He was elected vice-president of Bolivia in 1956, but resigned one year later due to differences with President Hernán Siles Zuazo. Ideologically inclined towards Marxism, he was influenced by the principles of the PIR. Chávez advised Fidel Castro on agrarian reform issues and was a close friend of Juan Lechín (see figure 2.1).

The MAC's principal task, until the new agrarian reform plan was formulated, was to uphold the 15 May 1945 decree that abolished servitude in the landed estates.[27] The minister's position was framed in an ideological context that perceived the "agrarian question" as under the aegis of three sources of inspiration: classical political economy, Marxism, and Indigenism. As posited by Ñuflo Chávez: "On the basis of the theories of Ricardo, Malthus, and other creators of Political Economy, and passing through the modern presenters of the subject, the need to destroy minute

FIGURE 2.1 Latin American Revolutionaries. Ñuflo Chávez and Fidel Castro in a press conference in Habana, Cuba, (circa 1962).

holdings (*minifundios*), which actually exist in our countryside, is imperious, so as to give space for the employment of modern agricultural machinery."[28] The left-wing line of the MNR was not directed toward the consolidation of the peasant economy but rather towards the development of agribusiness, and its concomitant use of high-modern technology. Its primary aim, therefore, was not land redistribution, but the transformation of the relations of production through the abolition of servitude in the haciendas and the adaptation of both haciendas and indigenous communities into a single, cooperative production system. The minister Chávez explained this position clearly:

> We will promote the outlawing of pongueaje and to that end we have given the first steps on writing out collective work contracts with some landlords. … The organization of a new system of agrarian labor will be developed on the basis of the existing indigenous communities so as to carry out their collectivization. … The reform will transform the

> labor tenant of the hacienda into a participating member in the exploitation of land and, on the other hand, the peasant laborer will be subject to a wage. … Private property will be respected in so far as it carries out a social function.[29]

According to Sándor John, Ñuflo Chávez's position on land distribution was similar to Arturo Urquidi's. Urquidi was the PIR's chief ideologue and their representative to the agrarian reform commission. Essentially, the PIR and Urquidi believed the best way to proceed with agrarian reform was: "respecting the productive *latifundia*, dissolving the communities, and turning the land over to the peasants individually."[30] However, the evidence presented above partially contradicts John's assertion; although Chávez had vowed to preserve large estates intact and to transform them into agrarian cooperatives, he was not in favor of dissolving communities nor distributing land individually.

Advised by United Nations' technicians, the MAC tried to apply its agrarian policies from the top-down, thus usurping the power of the landlords. The confrontation reached a critical point when Ñuflo Chávez declared: "the Indian is the only one who produces foodstuffs for the people while landlords live comfortably in the cities," provoking a vocal reaction from the FRC.[31] At this point, Ñuflo Chávez found himself attacked by both political extremes. From one side, he was the target of conservative landlords who were unable to understand his modernizing effort and characterized him as "irresponsible."[32] From the other side, he was criticized by radical sectors of the left for allegedly representing the interests of the landlords. Thus, the POR activists proposed a plan to have him removed from the government cabinet (together with the other two worker-ministers) and replaced with POR sympathizers. In a high-pitched meeting of the COB, which was described in the press as the "most agitated" COB meeting yet, the POR requested Chavez's resignation because of the "minister of peasant affairs' inefficiency in stopping the *gamonales*' (powerful persons) abuses against the peasants. … A majority vote ratified Ñuflo Chávez's permanence in the cabinet."[33]

However, the response of peasants to the newly powerful radical left, forced Chávez to change his position on agrarian property, giving more open support to the interests of both peasants and workers. In the speech

he made during a peasant meeting in the city of Cochabamba, he pointed out "a part of the private properties will be divided among the Indians, and the large estates (*latifundia*) will be given to the mineworkers."[34] As will be further discussed in chapter three, these land distribution strategies were finally implemented in 1954, through the creation of mixed peasant-miner agrarian cooperatives. These cooperatives benefited groups of mineworkers—who were considered to be the proletarian revolutionary vanguard—and were disadvantageous to the peasants, who were seen as a subsidiary social class. As a consequence, in the initial period after the revolution, not only did the peasants have to confront the interests of the landlords to gain access to hacienda lands, but they also had to overcome the MNR's political bias, which denied their right to autonomously participate in politics.

Peasant Movements Disrupt Cochabamba Politics

When the MNR revolutionaries started to figure out how peasant unions ought to be organized, the Valle Alto peasantry in Cochabamba already had nearly two decades' worth of experience on the matter. The Ana Rancho colonos of Cliza had first organized their agrarian union and met with President Toro in 1936, for the purpose of collectively leasing the land of the Santa Clara hacienda. The Ucureña peasant union had been founded in 1941, with the aim of organizing a school center in the area (see map 1.3 and chapter one). Therefore, in the early months after the upheaval of April 1952, Ucureña was at the center of attention for both the MNR's left- and right-wing factions, as both attempted to put the emergent peasant union there under their political sway.

Although they were initially contending from an asymmetrical position, the Ucureña peasants soon learned how to negotiate with the PIR, the POR, and the MNR urban intellectuals and political activists. Through these negotiations, the Ucureña peasants built a powerful network that connected their rural interests to urban social, political, and economic interests. In the late 1940s—when political mobilization in the countryside intensified—POR activists radicalized the Ucureña peasant's cadre. In the early revolutionary period, calls for land confiscation spread from Ucureña to the rural area, provoking a reaction from both the landlords

and the MNR authorities. The origin and the political consequences of the Ucureña peasants' radical demands will be analyzed below.

In June 1952, the Ucureña peasant cadre met with President Víctor Paz in the government palace, as a result of lobbying by the Cochabamba prefect and the MNR's right wing. At the gathering, the peasants greeted the president with a barrel of *chicha* (maize beer) and young pigeons, a symbolic act and ritual the peasants had always used when renewing their alliances with their *patrones* (landlords). In a speech, a peasant leader explained to the president: "We want you to help yourself to a glass of chicha from Cliza in the company of the comrade ministers, to feel the strength it has and take note of it, to compare it with the strength of the working people of Cochabamba to keep in power forever our comrade Víctor Paz Estenssoro, boss and father of all Bolivian workers."[35] The symbolic vitality of chicha thus penetrated the citadel of power in Bolivia, significant because the Cliza peasants overturned the urban-liberal principle which had—throughout the first-half of the twentieth century—attempted to exclude the traditional Andean drink from urban contexts and suppress it in decent circles.[36] This symbolic appropriation of power-space by the peasants, however, was still produced within a frame of mutually asymmetric relations of domination and subordination, in which the condescending attitudes of the urban elite defined the outlines of the ritual interaction. The peasant's petitions to the president remained circumscribed by their local conflicts and therefore had limited political reach. In fact, six of their eight demands revolved around conflicts with the Santa Clara hacienda owners. In their two remaining points, they asked for the establishment of an office of peasant affairs in the city of Cochabamba and that peasant farms be eligible for investment credit by the Bolivian agrarian bank.

The prefect of Cochabamba, having demonstrated control of the incipient regional peasant movement, moved to confront the regional landowners. Although dissident groups existed, the FRC was dominated by people of a conservative tendency that had never given up hope of returning to the pre-revolutionary status quo. The FRC's directors asked for a hearing with the prefect and also issued a petition list.[37] According to the landlords, the Bolivian state was the only responsible party for the economic and social crisis because of its exclusive support for the mining sector and its neglect of the agrarian industry. They suggested that the

indigenous people must first be educated and then, later, be incorporated into the nation, and that a law should be promulgated regulating the relationship between landlords and peasants. They demanded the creation of a rural police force that would keep watch over the countryside, in addition to a specialized office in charge of investigating affairs related to peasant agitation, "in agreement with the brilliant initiative of the Cochabamba prefect that allowed for the repression of the agitators without violence."[38] In his reply, the prefect urged the landlords to reflect on current social problems for, "you [landowners] cannot continue to consider the peasants an inferior social class that ought to bear suffering and humiliating treatment." Nevertheless, he ratified this agreement with the landlords' petition, asserting: "a sort of rural police will function—the agrarian department—which will be organized shortly to exclusively handle any peasant affairs and measures will also be taken against the rural agitators."[39] From the perspective of the MNR's right wing, therefore, the office of peasant affairs and the agrarian courts—both designed by the MAC to defend peasant interests—should rather function as repressive units aimed to control peasant unrest.

The first incident that frustrated the idyllic relationship between peasants and landlords modeled by the MNR's right wing was the creation of the FSTCC on 6 August 1952. From the moment that it was founded, the FSTCC began a campaign against the landlords and local authorities, based on public criticism of their retrograde political attitudes.[40] The FSTCC's campaign provoked the opposition of landlords and the prefect to its leader Sinforoso Rivas, both accused him of collecting money fraudulently (*ramas*) among the peasants.[41] What worried the prefect was not only the FSTCC's links to the COB and the MNR's left wing, but also that the FSTCC was beginning to weave its own networks of influence with government authorities and grassroots peasants' unions, essentially passing over the party's right-wing apparatus.[42] The prefect decided to sideline Rivas politically by questioning the FSTCC's legality and asserting that the Valle Alto's peasant unions had not participated in the founding of the FSTCC. The prefect demanded that peasants proceed with the election of a new board of directors. In a second election held on 1 October 1952, Rivas was re-elected as head of the FSTCC. Although the prefect did manage to infiltrate the committee with a few political agents,

FIGURE 2.2 Peasants Casting Votes. Peasant delegates electing their leaders (Second Peasant Departmental Congress in Ucureña, July 28, 1954).

his maneuver ultimately legitimized Rivas's leadership by allowing him to be elected twice as head of the FSTCC (see figure 2.2).

By the end of 1952, regional power relations had changed substantially, as the peasants had indeed superseded their expectations concerning the abolition of servitude in the haciendas. Peasant interest began to be focused on land distribution instead, effectively putting aside the discussion of labor conflicts. Peasant mobilization had effectively and dramatically overturned the regional balance of power. Landlords suddenly found themselves asking for the support of the authorities to make the peasants comply with the dispositions of the 15 May 1945 decree, which just a few months beforehand, the landlords themselves had been unwilling to accept. Unionization and peasant radicalization had vigorously emerged and regional authorities were unable to control the situation.

The goals of both peasant leaders and MNR activists coincided in their radical demands for land distribution (see figure 2.3). This was the case of José Rojas (the Ucureña leader) who allied with Emilio Chacón and Carlos Montaño (two infiltrated POR agents working under the prefect)

FIGURE 2.3 Peasant Gathering in the Highlands. Sinforoso Rivas addressing the peasants at the hacienda "El Choro" (Cochabamba, Ayopaya, October 1952).

to incite the peasants to act radically against the landlords by authorizing a de facto occupation of hacienda lands.[43] The Valle Alto peasant leaders set up their headquarters in Ucureña and were influenced by the POR's calls for radicalizing the peasant movement. For instance, the owner of El Choro (Ayopaya) hacienda denounced them: "[Carlos] Montaño and [Emilio] Chacón ordered the elimination of wire fences, authorizing the labor tenants to occupy that sector with their cattle."[44] In the Huatuyu (Punata) hacienda, both activists (Chacón and Montaño) distributed pegujales in the estate's demesne to the labor tenants.[45] Thus, peasant demands began to focus on the occupation of land and on the need for the peasants to arm themselves to confront the possibility of violence with the politically reactionary sectors. The Mizque subprefect denounced Emilio Chacón as having collected 200 Bolivianos per person for the processing of the distribution of land and for the acquisition of weapons.[46]

In the context of peasant radicalization and political instability in the region, a violent peasant rebellion broke out in Colomi on 6 November 1952. This rebellion had a profound impact on urban political consciousness in Cochabamba, because of both the magnitude of the uprising, which mobilized more than 2,000 peasants, and Colomi's proximity to Cochabamba city (see map 1.2). For the first time after the revolution, Cochabamba city dwellers realized how fragile their situation really was; that they were besieged by an outside world that had suddenly turned incomprehensible and threatening. Days before the uprising, news arrived from the Colomi police informing the prefect about the presence of unionists in the area, mobilizing the peasantry. The police identified Mario Montenegro and Carlos Montaño as the main agitators in Colomi.[47] When the rebellion erupted, the prefect traveled to Colomi to try to calm the peasants. Meanwhile, the FRC held emergency meetings with the district attorney, who sent the prefect a letter stating the landlords' concerns and requesting that armed forces be dispatched to Colomi to repress the movement and capture the ringleaders to bring them to summary trial.[48] The district attorney instructed the local prosecutor (*fiscal de partido*) to travel to Colomi to verify the truth of what had happened.[49] The district attorney put into practice a well-worn strategy of the landlords, which was to seek support from alternative, more sympathetic jurisdictions that claimed overlapping authority, and thus reclaim a degree of power and leverage over the peasants, without engaging with the official power networks of the prefecture and MAC. The peasants, through the FSTCC, criticized the justice department's interference in peasant affairs, asserting: "it is the landlords who are sowing discord in the countryside and making use of bad authorities and reactionary elements such as the district attorney."[50] The ability of the justice department to interfere in peasant issues would be finally blocked when peasant labor courts were created on 28 November 1952.

The local prosecutor verified the damages inflicted on nine haciendas in Colomi, noting broken entry gates and destroyed furniture. In his report, the prosecutor attributed responsibility for the acts to "irresponsible and undercover ringleaders," and suggested a need to organize a "mobile rural police force that would guarantee the landlords and labor tenants' tranquility, avoiding the peasant dictatorship that dares to act as

the vanguard of communist materialism."[51] Unsurprisingly, the peasants' interpretation of the event contrasted with the official version. One of the peasant leaders, Ángel María Herbas, was a colono from the Illuri hacienda. According to Herbas, some unionists spread a rumour that a coup had broken out in La Paz. It was from La Paz, Herbas asserted, that groups of people supported by the *rosca* (clique) were marching towards some peasant communities, with the aim of eliminating the comunario population. Facing this situation, Herbas declared: "all of the Illuri and other estates' colonos in the Colomi province decided to search the haciendas to seize arms."[52] Certainly, there were other more fundamental motivating factors that led to the uprising. The owner of Illuri had refused to set up a school on the hacienda and threatened to kill Herbas. The local mayor (*corregidor*) gave protection to his brother, who had wounded a peasant some days earlier. Nevertheless, Herbas' ability to translate the events into political terms became evident when he legitimized the movement, claiming the uprising was in defense of the revolutionary regime. Herbas craftily declared to the press: "when comrade president [Víctor Paz] came to Punata on September 14, he offered us many things and for that reason we will die defending him."[53]

The Colomi revolt signalled a qualitative leap forward for the peasant movement, leading it towards a wider political strategy, and, crucially, a degree of peasant political self-determination. Even though political activists certainly fertilized the roots of the uprising, the peasant cadre in Colomi realized that they were capable of leading and controlling their own political actions. The Colomi event also shifted perceptions of both the left and right wings of the MNR as to the nature of their relationships with the peasant movement. On the one side, the right-wing sector called for a revision of the political control system to "put an end to the activities of communist agitators."[54] Right-wing politicians drafted a project for organizing a confederation of the indigenous vanguard of the MNR, which would aim at "uniting the indigenous population in a common political idea."[55] On the other side, the COB created a secretariat of peasant affairs, which then incorporated the minister Ñuflo Chávez as a delegate to the FSTCC.[56]

Peasant leaders took advantage of the movement's momentum to propose a new basis for their political relations. In a series of joint meetings

between the FSTCC and the COB, presided over by Sinforoso Rivas and Juan Lechín, the peasants addressed a list of radical demands to the government. The peasants requested that the government organize a committee for the agrarian revolution, which would study rural property relations. Additionally, they demanded that the sale of hacienda lands should be forbidden while the agrarian revolution took place, and that the government should arm the peasants to form a union police force and assure them in this way that the march of the national revolution continued on.[57] The main peasant leaders of both of the MNR sectors signed the document, dispensing a tempest of profound discomfort over the landlords. For the first time, the peasants had proposed a public debate on the topic of landed property. According to the landlords, peasant demands "placed the landlords in a second-class category, denying them the ability to pursue action for the benefit of their interests and denying them the place of the principal party within the reigning property law."[58]

As discussed in chapter one, the Cliza peasantry had a long tradition of fighting for their rights, beginning with their struggles in the 1930s. The Cliza peasants were not alone, however, when struggling against the powerful valley landlords. Peasants from other major haciendas had also negotiated better labor conditions and access to land with their landowners previous to, and after, the 1952 revolution. Conflict preceded the revolution in three haciendas: Vacas (Arani), which belonged to the Cochabamba municipality; Convento (Capinota), which initially belonged to the Augustine order and was later acquired by the workers' Caja de Seguro y Ahorro Obrero (Worker's Insurance and Savings Fund); and Santa Clara (Cliza), which belonged to the female Catholic order of the same name (see map 1.3). These three haciendas were public or ecclesiastical property, so peasants' demands did not affect private landlords' interests directly. However, the tactics employed and the results obtained by peasants, when they acted in their own interests, proved useful for the peasant movement in propelling the process of occupation of private lands which would follow the 1952 revolution.

In the Vacas hacienda, peasants persuaded the government to grant them recognition as the municipal land tenants through a decree issued on 22 January 1937.[59] Afterwards, peasants fought to avoid rent increases that the municipality demanded at the end of every rental period. In

1937, the annual rent paid by the Vacas colonos was Bs. 50,000, which was double the amount previous tenants had paid. From 1938 to 1940, the rent was tripled to Bs. 150,000. From 1941 to 1942, the rent was raised again to Bs. 600,000.[60] After April 1952, the government's promise of agrarian reform and the municipality's attempts to increase the rent, left the peasants cherishing the idea of owning their own land. The MAC perceived in the Vacas experience a tangible possibility for converting a peasant community into a production cooperative. With this in mind, the MAC proposed that the state should buy the municipal land. The peasants, for their part, offered the municipality an annual rent of nearly two million Bolivianos, but once the proposal was accepted, they put off signing the contract. In other words, the peasants thus presaged the events which would soon occur, while keeping their social leverage and power strategically latent and flexible. The hacienda administrators complained: "the Vacas indigenous industrialists offered to pay one million eight hundred thousand Bolivianos per year, a promise which has not been fulfilled to date, for, in a suspicious manner, the supposed tenants did not present themselves to comply with the legal formalities."[61]

In the Convento hacienda, the administrators faced the organized resistance of one hundred and eighty colonos plus eighty *arrimantes* or subtenants, who worked for the worker's insurance and savings fund.[62] The peasant's aim involved the estate's administrators, as they accused them of perpetuating servitude in the hacienda. The conflict reached a climax when the Santivañez agrarian union decided to concede a three-day period for the head administrator and his subordinate employees to leave the hacienda. The *Los Tiempos* newspaper reported: "last Tuesday night, hundreds of indigenous people, carrying torches, set off to besiege the Convento estate. … The estate's administrator and the subordinate personnel had no choice but to flee precipitously to this city [Cochabamba] leaving that property uninhabited."[63]

In the Santa Clara hacienda, where the peasants' struggle had gone on since the 1930s and intensified after April 1952, peasants decided to confront the local landowners' power once and for all. Walter Revuelta, the Cliza subprefect, and Simón Aguilar, one of the hacienda's labor tenants, were both MNR militants and acted as liaisons with the party and the government. In the months after the revolution, the hacienda remained in

constant turmoil.[64] In mid-November 1952, some six thousand peasants surrounded the town of Cliza, threatening to invade the town in search of landlords, several of whom they had sentenced to death.[65] The peasants issued three demands: the return of evicted colonos to their plots in hacienda lands; government support for union activists; and, the expulsion of all *mayordomos* (hacienda administrators). José Rojas, the Ucureña leader, explained to the journalists:

> That he [Rojas] had six thousand men in military distribution, in such a way that, while two thousand occupied the strategic points to the north of Cliza, another two thousand were deployed in the plains to the south; one thousand blocked all the roads giving access to the province and the rest were dedicated to capturing the landlords in order to put them to death. José Rojas said that the death sentence had been given to the landowners Ramón Ledezma, Washington Arandia, Roberto Angulo, Justo Balderrama, and Bernardina Ledezma, for having committed despicable abuses against the indigenous population.[66]

The threat of the peasant forces provoked panic in the town of Cliza. The Cochabamba prefect immediately traveled to Ucureña with a committee of regional authorities, but "as soon as they recognized the prefectural car, the peasants let off their firearms and the hoarse braying of thousands of *pututus* (horns) split the air with dismal predictions. This was the greeting for the department's highest authority."[67] The prefect met with Ucureña leaders to gather their demands and afterwards made a speech combining both a paternalistic and an authoritarian tone:

> I would like a mass meeting like this to take place in defense of the regime, but you tell me that its purpose is uprising. You damage the government with these acts, the same government which supports you. … The prison is the place where criminals end up and not [the place] where you may end up committing crimes against property and against persons.[68]

The authorities asked for a three-day truce before they proposed a solution to the demands of the peasants, but the leaders did not accept the truce proposal. Instead, they informed the prefect that if the landlords denied the immediate return of their *pegujales* (plots of land) to expelled labor tenants, they would not be responsible for what might happen. Faced with such pressure, the prefect had no alternative except to address to the landlords a written order demanding the immediate return of the pegujales to the peasants who had been thrown off their estates. The prefect covered his back by stating that he had issued the warrant to the landowners for the provision of public order in the province, which was in danger of being disturbed due to the peasants' demands.[69] This was José Rojas and the Ucureña peasant union's first great victory, hoisting them to the front of the vanguard of the regional peasant movement. It also placed Cochabamba's Valle Alto at the epicenter of the revolution's geography, fostering the outgrowth of a deep hatred for the Ucureños in the Cochabamba prefecture office and the hearts of many of the MNR's right-wing politicians.

The Ucureña leaders, however, did not restrict themselves to heading the peasant's social demands, but also decided to take on other political initiatives. They chose to widen their political influence by organizing the Central Sindical Campesina del Valle (Valley Peasant Union Central), encompassing twenty-four unions from the Arani, Punata, Cliza, and Tarata provinces (see map 1.2). This territory was, at that moment, under the Ucureña peasants' direct political control.[70] The Ucureña leaders' initiative of expanding their political condition to that of a peasant central union aimed to strengthen their power in relation to the town of Cliza. According to the MNR's command hierarchies, in each province there should be just one peasant central union located in the provincial capital, which Cliza town was in this case. Thus, the Ucureña union leaders initially fought to obtain the "peasant central" category to prevent Cliza town's empowerment in the Valle Alto. Later, when its influence had expanded to seven Valle Alto provinces, the Ucureña leaders fought to obtain the "special federation" category to balance the FSTCC's power (which was based on seven Valle Bajo provinces), challenging the rule that each department should have only one peasant federation.

The Ucureña cadre sought, moreover, to command the regional peasant movement from the Valle Alto by practicing more radical political

actions than those of the Valle Bajo leaders. That is the reason why the Ucureña leadership escaped the MNR's control schemes, alarming the government, the landlords, and even the FSTCC. Thus, to counteract the thrust of Ucureña, the government supported the foundation of Catholic agrarian unions in the Valle Bajo. In late November 1952, the prefect and the FSTCC's executive secretary attended the swearing-in of the Tiquipaya and El Paso Catholic unions' committees and recognized Francisco Vargas as their main leader. Catholic unions were organized by activists who preached anti-communism and non-violence. Francisco Vargas was a leader in Montesillo, Chapisirca, and Altamachi in the Valle Bajo highlands. He was a labor tenant at the Salamanca family estates, attended the indigenous congress in 1945 and was persecuted by the government the six years following this (*sexenio*) for being a militant of the MNR.[71] By the end of 1952, the Valle Alto and Valle Bajo exemplified, respectively, a radical and a revolutionary ideology, but both held great influence in regional politics. This influence became apparent when the government organized a departmental meeting of peasants in Cochabamba in late December 1952. Two similar meetings were to be planned: the first in Cochabamba city (with the attendance of the Valle Bajo peasant cadre) and the second, the day after, in Ucureña (with the attendance of the Valle Alto peasant cadre). The government delegation, headed by the minister of foreign affairs, Walter Guevara, attended both meetings. In each of them, the minister shared the podium with the respective local peasant leaders and, remarkably enough, the content and tone of the speeches followed divergent paths in the different locations. In Cochabamba city attention was focused on social issues, meanwhile in Ucureña it was focused on political issues.[72]

Radical Peasant Revolutionaries in the Valley

The year 1953 was one of intense political activity in Cochabamba. The conflict between peasants and landlords came to a climax on 2 August 1953, when the agrarian reform decree was signed in Ucureña. A few months later, on 9 November 1953, Cochabamba became the epicenter of the most serious attempt of the oligarchy to abort the revolution using a coup d'état. Political maneuvers and plotting in Cochabamba began early in the year: on 2 January 1953, a meeting was held at the FSTCC's office—known as Las Palmeras—chaired by the minister of mines and top

COB leader, Juan Lechín. A group of peasant leaders, who had arrived from the Valle Alto, accused Sinforoso Rivas of embezzling union funds and of cutting deals with the landlords. Without further discussion, the dissidents asked for the immediate election of a new FSTCC committee. Despite the protest of those in attendance, Lechín authorized the new election and swore in those elected—Emilio Chacón, Carlos Montaño, José Rojas, Modesto Sejas, Andrés Arispe, Crisóstomo Inturias, and Encarnación Colque—many of whom were well known POR militants.[73] Why did Lechín betray his old ally Sinforoso Rivas by replacing him with POR militants in the FSTCC committee? Probably because Lechín knew that the MNR's right wing was, at that moment, plotting an internal coup, which indeed broke out on 6 January. The aim of the coup was to remove left-wing elements from the cabinet of Víctor Paz, so Lechín needed radical allies who would defend him.[74] Once the coup had been quelled, the left reacted by demanding a larger share of power and the redirection of the revolution towards socialist aims.[75]

Modesto Sejas—a POR activist directly working with peasant leaders in Ucureña during this time—recalled in an interview by Sándor John that in the FSTCC meeting in January 1953, "we [the POR activists] argued with Lechín for two days, and we defeated him. We argued for the agrarian revolution and he argued for agrarian reform, the MNR's position." According to Sejas, from the POR peasant activists' perspective, the agrarian revolution meant socialization of the land. Essentially, the estates' lands "would pass directly into the hands of the [peasant] union as collective or cooperative property. … [The peasants] understood just fine."[76] The degree to which collective property as a goal, or ideal, was the conscious aim of the Valle Alto peasants and the degree to which it was simply a pipe dream of radical activists in the area, cannot yet be determined. Valley peasants were divided in the issue of organizing agrarian cooperatives. The Valle Bajo peasants reluctantly allowed for the creation of agrarian cooperatives in 1954, which eventually failed. Meanwhile, the Valle Alto peasants opposed the implementation of any kind of agrarian cooperatives in its territory. Whatever the case, the uncertainty concerning the direction of the revolution continued for some weeks until the MNR's sixth convention finally decided, in February 1953, that the route would be that of revolutionary nationalism.[77]

Within this short period of time, different alliances and ruptures occurred amongst the peasant leaders, the POR, and the MNR politicians in Cochabamba. This tension specified the character of peasant-government relations, because the ideological divide between the Valle Alto and the Valle Bajo became further polarized as a result of the radicalization of the FSTCC's new leadership under the POR command. On the one hand, the Ucureña peasant central spread radical policies which aimed at the expulsion of the landlords and the free distribution of hacienda lands under the slogan of an "agrarian revolution." On the other hand, the moderate political front developed in the Quillacollo peasant central—which identified itself with the aims of the official "agrarian reform"—was now in peril due to the POR activists' infiltration of the FSTCC's committee.[78]

According to John, POR activists were so influential and numerous in the rural area in that time that "the POR became a mass party in Cochabamba. It opened two headquarters in the city of Cochabamba and one in Ucureña, each guarded by armed members." However, from the POR Central Committee's perspective "peasant mobilization in Cochabamba was too radical, ran contrary to a nation-wide downturn in labor activism, and was out of line with national party positions."[79] The POR's Cochabamba Regional Committee went even further, declaring that: "the Cochabamba peasant movement is disproportionately advanced in relation to the rest of the country and in relation to the worker's movement as such. … 'Occupy the land,' while still correct, cannot be carried out under present conditions."[80] Why were the POR party leaders against the grassroots peasant movement in Ucureña and why did they label it as too radical? The POR leadership was looking for an alliance with the left wing of the MNR, and both were hostile to the "uncontrolled" peasant mobilization in Cochabamba. Thus, the policy of *entrismo* or collaboration of the POR leaders with the MNR must be considered, in order to understand political maneuvering of politicians, peasant leaders, and activists in Cochabamba during this period.

Ucureña leaders' strategy consisted of transferring political power to the grassroots unions, thus ignoring the established authorities. Grassroots peasant leaders and activists created localized areas of agitation to achieve their aims; they often travelled preaching disobedience towards the landlords, fomented land invasions, and promoted a refusal

to recognize outside authorities. Such was the case of Pojo, where a labor inspector traveled to assess the complaints concerning a peasant attack on that town (see map 1.2). The inspector reported: "The town [of Pojo] is relatively calm. The inhabitants are evacuating it for fear of a new attack. … The peasants are spreading rumors that they have authorization from the comrade minister Lechín to continue attacking the haciendas."[81] A few days later, the same agrarian inspector returned to the town of Pojo, where peasant provocations had not ceased, but this time the news was more alarming. The inspector informed the prefect:

> In Pojo I gave orders to notify two peasant representatives from each property to present themselves at 14:00; they did not obey this order and rather sent messages that all the authorities in the department were supporters of the *rosqueros* (oligarchy), as well as the president Don Víctor Paz Estenssoro. They indicated that that was the slogan taught by the members of the peasant federation, who were there a few days before the first inspection I carried out, who are Emilio Chacón and José Rojas of Ucureña, whom left instructions to attack all the landowners with weapons, to make rivers of blood run through the streets of the town, and share out the land. They told the peasants that they would only listen to them, not to other people who had nothing to do with the federation, because they were the only authentic authorities for them … the peasants also said that they would sell the landowners' cattle to buy arms and defend the agrarian revolution.[82]

In other words, the message from the Ucureña leaders to the peasantry was that of disobedience to the authorities, including President Víctor Paz himself. Ucureños, instead, reaffirmed that their absolute loyalty was to the peasant unions. José Rojas—the Ucureña leader—was personally involved in the task of spreading the message and mobilizing the peasantry. That is the reason why Rojas was identified as the main target for political repression by both the left and right wings of the MNR.

However, in Ucureña itself the situation was no less chaotic. The creation of the Central Sindical Campesina del Valle had strengthened union power against the landlords, and the local peasant leaders had made full use of it. Such was the case of Carlos Linera Pareja, who tried to sell some plots of his hacienda land in Cliza. The Ucureña peasant center notified him that the plots in question fell in the category of pegujales, where peasants had made improvements and, as such, they could not be transferred. José Rojas, as the executive secretary of the peasant central, addressed the landowner a letter stating: "this peasant centre will not recognize any sale which you may make with respect to your property and will take the appropriate measures to guarantee the possession of our comrades."[83] The landlord claimed that the alleged labor tenants had left his estate several years back, but that they now cited the previous fact that their ancestors had lived there to achieve the possession of the pegujales. Despite the landowner's claim, the Ucureña center proceeded to give possession of the pegujales to the peasants in a violent act, which reveals the internal political conflicts between different factions of the peasantry. The prefect ordered the police to control the situation and report on the events to him. The Cliza police chief sent the prefect the following report:

> On 17 January, certain disorders were produced by the peasants of Ucureña in the place known as Pérez Rancho, where the estate's peasant leaders granted possession of their pegujales to those who had been dislodged. … In the police office, the peasant Gabriel Villarroel presented himself completely drunk and somewhat wounded from the attack the peasants of Ocureña carried out, indicating that he had been described as a *rosquista* (oligarchy supporter) and then they confiscated a Colt revolver from him. Afterwards they raided his house where they took from him a gun; these arms were provided by the CDM, in his capacity of belonging to the MNR vanguard. … As your authority ordered measures to be taken against all agitators. … I was obliged to dispatch three policemen with the mission of observing the events … but these policemen were discovered,

> and were mistreated with blows of the fist and with stones, before being shot they managed to escape.[84]

Both the Pojo and Cliza aforementioned cases display the deep seeded tension that arose from the radicalization of the revolution in the hands of the peasants. To control violence, the prefect requested the political influence of the ministers Juan Lechín and Ñuflo Chávez, and to that end he sent them a telegram stating: "the last days violence intensified in rural areas [due to] agitators' instructions to the peasantry that only direct action [from] the masses could make the agrarian revolution a reality. I beg you to inform newly elected peasant leaders about the conduct they ought to follow to avoid later consequences."[85] At this critical moment, the MNR's left-wing leaders were hesitant and timid in their response. Lechín adopted a neutral position that allowed him to maintain ambivalent pacts and alliances. He explained to the prefect that, "the solution to the problem is to replace the reactionary or infantile leaders for authentic revolutionaries who understand the reality we live in."[86] Chávez—who advocated for a sterner position—instructed the prefect to order the police to arrest agitators.[87] This order for repression relieved the prefect, who promptly ordered the police to prepare a plan for the arrest of the FSTCC's leaders.[88]

In the meantime, Sinforoso Rivas and his Valle Bajo cadre developed several strategies to regain control of the FSTCC. These strategies consisted of keeping up a parallel FSTCC office; exerting pressure on Ucureña through the dissemination of agent provocateurs who threatened the leaders; meeting with President Paz to ask for his direct support; and, calling elections for a new FSTCC committee on 31 January. Rivas' supporters, however, did not wait until the proposed election date. They simply invaded the FSTCC office and swore Rivas in as the new executive secretary on 26 January. The FSTCC's recapture garnered the support of the local authorities, who legitimized it by acknowledging that these political actions were an example of the peasants' rejection of the POR leaders, who were labelled "traitors and communists."[89] The FSTCC's recapture by the Rivas' sector stunned the radical leaders, who depicted it as an assault on a legitimate committee that was sworn in "by the comrade Juan Lechín, the COB's executive, but which has now been displaced by the MNR's reactionary sector together with the abusive *gamonales*, Freemasons, and

local authorities."[90] On 30 January, the police arrested a group of radical peasant leaders, unleashing a wave of repression, which started a few days before with the publication of a threatening prefectural communiqué:

> It is communicated that unscrupulous elements, false propagandists of the peasantry's redemption … are crossing the countryside attributing to themselves legal functions, deceiving the rural workers. … All the citizens who wish to collaborate are recommended to make responsible complains against those who wish to make a festival of handing out land. [91]

Among the seven arrested peasant leaders were José Rojas and Carlos Montaño, and all of them were transferred to La Paz as political prisoners.[92]

The arrest of their leaders infuriated the Valle Alto peasants, who then invaded the city of Cochabamba, armed with clubs, iron bars, guns, and slings. The authorities tried to negotiate with them, but "about five hundred indigenous people moved to the city's main square, while the rest scattered around the Barrio Obrero and took up a defensive position on San Miguel's hill"[93], which was the strategic point of entry to the city from the Valle Alto. The prefect invited a delegation—headed by Encarnación Colque, a POR activist—to discuss the issue in his office, but the tensions were so heated that the peasants began to attack the police barracks. Given the seriousness of the situation, the prefect managed to get a government delegation to travel to Cochabamba that same afternoon. Among the delegation were the ministers of state, Federico Fortún, of peasant affairs, Ñuflo Chávez, and of mines, Juan Lechín. In the assembly with local authorities and peasants' representatives attended by the three ministers, Juan Lechín justified the arrests by accusing the peasant leaders of being agitators who needed to face justice. He called on peasants to return to the countryside and carry on with their work. At the end of the meeting, Lechín gave a press conference as official spokesman of the government indicating that, "what happened was that the Ucureña peasants were misinformed and for that reason they have made claims on behalf of leaders who were no more than agitators."[94]

Lechín's second betrayal of the peasants tilted the power balance in favor of the MNR's conservative sector. The MNR's right-wing leaders and the government officials both converged on reactionary rhetoric in response to the conflict. The prefect stated that: "the insolent and provocative attitude of the peasants has not altered the line of conduct of the established authorities, since it is known that indigenous people have always been led to these attitudes by making use of their ignorance." The minister of state said: "with the motive of the assault provoked by extremist elements who agitate the peasantry, let it be known that the supreme government will sanction all attitudes which undermine the principle of law and order." Finally, the ministers of mines and of peasant affairs both communicated that: "the events of today, headed by the former leaders of the union federation of peasant workers are proof of their deception to the peasantry."[95] In other words, both the left and right wings of the MNR agreed on a perception of the Ucureña leadership as naive and politically manipulable. More surprising, however, was the POR leadership's response to its own radicalized peasant activists in the Valle Alto. The POR radicals were not only alienated by their own party, but were harassed by the MNR and some were arrested as political insurgents. Moreover, as John states, Guillermo Lora (the POR's main leader) "recalled opposing the enrollment of 'too many' peasants in the Cochabamba POR. The peasants claimed to be revolutionaries, he said, but were being 'tricky' since all they wanted was to get some land."[96] In other words, from the POR's perspective, the peasantry was not revolutionary enough.

The reactionary attitude of government officials was not approved by the workers' sector, because the manipulation of the peasant union apparatus through repression could be used against the workers' unions at any moment. Once Lechín arrived in La Paz, he denied the veracity of the joint communiqué that he had previously issued—together with the minister of peasant affairs—in Cochabamba. Instead, as the top leader of the COB, he condemned "the assaults which, at the hands of subordinate authorities, the peasant union leaders have suffered."[97] Through this cynical behavior, Lechín showed a shifty political attitude which led him to reject as a worker's leader a decision he had earlier approved as a minister, earning the distrust of the peasants of Cochabamba. On 3 February, the government communicated to the prefect that the only peasant leaders authorized to

work in the countryside were Sinforoso Rivas, Juan Chumacero, Agapito Vallejos, and Simón Aguilar. They said that José Rojas and Carlos Montaño had been freed and both had joined the MNR. The party assigned Sinforoso Rivas and Simón Aguilar the mission of controlling the political conduct of Carlos Montaño and José Rojas, respectively. All these peasant leaders in turn were under the political control of three MNR militants: Víctor Zannier, Miguel Jaldín, and N. Mercado.[98]

This development annoyed the prefect, for he lost authority in favor of the "Zannier group," which led to the monopolization of control over the peasant leaders in Zannier's hands. Nevertheless, Zannier kept his political control and President Paz named him MAC's peasant affairs coordinator.[99] Víctor Zannier's historical character and personality are enigmatic and devious. He was a lawyer and former PIR militant, a student leader at Cochabamba university, and the founder of Cochabamba's *El Mundo* (1958–64) newspaper. He was invited by Víctor Paz to work within the MNR, but later on he supported General René Barrientos' regime.[100] He participated in the plot to hand over Che Guevara's diary microfilm, his severed hands, and his death mask to Fidel Castro, in the late 1960s. Zannier's empowerment as the new peasant affairs coordinator certainly weakened the power of the prefecture and the CDM. The prefect reacted to the news accordingly, arguing in a communication with government authorities that, "however much optimism may come from observing the attitude of these agitators or leaders, one cannot suppose that Simón Aguilar, illiterate and subject to José Rojas, could ever control Rojas." According to the prefect, this was simply Víctor Zannier's hare-brained idea, and did not correspond to reality. For that reason, he asserted, the prefecture was not prepared to change its political line "at the mercy of individual suggestions." Moreover, the prefect concluded: "I directed myself to the minister of state who should remember that the MNR cannot act in concert with Rojas and Montaño, nor with Vallejo, Chumacero or Rivas."[101]

Ñuflo Chávez, the minister of peasant affairs, joined the dialogue. To explain the release of José Rojas and Carlos Montaño the minister argued: "one has to begin with the principle that these men acted unconsciously, being managed by POR leaders." However, he warned the prefect that Zannier's presence was due to direct instructions from the president,

who ordered that he should work "as our peasant leaders' advisor." Ñuflo Chávez explained the principle for the new control scheme in the following way:

> The lack of our own people who could control Ucureña and Colomi brings us the danger that they could become centers of uprisings provoked by the POR. On the other hand, making use of these men under the direct control of Chumacero, Rivas and Vallejos, we can neutralize the action of the agitators … until our leaders gain a reputation … and can take the place of Rojas and Montaño.[102]

Ñuflo Chávez also emphasized that, "this attitude has been assumed through consulting with Sinforoso Rivas and after talking to the president. We should not forget that the actual peasant situation in Cochabamba is because of the bad direction taken by the regional party leaders, who were the first to attack Rivas and his collaborators." Therefore, the government and the MNR did not achieve direct control of the peasant unions and their leaders until the early months of 1953. The agrarian revolution project, promoted by POR peasant activists seeking to radicalize the revolution, alarmed the regime. President Paz had to intervene in peasant politics by creating his own control mechanism through the new "peasant affairs coordinator" office.

Once the FSTCC returned to Sinforoso Rivas' hands on February 1953, the MNR put its control plans into practice by insisting on the demobilization of the peasants. To do so, they organized a mass meeting in Cochabamba city where peasants were instructed to halt their radical political actions and restricted from performing public activities. For instance, the speech by Sinforoso Rivas on that occasion stated: "conscious and nationalist peasants do not need to display knives or axes to demonstrate their support for the government and their resolution to struggle for social justice." Rafael Saavedra, the Cochabamba mayor, acknowledged that, "the government will hand over land to the peasants but pay the legal indemnity to the owners." Finally, the minister of agriculture, Germán Vera Tapia, emphasized that, "the government will carry out the agrarian reform but, meanwhile, we should work more and trust in it."[103]

The Ucureña peasants became the target of discursive attacks by the MNR authorities, who spread anti-communist rhetoric against them: "It will be remembered that after the 21 July 1946 revolution, the indigenous population of the indicated district [Ucureña] paraded with their left fists on high."[104] Notwithstanding, the Ucureña insurgent unionists persisted in their struggle against the MNR's control policies. The peasant struggle was strategically focused on agrarian labor rather than the political arena. For instance, once liberated from prison, José Rojas and his cadre travelled all around the Valle Alto area carrying with them a memorandum from the ministry of peasant affairs. This memorandum authorized them to instruct the peasantry that the mandatory number of working days by colonos in the haciendas were to be reduced to three days per week instead of four, as the 15 May 1945 decree mandated. Minister Ñuflo Chávez made the decision of reducing the colonos' working days in the haciendas and it was harshly criticized by the FRC. It is clear that Ucureña peasant leaders utilized this official order to aide them in their ongoing project to mobilize the peasantry.[105]

Complaints from the Valle Alto landowners and peasants soon arrived at the prefecture. Colonos demanded to work only three days per week on the haciendas' lands, "threatening an uprising on instructions from Ucureña leaders according to orders given by minister Chávez, which they say they have."[106] The owner of San Ignacio hacienda (Arani), for instance, sent a letter to the prefect explaining that Ucureña union leaders had gathered the labor tenants in the hacienda house for an assembly, which the estate's administrators also attended.

> [The leaders] José Rojas, Encarnación Colque, and Crisóstomo Inturias, had the peasants form a circle and, standing in the middle, they said: 'With authorization from the [peasant affairs] minister we have come from Pojo to notify all the peasants of the region that they should work only three days a week. … We will be responsible for everything we say and do.' The administrators, who handed out the printed leaflet with the MNR's resolution expelling Rojas [from the party], made him take note of this circumstance and also read out the dispositions which indicated four days' work

FIGURE 2.4 Peasant Central in the Valle Bajo. From left to right: Víctor Zannier (peasant affairs coordinator), Ñuflo Chávez (minister of peasant affairs), and Sinforoso Rivas (head of the FSTCC) visiting the Quillacollo peasant central (Cochabamba, 1953).

> per week. … Rojas and his comrades replied, saying that even if they had previously been arrested and taken to La Paz, together with N. [sic] Rivas and others, they had immediately been released by the ministers, who gave them the mission of watching out for the fulfillment of the reigning dispositions. … The administrators chose to leave the place.[107]

The discourse of the Ucureña unionists reconfigured the government's repressive message to link governmental legitimacy to their revolutionary actions. Furthermore, José Rojas and his cadre continued to lead the Valle Alto peasant movement, despite the government's attempt to stop them. With Víctor Zannier's appointment as peasant affairs coordinator in Cochabamba in early 1953, the state apparatus' capacity for controlling the peasantry improved notably (see figure 2.4). President Paz essentially

wielded a practical political instrument that allowed him to intervene in political conflicts between party sectors and rebalance their often-opposed interests.

According to Víctor Zannier, this proved to be an important strategy because the MNR had dangerously lost control over the peasants. The politicians took a long time in realizing that the political center of gravity had moved from the cities to the countryside, and the MNR militants mistakenly tried to continue directing the revolution from their desks. Víctor Zannier stated in an interview that, before acting as peasant coordinator:

> I went out to the countryside a couple of times and it was very easy to have the view that the Trotskyists were involved in the countryside. Wherever one went the debate had to be with a Trotskyite, who often had peasant origins but usually they were city dwellers who spoke Quechua. I explained this situation to the president and said to him. … I don't know what people we will do it with, but what I see in the countryside is the POR presence, and Lechín is the man who sympathizes totally with the POR people.[108]

A different party policy that softened the previous satanic image of the "peasant leader"—a characterization that had been built up by the MNR's right wing—soon came to fruition during Zannier's term in office as peasant affairs coordinator. For the first time after the revolution, Zannier and the regional authorities began to appear in public together with armed peasant militias. For instance, in the parade commemorating the first anniversary of the revolution, as *Los Tiempos* newspaper described: "the indigenous population entered the main square of Cochabamba in rows of five headed by the coordinator of peasant affairs, Víctor Zannier, who marched together with the Ucureña peasant union, as did the principal official of the municipality."[109]

After April 1952, peasant unions in Cochabamba began storing guns and ammunition to defend themselves and intimidate the reactionary forces, especially in the valley region. When the revolution evolved, the MNR government provided limited amounts of armament to some selected peasant unions. MNR authorities were unwilling to accept peasant

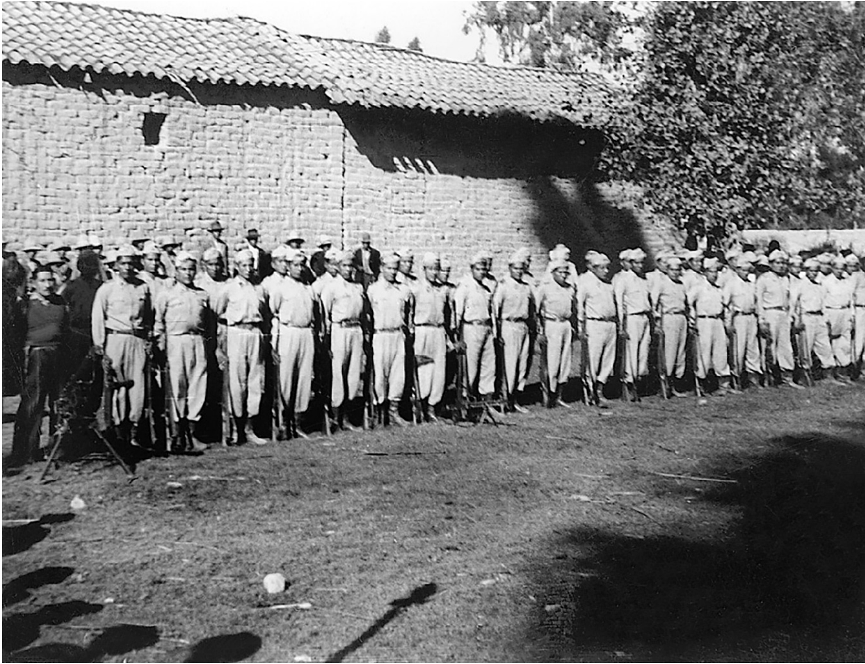


Figure 2. 5 Peasant Militiamen in the Valle Bajo. Peasant militiamen at the "Bella Vista" headquarter (Cochabamba, Quillacollo, 1955).

militias, due to the fact that they could not entirely control the peasants' political behavior.[110] Thus, it was usually each peasant union that financed the armament and training of its militia troops. The peasant unions in the Valle Alto—like Ucureña and Cliza—hired war veterans, retired military personal and NCOs, to give military instruction to the militia troops. In the Valle Bajo—where Sinforoso Rivas organized the "Bella Vista" headquarter—the militiamen received military training with the army's support (see map 1.2 and figure 2.5). This exceptional situation allowed young peasant recruits to fulfill their military service in the countryside instead of the military barracks.[111] Although the warlike capacity of the peasant militias never allowed them to successfully confront the army, peasant militia forces proved to be lethal when fighting amongst themselves during the Champa Guerra (1959–64), in the Valle Alto (see chapter four).

The new peasant control scheme designed by the MNR, and practiced through the peasant affairs coordinator's office, allowed for the Cochabamba's first departmental peasant congress to be called. The peasant congress was held at the Convento hacienda (Santivañez), on 15 June 1953 (see map 1.2). The new FSTCC leaders were elected in this event; Sinforoso Rivas as executive secretary and José Rojas as general secretary. As Sinforoso Rivas recalled: "Rojas and myself, we both remained as the undisputed regional leaders. To balance our political interests, it was agreed that each of us would control seven of the fourteen Cochabamba provinces, our powers thus being defined."[112] The rest of the FSTCC portfolios were distributed between members of the party's left and right wings, purging the POR leaders. The most prominent POR leaders—Carlos Montaño and Emilio Chacón—were exiled from Cochabamba.[113] This solution clearly demonstrated the government's intention of carrying out agrarian reform. The decrees creating the agrarian reform commission and the one nominating their members were issued on 20 January and 20 March 1953, respectively.[114] What was at stake now was how far the reform should go. One group of the landlords linked to the Church's progressive wing accepted the reform with but a few observations, but the other faction conspired to abort the process—together with the Church's reactionary wing and the Falange Socialista Boliviana (Bolivian Socialist Phalanx, FSB). In late May 1953, the government decided that the agrarian reform decree should be signed in Ucureña on 2 August. As the moment approached, tension in the countryside increased; it was an openly known secret that the landlords were preparing a coup against the government.

On 29 June, the ministry of state's secretary arrived in Cochabamba and, in a closed meeting, informed the prefect and the CDM that the possibility of a coup by the FSB existed. He demanded absolute discretion while waiting for new instructions from the government to be received. In spite of his demand, between 30 June and 1 July, the largest peasant armed operation to that date was carried out in Cochabamba's countryside. In the course of this operation, peasant unions throughout the valley besieged rural towns and seized the weapons of supporters of the coup. The mobilization began on 30 June, when Cliza's peasant central leader and MNR activist, Agapito Vallejos, contacted the Ucureña central's leaders warning them about the coup. While, as recalled by Sinforoso Rivas: "José

Rojas, Simón Aguilar, and myself, the regional peasant leaders, we all were in La Paz city in a meeting with the president to receive instructions."[115] Acting jointly, Cliza and Ucureña peasant centers' leaders decided to arrest all FSB militants living in the town of Cliza. Among them was José Escobar, Cliza's former subprefect, and he confirmed the conspiracy by providing the peasants with a list of people who were hiding weapons in their houses, most of whom lived in Tarata and in Vila Vila (see map 1.2). A *Los Tiempos* journalist reported from Cliza:

> José Escobar's statement was read out loud at the assembly, determining, as a consequence, that the peasants should go to Tarata to search the houses of the people indicated. … Agapito Vallejos, making use of the railway office's telephone, communicated with Sacabamba and Vila Vila instructing the peasants to proceed in search of armament.[116]

Several hundred peasants from Cliza and Ucureña searched private houses in the town of Tarata and then returned to their bases without incident. In the afternoon, a rumor surfaced that in Huerta Mayu (Tarata) a great number of arms were concealed. The peasants decided to go back and search that zone, where they fought armed defense groups, leaving several peasants dead and wounded. In the town of Vila Vila, another group of vecinos set up a machine gun on the roof of a house, in such a way that when the peasants entered the main square, they fired on the crowd, causing many casualties. According to coordinator Zannier, among Vila Vila's town dwellers only one person was wounded: "He [the vecino] was wounded after [the massacre in the square] by the peasants in a circumstance in which he was kicking right and left the inert bodies of the dead Indians."[117] The newspapers printed several testimonies of the tragic events in the Valle Alto, which narrated the high level of violence experienced in the confrontation between town dwellers and peasants. The fact that the political authorities of the MNR did not have any control over the situation demonstrated the weakness of the revolutionary regime. Furthermore, it became evident that the prefect of Cochabamba and the local authorities of the right-wing sector of the MNR had lost control of the peasant movement.

FIGURE 2.6 Peasant Leaders in the Valle Bajo. Second row from left to right: Enrique Guzmán, Luis Bustamante, Sinforoso Rivas, Miguel Duran. First row, militiamen from Quillacollo Peasant Central (Cochabamba, Capinota, 1954).

According to Sinforoso Rivas' testimony, the operation of arms confiscation was planned by the leaders of the FSTCC behind the backs of Cochabamba's political authorities. The peasants knew that the landlords had weapons hidden in their haciendas, but they did not trust the regional and local authorities, whom they saw as very close to the landlords' interest. Thus, they selected the peasant leaders who were to take charge of the search in each area of the Valle Bajo, and some of them were commissioned to immediately travel to La Paz to inform the president (see figure

2.6). Rivas explained: "when I got back from La Paz, the operation had already begun and I started receiving reports on the searches. The haciendas of the Valle Bajo and of the highlands were searched, but all they found were old useless arms. In contrast, in the Valle Alto, they found a great number of new weapons and ammunition, just as we had foreseen."[118]

The arms-search operation by peasants was a landmark of the peasant movement in Bolivia, for no subsequent peasant political activity was so independent, so highly coordinated, or so widely executed. In spite of these achievements, authorities never recognized the potential of peasant unionism. Official interpretations always looked for causes outside the domain of peasant political agency and intent. For example, peasant coordinator Víctor Zannier's report attributed the cause of unrest to a peasant who sparked the conflict: "Agapito Vallejos acted on his own account, disobeying tacit instructions. … The FSB's and POR's agent-provocateurs, introducing themselves into the midst of the peasants, tried to create a climate suitable for the oligarchical counter-revolution to prosper."[119] The report by the minister of peasant affairs repeated Zannier's arguments but conceded that in the peasant operative, "eight crates of ammunition, four submachine guns, twelve machine pistols and forty rifles were confiscated."[120] Finally, the minister of state chose to make the POR militants responsible, threatening to start a process of repression of those alleged instigators.[121] Facing accusations from the MNR, the POR's regional committee made a public declaration:

> It was the peasant federation which ordered the search for arms belonging to the abusive landlords. By this way, the mobilized masses violated the control and the desire of the political leaders. [The minister of state] under pressure from some ladies and landowners, did not have the civil courage to defend the labor of his own party and has believed it convenient to unload all the responsibility on the POR.[122]

Although momentarily controlled, the antirevolutionary forces (even inside the MNR regime), were not discouraged. In fact, a final coup attempt was unleashed on 9 November 1953. Details regarding this unsuccessful coup to overthrow the revolutionary regime are discussed in chapter three.

Discursive Polyphony: Landlords, Peasants, and the MNR

In the first revolutionary period (1952–53), a discursive polyphony combined the voices of the landlords, peasants, and the MNR. The tools used by political actors to participate in the dialogue were diverse and led to a complex field of debate. The editorial and the commentary were the primary journalistic genres that the landowners used to mark out a field of ideological discussion, and the interlocutor between the landlords and the press was usually the state. The denunciation, for its part, was a tool that both landlords and peasants used to debate social and political aspects related to the instituted order. Finally, landlords, peasants, and politicians used the communiqué to engage a debate concerning daily political topics.

Editorials and commentaries in this initial revolutionary period proposed three positions that emanated from the landlords' points of view. The first interpreted social contradictions as a product of a "natural" historical process in which Indians were racially inferior and possessed a sole political alternative, which was the "race war" directed toward the extermination of white people. Therefore, white people's defense was a mandatory response in the preservation of the state's integrity and for guaranteeing the only possible route open for the civilized development of the Bolivian nation.[123] This ideological position characterized the most reactionary sector of the landlords, who stubbornly opposed any change in the landed property system, based on their racist perceptions.[124] This sector put forward the proposal "to saturate the countryside with European farming families who would introduce their modern techniques and their customs, contributing to civilization by contaminating our Indians (*por contagio a nuestros indios*)."[125] As such, the problem was not the distribution of land but rather "the retarded human types [Indians], who need to receive special treatment to be able to integrate themselves with civilization. There are reasons to believe that the Aymara groups, as much as the Quechuas, are capable of evolving, as long as an integral educational plan has been adopted to that end."[126] Moreover, revolutionary change posed a threat to the Indians because it could remove the guardianship of white landlords over them, disrupting Indian's contact with Western civilization. As Damián Z. Rejas, a regular *Los Tiempos* columnist posited:

> The Indian, who is originally lazy and mistrustful, when he gives personal service (*pongueaje*) becomes lively, is trusted by the landlord, manages his money with politeness (*delicadeza*) and honesty … to sum up, the Indian who gives personal service, being in contact with the landlord, becomes civilized, learns good habits, learns to enjoy relating to the townspeople; he becomes gentle, communicative and polite … thus, the so-called [agrarian] reform will do a lot of damage to the Indian.[127]

Moreover, this group of reactionary landlords argued that the lack of control over the Indians would lead to sloth, resulting in a catastrophic famine, "that the Indians will take advantage of to exterminate [the white population] and re-establish the Inka Empire which they are so anxious for."[128]

The second ideological position of the landlords was based around the argument that the regional historical process had opened a possible solution to the Indian versus white people contradiction. This solution, which allowed hope for civilization, centered itself on the image of the "mixed blood" or *mestizo*. In a commentary by Octavio Salamanca—who was a member of the most important hacendado family in the Valle Bajo—he stated that the mestizos had the virtue of not thinking in terms of conflict as the Indians did. As such, the mercantile experience of the mestizos made the smallholding route possible, through the purchase of land from "its legitimate owners."[129] Facing a decline of creole power, the best solution to the land problem was to break it up and sell it out to the mestizo, who could take up smallholdings without damaging the landlords' interests. This solution—Salamanca continued—would not be practical if the project of the Indians was imposed, since Indians did not seek the legal purchase of the land but rather its violent takeover. Salamanca's commentary finalized by addressing a political perspective that transcended his initially ethnic oriented approach:

> While the Aymara and Quechua Indians have been helped and succored and gifted with the enjoyment of land, remaining afterwards as landowners, the mestizos of the valleys who have acquired their land as property have received

> help from nobody. … Communism and its thugs [the Indians] pursue and impose the acquisition of land for nothing … unworked land is their aim; on the other hand, our mestizos know that property is acquired by work and not by taking it off its owners to give it to the Indians.[130]

Salamanca, as the spokesman of this group of landlords, was referring to the valley piqueros who strengthened their peasant economy and separated themselves from landlord control beginning in the late eighteenth century—entering into the land market a century later. The mestizo solution that the landlords proposed did not take long to vanish, when the revolutionary euphoria led the valley peasants to violently seize the estates' lands. The virtuous mestizo in the minds of the landlords was then transformed into the noxious "union boss," who with his pernicious preaching contaminated the spirit of those who once again reappeared as the peaceful hacienda Indians.

Daniel Mendoza—another regular columnist in *Los Tiempos*—commented on his own experience when attending a peasant gathering before the takeover of a valley hacienda land. He was impressed by a peasant leader's speech to the mobilized peasantry: "An urbanized little Indian (*cholito*) with bulging eyes in a face of feline exasperation [made a speech]. [These leaders] were not the classic little personal servants who were kicked by their landlords; but perhaps they had atavistic memories of that sort."[131] The MNR's right wing and its peasant cadres shared this second position of the landlords. The MNR's right-wing politicians backed the idea of payment for the plots, which the state would hand over to the peasants through the agrarian reform. While the right leaning peasant cadres tried to justify the payment from an ethical point of view, which would legitimize the peasants' access to land. Clearly, the mestizo project, emerging as it did from landowning circles, did not have significant weight among the valley peasants. Moreover, the ideas of a race war, or an indigenous Messiah, proceeded from the ramblings of the spokesmen of the elite, given that no oral or written evidence of valley peasant origin in that historical moment has been found to back up the thesis of a race war, or that of the return of the Inca.

The third ideological position of the landlords was more pragmatic. According to this position, which emanated from the FRC, the contradictions in the distribution of land came from the historical inefficiency of the Bolivian state. The pre-revolutionary state—the FRC asserted—failed to distribute the land equitably, but this should not have caused any conflict given that there were ample state lands. Those were the lands that the revolutionary state should have distributed to the peasants, without affecting the actual property of the landlords. This landlord's point of view emphasized the technical aspects of the agrarian problem, sidelining any consideration of its conflictive social relations. In an FRC communiqué published in *Los Tiempos*, the landlord's federation wrote:

> It is not known if the present government has in mind a proposal to distribute the land among the Indians for free or through transferences with mandatory title paid over a long period of time. With either hypothesis, evolution is more practical with a public [good] than with private goods, which already have an owner and as such have already been distributed.[132]

When peasant pressure was so intense that the agrarian reform could no longer be delayed, this group of landlords, in conjunction with the MNR's right wing, attempted to slow it down. They argued that it was necessary to carry out preliminary studies and to educate the peasants, as that was the only way to guarantee sustained productivity in the agrarian sector. According to another FRC communiqué:

> Nobody is an enemy of the indigenous population's legitimate claims. But any effort which is made to remove the peasants from their ignorance, their social incapacity, their servitude, their poverty, and their vices, must be the result of study and of the rigorous and scientific consideration of a many-faceted problem, such as the Indian question.[133]

In an interview given by the minister of public works to members of the FRC, for instance, the minister stated that "the agrarian reform will be

carried out scientifically [because] this tends to create greater productivity in economic terms." Members of the FRC replied to the minister that agreeing "to terminate the *latifundio* after classification and a scientific study of what should be considered as such, and that they were also in favor of the abolition of the *minifundio*."[134]

These arguments of the right, which attacked the peasant vision by pointing to smallholdings as a technically unproductive solution, were shared by the MNR's left-wing intellectuals. Urban leftist intellectuals and MNR militants like René Cuadros Quiroga, for instance, envisioned a socialist society, wherein the peasants would lose their autonomy and be incorporated into a mechanism of centralized rural state planning.[135] The government, which initially lacked a clear plan for agrarian reform, confronted the oligarchy by debunking their two central arguments against agrarian reform: the idea that indigenous education was a prelude to the reform and the idea that the latifundio was not an exploitative regime. Ñuflo Chávez, the minister for peasant affairs, attacked these elitist points of view and this sparked a flutter of loud public polemic back and forth. In a press interview, Ñuflo Chávez pointed out his position regarding productive relations inside the *latifundia* units:

> It is not a priority to teach the indigenous population to read and write, what is important in this moment is to rescue them from the bourgeois feudal regime and incorporate them into the Bolivian population … the landlord only presents himself when it is time to receive the money from the sale of foodstuffs produced by the Indian, he never contributes a cent to the exploitation of his property.[136]

The FSTCC upheld the minister's claims, indicating that the *latifundia* owners were backward elements who did not invest in capital or machinery.[137] The rural schoolteacher's union, for its part, alleged that their experience gave them sufficient authority to affirm that the Indians were active producers of foodstuffs for the feeding of the people.[138]

Public denunciations created a different rhetorical context. Denunciations were frequently published in the press, putting the everyday confrontation of the respective interests of the landlord and peasant in full

public display. Reality was basically inverted politically in many of them, a subversion of the perceived institutional "order of things." The manifold representational images found in denunciations, in turn, evolved as the revolution gradually weakened the power of the landlords. In the months following 9 April 1952—when peasant actions against the landlords had just begun—the landowners denounced these transgressions of social order by disseminating an overweening discourse. The landlords' arrogance pointed its darts against agitators, ringleaders, and public authorities, for these political agents, in their minds, were the ones who had mobilized the Indians. They were driven, in these representations, by a social or personal vendetta. For instance, a denunciation by Bernardina Ledezma, a powerful landowner in Valle Alto, was published in the press:

> For some time, we farmers have been living through an era of complete terror and confusion, organized in a Machiavellian manner. [Those who provoke it are not indigenous]. … The real authors are some irresponsible authorities and many agitators, with the sinister slogan of assassinating the landowners, intimidating, and sowing terror in the communist style.[139]

The landlords' political perspective was based on their confrontational experience during and immediately after the 1940s peasant rebellions in Cochabamba, as discussed in chapter one. Consequently, they blamed the agitators and the venal authorities that supported the rioters for the violence. For instance, The Llacma (Yayani) hacienda owner's widow, Margarita C. viuda de Coca, denounced the rebel leaders as common criminals:

> The event [Ayopaya haciendas' attack in 1947] had been carefully prepared. It was not only a seizure of collective fury. Hilarión Grágeda, who went to the indigenous congress in La Paz, often traveled to that city with money that came from subscriptions (*ramas*) by all the indigenes. He hired the services of Muñoz (the Miner) and supplied

himself with dynamite, guns, and ammunition. The premeditation was thus obvious.[140]

The peasants, for their part, entered the public pitch denouncing the abuses and the vicious practices of the landlords in their relations with the rural workers. To undermine the landlord's prestige and power, the peasants detailed the exploitation they underwent in the haciendas, displaying the inhumane images of their submission to the landlords. The peasants denounced, for instance, that the landlord "obliges us to serve him four days a week, no matter if they are public holidays or if it is raining and even during the days of Holy Week. When one of the labor tenants dies, he does not want to give us permission to attend the funeral in a spirit of companionship."[141] By late 1952, however, rampant violence had replaced the peasants' public denunciations, as they began challenging the landlord's power by using direct violent action as their most effective discourse. The seizure of the haciendas, the search for arms in the houses of the landlords and town dwellers, and the acts of disobedience to the landlord's orders had an explosive effect on the spirit of the landlords whose discourse took on, suddenly, tones of perplexity and surprise. Ramón Merino, a hacienda owner in Valle Alto, for instance, was so upset with the new revolutionary order that decide to publish the following denunciation:

> [When the agitators arrived at the hacienda] people went past me without greeting me or taking any notice of me. I was surprised when I saw that they were carrying jars of chicha from the town of Anzaldo … when I approached the crowd, I noticed the presence of an individual obviously disguised in a red poncho who said to me: 'I'm in charge of the union, all the obligations have come to an end, there is no service anymore.'[142]

The situation of the landowners and town dwellers in the countryside was uncertain, since the rural territory had become a forbidden place for non-peasants, and the traditional order no longer prevailed. The press was flooded with denunciations, like this one, published in *Los Tiempos* that was written by Clotilde Candia: "From four in the morning I heard

constant whistles, something that had never happened [before] and dogs barking in my house and the neighbors. All this called my attention and I thought that the Indians could attack us, as was effectively the case a few hours later."[143] When landlords fled to the cities in hopes of managing their estates through their overseers or *mayordomos*, the peasants cut off their services and froze production in the haciendas. For instance, José Claros claimed that, "[when] some laborers I had brought from the city to work for day wages set to harvesting the wheat sown on the property … two-hundred indigenes armed with army rifles, knives, machetes and sticks pursued them over the countryside with bullets."[144] The escalation of violence, which ended with the landlords cornered in the cities, was followed by a series of public denunciations from the hacendados. The landowners described their anxiety in tones of impotence and disgust:

> Uncontrollable hordes of Indians more savage than the Huns assaulted the granaries, rustled animals, cut down the woods, threatened people having lost all idea of respect, of that sacred respect of collective tranquility, of individual life, of the inhabitants' property. … Since it seems that there is no responsibility for these wild performances (*desmanes*), we simply apply to your prestigious newspaper so as to inform the public of these facts and so that the authorities will perhaps decide to put an end to these attacks.[145]

Antonio Abasto, owner of the La Alcoholería (Tolata) hacienda in the Valle Alto, provided another denunciation regarding the treatment of the landlords. He complained to the office of peasant affairs about the removal of produce from his hacienda and obtained from it an order for its return. Thus, he presented his case to the Tolata peasant union. The peasants decided that the local union had no right to judge the affair, but rather it the trial ought to be held at the Ucureña tribunal in its central office at Cliza. When the peasants took him to Cliza that afternoon, the intendant managed to convince them that the landlord should spend the night in the local jail until the following day. Antonio Abasto complained that the next morning:

> I presented myself in the peasant center [of Ucureña] which was full of people making complaints. A 'tribunal' of leaders was set up, which began the interrogation concerning various affairs. … I asked the head of the tribunal to get the hacienda administrator to make a statement, under oath. In answer to my request the head took the oath, 'by Villarroel, by Busch, etc.' [In response to the witness' doubts] a peasant leader said to the declarer, in Quechua: 'Since when you are with the wolf, because all the owners are wolves, you ought to be with the sheep who are the peasants. As a punishment you'll be imprisoned with your boss (*patrón*).' [After fining me] I was pushed out of the office and taken to a hacienda house, which was that of Santa Clara. There they locked me in a room which had a little skylight, under which there were some mud bricks. They ordered me to take away the mud bricks and collect the ash which lay on the floor. Placing myself in a corner of the room, I absolutely refused to do it.[146]

It was evident that the rural territory had been converted into a peasant dominion. In response to such a peasant attitude, the notion of transforming the city into an exclusively non-peasant territory sharpened. The idea of exclusion from the use of territory intensified in the revolutionary era, as an effect of peasant mobilization. Although urban elites had already been reordering urban and rural spaces based upon modern liberal ideological standards since the late nineteenth century, such an exclusionary mentality had never before been implemented so intensely.[147] The power struggle through territorial exclusion played an important role in the collective imagination and produced hysterical behaviors when peasants or town dwellers threatened to cross borders. For example, when the decision was made to sign the agrarian reform decree in Ucureña, the problem of where to lodge the thousands of peasants in attendance arose. The residents of Cochabamba city, headed by the Comité Pro-Cochabamba (Committee for Cochabamba), refused to allow the presence of peasants within the city limits. They elaborated trivial reasons reflecting the urban

dwellers' fears and hatred towards all that was rural and external to the city itself. As a columnist in *Los Tiempos* wrote:

> In a democratic country we can make no opposition to such a concentration [of Indians in the city of Cochabamba]. However, the following problems should be taken into account: 1. The danger which would arise if these people were to be lodged in schools and colleges which could be left contaminated by parasites; 2. The shock which their presence would cause to the [urban] inhabitants and above all to ladies and nervous people; 3. The results of such a huge meeting for the atmosphere of the city.[148]

Amid this toxic political environment, the landlords, peasants, and MNR politicians initiated a dialogue through the use of communiqués. The FRC, as the spokesman for the landowners' interests, played an important role in influencing official agrarian policies. Its initial strategy, as seen above, was to blame the republican regime for the existing social contradictions. The FRC recognized President Villarroel's supreme decree of 15 May 1945 as a valid framework for the relationship between landlords and peasants.[149] Following this, the landlords (and the MNR's right wing) described a premature image of a victorious revolution, making out that the peasants had triumphed in their demands. If the agrarian reform was to continue, the landlords asserted, its implementation should be in the hands of a group of experts who would plan it scientifically. For that reason, this was the second stage of action, which went beyond the limits of immediate revolutionary change.

Some peasant unions controlled by the MNR's right wing shared this belief. Thus, when the valley peasants began to mobilize from their grassroots to attack the landlords' power, the leaders of these right-wing peasant unions tried to calm the peasants' impulses. Such was the case of the Federación Sindical Agraria Boliviana (Bolivian Federation of Agrarian Unions, FSAB), headed by Antonio Mamani Álvarez, who launched a communiqué during the Indian's Day, celebrating the final liberation of the Bolivian Indians:

> [We celebrate] the arrival of the government presided over by he who is justly called father of the indigenous population, don Gualberto Villarroel, who with an ample vision dictated the decrees which came to change the state of things, because after the promulgation of those decrees, the indigenous population had **freedom**. … With pride after long years of imprisonment, persecution, and exile, I greet you with a proud and serene glance because we have fulfilled our duty.[150]

In September 1952, when the valley peasants were in full confrontation with the landlord's power, Antonio Mamani Álvarez returned to Cochabamba and declared:

> We are nationalists, we respect private property, but we want the decree of 15 May 1945, which presently applies, to be strictly fulfilled … we want to tell our comrades that we [the peasants] are the ones who should avoid rage among our people. We also say to them, that they should respect the landlords; that if any injustice is committed against them the union will help them. They should not take private vengeance, they should not kill, they should not sack. There are laws which support the Indian and the landlord, and since we are all equal, the law is the same for all. We will not permit abuses by the landlord and neither will we abuse them.[151]

Antonio Mamani Álvarez (or, sometimes, Antonio Álvarez Mamani) was a multi-faceted politician from the altiplano who switched his surnames according to the indigenous or mestizo significance that he wished to present. Mamani (or Álvarez) was one of the most important highland peasant leaders of the 1940s. He spoke Quechua, Aymara, Callawaya, and Spanish, and was involved in the organization of various regional peasant congresses, mainly in La Paz.[152] Although he attempted to intervene in Cochabamba valley peasant politics, he never achieved much success.[153] Understandably, Mamani's rhetoric provoked enthusiasm among the

landlords, who suggested that the FRC should establish relationships with the leaders who were headed by Mamani, with the aim of putting together a plan of cooperation.[154] However, Mamani's rhetoric contradicted the goals of the peasant movement in Cochabamba. In contrast to Mamani, peasants in the valley demanded that the government set up "a commission for the agrarian revolution; that forbids the sale of estates' lands and the eviction of smallholders; and that expropriates the *latifundia* and hands over arms to the peasants to ensure the onward march of the national revolution."[155]

The radicalization of the peasant movement by way of "agrarian revolution" terrified the landlords. The FRC began to pressure regional authorities to take precautions "against the attitude of the agricultural unions who do not observe any rule of law, make their decisions rashly, and make public statements of not recognizing any authority."[156] The landlords argued that it was urgent to reestablish the principle of authority in the countryside and criticized the government because the idea of an "agrarian revolution" had gained so much ground relative to "agrarian reform."[157] The authorities—who feared peasant radicalism just as much as the landlords did—began a campaign of public threats against the peasant movement:

> The departmental prefecture announces that it will fulfill its duty of repressing any act which tries to contravene the social order. The agitators will be arrested and handed over to justice. The security police have been instructed to detain any ringleader who is an agitator, wherever they may be found.[158]

This campaign, however, did not stop the peasant movement until the agrarian reform decree was signed in Ucureña amidst a climate of political tension, foreshadowing the outburst of civil confrontation.

Conclusion

During the first two years of the revolutionary era (1952–53), in the heat of the euphoria for unionization and the search for land ownership, the peasant movement in Cochabamba lead a grassroots mobilization of the rural

population. A cohort of new leaders emerged from the rank and file of the movement and their experience was forged in a context of substantial political autonomy. The peasant movement, however, did not start with the revolution itself nor was it a consequence of it. Peasants in Cochabamba, both in the altiplano and the valley, already had a long historical experience of political dealings with non-local power centers. A novel aspect of the 1952 revolution was that it opened channels for direct peasant political participation. Once those channels were opened, everything turned upside down: a new political culture emerged and all roads to the previous status quo were blocked.

Revolutionary peasant leaders in Cochabamba fomented several resistance strategies against the landlords, the principal target of their political actions. In the struggle against the landlords, tensions with government authorities arose, but the peasants never broke with the revolutionary state's power. The main tension between the peasants and the state originated when the Ucureña peasant center fostered its own "agrarian revolution" project (a peasant-union-controlled land distribution), instead of the official "agrarian reform" (a state-controlled land distribution) project. Radical peasant leaders in the Valle Alto—together with POR peasant activists—were politically purged with the tacit complicity of both POR and MNR urban leadership figures, who were seeking a pact of collaboration with the revolutionary regime.

The Colomi upheaval in November 1952 and the peasants' operation to seize weapons from supporters of an anti-revolutionary coup in June 1953 were the two most important political events that were led by the peasant leadership in the valley. Both were landmark events in the peasant movement, for they were independently planned, highly coordinated, and well executed by the peasantry. The peasants fought against the ideological biases of the MNR's left and right wings, which considered the peasants subordinate to the workers' leadership and a proto-social class needing to be educated first before ever participating in politics. The peasants' initiative of seizing hacienda lands shifted the regional power balance and put the landlords on the defensive. The signing of the agrarian reform decree in August 1953 and the failed antirevolutionary coup in November 1953 finally dismantled the landlord's power in Bolivia.

The political action of peasants came together with revolutionary political discourse. During the first two revolutionary years, peasants, landlords, and MNR politicians were the main actors in the discursive arena. In newspaper's editorials, communiqués, and denunciations, political actors fought to impose their own interpretations of the revolutionary events. The arrogant initial discourse of the landlords, depicting "Indians" as an inferior social group, shifted when peasants finally seized hacienda lands and had cornered landlords in the cities. In response to such peasant attitudes, the criterion of transforming the city into an exclusively non-peasant territory sharpened. However, social relationship between vecinos and campesinos was still perceived by the city dwellers as equivalent to a basic relationship of domination and subordination. In other words, the notion that the civilized vecinos ought to control the unruly campesinos. A seed of division was planted in the revolutionary political soil: the city versus the countryside.

3

The Agrarian Reform and the State's Discursive Dominion (1954–58)

When the MNR finally signed the agrarian reform decree in August 1953, it indeed opened quite a Pandora's box of conflict and violence. Many latent long-term ethnic and class issues permeating regional social relations suddenly reappeared, seemingly from nowhere. Although the landlords' power had been wiped out from the political equation, many other contradictions still flourished. These contradictions set workers against peasants, *comunarios* (ayllo community members) against *campesinos* (peasants), and *vecinos* (town dwellers) against campesinos. The following are the case studies examined in this chapter: the miner-peasant agrarian cooperatives that were implemented through the agrarian reform, in early-1954; the Tapacarí *ayllo-comunario* clash against the Valle Bajo peasant union militias, in late-1954; and the fight in northern Potosí between the San Pedro de Buenavista vecinos against the Choroma peasant federation, in early-1958. Each instance included as a case study illustrates the conflicts that emerged in the wake of the signing of the agrarian reform decree.

It was the tension between the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario's (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR) left and right wings that built such a pervasively oppositional and violent political context, fueling intense and sometimes bloody confrontations between the myriad interested parties. Peasants were always the most deeply affected by the violence. The left-wing attempted to subordinate the peasants to their proletariat aims, for peasants were not considered capable of the

consciousness required to lead a revolution, and the right-wing tried to control peasants through the urban power networks of the party. Both party factions sought to manipulate the peasant unions, and to utilize the symbolic and paramilitary powers of the union militias. Urban politicians and intellectuals almost always favored restricting the political autonomy of the peasant unions. The collapse of the landlord class during the early years of the revolution—far from representing the ultimate political triumph for the peasantry—was in fact the initial step of a long-lasting struggle against revolutionary power groups for the peasants to create their own *campesino* identity.

This chapter's time frame (1954–58) encompasses the second and the first half of two consecutive presidential terms, those of Víctor Paz (1952–56) and Hernán Siles (1956–60). During President Paz's second half term, the MNR's left wing was more influential, while in President Siles' first half term, the right wing was the dominant faction in the government. The initial execution of the agrarian reform law through the expropriation of hacienda lands and the formation of agrarian miner-peasant cooperatives occurred under the rule of Víctor Paz. The experiment was unsuccessful; the cooperatives were dissolved, and their land redistributed on an individual basis. More problems emerged, however, when comunarios in Cochabamba's altiplano reclaimed the property of valley lands as part of their ancestral communal territories. Peasants in the valley—who were ready to obtain their own individual plots of land through the agrarian reform system—confronted comunarios with armed militias. Conflict between vecinos and campesinos further increased during the rule of Siles, as a result of his administration's attempt to recentralize the power over peasant unions within urban party institutional bodies. As a part of their push to shift control of peasant unions, the government manipulated public information and created parallel peasant and workers' unions to weaken the established pro-leftist ones. Furthermore, the regime systematically tainted the public image of peasant leaders who were not organically aligned with the official political ideology. A central tactic of the MNR's right wing was the encouragement of conflict between the town dwellers and peasants in their support for a "progressive landlord return," rhetoric that irritated the peasantry in both the valley and highlands of Cochabamba. Within this context of counterrevolutionary resurgence,

San Pedro de Buena Vista vecinos clashed with Choroma campesinos in northern Potosí.

This chapter also examines public discourse in Cochabamba during this period. After the failed coup in November 1953, the MNR regime monopolized the press in Cochabamba. The official *El Pueblo* was the only newspaper that circulated in the region until 1958, when the press monopoly in Cochabamba ended. As a result of the failed coup, however, the landlords' voices disappeared from the discursive political arena. The peasants became a central subject in the MNR's triumphalist and self-congratulatory political discourse, which not only celebrated the revolution but also took full responsibility for its genesis. The rhetoric disseminated concerning the success of the revolution focused upon the importance of agrarian reform and its peasant beneficiaries, an abundance of discourse also highlighted the benevolence the governing party, the MNR, lovingly granted to the peasants of Bolivia. Although the peasants were characterized and represented as political actors totally subordinate to the state, in actuality, this discourse created an idealized model for peasant-state relations from the perspective of the state and its agents. Implicit within the claim of an already existing "total" subordination of peasants to the state, is the reality that the government lacked the capacity beyond the dissemination of political propaganda, to convince the peasants to align themselves with their political control policies.

Peasants and the Left-Wing Populist Paradigm

The most serious attempt of the Bolivian oligarchical elites to overturn the revolution was the failed 9 November 1953 coup d'état, carried out under the political command of the Falange Socialista Boliviana (Bolivian Socialist Phalanx, FSB). The right-wing faction of the MNR surreptitiously supported this seditious act, as it was concerned about the extent of social change thus far within the revolutionary processes. In Cochabamba, several important MNR militants maintained family and social ties with the oligarchy. The regional oligarchs had been deeply affected by the revolution, were angry about it, and had silently supported plans for the coup. The prefect of Cochabamba, Gabriel Arze Quiroga, for instance, was bitterly criticized for his lukewarm response to the coup's plotters.[1] Once the government gained control of the attempted overthrow, it lost

all confidence in the party's right-wing members and removed them from public offices, replacing them with left-wing militants. From late-1953 to 1956, when President Paz's administration came to an end, the left wing was given free rein to implement its populist agenda through supporting workers' and peasants' unions.[2]

The MNR's right wing, however, was not entirely dismantled but rather required a period of time to regroup and plan a counter-attack. In Cochabamba, Germán Vera Tapia, the former minister of agriculture, returned to occupy the leading position in the Comando Departamental del MNR (MNR's Departmental Commando, CDM). From his post, he rebuilt the rank and file of the party's right wing under the pretext of leading a "political instruction" campaign aimed at grassroots peasant organizations. At the same time, in both provincial capitals and rural towns, the MNR's right wing deployed a campaign to organize "Provincial Commandos," "Worker-Peasant Blocks," and "MNR Vanguards," with the aim of establishing parallel institutional power blocks that might be able to compete with the power held by the peasant unions. These party-based organizations drew on the urban middle class and artisans to fill their membership rolls, and city dwellers, keen to take advantage of a means to differentiate themselves politically from peasants, jumped at the chance. The attitude of the urban MNR militants generated a new revolutionary ethnic discourse that exacerbated pre-existing exclusionary patterns in the power dynamic between town dwellers and peasants. MNR militants in rural towns mistreated the peasants, generating ethnic and political rivalry. For instance, in Tapacarí, MNR vanguard members "bullied and mistreated the peasantry."[3] The Punata subprefect denounced that MNR worker-peasant block members "abused the rural population by forcing them to obey their orders."[4] The Ucureña peasants complained to the prefect that the Cliza vecinos were organizing an MNR worker-peasant block "so as to divide the local peasantry."[5]

The MNR's right wing began organizing MNR Provincial Commandos (CPM) in all provincial capitals of the Department of Cochabamba. A right-wing militant was usually placed as head of each CPM, aiming to create a renovated network of right-wing leaders in the provincial capitals. From their posts, these MNR right-wing militants maintained a state of permanent confrontation with the regional peasant leaders and attempted

to take control of the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (Union Federation of Peasant Workers of Cochabamba, FSTCC). For instance, Washington Arce, the right-wing supporting peasant leader of Capinota, made a series of accusations against Sinforoso Rivas and José Rojas, in an effort to split the peasant leadership. The FSTCC declared him a traitor to the peasant movement and expelled him from the FSTCC committee board. His challenge to the power of Rivas and Rojas intensified when he founded a parallel and competing peasant federation to theirs in Capinota.[6] Despite his expulsion from union leadership, however, Washington Arce continued to represent the MNR's right wing as a deputy of the national parliament.[7]

In contrast to the right-wing's confrontational attitude, the MNR's left wing supported the peasant unions, maintaining direct links with both Sinforoso Rivas in the Valle Bajo and José Rojas in the Valle Alto. Rivas and Rojas were both attached to the policies that the Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers' Central, COB) and the Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos (Ministry for Peasant Affairs, MAC) implemented in an effort to aid the peasantry. Within the mutually held areas of influence, Rivas and Rojas had established far-reaching power networks composed of local peasant leaders who were faithful to both of them. Drawing on the size and latent power of these networks, both peasant leaders individually negotiated their own political positions within the regime. Meanwhile, local peasant leaders engaged in tense and often violent power tussles with local authorities, the CDM, the CPMs, and other urban MNR organizations. These politically motivated violent conflicts were encouraged by local leaders of both factions, shattering any notion of a *Pax Revolucionaria,* the existence of which the regime had fabricated with its monopoly on media.[8]

In June 1954 the government's agrarian reform apparatus began the divisive process of land redistribution. To accelerate the process, the left applied a parallel plan for also distributing land to groups of miners and hacienda colonos. This additional plan originated in the miners' unions and was put into action by the MAC and the COB (see figure 3.1). The goal of the plan was to shift underemployed miners into the agrarian sector, for mining output had shrunk significantly. This idea was also informed by literalist interpretations of Marxist theory, which argued that the mining

Figure 3.1 Revolutionary Leaders in the Valle Bajo. Sinforoso Rivas, head of the FSTCC, Juan Lechín, minister of mines and head of the COB, and José Montaño, mayor of Quillacollo, are standing next to the Viloma landmark (Cochabamba, 1953).

proletariat was the only possible vanguard of the revolution, because peasants simply lacked revolutionary consciousness. The goal of the miners' plan was to establish influence over the revolutionary spirit of the peasants and the organization of stable miner-peasant agrarian cooperatives in the former haciendas.

The government set up a commission for land distribution and issued a resolution authorizing the expropriation of several haciendas in the Valle Bajo of Cochabamba. Nearly half of the beneficiaries of land distribution were miners from the Siglo XX, Catavi, and Colquiri recently nationalized mines.[9] From January 1954 to July 1955, twenty-eight *latifundios* or great estates were expropriated: twenty-five in Cochabamba, two in Sucre and one in Potosi. In the case of Cochabamba, some 554 miner and 623 peasant families received plots ranging from two to eight hectares

Table 3.1 Distribution of Hacienda Lands to Miners and Peasants in Cochabamba (1954–55)

DATE	ESTATE	EXTENSION (has)	MINERS (Families)	PEASANTS (Families)	TOTAL (Families)
30/1/54	Parotani	--	69	39	108
26/3/54	Chilimarca	500	36	20	56
26/3/54	Chojñacollo	140	30	55	85
28/3/54	Viloma	500	30	135	165
28/3/54	Caramarca	600	30	155	185
28/3/54	Vinto Chico	--	32	13	45
06/5/54	Mamanaca	--	17	32	49
15/5/54	Viloma	690	186	110	296
09/6/54	Sumumpaya	80	17	15	32
10/6/54	La Maica	200	21	24	45
15/6/54	Paracaya	400	--	--	125
09/1/55	El Convento	663	60	25	85
13/5/55	Novillero	150	26	--	26
TOTAL			554	623	1,302

Source: *El Pueblo* (Cochabamba).

(4.5 to 18 acres) in area (see table 3.1). As so many miners benefited from land distribution, peasant leaders became upset and criticized the idea of settling miners in already densely populated peasant-agricultural areas. Sinforoso Rivas reluctantly collaborated with the land distribution project in the Valle Bajo, while Valle Alto peasant leaders refused to implement the project in Cliza.[10]

Wherever the government was to distribute hacienda lands, a public celebration and peasant gathering was organized at the hacienda's manor house, with MNR officials in attendance. These events—marking the hand-over of hacienda lands to the workers and peasants—were considered revolutionary rituals of great transcendence. Through these rituals, the desire of the peasant to become a legitimate landowner was

TABLE 3.2 Agrarian Cooperatives in Cochabamba, 1954

NAME	LOCATION	DECLARED CAPITAL	PAID CAPITAL (Bolivianos)
Agrarian Industrial Co-op "Montecarlo" Ltd.	Arque	6,000,000	450,000
Mixed Farming Co-op "Totorapampa" Ltd.	Arque	600,000	85,000
Mixed Farming Co-op "Vilcaima" Ltd.	Arque	600,000	25,000
Mixed Farming Industrial Co-op "Gualberto Villarroel" Ltd.	Punata	800,000	200,000
Agrarian Industrial Co-op "Camacho Rancho" Ltd.	Punata	12,000,000	(In process)
TOTAL		27,000,000	760,000

Source: AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 16 August 1954, Leg. №. 11/54

symbolically fulfilled, and the solemnity of the ceremony reinforced the viability of the processes of agrarian reform applied by the MNR. These rituals also provided helpful material in generating revolutionary propaganda and rhetoric that exalted the role of the official party. Every speech given at these gatherings reiterated the mantra that the MNR was the only political party in Bolivian history to lead a revolutionary process, freeing workers and peasants from exploitation at the hands of abusive landlords.

The next step of the project included the organization of agrarian cooperatives, but this part of the project was hobbled by difficulties as soon as it started. By August 1954, the cooperative's inspector issued a report to the Cochabamba prefect detailing the actual situation of peasant cooperatives in the region.[11] He asserted that, to that date, only five cooperatives had been organized, the location and value of which are detailed in table 3.2. However, the report continued, the Ucureña cooperative that was to be the largest in Cochabamba was not yet ready to function. The report estimated that around 3,000 peasants currently subsumed under the Ucureña central ought to be able to contribute 5,000

Bolivianos per capita, an amount that would have allowed the cooperative to begin its activities with a paid capital of 13,000,000 Bolivianos (9,658 US Dollars) and a much greater authorized capital.[12]

The left-wing agrarian cooperative project had a short life. The revolutionaries did not adequately understand how to combine the project's political goal—which aimed to create the idea of a modernizing revolution being fostered by the state—with its financial goal of yielding a surplus, which required efficient agricultural administration. The experience of attempted collective farming in Ucureña followed a similar path as other agrarian cooperatives, which did not produce expected surpluses and never operated with any sort of efficiency. Peasants attributed the collapse of the agrarian cooperatives to "the lack of qualified staff with some understanding of management and accounting, by just naming directors the result is only the production of propaganda, after that, nothing else happens."[13]

In January 1955, complaints of administrative corruption in the agrarian cooperatives were made public for the first time. It was announced that the Tucma hacienda, owned and operated by the COB, suffered from an extensive problem with embezzlement of funds.[14] Mario Tórrez, the minister of mines, referred to the leaders of the miners as "irresponsible," because their criminal acts had provoked a lack of confidence in the government among the peasants.[15] The COB's main leader, Juan Lechín, accepted a plan to arrest and imprison the corrupt leaders of the miners, as peasant groups were becoming highly critical of the situation and pressuring leaders for action.[16] Despite Lechín's intentions of restructuring the corrupt miners' leadership, the project to establish agrarian cooperatives continued to suffer under crushing obstacles, which lead eventually to their demise. The introduction of significant agricultural insecurity as a result of the failed attempt to organize agrarian cooperatives sowed frustration and disbelief in the ability of the MNR to provide what it had promised, goals which were to be supplied through the revolutionary process and the distribution of land to peasants. The peasants perceived the miners as interlopers, only seeking to take whatever advantage they could of the situation and obtain ownership of profitable land, rather than as honest workers imbued with revolutionary consciousness, fighting for their right to farm their own lands.[17]

Class Conflicts in the Land Distribution Process

Once the agrarian reform decree was promulgated on 2 August 1953, it took the regime over nine months to begin distributing land in Cochabamba. On April 1954, the agrarian judges and the presidents of the *juntas rurales* (rural councils) were sworn in to start distributing land. It was in June, however, that the bureaucratic machinery began to creep forward, while, at the same time, a debate began over the creation of a "rural security service" that would guarantee the fulfilment of the agrarian courts' verdicts.[18] The establishment of a bureaucracy to execute agrarian reform was only a beginning, the real work to be done was the coordination of the land reform within the peasant union apparatus, which would enforce the decisions and stipulations of the agrarian courts. The previous experiment of the MNR's left-wing faction with the direct distribution of hacienda lands to miners and peasants had not gone smoothly, but had been marked by political conflict that was linked to the leadership of Lechín and Rivas. The MNR regime soon realized it was unable to control the processes of reform and redistribution, as leftist peasant union leaders had ample decision-making powers in the execution of these processes, and also the latent violent potential of peasant militias to reinforce that power. By mid-1954, the government attempted to take full control of the land distribution process. Looking for the political support of the peasants, the minister of peasant affairs, Ñuflo Chávez, visited the Ucureña peasant central. Both government authorities and peasant leaders decided that Ucureña would host the second departmental peasant congress in late July (see figure 3.2). Additionally, both parties also agreed that José Rojas would be the official candidate for the FSTCC's executive secretariat. To better negotiate with Ucureña, Ñuflo Chávez was accompanied by the president and vice-president of the national agrarian reform service—Eduardo Arce Loureiro and Ernesto Ayala Mercado—both of whom were former POR militants and had a great deal of influence over José Rojas and his cadre.[19] As such, the MNR sought to ensure the party's control over the FSTCC and sideline Sinforoso Rivas, who was expected to be Juan Lechín's left-wing candidate.

In the Ucureña congress of July 1954, José Rojas was elected executive secretary and Sinforoso Rivas general secretary. The fact that Chávez's and Lechín's supporters competed in the election caused political division

Figure 3.2 Second Peasant Departmental Congress. First row sitting, from left to right: José Rojas, Walter Revuelta, Edgar Nuñez Vela, Ñuflo Chávez, Sinforoso Rivas (Cochabamba, Ucureña, July 28, 1954).

among the Valle Alto and Valle Bajo peasant leadership.[20] Nevertheless, at this blooming stage of regional peasant unionism, the prefect estimated that "around 3,500 agrarian unions were organized in Cochabamba, gathered into 40 sub-centrals and 14 peasant centrals."[21] The expanding union apparatus was to play an instrumental role in the regime's plan to control the centralized process of land distribution, because of the incorporation of top peasant leaders into its bureaucratic hierarchy (see figure 3.3). The process of land distribution was not free of conflict; in fact, conflict was inherent to the attempted process of revolutionary land reform, constant, complicated, and prevented its would-be beneficiaries from reaping any rewards at all. The years of highest tension were 1954 and 1955. During this period, local authorities, peasant unions, agrarian inspectors, and indigenous communities often employed violence in defense of their interests in the mayhem that followed from the agrarian reform. Seven out of ten cases of violence took place in the valley, with a particular locus of

FIGURE 3.3 Peasant Gathering in the Valle Alto. From right to left, Salvador Vásquez, peasant leader of Ucureña and Sinforoso Rivas, head of the FSTCC (Second Peasant Departmental Congress at Ucureña, July 28, 1954).

agitation centered around Aiquile, Capinota, Punata, Tarata, and Anzaldo. The rest of the violence occurred in highland zones, mainly in Tapacarí, Independencia, and Arque (see maps 1.2 and 1.3). In the valley, violence was directed towards local state authorities and landlords, and included acts of disobedience, theft of produce, and the seizure of land. In contrast, violence in the highlands was committed against Indian comunarios and urban vecinos.[22]

What can explain the stark differences between the valley and the highlands? In the valley, local peasant leaders took charge of the agrarian unions and focused primarily on gaining control of their respective areas of influence. Acts of real and symbolic violence were meant to remove the last vestiges of power held by the landlords and also to challenge the state's central power. Assaults and sackings of hacienda manor houses

proliferated before peasants proceeded to directly occupying the land. For instance, the subprefect of Capinota informed the prefect:

> In the locality of Sicaya, in Capinota province, some peasant leaders have committed certain abuses, giving themselves over to theft of produce; such as wheat, potatoes, and other items. These people, in attacking the storehouses, arbitrarily removed the mentioned produce and took it to certain places to sell them, forgetting that the said produce ought to be shared between the landowner and the comrades who work in the countryside. … I presented myself in the place, where I had the leader appear, who replied to my questions in a brusque and stubborn manner, that I, as subprefect, ought not to intervene in rural affairs and much less get involved with them, otherwise it would be dangerous to the stability of my post and I would accompany the landlords to the tomb. … Filiberto Sánchez, subprefect [Capinota].[23]

In the valley, the headquarters of the peasant unions attempted to litigate some everyday issues facing valley peasants, which sometimes required ignoring the authority of judges. Peasants who had been arrested and imprisoned were released and hostility towards the holders of judicial authority increased as a result of these new processes. A new set of power relations emerged, changing the relationship between rural denizen and town dweller, as a judge from Arani complained to the prefect:

> Yesterday, the personnel of my court, replacing that of Punata, went to the place 'Molle-Huma', in that jurisdiction, with the aim of administering the possession of some five hectares [12 acres] of land on the part of Asunción Gutiérrez, since the act of possession had been executed and the legal formalities complied with. But, in an inexplicable way, I have been made an object of attack by the peasants of that place, who, ignoring my judicial authority, showed armed resistance in a hostile manner; since hearing the news of my arrival, they have waited for me, stationed in the road,

> with their guns drawn, putting my life and that of my companions in serious danger … [they also have] impeded our access to the site of possession with gestures and provocative actions that caused us to flee. … Arturo Arnéz, judge [Arani].[24]

This readjustment of relationships of power between town and country fostered the reformulation of both campesino and vecino visual depictions and characterization in media and discourse. Vecinos thought that peasants were unable to behave rationally, unable to truly comprehend revolutionary liberties, and would be unable to negotiate against outside interests in their own interest. Vecinos considered the revolution the work of urban dwellers, who alone would offer benefits to the masses. The town (as the locus of power) and the vecinos (as the individualization of authority exercising that power) found themselves in confrontation with the peasants, who violently challenged all these symbolic interpretations. As the subprefect of Totora wrote:

> Groups of peasants toured the streets [of Totora] in a drunken state, as a sign of daring. … The peasants, at this date, although they have faith in my authority and that of the MNR zone's commando, are obliged to take all their demands to the Moyopampa peasant central, where they are punished and obliged to disobey the legally constituted authorities vested here, the central is the only place for any kind of complaint or court case; because of this, the leaders and the peasantry find themselves totally disorientated and go around without any kind of direction and have lost all respect for the authorities. … S. Guzmán, subprefect [Totora].[25]

The peasants, upon realizing that their political and social power had grown, engaged in actions to undermine the traditional symbols of power in rural towns, selectively attacking groups of transport operators, traders, and artisans. Many vecinos attempted to control revolutionary processes by inserting themselves into the MNR party apparatus. From there,

they began a crusade to consolidate a dominant position for themselves over the peasants, with the political support of the departmental authorities. Confrontations between peasants and town dwellers were more than mere fighting over political power in the countryside. The struggle also penetrated the ethnic arena, where a strengthened conceptualization of a daring and adventurous valley peasant emerged. This representation and characterization overcame the marginal political role that liberals in the party had assigned to the peasants, further undermining the idea that peasant political participation had to be mediated through agents recruited from the urban middle classes.[26] For instance, the leaders of the transportation union in the town of Sacaba sent a letter of complaint to the prefect, stating:

> Motor Transportation Union (Sacaba-Bolivia). … Comrade prefect: Allow us to bring to your attention the following formal complaint. … As the vanguard of the working class, we wish to make it clear that we do not oppose the conquests obtained by our peasant comrades, but we do ask that they respect us. … At 11.30 at night I was violently attacked, without any motive or cause, with the expressions: 'Damn you Almanza, you *gondolerito* (little bus-driver),' shouted at me by the peasant leader Hermogenes Veizaga; [later on] he reappeared once again with a considerable group of peasants. … Not content with the aggression, he displayed vanity and pride, shot to one side straight at the back tires of my bus. … I am witness that all the peasants carried rifles and sub-machine guns. … Raúl Almanza, bus driver [Sacaba].[27]

The town's public spaces; the squares, the *chicherías* (corn-beer taverns), and the markets were gradually saturated with peasants, which, in turn, led to resistance from town dwellers, who considered that their "natural space" was being invaded.[28] Peasants also displayed their presence and power in public transportation vehicles such as buses and trains through acts of symbolic violence, undermining the vecino's self-assurance of their social superiority to the rural peasant. For example, peasants sometimes searched the bags of first-class train passengers and stole their belongings,

they detained passengers under the pretext that they belonged to the *rosca* (clique), they refused to pay fares, and some of them urinated out of the carriage windows as the train was running.[29]

In the altiplano, by contrast, comunarios outnumbered hacienda colonos. Although these colonos had recently been unionized, their political impulses were restricted by the influence of the ethnic authorities who ruled the communities (*ayllus*). Highland peasant union leadership was not controlled by the hacienda colonos or the peasants, but rather by political activists from within the FSTCC or by agrarian inspectors sent by the government to control the highland areas. Moreover, the townspeople of the highlands were mainly traders and intermediaries. Local authorities almost never changed, the same people stayed in the same posts, no matter what political regime held power. Whatever their ideologies, the ultimate goal of town dwellers was to use their traditional position of power to exploit indigenous communities as a source of cheap labor. Consequently, local elites resisted the presence of FSTCC operatives and MNR agents supporting the agrarian reform. Political confrontations in the highland areas generally pitted comunarios and external revolutionary activists against traditional local authorities and other town dwellers.[30]

Ethnic Conflicts in the Land Distribution Process

Ethnic contradictions in rural society exploded when the demands of the highland comunarios and those of the valley campesinos came into direct conflict with one another over land distribution. The highland communities of Tapacarí, Arque, and Ayopaya reclaimed their alleged communal rights over some lands in the valley (see map 1.2). This claim contradicted the interests of the peasants already settled in the valley lands; whose property titles were to be obtained through the agrarian reform process. The problem was not limited to land distribution, however, for it also included conflicts over new consolidations of power that emerged from the revolutionary context. Although the highland communities possessed a long history of resistance against colonial and republican power, they had to readjust their strategies to manage political interests of both the peasant and the town dweller. Although communal territories handed over to the Indians by the colonial administration included land in both the highlands and the valleys of Cochabamba, by the mid-twentieth century the few

remaining community lands were confined to the fringe highland areas, where conditions for agriculture were extremely difficult. Even though revolutionary comunarios in the highlands retained the remnants of their communal lands and were exempted from rendering personal services to the landlords, they were nevertheless forced to maintain mercantile links with the landlords, authorities, and townspeople who exploited them. As an agrarian inspector stated in an interview: "Landlords and urban dwellers advanced groceries and alcohol to the community members and took over their harvests. The authorities extorted them by demanding annual donations of foodstuffs."[31]

The revolution overlapped the authority of peasant unions leaders with the authority of ethnic chiefs, or *curacas*, who linked the highland communities with the government apparatus. Generally speaking, the peasant unions settled into the new power relationship, reducing the overall influence of ethnic institutions and authorities. In some cases, the power of a peasant union leader eclipsed that of a comunario ethnic authority. For example, some peasant union leaders—when their authority began to overlap the provenance of the traditional chiefs—they sought to use the power networks of their unions to build political alliances with townspeople, competing with curacas the leadership over the local peasantry. The new peasant-based power groups that emerged in the highlands in this period, gained legitimacy through political discourse based on the logic of revolutionary change:

> The undersigned members of the committee of the peasant union of the communities of Jarvi Coya, Tallija, Antacahua, and other communities of the canton Challa [province of Arque] … request that men who sacrificed themselves for the national revolution should govern in exercise of authority and not those opportunists who, before 9 April 1952, having been the party's prime enemies, and who committed abuses and attacks on all the community members extracting *ramas* (monetary contributions) by force and wanting to lead us to the elections under the rod. Today, those men who were our exploiters yesterday, have the daring to want to be our *corregidor* (rural town mayor), and this will not

> be permitted by us while our peasant union persists in this community. In a great assembly, the name of the comrade Fabián Tórrez Burgulla … a son of the town who has struggled for our cause … was proposed for the governorship (*corregimiento*) in this canton … only thus will we be able to keep our calm and well-being, which is the desire of the outstanding leader of the national revolution, comrade Víctor Paz Estenssoro.[32]

In other cases, however, ethnic authorities tried to preserve their direct political links with the state. They ignored the mediation of the unions and denounced the abuses of the union leaders. Moreover, ethnic authorities represented the interests of many communities ranged over a huge tract of highland territory, including the provinces of Campero, Ayquile, Mizque, Arque, Tapacarí, and Ayopaya (see map 1.2). As a group of ethnic leaders complained to the prefect:

> We, the indigenous private mayors and the school mayors (*alcaldes mayores y escolares*) of the Aymara and Quechua Indians. … We have been pursued for years and years without understanding why in the years [sic] 1946–47–48–49–50 and 51, we were pursued by the slave traders who deal in Indians calling us ringleaders, agitators, *movimientistas*, enemies of the people (*contra pueblos*), enemies of the government, and subversives (*sublevadores*). But now we are free since 9 April 1952. We private mayors in the altiplano are very happy with President Víctor Paz Estenssoro … but now it turns out that our Indian brothers named agrarian unions to defend us humble peasants, instead of giving us guarantees and supporting us, instead they begin to pursue us again … telling us that we are 'communists,' 'Falangists,' 'oligarchy supporters,' 'evangelists,' 'enemies of the government,' etc. … We are not rich people with money, but rather we are totally exploited and mistreated, [we ask for] guarantees to return to our land and for us not to be pursued again.[33]

The FSTCC's leaders acknowledged the tension between peasants and comunarios and agreed to incorporate some petitions of the provincial delegations of Arque and Tapacarí into the list of demands given at the second departmental peasant congress of Ucureña in mid-1954 (see figure 3.4). The Arque delegation requested that, "land in the valleys for the community ayllus of Kirquiavi" must be handed over. It also requested that a stop be put in effect of "the pushing forward of boundaries [attempted] by the Potosí comunarios."[34] The Arque delegates were aware of the highland's low productivity and the conflicts being caused amongst the ayllus as they attempted to expand their respective territories. The local authorities, town dwellers, and *tinterillos* (back-room lawyers) took advantage of this situation by encouraging violent boundary disputes between different ayllus. When land distribution began, comunarios tried to use the agrarian reform procedures to expand their territory into valley lands. This situation altered the terms of the land problem. As such, the opposed interests turned out to be those of the comunarios, who were trying to widen their land ownership into the valley, and those of the valley peasants, who sought to retain control over their plots of land. These contradictions endangered the program of land distribution and made the task of agrarian reform commissions much more difficult. Due to this situation, the Arque peasant center requested that *alcaldes de campo* (ayllu leaders) be independent of the power structures of the peasant unions, to avoid them serving as an instrument of "bad authorities." This, in other words, meant that the peasant unionists in Arque were seeking to isolate the ethnic chiefs from the revolutionary power apparatus.[35]

The Tapacarí peasant central, for its part, asked the second peasant congress "to avoid conflicts with community members."[36] It formulated a petition because the Tapacarí ayllus were being mobilized by several groups with differing interests, but realized that their interests converged around the effort to slow the pace of land redistribution. In late 1954, the tension between peasants and comunarios increased, paralyzing the process of confiscation of estates (see figure 3.5). As a rural council member informed the prefect: "Yesterday there was a mass meeting of community members in Ramada as a consequence of the arrival of a commission from La Paz city, with so-called 'Ayllu-Community' laws. [*Ayllu-Comunarios* in Ramada] displayed their rejection against the agrarian reform, and

Figure 3.4 Peasant Leaders in the Highlands. Sinforoso Rivas (center), head of the FSTCC, and, to his left, Walter Echeverría, agrarian inspector, surrounded by peasant leaders of the haciendas "El Choro" and "Altamachi" (Cochabamba, Ayopaya, 1954).

arrested me, preventing the realization of the confiscation hearing. Carlos Crespo. Rural Council [Tapacarí]."[37] The news surprised the authorities, for just a few months earlier, in May 1954, the government had returned lands that had been taken from the highland communities from 1900 onward. Despite this concession, the comunarios' pressure to take possession of valley lands continued until 1 December 1954, when an armed clash between highland comunarios and valley peasant militiamen left six men dead and several wounded.[38]

The mobilization of the comunarios included peasants from the ayllus of Totorapampa, Challa, Ramada, Tapacarí, and Villcabamba, and gathered together about two thousand people (see maps 1.2 and 1.3). The FSTCC mobilized its militiamen to ambush the comunarios in Uchu-Uchu and Ramada. The comunarios came from the mountains, organized into two columns and bearing red and white flags, sacking houses as they

Figure 3.5 Land Property Titles. Smallholder peasants in Valle Bajo proudly exhibiting their property titles issued by the revolutionary state (Cochabamba, Quillacollo, 1954).

went. Sinforoso Rivas, the top commander of the peasant militia troops, arrested Sebastián Abasto, as he was widely considered to be the promoter of conflict. Rivas also suggested arresting the lawyer Remberto Camacho, "an old defender of abusive landlords," who had monitored the conflict from the city of Cochabamba.[39] The Tapacarí peasant central issued a resolution defining the situation in terms of a duality between those in favor of and those against the agrarian reform, thus identifying the comunarios as enemies of the revolution:

> As a consequence of the FSB's political maneuver and the pro-market goal of the so-called **ayllu-community members**, the peasantry of Tapacarí has been divided into two factions: the peasants who support the national revolutionary government called the **agrarian reform**—who are the

> majority—and those who oppose it with the mask of **ayllu-community members**, who are a minority.[40]

Comunarios, to date—argued the peasants—"had not lodged a single complaint regarding confiscation of land; it seemed there was no reason for the comunarios' interests to converge with the interests of the abusive landlords as they had. Moreover, the community members and their leader, Sebastian Abasto, put a price on the head of Marcelino Vargas (the Tapacarí peasant leader), and so displayed publicly their aim of attacking the peasant union apparatus."[41] The *Ayllu-Comunario* movement, therefore, remained stigmatized as anti-revolutionary by peasants in the Cochabamba valley and the movement did not rise again throughout the revolutionary period. A telegram sent by Sinforoso Rivas to the prefect of Cochabamba illustrates the demise of the comunario group: "Three ayllu-comunario ringleaders and six peasant thieves are prisoners. I beg you to tell us how we should proceed." The prefect Joaquín Lemoine replied: "Send them to Chapare [the penal colony for common criminals]."[42]

At this early stage of the revolution in Cochabamba, when the impulse for unionization was unstoppable, the power of peasant union leaders in the valley was unquestionable. This was not the case in the highlands, for community leaders had lost part of their power to the newly created peasant unions. As recent research by Carmen Solíz has shown, however, the power networks in the core areas of indigenous communities in La Paz, Oruro, and Potosí, were able not only to contest, but also to impose their own agrarian reform agenda upon the MNR, which signals the vitality of communal power in that region.[43] The question is, what happened in the Cochabamba based highland indigenous communities? Did their communal territories survive the agrarian reform or were they individually partitioned? More research is needed to begin to answer these questions.

Peasant Unionism Faces Re-adaptation to Revolutionary State Policies

The first presidential election under the system of universal suffrage in Bolivia was scheduled for June 1956. 1955 then became an electoral year and the MNR's left and right wings began their electoral campaigns. The

COB requested publicly that President Paz remain in power for another term, so as to guarantee the continuity of the revolutionary reforms. The president did not accept this request, for he believed that the best way to guarantee the revolution was to legitimize it through the ballot box. The Bolivian parliament was closed during the first term in office of Víctor Paz. The president feared that reactionary groups would seek to reverse his reforms, and so he insisted on reinforcing the power hierarchy and increasing the number of voters five times over.[44]

The right-wing faction of the MNR in Cochabamba began a campaign against the peasant leaders, arguing that they were responsible for the convulsive political situation in the rural areas and the food shortages in the cities. These problems—the MNR's right-wing argued—originated in the union leaders' dismissal of legal norms and promising to the peasants' compensation they could not deliver on, in a calculating thrust, intent only on gaining more power. Sinforoso Rivas, the FSTCC leader, responded to the criticisms from the right by affirming that peasant unionism was stronger than ever before and that its armed militias stood ready to defend the revolution. According to Rivas, the collapse of agricultural production had been caused by factors outside of peasant control. Firstly, haciendas had been dismantled when landlords fled from their properties, rendering their production potential useless. Secondly, property structure was disorganized due to the processes involved in the transference of the estates to the peasants. Thirdly, the universities had not and did not train technicians in specialized agrarian problems. Finally, available agricultural credit was insufficient to sustain the peasant economy, and this shrank their investment capacity. Peasants supported a university reform program and complained that only 6 percent of the Banco Agrícola Boliviano (Bolivian Agrarian Bank) loans were going into peasant hands.[45]

Meanwhile, in the realm of national politics, the MNR nominated Hernán Siles and Ñuflo Chávez as candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency, attempting to balance the interests of the MNR's right- and left-wing factions. The MNR's electoral program was based on three main issues: reinforcing private enterprise, controlling monetary inflation, and combating corruption.[46] From the perspective of the MNR's right wing, any political action they undertook in Cochabamba had to be concentrated upon centralizing power in the CDM. The regime's right-wing

considered that the peasant unions and their leaders posed a real threat of communist infiltration. Therefore, they asserted, the government must define a nationalist line of action, which would block the left's attempt to radicalize the revolution. The process of handing over land to the peasants could careen out of control if mechanisms for transfer of ownership, legal or otherwise, were employed that were outside the realm of those propounded by the official agrarian reform. For that reason, they concluded, it was necessary to educate their leaders in nationalist principles and not lose control of the peasantry. These lines of political action resulted, on one hand, in the protection of rural properties that were in course of being confiscated. The pretext they provided for this action was to make sure that the development of low-yielding smallholdings or *minifundios* did not occur and to support the activities of "progressive landlords." On the other hand, this retrenchment of the right-wing faction of the MNR turned into a witch-hunt against dissident peasant leaders, accusing them of political and economic corruption. The top two secretaries of the FSTCC, José Rojas and Sinforoso Rivas, sent a letter of complaint to the prefect, explaining the virulence of the attacks against their leadership voiced by some members of the CDM:

> Ever since the elections of the MNR's Departmental Commando [CDM], this federation has seen … machinations put into practice with the aim of undermining the prestige of the peasant workers of Cochabamba and their leaders … we have concluded that it represents a shady and Machiavellian plan plotted with the connivance of the reaction. José Rojas, executive secretary. Sinforoso Rivas, general secretary of the FSTCC.[47]

The head of the CDM, Germán Vera Tapia, presented a false complaint to the chief of police that peasant leader José Rojas was then preparing for an armed assault on Cochabamba. The FSTCC peasant leaders explained to the prefect that: "This Monday morning a spy plane flew over Ucureña at 7 a.m., causing amazement among the peasants of the zone and, as is natural, proved that there was no movement of peasant forces."[48] Furthermore—they argued—every Sunday morning, taking advantage of

the market in Quillacollo, the leader of the CDM presented himself with numerous vehicles, providing him with the protection of an escort,

> And in the chicherías he shouted against Rivas and Rojas, at the top of his voice calling them, 'Communists, dealers, importers, who deceive and rob the Indians, who have houses in foreign countries,' etc. As this attitude became unbearable, the grassroots leaders had to intervene one day so as to avoid [CDM leader] Paiva, and those who accompanied him, from being punished by the peasant masses … who tried to punish him thinking that he was an element of the *rosca* (clique). … His speeches exhorted the peasants not to obey the federation, as it was made up of their enemies and of 'communist' elements, but instead [of obeying the federation] the CDM would, through the municipality, give them *cupos* (food stamps) for getting staples.[49]

Finally, the FSTCC leaders denounced that as part of the CDM's intention to set the country against the city, versions of a narrative circulated claiming "the peasants are going to attack the city, they are going to capture the CDM, they are going to release the water from the [Angostura] dam to flood the city and then enter to sack it." The chief of the CDM himself ordered the mobilization of zonal commandos, alongside the rest of the party forces, proving, from the perspective of the peasant forces, that the rumors were also being created by the CDM.

Tension between the peasant leaders and the MNR's right-wing politicians remained latent during the election campaign, as the peasants supported Ñuflo Chávez, the vice-presidential candidate. The list of Cochabamba's candidates for senators and parliamentary representatives was a demonstration of the enforced, tenuous balance between both MNR factions. Half of the candidates belonged to the left-wing and the other half to the right-wing of the MNR. José Rojas (Ucureña) and Víctor Torrico (Sacaba) were the two peasant parliamentary candidates for Cochabamba, while Sinforoso Rivas accepted a position on the Consejo Nacional de Reforma Agraria (National Agrarian Reform Council, CNRA). The MNR won the 1956 general elections in which the peasant vote was decisive (see

figure 3.1). In this election, the results in the department of Cochabamba favored the MNR with 86 percent of the votes. In the city of Cochabamba, however, the MNR lost to the opposition, which shows the importance of the peasant vote at the time.[50]

After the presidential election, the third departmental peasant congress was held in Ucureña in August 1956, where Salvador Vásquez (Ucureña) and Jorge Campos (Quillacollo) won the elections for the FSTCC's executive secretary and general secretary, respectively. Salvador Vásquez was the Ucureña's second-in-command leader after José Rojas. He was born in Ucureña in 1921 and was a former colono of Ramón Ledezma's hacienda. He attended the local school until the second grade and—against the will of the hacendado—he enlisted in the army. In retaliation, the patrón evicted his family from their *pegujal* (plot occupied in temporary terms by the labor tenant or *colono* of the hacienda). When demobilized from the army, he had to beg the patrón to return his pegujal, which was granted to him under the grounds of a promise to never socialize with other peasants on the hacienda, because he was considered a potential political agitator. He had a long experience as a revolutionary peasant leader. He would go on to cooperate with General Barrientos in the coup against Víctor Paz in 1964 and was one of the co-signers of the peasant-military pact ratification in 1966.[51]

The fragile unity that had been achieved by regional peasant leadership, as a means of defense from the MNR right-wing faction, broke when José Rojas moved to rid himself of his rival, Sinforoso Rivas. In September 1956, in concert with right-wing deputy Carlos Salamanca and peasant deputy Víctor Torrico, Rojas accused Rivas of illicit enrichment before the deputies' chamber, requesting that his commercial activities be placed under investigation. It was a contradictory situation, for just one month before Rivas was denounced, José Rojas declared to the press: "We, Rojas and Rivas, are men hated by the opposition, by the Falangists, by the sons of the *ex-latifundistas* (former landlords). These are the people who discredit us, who oppose us because we represent an obstacle to their pretension."[52] Rivas responded to the accusations on September 29, addressing a letter to the president of the deputies' chamber. In the letter, Rivas showed no surprise that one of the signatories was deputy Carlos Salamanca, for he belonged to one of the most affected families in Cochabamba by agrarian

reform. He was surprised, however, to find the signatures of deputies José Rojas and Víctor Torrico, who were peasant leaders, like himself. He could not know certainly whether their motivations to flip against him were union, personal, or otherwise. He requested temporary leave from the CNRA and awaited the verdict before deciding on any other action.[53] On 26 February 1957, however, he felt obliged to send a new letter to President Siles. In this letter he complained that there was still no verdict regarding his case, but he nevertheless decided to renounce the office.[54] Through this sophisticated political stratagem, the MNR's right wing rid itself of an important dissident peasant leader. Meanwhile, José Rojas had freed himself of his rival and monopolized peasant power in Cochabamba. When interviewed, Rivas expressed his belief that besides political hatred, the interests of former landlords and the MNR's scuffling bureaucrats who fought to preserve their landed properties were at the root of his political demise, because he had been pressured endlessly, and in vain, by these same people to issue favorable court decisions as a member of the CNRA. Finally, Rivas went into voluntary exile in Argentina, until returning in 1960 to support the presidential candidacy of Víctor Paz.[55]

Certainly, 1957 was a turbulent year for the new administration. President Hernán Siles had no other choice but to apply a monetary stabilization program to combat high inflation rates. To fight the resistance of worker unions, the president initiated the first hunger strike in national history to be carried out by a presidential figure.[56] With this pathetic political maneuver, Siles attempted to both fabricate an image of sacrifice, which would be shared by the population, and to achieve political legitimacy as a tactic to weaken the opposition. Additionally, during his four-year term (1956–60), Siles manipulated official information mainly through the monopoly he held on the press in Cochabamba and the deployment of an aggressive and slanderous public discourse intent on damaging his political enemies. An official campaign for "moralization" of the leadership of the agrarian unions was the realization of a perceived need for the government, in the eyes of government agents, to centralize more power in their hands at the expense of the power of the peasant unions. The campaign denigrated the reputation of several peasant leaders as a crude means to legitimize the presence of political agents from the CDM who had infiltrated even the peasants' upper echelons.[57] Even left-wing Vice-President

Ñuflo Chávez got involved in this campaign, for he was in charge of the party's political control commission, which monitored the conduct of all members of the "MNR's National Left Front."[58] At the same time as the government was flexing its inquisitorial tendencies, the MNR's right-wing apparatus also began a social campaign highlighting the conditions of guarantees provided for landowners who might wish to return to work in the countryside, further irritating the peasantry.[59] The crisis culminated when Ñuflo Chávez renounced the vice-presidency due to discrepancies with the implementation of the monetary stabilization program, thus provoking political chaos in the government. The Ucureña peasant leaders traveled to the city of Santa Cruz for a meeting with Ñuflo Chávez. They requested that Chávez take back his renunciation, while the government published several fake communiqués as evidence of peasant support for the government, which were then denied by the peasant leaders.[60]

From this moment on, the government modified its control tactics over the Valle Alto peasants. A series of alleged complaints from the "peasants of the town of Cliza" were published in the press, accusing the Valle Alto leaders of committing acts of vandalism. For instance, an editorial in *El Pueblo* complained that in the Valle Alto, the "controllers" (*interventores*) designated by Rojas and Vásquez, are owners and lords with gallows and knife, who use arms to impose their will on the peasantry.[61] Simultaneously, the prefect exerted pressure to force the Ucureña peasant center to send its delegates to the CDM. His aim was to link up Ucureña with the official plans for political control, given that the other peasant centers of Quillacollo, Arque, and Capinota had their members registered in the CDM.[62] The pressure led José Rojas to declare that, if the case should arise, he "would offer his life for President Hernán Siles Zuazo, and for the future of the national revolution."[63]

It was clear, however, that declarations of loyalty were not enough for the government, which sought to consolidate control over the peasant movement. Despite the revolutionary practice of consulting the Ucureña peasants before naming authorities in the town of Cliza, the government decided vertically to swear in a new mayor. According to the MNR officials, the new mayor was a man who, "has unquestionable merits as an MNR militant and had occupied important posts in the CDM."[64] Although local and departmental officials attended the swearing-in of the new mayor, not

a single peasant leader was present at the event.[65] Afterwards, a peasant warned the prefect that in Mosoj Rancho some peasant leaders were handing out ammunition, possibly in preparation for an assault on the town of Cliza.[66] The authorities ignored the information, but once they returned to Cochabamba, a group of peasants attacked the town, dynamiting the city hall where the celebration took place and also the houses of the guests invited to celebrate the event. Some 400 peasants participated in the attack on the town of Cliza, moving against it with heavy rifle fire and shouting, "¡Viva Ñuflo Chávez!"[67] The next day, an official delegation headed by the secretary of state and the minister for peasant affairs arrived in Cliza. In their address to the peasants, the secretary of state asserted:

> That it was serious to have tried to resist the mayor named by the government and who had been recommended by the CDM as a citizen who could deal impartially with all the inhabitants of Cliza … [it] being necessary [for him] to guarantee the safety of the inhabitants of the town of Cliza and all those who dedicate themselves to their agricultural labor as owners of small and medium-sized landholdings.[68]

The peasants' answer came from José Rojas. He claimed that the peasants had indeed respected the authorities and were subject to the law, but they were also aware that:

> For some time, the peasants were provoked by some [Chaco War] veterans led by Hugo Balderrama, who, misusing his position as the leader of that mutual association, tried to incite in the town of Cliza opposition to the peasants of Ucureña, and the fact that the new mayor of Cliza should have met with that sector led to the unfortunate reaction of a group of peasants.[69]

The peasants resisted the provocations of the Cliza vecinos—who had been encouraged by the centralizing projects of the government—and who were seeking to renew their position of domination over the peasantry. The vecinos employed a rhetoric colored by modernizing political

discourse, yet in practice, their actions displayed that they were not truly interested in this discourse, but only in amassing as much power as possible. In response, the secretary of state sent a force of fifty armed policemen to Cliza to impose order. The Ucureña peasants received the police force with provocative "rifle shots and explosions of dynamite." When the prefect and the CDM leaders made an emergency trip to Cliza, the police troop was reduced to only eight members in an attempt to restore peace.[70]

This climate of political polarization spurred the government to attempt a subjugation of the peasant union apparatus to their will, which the peasant unions understood and resisted. In this conflictive political environment, a worker-peasant pact of alliance was signed in Ucureña between the leaders of the Ucureña peasant center and the Catavi miners' union. The government sought to sow confusion about the just signed worker-peasant pact by publishing in the press a fake document disavowing the pact and listing the second-in-command Ucureña leader, Salvador Vasquez, as the author. The government was losing control of the peasant movement and its old Ucureña ally was only one step away from turning into a political enemy. The worker-peasant pact signed in Ucureña emphasized that the revolution was in crisis, providing the political context necessary for the reactionary factions to attempt a return to power. The pact's co-signers declared, "[they] had to co-ordinate their struggles on the basis of a common program, which would allow them to impel the revolution."[71] In trying to neutralize peasant power, the MNR's right wing worked by seeding mistrust, and the peasant leaders now moved closer to the workers, in what might have been the beginning of a truly radical socialist bent for the revolutionary process. The prefect of Cochabamba wrote the following in a confidential communication to the minister of state:

> SECSTATE N° 1665. Peasant leaders of Ucureña, particularly Salvador Vasquez, have assumed a position of open disobedience to the dispositions which emanate from departmental authorities, especially in regard to the denial which they were supposed to have expressed of the communist pact, which they had signed with miner leaders from Catavi. [Vásquez] did not even answer the order from

> my authority to present himself [in my office]. I think I am not mistaken that swearing in new authorities in Cliza will create a disturbance climate. Respectfully. Lt. Col. Moreira Mostajo. Departmental prefect.[72]

After the political rupture with Ucureña, Quillacollo was the only peasant central left supporting the government. In response, the government spurred second-level peasant leaders to paint the peasant movement as united and strong in line with the official policies, but this was no longer the case.

Peasant 'Troscobites' and 'Progressive' Landlords

During 1958 the government attempted to establish their "restructuring blocks," or the creation of parallel peasant unions, founded to weaken the already existing ones. By using the slogan: "The purge of the leading cadres strengthens the peasantry," the CDM organized groups of provincial militants who dedicated themselves to the formulation of denouncements against the Valle Alto peasant leaders. Articles published in *El Pueblo* continued to denigrate dissident peasant leaders in the region: "The peasantry in most of the Cochabamba provinces wishes that the constitution, the concepts of God, fatherland, law, home, order, and established authority should be respected, that the assaults and crimes should come to an end so that there may be peace in the countryside, brotherhood in labor, and calm in the town."[73] Additionally, departmental authorities received instructions from the government to imprison the Ucureña leaders for their criminal activities as well as to allow landowners, who had been unjustly treated in the application of the agrarian reform, to return to their properties.[74]

The government attempted to reorder the geography of peasant conflict by setting up a new power center in the Valle Alto to neutralize the influence of Ucureña. This political role was assigned to the Achamoco peasant center, which was close to the town of Tarata, where MNR's right-wing militants were concentrated (see map 1.3). At the head of Achamoco peasant center, the CDM placed Agapito Vallejos and Simón Aguilar, who began an aggressive smear campaign against the Ucureña leaders. They denounced that the Ucureña leaders:

> Have become other landlords, taking the armchair and the whip of the great estate owners to submit the peasants to the cruelest of punishments in the style of the abusive feudalists … the Achamoco peasant central, on the other hand, proposes calm in the countryside combating all the systems of violence which the givers of orders have exercised for years, discrediting the revolution.[75]

On the basis of unconditional support for President Siles' regime, the CDM's agents took over leading posts in the FSTCC and began a campaign of union reorganization backed by ministry of peasant affairs' coordinator, Gustavo Sánchez. The nickname "troscobites" for the Ucureña peasants originated in this inner circle of government bureaucrats, as they claimed that Trotskyist's slogans and the COB's political agenda influenced the Ucureña leadership, and this put them under suspicion of being communists. The Achamoco peasant center's rhetoric displayed a deep degree of servility to president Siles, using pomposities such as "exemplary president of Bolivia," "notable chief of the army," "talented, hard-working, and honored first functionary of the nation," just like those used by politicians associated with the CDM.[76] This demonstrates that the right-wing of the MNR's purpose in doing this was to convert the peasant movement into a servile political force under the control of the party's power networks.

Despite government pressure, the Ucureña peasants did not lower their guard, and in a strategic political maneuver, they decided to raise the rank of their peasant central to that of a peasant federation. The aim of this was counteracting FSTCC influence—which was controlled by government agents—and blocking the attempt of the CDM to centralize the unions' control. Thus, by creating the Federación Especial de Ucureña (Ucureña Special Federation), the *Valle Alto* (Upper Valley) peasants opened a political space that allowed them to call the third departmental conference of peasant workers in February 1958. At this point, Ucureña's political influence was fully consolidated in the Cochabamba provinces of Sacaba, Mizque, and Campero as well as in the northern Potosi provinces of Charcas and Bilbao Rioja (see map 1.2).[77] In May 1958, Ucureña decided to summon the fourth departmental conference of peasant workers. The conference took place at the El Morro (Sacaba) peasant central in spite of

stubborn opposition from government leaders.[78] The peasants that supported the government line were led by Alejandro Galarza and decided to carry out their own second departmental peasant conference at the Quillacollo peasant central. Attendants to the conference, harshly criticized *caudillismo* (leadership cult of personality) and requested "the unity of the peasantry, without the return of the dealers and demagogues."[79]

The rhetoric displayed in both peasant conferences was substantially different, reflecting the distance between the political aims they pursued. In Sacaba, the debate turned to political topics, mainly those referring to peasant representation renewal at the national parliament. In contrast, in Quillacollo the debate focused on technical and social aspects that affected the peasantry, such as financial credit for farmers and the organization of peasant colonies in the Bolivian eastern lowlands. In other words, the Valle Alto sector conceived of a peasant society that was actively involved in the political dynamic of the country. Meanwhile, the *Valle Bajo* (Lower Valley) sector focused on the peasants' economic and social role, relegating political activity to a marginal place.

The MNR's right wing perceived Víctor Paz's return to Bolivia, in mid-1958, as a threat to its aim of keeping power and to the presidential ambition of its candidate, Walter Guevara. In Cochabamba, the Ucureña peasants lined up with Paz, while his arrival weakened the hopes of the landlords of recouping their rural properties. When Víctor Paz visited Ucureña, the leaders Walter Revuelta and José Rojas protested the bad application of the agrarian reform and showed their support for the advance of the national revolution.[80] Reactionary factions that had been affected negatively by agrarian reform sympathized with the attitudes of right wing endorsed peasant leaders and their CDM allies. These vested interest groups approved of the return of "progressive landlords" to their properties, and opposed the workers' and peasants' movements under a pretext of rejection of extremist union leadership.[81] For instance, a communiqué opposing a worker's railway strike in August 1958 was signed by peasant leaders of Quillacollo, Tapacarí, Morochata, Cocapata, Arque, and Capinota, all of them militants of the MNR's right wing.[82]

In a coordinated action, at the national level, the elitist pro-Cochabamba committee called its delegates together "in order to study and deliberate on the established rights and interests of the Cochabamba

people."[83] Among other issues, the committee named a commission that studied regional agrarian problems and was composed of delegates of the Federación Rural de Cochabamba (Rural Federation of Cochabamba, FRC), the lawyer's college, and the society of agronomist engineers. A few days later they initiated a political campaign in some newspapers in La Paz, with editorials asserting that, "the agrarian reform constitutes a monstrous attack on the right to property. It is confiscation by force. The so-called agrarian reform has no legal force of any kind. Judicially, the agrarian reform is null and void. The peasant has the right to work and the owner has the right to property."[84] The attack on the revolutionary reforms by the oligarchy took place in the midst of a tense political climate of permanent agitation and threats of a coup that alarmed the Cochabamba peasantry. The FSTCC called a meeting with its executive committee that declared its unity in defense of the national revolution and the agrarian reform.[85] Certainly, the MNR's right wing fanned counterrevolutionary flames during the Siles' era, provoking a reaction from peasants in defense of the revolution.

Vecinos versus Campesinos Clash in the Highlands

Amid a toxic political climate—where the former landlords attempted to reunite their forces and push the balance of Cochabamba power relations out of equilibrium—a bloody peasant confrontation erupted in 1958, in the Charcas province in northern Potosi.[86] In practice, the Charcas peasant unions fell within the FSTCC's area of influence, for its population had more direct social, economic, and political links with Cochabamba than with the administrative centers in its own Potosi department (see map 1.2). The Cliza and Ucureña peasant centers had expanded and struggled over the influence they held in northern Potosi, and this was based on a resolution of the second departmental peasant congress held in July 1954. The resolution widened the jurisdiction of the FSTCC, to include "the provinces close to Cochabamba and which correspond to it by social gravitation, such as the provinces of Bilbao Rioja and Charcas of Potosí."[87] As in the Cochabamba highland zone, in northern Potosi the hacienda system coexisted with the indigenous communities through tense relations between social groups and exploitation. This structure sheltered local authorities, intermediaries, and traders, who were mainly town dwellers

that had created a local power network that siphoned peasant surplus to their advantage.

When the agrarian reform began to come into force, these power networks confronted the peasantry and their interests, trying to obtain for themselves the most advantageous position in the benefits of the land distribution process. As a consequence, the leaders of the Ucureña peasant central helped create the Federación Campesina del Norte de Potosí (Peasant Federation of northern Potosi), which was located in the hamlet of Choroma. This federation centralized the sub-regional peasant union's political activities and, from Choroma, the peasants defied the vecino's interests in the provincial capital, San Pedro de Buena Vista.

In early 1958, conflict between vecinos and campesinos reached a crisis level. Some Charcas vecinos residing in Cochabamba city organized the Centro de Acción Charcas (Charcas Action Center) and started a public campaign against the Choroma federation peasant leaders. The peasant leaders were described in *El Pueblo* as "communist vandals, delinquents, and pseudo leaders."[88] The Centro de Acción Charcas in Cochabamba city complained that, in northern Potosi, the agrarian reform procedures were irregular, for there was no legal process of land confiscation. Peasant leaders and agitators, the Centro argued, traveled to the estates where the hearings were taking place and, after expelling the agrarian authorities, declared the haciendas as large unproductive estates (*latifundia*), subject to total expropriation. This development further challenged the landowner's interests.[89] Using an ultimately effective strategy, the Charcas vecinos switched the epicenter of the conflict to the cities of Cochabamba, Potosí, and Oruro, where they posted macabre and distorted images of the peasant leaders to shape urban public opinion against them. The peasant leaders were denigrated as marginal human beings who could not adapt to living in a civilized way, for they did not recognize neither the rule of law nor the MNR's political leadership.

The vecino's political target was the peasant leader Narciso Torrico who, in January 1958, was brutally murdered in a skirmish. The Cochabamba prefect received a report from the San Pedro de Buena Vista officials explaining that in the fury of the combat between vecinos and campesinos militias, a homemade grenade made in San Pedro de Buena Vista hit Torrico's head, blowing his brains out. "A boy aged 15 or 16 cut his

head off making the widow carry the head [towards the town] … once in the town's main square, the head of comrade Torrico was exhibited hanging from a rope, without ears."[90] Narciso Torrico had been a mine union activist and MNR militant after the 1952 revolution, and had established himself as the main peasant leader of the Choroma peasant federation. Although it is not clear when he arrived in the region, Torrico's struggle for leadership of the local peasant union brought him into conflict with other peasant leaders, as they were more closely aligned with the interests of the townspeople.[91]

Alarmed by these events, the ministry of peasant affairs ordered the Cochabamba prefect to send a commission there, made up of regular forces and militiamen from the Ucureña peasant central. The prefect was unwilling to obey the order and replied to the minister that San Pedro de Buena Vista town dwellers, who were now residents in Cochabamba city, were against the idea of sending peasant militias to pacify the peasantry in that region, because Ucureña militiamen were prone to abuse the town dwellers. Instead, the prefect argued, regular police forces together with civilian volunteers were prepared to march to San Pedro. The prefect made it clear that he was firmly opposed to send Ucureña militiamen to San Pedro: "Allow me to indicate that such pacifying powers which would be conferred to Ucureña leaders would disagree with the initiated policy of restricting powers to that peasant center and perhaps would lead to greater complications. Gabriel Arze Quiroga, prefect [of Cochabamba]."[92]

Some aspects of the prefect's political position are illustrated in the above text. Firstly, he took for granted that the peasants were the only political actors that had exacerbated the conflict. He would not even consider investigating the role the vecinos might have played in the conflict. The narrative he created was that of a circle of invading forces around a defenseless town in need of help. Secondly, the idea of helping vecinos was linked with armed repression, which had to be carried out by the regular forces and the town dwellers. The vecino's rejection of the participation of the Ucureña's militias in the pacifying forces was due to their distrust of the behavior of the militiamen. Given that the Ucureña militia was made up of peasants, the town dwellers knew that they would not obey any order of armed repression against the peasantry in Charcas. Thirdly, the prefect was unable to omit his own political bias when he reminded

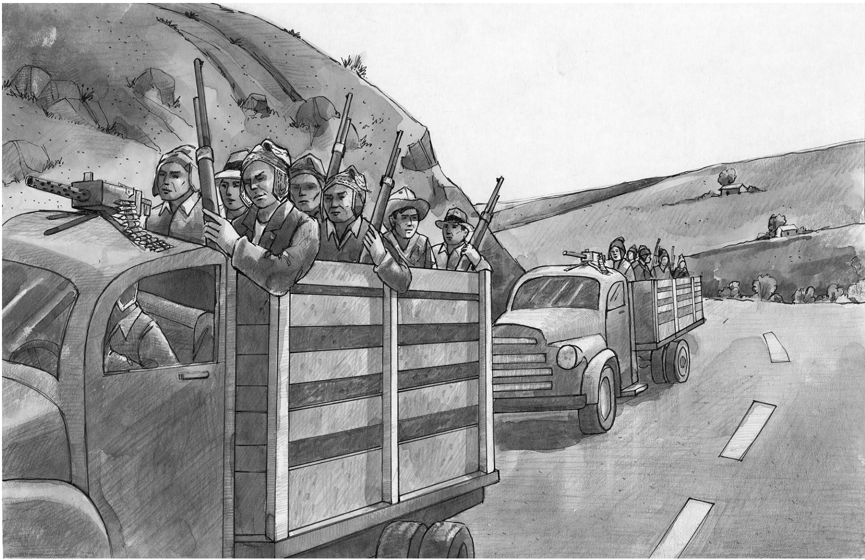


FIGURE 3.6 PEASANT Militiamen in the Valle Alto. Ucureña militiamen patrolling their territory (Tolata, circa 1960).

the minister that there was an official plan to "restrict the power" of the Ucureña peasant central. As a consequence, the prefect suggested that the peasant representative on the commission be Alejandro Galarza, a right-wing peasant leader from the Quillacollo peasant central. His petition was rejected by the government and it was decided that the parliamentary deputy, José Rojas, would travel to San Pedro de Buenavista, at the head of fifty militiamen from the Ucureña headquarters (see figure 3.6). The prefect had no other choice but to reply the minister: "deputy José Rojas was very gratified to receive distinction from the president of the republic and the ministry of state, which charged him with the pacification of San Pedro zone. He left this city to collect 50 men who are ready in Ucureña to continue journey along river Caine. Gabriel Arze Quiroga. Prefect [of Cochabamba]."[93]

While details were being debated, government authorities had already sent police lieutenant Nicéforo León to the site of the events. Simultaneously, parliamentary deputy and peasant leader Zenón Barrientos Mamani

arrived at San Pedro de Buenavista from Oruro. Both of them led the first peace negotiations between town dwellers and peasants. According to the policeman's report, his group arrived in San Pedro on 30 January and to enter the town he had to meet with the leader Demetrio "Deny" Moscoso, commander of peasant forces there, forces that he estimated to be around four thousand combatants. After crossing the peasant siege lines carrying the national flag and displaying their government credentials, León and Barrientos entered the town and were received with effusive displays of joy.[94]

The policeman's report states that the negotiators went to the outskirts of town aiming to parley with the besiegers. Lt. León addressed the peasants in the Quechua language, explaining that his mission was restoring peace between townspeople and peasants, and he asked the leaders to list their complaints. The peasant leaders used the Spanish language to put forth their indignation at the town dweller's cruelty and demanded that their deceased leader, Narciso Torrico, be returned to them alive. Zenón Barrientos Mamani used the Aymara language to tell them that their request was impossible to fulfill since the dead cannot be brought back to life, and that they should leave their aggressive attitudes aside. Finally, all participants in the negotiation accepted a peace agreement that required both sides to hand over their weapons to the authorities, reorganize the CPM as well as the Choroma peasant federation, financially help those affected by the conflict, and provide a burial for Narciso Torrico's remains.

What stands out in the policeman's report is the conflicted coexistence of three different cultural worlds. Over the course of the conflict, these three cultural worlds interacted constantly but could not communicate amongst themselves in a common language. Each of the three speakers had used the language of the group that they considered to be "the other" and not their own everyday speech. None of the three languages was used as a common mode of interaction, keeping a degree of communicative tension ever present amongst the negotiators. From the policeman's point of view, this linguistic conflict was a Barrientos-style political strategy, he perceived of Barrientos as a politician who was "a communist demagogue since he used terms and words which were definitely materialist." Lt. León's suspicions around parliamentary deputy Barrientos increased after the signing of the peace agreement (see figure 3.7). He wrote in his

FIGURE 3.7 Peasant Delegates to the Seventh MNR National Convention. On the far-left side is Zenón Barrientos Mamani (Oruro); in the front row are Sinforoso Rivas and José Rojas (Cochabamba); in the second row are two unknown delegates from the Eastern lowlands (MNR's VII National Convention at La Paz, January, 1956).

report that Barrientos did not allow him to stay in Choroma. Barrientos spoke to the peasants all afternoon, always in Aymara, although the peasants are Quechuas, "surely for reasons of method. Informants from the peasant mass gathering itself indicated that in his speech he [Barrientos] said that the peasant comrades should not accept that uniformed armed forces staying on and that they should be out without harming them."[95]

The policeman's concern about Barrientos' political role originated in his own incapacity to enter the peasant world, a world that was so close to him yet always unreachable. Therefore, his concern turned into anger when local peasant leaders dared to penetrate the policeman's world, by making artificial use of Spanish, a language the policeman considered to be his and absolutely not theirs. Lt. León further reported,

> The leader Benedicto Paredes spoke in Spanish. I asked him after hearing him speak if he was a son of the town of San Pedro. He answered saying that he was a peasant, and given

> that he was dressed in their clothes, I should note that at first sight one proved that it was a disguise … in later investigations I was able to prove that he had been previously detained in the national panopticon [the prison in La Paz city] from where he returned a short time ago, it also came to be known that the mentioned leader had been an armed policeman of the nefarious previous regime.[96]

From a political point of view, all peasant leaders in the police report were considered agents external to the peasantry itself. For that reason, their political activity was thought alien to peasant society and a subversion of the usual order. Only one reference to the vecinos' political actions is made in the entire report, where it details the assassination of Narciso Torrico. Even in this instance, however, the murderer turned out to be "a boy of 15 or 16 years of age," a minor and a person without legal responsibility, an actor who cannot be indicted and through whom the civilized image of the town dwellers remained untainted. The vecinos were absent from the rest of the report, they were not actors but mere observers. They did not fit into a narrative where the exotic and the savage stood out above the rest. Despite the fact that the vecinos had committed a hideous crime, they had not been investigated by any authority at all. The townspeople, in this narrative version, morphed into mere spectators of a drama in which the victims, the peasants, received the blame for the violence committed against them.

Furthermore, in regard to Lt. Leon's report, he believed that it was the combination of both language and attire that defined ethnic identity. It was the use of the Spanish language by the peasant leaders Demetrio "Deny" Moscoso and Benedicto Paredes that had disqualified them as real peasants and their indigenous attire was disregarded and described as a disguise. Lt. León went even further when interrogating Paredes about his vecino origin, and specifically mentioned in his report that Paredes was a felon and later on had been an armed policeman in the capital city of La Paz. Thus, Lt. León's conclusion was that both peasant leaders, Moscoso and Paredes, were in fact agents external to the peasantry and were acting according to their individual or group interests. This fluidity of ethnic identities in Cochabamba is also discussed in chapters one and five, yet

what is evident in this particular report is that Lt. León's ethnic perceptions addressed issues that were commonly employed means utilized to help identify "the other" in Bolivia. The fact that Narciso Torrico was an outsider coming from the mines, and that his cadre was composed of people from La Paz city (Benedicto Paredes) and of townspeople from San Pedro de Buena Vista, reinforced the policeman's conviction that peasant leaders were political agitators external to the peasantry.[97]

In contrast, the passive characterization of vecinos in the report concealed a group attitude which was aggressive and dangerous, one which could, at any moment, explode into violence. When the commission headed by José Rojas found out, in the town of Toro Toro, the details of what had happened before and after Narciso Torrico's murder, Rojas decided to return to his headquarters in Ucureña to reconsider his position regarding the conflict. The Ucureños' position in the conflict was difficult. Ucureña was under attack by government officials who wished to politically annul it. At the same time, these same officials were pressuring Ucureña to act as an intermediary in a conflict provoked by landowners and vecinos in northern Potosi. According to Bridgette Werner, José Rojas position was problematic as he was forced to negotiate a path between these divided loyalties. He was bound to defend his peasant allies in northern Potosí, but he also had to consider negotiations with state power. This was precisely the dilemma that forced Rojas to navigate the territory between autonomy and acquiescence.[98]

In addition to solidarity from the Cochabamba prefect, the townspeople in San Pedro de Buena Vista also had the support of the Potosí and Oruro prefectural authorities. These officials dispatched armed policemen for periodic tours of the conflict zone, aiming to defeat peasant resistance with direct repression. This is why the Ucureños finally decided to provide military support to the Choroma peasant federation against the vecinos' assaults and the government's police interventions. Choroma's military defeat would have trapped Ucureños between a strategic rock and hard place: the Valle Bajo to the north and the provinces of northern Potosi to the south (see map 1.2).

The conflict added even more tension to the relationship between regional authorities and the union leadership of the Ucureña central. Regional authorities realized how fragile their power in the countryside

was, given that the power of the police had a limited reach and was mainly confined to the valley's fringe areas. For instance, in mid-1958, the Choroma peasants arrested local authorities and took them on foot as far as the town of Cliza, where they asked the judicial authorities to put them on trial. The prefect sent police Lt. Col. Julio Vergara with the mission of transferring the prisoners to the city of Cochabamba. In Cliza, he parleyed with the peasants asking them to explain their actions:

> They indicated that it was because these elements were the instigators in making the peasants fight among themselves and they had a lot of proof to demonstrate the veracity of their conclusions … they preferred for them to be put on trial in Cliza, given that on previous occasions the prefect and the minister of peasant affairs had not listened to them when they had presented complaints and, in reality, this lack of attention led to these incidents.[99]

The Cliza mayor, Walter Revuelta, and the peasant deputy, José Rojas, participated in the negotiations to send the prisoners to Cochabamba. A notable aspect of the conflict was the appeal of peasants for help to lower judicial appointees in the Valle Alto, and this happened because the departmental authorities had lost contact with the peasant movement's foundational grassroots membership. In other words, on breaking with the union leadership in the Valle Alto and supporting the demands of the local elite, the prefect's power in the rural areas was weakened.

A day after this incident, news arrived that the Anzaldo peasants had taken more prisoners among the town dwellers (see map 1.2). The prefect sent a new emissary to ask Walter Revuelta to accompany him to Anzaldo to negotiate for the freedom of those arrested. When the emissary arrived in Cliza and reached Revuelta, Revuelta told him that not even his presence could guarantee the security of the commission. Therefore, it was also necessary for José Rojas to authorize a trip to Anzaldo. To that end, they went to Ucureña, where they found a festival in progress, complete with a musical band. They found Rojas surrounded by his cadre, and they were all drinking chicha. According to the emissary's report to the prefect, Rojas got angry when Revuelta explained Rojas the policeman's mission:

> [José] Rojas, in the tones of a boss (*mayordomo*) and angry, said '¡Ha! Lieutenant, are you the commission? That commission which I know nothing about? What do they think I am, who am I? A serf, a slave, a weekly servant (*pongo*), no, damn it, now that they've shat on that Falangist scum you get a move on. When they cut Narciso Torrico's head off and made the widow carry it, walking for miles and miles, why didn't you get a move on? The peasants will have revenge. Now the prefect and that little Galindo (*Galindito*) will have to go and shoot and arrest as many Indians as they can. If you want to, why don't you take me prisoner and take them prisoner?' (He showed me some twenty peasants, possibly leaders) 'Now I know how to struggle for my peasants. We're not blindfolded like before, we're not the ladder any more for those bastards to make space for themselves and give orders from behind their desks.' He finished: 'You can go, I'm not against it. Do what you like, but I'm not responsible.' To all this, Revuelta who had taken me there on purpose bowed his head and did not reply.[100]

This report describes an impressive ritual of affirmation and renewal of the structures of peasant power. José Rojas, in front of his closest supporters, questioned and defied the national police as a symbol of the state's repressive power. He also provoked doubt about the authority of the prefect and the head of the CDM, whom he despised as he showed by using the diminutive of the latter's surname, *Galindito*. In his report, the policeman emphasizes the fact that José Rojas was not under the influence of alcohol when he expressed his opinions: "I noted that José Rojas was not drunk, on the contrary, he had his speech ready, because there were moments when his mass applauded him with shouts of '¡Viva!' and displays of agreement."[101] From the informant's point of view, such a defiance of authority was only conceivable if coming from a peasant who had lost consciousness, who was clouded by some stimulant which impeded him from recognizing the inherent hierarchies of established power. To balance this break in the structure of power relations, the policeman had to pick out the commanding position that Rojas occupied in the local hierarchy. In

his mind, this was the only source of power which backed the authority of the peasant leader. This is why, in the beginning of his report, he painted Rojas as an "angry hacienda administrator (*mayordomo*)," someone who was capable of dominating only through threats, even with respect to his own audience.

Given the repetition of peasant sieges on the town of San Pedro de Buenavista, the political authorities of Cochabamba, Potosí, Oruro, and La Paz continued to dispatch police troops on "pacification" missions. In fact, town dwellers, with the support of state protection, continued to pressure the peasantry to destroy their unions and any other network of resistance. A commission from Cochabamba complied with the initiative of investigating eight peasants who had been arrested. One of them, Andrés Mareño from Choroma, made the following statement:

> Before the death of [Narciso] Torrico, individuals from the town of San Pedro unveiled a campaign of persecution against the peasants which culminated in his death, telling us that there were no leaders anymore and they would chop up the rest of them like onions and, organizing themselves, they left [the town] accompanied by a commission from La Paz, searching for weapons which we might have in our private residences. For fear of this we do not even stay in our houses, since they broke into fourteen private residences breaking padlocks. We have even been obliged to transfer our [peasant] center to another faraway place where it was quieter.[102]

The vecinos' abuses described by peasants in the investigation included acts of rape, theft of domestic animals and clothing, the torture of children, the seizure of land plots, and other violent acts. According to the witnesses, these acts were carried out by vecinos, such as, "Lucio Tórrez, San Pedro mayor; Doroteo Mareño, hat maker; Luis Tórrez, shoemaker; Bernabe Alcócer, butcher; all of them from San Pedro [de Buena Vista]."[103] Thus, the group of San Pedro de Buenavista vecinos, whose personal wealth and interests were at risk because of the revolutionary transformations, organized the political scenario from the city of Cochabamba. Meanwhile, the

vecinos who had actually confronted the peasants and their interests were the towns' minor functionaries and artisans.

Peasant voices did not fit into the revolutionary discourse and they were indeed silenced by local authorities. In contrast, protests against the abuses of peasant leaders—who were blamed by the revolutionaries for the violence which broke out with the agrarian reform—were often disseminated and magnified. For instance, when the Potosi prefect visited San Pedro de Buenavista and saw how dire the situation of the peasants there was, he then spoke more about Ucureña's invasion of his jurisdiction and demanded that the Ucureña peasant center's power be curbed. He expressed his ill feelings in a letter addressed to the Cochabamba prefect:

> For the interference of elements from that [peasant] central [of Ucureña] in the dismal events in the north of the department of Potosi, which being of public knowledge, have filled the entire country with shock, due to the unheard acts of barbarism which were committed … this prefecture will be obliged to take the most drastic and severe measures with all the 'agitators' who may be found in my departmental jurisdiction. The elevated prestige of the national revolution, its sacred postulates and it's just claims, by which the peasants are precisely the most favored, are being stained with mud, with indignity and dishonor. … These [peasant] leaderships are neither political nor doctrinaire, nor are they reclaiming their rights. Unfortunately, they are the meanest [people] that could be imagined; disorder, chaos, and shameless banditry that goes unpunished. [I beg you] to take the most energetic provisions with the aim of imposing sanity on evildoers who call themselves leaders and who, losing their way, have lost the last particles of reason. Humberto Salas Linares. Prefect [of Potosi].[104]

The Potosí prefect's rhetoric matched the formal structure of the MNR's right wing discourse. Accordingly, the acts of violence in the countryside—which in many cases were carried out by the landlords or their agents—were invariably attributed to the peasant leaders. Town dwellers

(in general) and public employees (in particular), appropriated the revolution through a discourse that constructed and represented the peasants as passive beneficiaries. Peasant leaders, from their point of view, were perverting the revolution with their unthinking attitudes and ignorance of even the basics of civilized life. Both groups believed that the peasants did not have any class-based political ability or consciousness and that they did not really understand the sacrifices the MNR leaders were making to drive the revolutionary process forward. Far from obeying the party's leaders in search of the common good—as the MNR's right wing discourse asserted—the peasantry put obstacles in their way with their chaotic and disorderly actions. From this point of view, there was no solution other than repression, given the fundamental irrationality of the peasant leaders.

These dynamics, which linked the interests of reactionary elites and the MNR's right wing together in their intention to overturn revolutionary reforms, began to change towards the end of 1958. As the campaign for presidential elections started, right wing politicians renewed their revolutionary image. José Rojas and the leaders of Ucureña seized the initiative and headed a government commission that would achieve social peace in northern Potosi. They worked to consolidate the presence of the state through new local political authorities and a team of agrarian judges who guaranteed a balance of interests. Vecinos and peasants ended up exhausting themselves in the conflict, which allowed new authorities to control the situation. In the end, José Rojas benefitted from the conflict, as his reputation as a peacemaker spread widely and was publicized in the conflict's wake.[105]

Hegemonic Discourse: The Peasants and the MNR

To examine public discourse in Cochabamba during the second revolutionary period (1954–58), this section makes use of *El Pueblo* newspaper editorials and commentaries on peasant issues. After the aborted coup in November 1953, the MNR government monopolized the press in Cochabamba and *El Pueblo* which was the official and only newspaper circulating in the region. The landlords' voices practically disappeared from the discursive political arena, while the peasants became the subject of the MNR's triumphant political discourse, which celebrated the

revolution and took over its paternity. The rhetoric of the revolution's success was centered on images of the agrarian reform and its peasant beneficiaries, leading to an abundant discourse focused on the MNR's benevolence and creating a favorable public image for the so-called prodigal sons of the regime. This official discourse—formulated with meagre peasant participation—was so prolific and convincing that it came to be taken as a description of the actual relationship between the peasantry and the revolutionary state. The peasants appeared as political actors subordinated to the state, although they actually were the subject of a discourse which wished to subordinate them to the state.[106] *El Pueblo* in Cochabamba, displayed a "*Pax Revolucionaria*" image that subordinated peasant actions to the MNR's political leadership. Therefore, their editorials sought to create a narrative of contemporary peasant society as the result of a historical process in which peasants had achieved a superior stage of social development, under the political lead of the MNR:

> The national revolution's government has set a precedent of honesty in breaking with colonial defects. … This process of legitimate democracy began with [President] Villarroel in 1945, when the first indigenous congress [took place]. The revolution [then] continued on its way and the *sexenio* [counter revolutionary six-year term] was no more than an accident in its unstoppable advance. 9 April 1952 arrived, and President Paz signed the agrarian reform decree freeing the Bolivian peasant. [Now] the peasant has acquired political maturity [thanks] to the MNR.[107]

When the agrarian reform ran into various obstacles and the peasant cadres did not conform to the MNR's centralizing leadership, editorials began focusing upon the technical defects of the agrarian reform and the incompetence of the peasants as the two main causes of its failure.[108] Both President Siles and the MNR's right-wing politicians were incapable of leading the populist agenda, for they shared the goal of centralizing power into their own hands. Instead, they utilized the image of a self-sacrificing president Siles, who was supposedly misunderstood by the people because he had been targeted by the malicious preaching of union leaders. It was at

this moment that the regime initiated a dark period of official propaganda wherein public information was widely manipulated by the monopolistic government media in Cochabamba.

El Pueblo editorials insinuated that peasant union leaders should make their support for President Siles public, as this was the correct attitude that distinguished them from the "bad" leaders. Moreover, the bad leaders ought to be purged from their unions and replaced by individuals who have shown that they are authentic leaders and not simple advantage seekers.[109] This discourse soon crossed over into the field of political blackmail when it started to present analogies of living organisms as models of societies, from which the self-serving, the extraneous, and the pernicious should be wiped out.[110] In spite of the political pressure put on the peasants, it was evident that the regime had not managed to consolidate enough power over them to exert the controls that the regime wished to exert. The official discourse of the period offers glimpses of the deep splits that alienated peasants from the government. For example, when a conference of leaders was held in Ucureña to prepare for the second national peasant conference, an editorial demanded that the peasants overcome their "duality of criteria." On one side, the editorial argued, the peasants responded to the respect that the revolutionary institutions had demanded but, on the other, they provided fuel for the tendency towards disorder and abuse fostered by extremism.[111] The peasants, the editorial went on, ought to support the government of Hernán Siles, who was working to free them from their bad union leaders: "This implies ratifying their support for revolutionary unity, without extremism or classist slogans with which the peasantry isolates itself from all control by its fellow citizens and becomes a fugitive delinquent, instead of crushing its inferiority complex in an open manner."[112]

In other words, the union leaders were beyond the government's control, keeping their grassroots power base alienated from central power, and converting the peasants into a marginal social group. If their fellow citizens (i.e., MNR politicians) were to control them, the peasants would fit into the margins of civility and could be integrated into the nation. This type of discourse concerning the peasants was addressed to the MNR's non-peasant militants, not to the peasants themselves. This rhetoric coming from the regime's perspective referred to the peasants as the "other,"

thus creating an unchallenged relationship of domination and subordination between the two groups. In contrast to the first revolutionary period (1952–53), when the landlords, in editorials, debated their projects with the revolutionary state, now *El Pueblo* editorials wrote a states soliloquy, where arguments vanished within the text itself. [113]

Divergence between the state and the peasants widened as their common revolutionary goals—land distribution and peasant farming mechanization—weakened as revolutionary processes. Official discourse concerning the peasants took on its old, *indigenista* tone, reviving obsolete ideas that once again idealized the image of a subservient Indian:

> [In Ucureña] the peasants have mentioned the administration of comrade [Hernán] Siles Zuazo and have emphasized the fact that, despite the unchangeable aims of the president, the agrarian reform has suffered from clumsiness, which is not in favor of the MNR government. … The government should not cease to listen to these accusations. … Those who have given their word at the altar of new America are the genuine representatives of the Indian masses (*indiada*) of the country. … There, in the sacred fields of Ucureña, peasants have reaffirmed their faith in the national revolution and have sworn to maintain its postulates through the MNR, because the party has made their dreams reality and given life to the new Inka empire, returning to the Indians the land of their ancestors.[114]

From this moment on, the MNR's right-wing rhetoric made a turn, sharpening its paternalist posturing over peasants and also listing the alleged natural virtues of the "Indian race."[115] The return to this allegorical discourse on the Indian, however, was related to a parallel discursive trend that denigrated the union leaders and attempted to explain the growing peasant discontent with the regime, with the pretext of personal rivalries between the agrarian leaders.[116]

Newspaper opinion pages were written by the regime's faithful intellectuals, and these commentaries were the mouthpiece for the government's final and unchallenged ideological explanation of the social

problems of the revolutionary era. Since there was no peasant interlocutor who could challenge it, the MNR's discourse in this period never overcame its condescending character. When the internal crisis of the MNR became so severe that its contradictions went out of control, only then did the commentators reflect the regime's hysteria at the thought of losing the political support of the peasants. This happened in August 1957, when Vice-President Ñuflo Chávez resigned from his post and received the support of the peasants without the knowledge or consent of President Siles, who at that moment was struggling to apply an economic stabilization plan. It was in this circumstances that official commentators began using denigratory language against the opposition, calling the peasant leaders José Rojas and Víctor Torrico "*dirigentes de pacotilla*" (tin-pot leaders) and insulting Vice-President Chávez and other parliamentarians on the left of the governing party.[117]

The topics addressed in newspaper commentaries varied substantially from the last years of Víctor Paz's term (1955–56) and the first years of Hernán Siles' presidency (1957–58). In the first period, the commentaries focused on the process of organization of the productive apparatus and wrote in exultant tones of great confidence about the future: "Bolivia will live through an unprecedented economic boom and a new era of development will arrive."[118] In the later period, the tone became pessimistic, and commentaries referred to the readjustment of the revolutionary process, and the difficulties of achieving its goals. Nevertheless, even in the moments of greatest revolutionary euphoria, when the emphasis was on the process of change itself, and the peasant's new "political consciousness" was applauded for the spontaneous help it had provided the new regime, the commentaries printed did not argue that the state should strengthen peasant economies. On the contrary, the emphasis was on the idea that the revolutionary state should educate the peasant class, whose future lay only in the proletarianization of its ranks, for it was to have a progressive landlord class as its counterpart:

> The formation of the peasant proletariat is the new stage of national economic development, it is the step from feudalism to capitalism, from the labor tenant to the wage laborer, from the lord of lives and estates to the businessman

> (*patrono*); it is, in synthesis, the economic revolution which the national revolution government has brought.[119]

It was for this reason that commentaries at this moment centered on two main issues. First, the proposed "March to the East," to the tropical lowlands of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, where the excess labor groups forced from the valley of Cochabamba could meet. Second, the creation of agrarian cooperatives that were to replace the peasant's smaller productive units. Cooperatives would be headed by the miners, who were to be brought to the valley, and who were said to be the bearers of the revolutionary mentality that was to guide the peasants' behavior and their evolving political consciousness.[120]

During this era of confidence in the revolutionary process, the regime decided to revise the national history and summoned intellectuals to join a crusade in favor of nationality, taking the everyday life of the popular classes as a source of inspiration. Simultaneously, the peasant symbols related to the revolution were fortified and the characterization of Ucureña as an icon of realized peasant power was magnified. Ucureña was named as "the Catavi of the fields" in allusion to the mining center of greatest revolutionary energy.[121] The yearly revolution anniversaries, as well as the "Indian day," were celebrated in Ucureña with extensive programming. *El Pueblo* gave these events significant publicity and this profoundly affected regional political consciousness. On these occasions, the unions of the peasants and the rural schoolteachers organized sporting and cultural competitions with the aim of "showing those who still have prejudices against the peasant class that they are not incapable, as the great landowners believe, but rather they are capable of developing any kind of [physical and intellectual] activity."[122]

The optics and dialogue of revolution also inspired artists and poets. In Ucureña, for instance, a mural was painted which symbolized the overcoming of Bolivian reality, escaping from single mining production to enter into agricultural development. In the Ucureña mural, "the monumental portraits of President Víctor Paz and Vice-President Hernán Siles were depicted [together with] the portraits of peasant leaders such as José Rojas and Sinforoso Rivas and the heroic [mining woman] María Barzola."[123] Many poems were published in the official newspaper. For

instance, a poem by Raúl Murillo Aliaga: "Rough Aymara who lives in the Andes / Sweet Quechua of the noisy valley / Mysterious Movima of the green rubber grove / Camba, centaur of the East / All of you, brothers, are sons of one fatherland." Or another by Juan Pueblo: "The reform must be fulfilled / And a new people forged / Once again conquer the Indian / With legions of teachers." The idea of creating a new Bolivian identity emerged, an identity that would amalgamate the regional cultures and foster the education of the Indian as the culmination of its conquest, up until then unfinished.[124]

The idea of centralized power, the benevolent paternalism of political leaders, and continuity in the processes of Indian conquest were expressed through the delimitation of urban and rural territories and the increasing specialization of the population. The contradiction between countryside and city once again manifested itself, but in such a way that it did not devolve into conflict due to the protective character of the revolutionary regime towards the peasants. Moreover, a proposal for the protection of peasants came from the FSTCC itself in the guise of a civilizing project. To this end, the FSTCC asked the police to carry out periodic round-ups (*batidas*) of the peasants who were wandering about in the city of Cochabamba, "given that a great number of them abandoned the countryside to dedicate themselves to activities which are not compatible with agriculture, or else to earn their living working as porters (*changadores*) with a great risk of coming into contact with criminal elements (*hampa*)."[125]

Urban intellectuals took up this idea and widened its ethical and productive implications. The peasants, they argued, had dedicated themselves to cultivating maize since their liberation from landlord control, as it was the raw material for brewing chicha. Consumption of chicha had increased the level of alcoholism, weakening work discipline, and fomenting migration. For these reasons, "the moment has arrived to face this problem, imposing obligatory labor [on the peasants] and a dry law on working days … we must produce more wheat and abandon corn."[126] Revolutionary intellectuals were still unable to overcome the old regional colonial elite's bias, which feared a lack of political control over the Cochabamba peasants, and alleged that their chicha drinking habit was a widespread addiction problem. What, in fact, worried the former regional colonial elite was the emergence of a secure and independent peasant economy. An

economy which was, at the moment, successfully competing against the monopolistic policies of the colonial state through gaining entry into the regional maize market, which up until then had been tightly controlled by the landlord class. Both the colonial and the revolutionary elites sought to centralize power; therefore, peasant political and economic autonomy were always considered an undesired social outcome.[127]

During the Siles administration, commentaries in the official newspaper stressed the economic policies of readjustment, which the regime planned to implement in order to bring the revolutionary goals back into action. At the regional level, a recurring theme in newspaper commentaries was the inefficiency of the agrarian reform apparatus. The government started a readjustment process, but peasants were suspicious that right-wing elements might infiltrate it, and this might cause even more questioning of the validity of the agrarian reform. As an official commentary in *El Pueblo* stated:

> Unidentified elements try to disorient the peasants, spreading false news about the agrarian reform … since they insinuate that the farms will be returned to the great estate owners and that there will be an attempt to deny the legal value of the agrarian reform decree and the other complementary dispositions. … The peasant comrades should be quite sure that the processes of confiscation and consolidation will be completed, once they reach the office of the president of the republic.[128]

The government made it clear that it did not question the basis of the agrarian reform, indicating that the president was ready to sign the land property titles, but only when they "reached" his office. In other words, Siles insinuated that other levels outside the jurisdiction of the executive branch were holding back the agrarian reform, and one of these levels was that of the peasant unions and their leaders. Through these methods, the government brought into question the legitimacy of the leaders who did not yield to official control by unleashing a fierce smear campaign on peasant leader Sinforoso Rivas, accusing him of corruption.[129]

The MNR's right wing authoritarian attitude and its hierarchical conceptualization of power formed the basis for their pursuit of a dominant relationship over the peasant movements. Intellectuals from the right—like Alfredo Galindo, a member of a prominent landowner's family in Cochabamba—aimed to slow down the MNR's left-wing populist practices. Their discourse thus allocated the peasants a neutral position of citizenry, which freed them from any kind of guardianship. "Overcoming the fictitious 'Indian Day' with which the oligarchy put the emancipatory consciousness of the Bolivian peasant to sleep, [I greet the peasants] wishing them total and definitive liberation from all the expressions of slavery."[130] This demagogic posture, which, in fact, undermined the political role of the peasant leaders, was unveiled when MNR right-wing intellectuals wrote their opinions in *El Pueblo*:

> The ingenuous and ignorant mentality of the Bolivian peasant has been inculcated with the idea that every large property belongs to them by fact and by right. … This fallacious preaching goes against the postulates of the agrarian reform. … When we spoke to them frankly and clearly … one noted stupor in their faces, doubt, and uncertainty, which shows that the demagogic propaganda had changed the autochthons mentality, who ever since the paternal epoch of the Incas practiced the virtues of work, truthfulness, discipline, and lived observing moral and legal norms.[131]

The Ucureña ritual—where the peasants' alliance with the revolutionary state was annually renewed while celebrating the anniversary of the agrarian reform decree signing—was transformed in form and content. As the MNR's right-wing intellectual, Saturnino Rodrigo's speech illustrates, revolutionary jargon was now combined with millennial allegories to the Inca empire and odes to the mythical image of a submissive Indian.

> Let us kneel and kiss the earth, the eternal mother earth (*Pachamama*), to take communion with our father the sun. … Now you have communicated kissing the *Pachamama*, we must swear that Ucureña will become the center of the

> Indian continent. … But to that end, we must return to the spirit of our ancestors, follow them in their principles of "Do not rob, do not lie, do not be lazy" (*ama sua, ama llulla, ama kella*). What does "do not rob" mean? Do not take others' land. And "do not lie"? Do not lie to yourselves, saying that you work without doing so. And, finally, what is "do not be lazy"? That you should work all your land, because the land which is not worked becomes evil, it is unlucky (*khencha*).[132]

This manipulation of revolutionary rituals was a product of the MNR's right wing distrust of the political conduct of their peasant allies. The MNR leaders tried to patronize the peasants but only with relative success. This was the reason why leaders from the MNR's right-wing, like Walter Guevara, considered the peasants incapable and volatile individuals.[133] This perception of the peasantry by the MNR's politicians would foster confrontational positions in the years to come, when peasant wars erupted in the Valle Alto.

Conclusion

At the time when the MNR's left wing implemented its unionist policies (1954–56), the peasants' and workers' movements were at a vanguard position in the revolutionary process. The MNR's left wing controlled the government and supported the peasant unions apparatus. The Valle Alto peasants, however, resisted the MNR's left wing project to transform the haciendas into agrarian cooperatives, as had also been fruitlessly attempted in the Valle Bajo. When the MNR's right wing began to centralize power in the urban organization of the party (1957–58), peasant resistance to the regime's policies became intense. The government created new union organizations parallel to those already existing, with the goal of weakening the peasant movement. In addition, a witch-hunt of the most important leaders began, especially of those who refused to adjust to the new political circumstances. The government's aim was to substitute peasant leaders with officially appointed and on the MNR payroll employees in the countryside. Thus, the government consciously increased tension

between vecinos and campesinos to slow down the changes the grassroots peasants were demanding.

Revolutionary geography defined the Valle Bajo and its neighboring highlands as the area which aligned with government policy. In contrast, the Valle Alto and its territory of influence—which extended as far as northern Potosi—was considered the oppositional and conflictive zone. However, the Ucureña peasant center, which was the locus of political activity in the Valle Alto, never went so far as to openly defy the government's authority. The fact that valley peasants, in general, and Ucureña, in particular, never broke their relationship with the regime had been interpreted in previous scholarship as evidence of the MNR's co-optation of revolutionary peasants. This study, as well as recent research confirms, however, that the Ucureña leadership in this period actively negotiated with the state by means of a dynamic balance between political autonomy and acquiescence.[134] Essentially, the Ucureña leadership adopted a pragmatic position in relation to the government's political demands, which allowed the peasantry to monitor the fluctuating ebbs and flows of its relationship with the revolutionary regime.

4

Peasant Wars and Political Autonomy (1959–64)

Revolutionary peasants in the Cochabamba valley after the presidencies of Víctor Paz (1952–56) and Hernán Siles (1956–60) understood that anti-peasant sentiments ran deep in the MNR party membership, in both the left- and right-wing sectors. These peasants, by then, had also experienced the vanguardism of the Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Party, PIR) and Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party, POR), who had disavowed peasant claim to political autonomy. Revolutionary peasants in Cochabamba had only circumstantial allies when they fought for land and political autonomy. They were aware that confronting the revolutionary state was not a good idea; after all, they had centuries-long experience of state repression. Therefore, they had no other option than to reluctantly cling to the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR) in order to attain their own political space.

The Ucureña peasant central led the revolutionary movement towards the construction of an autonomous political space for the Cochabamba peasants. In 1960, in the middle of the climax of the MNR-monitored clash between the Cliza and Ucureña militias, an Ucureña peasant leader declared to the press: “Ucureña is the MNR, but does not belong to the MNR.” It was a dismal message, indeed, a warning to the MNR that even peasant patronage had limits. The MNR did not get the message, instead they blamed the messenger and hung on to their anti-peasant rhetoric. This political misunderstanding was dearly paid for Víctor Paz, as General René Barrientos removed him from power in 1964, forcing the end of the revolutionary era in Bolivia.

This chapter analyzes the role of the Cochabamba valley peasantry in the power struggle that culminated in the Champa Guerra (1959–64).[1] The revolutionary regime's electoral campaign for the third presidential term (1960–64) unleashed unprecedented political violence among the MNR's internal factions, each vying for power and favor. Extreme political violence began in the Cochabamba valley in 1959—when the first clash occurred between the Cliza and the Ucureña peasant militias in the Valle Alto—and ended in 1964, when the military pacified the peasant movement and led a coup against the MNR regime. The struggle between the MNR's left and right wings intensified in 1959, when both Víctor Paz and Walter Guevara announced their presidential candidacies. Both candidates sought votes in Cochabamba and worked to undermine the union leadership of the powerful Ucureña peasant central. At the core of the peasant political struggle was a latent division between town dwellers (*vecinos*) and peasants (*campesinos*). The ethnic perceptions that historically differentiated vecinos from campesinos sharpened when peasants gained political power due to the revolutionary changes brought by the MNR. The struggle between city and countryside originated from the tense pre-revolutionary relations of domination and subordination between the so-called "civilized" vecinos and the "barbaric" campesinos.

During the 1960s, the political and military power struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States, generally referred to as the Cold War, intensified. The triumph of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution in 1959 encouraged left-wing parties in Latin America to seize power through the mobilization of peasant troops. National armies in Latin America aligned themselves with the anti-communist position, under the leadership of the United States, against urban and rural, Cuban trained and supplied guerrillas. In the following two decades, bloody "dirty wars" erupted all over Latin America, which in each incidence resulted in a war won by the military, with the exception of Nicaragua.[2] These political tactics were also evident in Cochabamba, where the miners' and urban workers' movements had gained influence among peasant unionists. Juan Lechín acted as the left's visible head in Bolivia and governed as vice-president during Víctor Paz's presidency (1960–64).[3]

The MNR's internal political dispute deepened the division and conflict between the Cliza and Ucureña peasants. A collision course between

the city and the countryside arose once again, triggered by the workers' attempt to reclaim leadership in Cochabamba and subordinate the peasant movement. The Bolivian armed forces had undergone training and received financing from the United States government through aid programs, employed to help the rural population. The military utilized this support as a base to actively engage in politics and in the fight against communism. As Thomas Field posits: "Civic action programs of the Alliance for Progress fueled a rapid militarization of development in the countryside, with many projects receiving the enthusiastic endorsement of future coup leader General René Barrientos."[4]

General René Barrientos emerged at that time, seeking the political support of the peasants to launch his vice-presidential candidacy alongside Víctor Paz in the presidential election for the 1964–68 term. General Barrientos understood how to capitalize on his contacts with peasant unionists, he organized a truce between the Cliza and Ucureña militias, and he also developed a peasant-military pact in 1964. His public image grew to national stature when it became evident that he was able to control the peasant militias, and worked to remove the leftist influence in their ranks. From this moment on, the peasants were virtually neutralized as an autonomous political force and the axis of political conflict shifted from the country to the city. In November 1964, just a few months after Víctor Paz and René Barrientos won the election and began their constitutional mandate, Barrientos mounted a coup d'état which thrust the MNR from power, thus ending the revolutionary era in Bolivia.

This chapter also analyzes the regional political discourse that was produced by the peasants, the MNR politicians, and the military in this period. The source of information for this analysis is the *El Mundo* newspaper, published in Cochabamba. Through *El Mundo* editorials, press conferences, and communiqués, political actors participated in the rhetorical arena debating over the contentious concept of peasant boss or *cacique campesino*. In this period, peasant participation in regional politics reached its climax, although cities gradually displaced the rural areas as centers of political activity as the military gained power. Two distinct moments can be identified when analyzing public discourse in this period. The first, from 1959 until 1962, wherein the MNR's antagonistic left- and right-wing struggled for power. The second, during 1963 and 1964, was

marked by the political emergence of the military, which culminated with the military's coup d'état against the MNR in 1964. The intense political conflict during this second period spawned a great deal of political discourse published in the Cochabamba press. The regime's information monopoly was suspended, and three local newspapers—*El Mundo* (1958–64), *Prensa Libre* (1960–64), and *Crítica* (1960)—began circulating in Cochabamba, all of which defined themselves as independent. The *El Mundo* newspaper was published during the entire period in question, and thus it was selected as the source for analysis.

The Struggle for Power and the Role of Peasant Unionism

In late 1958, both Víctor Paz and Walter Guevara were vying to be nominated as the MNR's official candidate in the presidential elections of 1960, with Paz supported by the left-wing faction of the party and Guevara supported by the right. The nomination of the official candidate was planned to be announced during the MNR annual convention, which actually took place in January 1959. Both prospective candidates began campaigning in order to demonstrate their ability to gather more public support at the ballot box. Obtaining peasant support in Cochabamba was a priority for both presidential aspirants, because garnering that support not only would secure a great mass of future voters but also would hold important symbolic value for the national electorate. When political campaigning began in late 1958, Víctor Paz received the support of the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (Union Federation of Peasant Workers of Cochabamba, FSTCC), the Ucureña, and the Sacaba peasant centrals. Walter Guevara and his right-wing faction could only count on the support of the Quillacollo peasant central.

Walter Guevara's first campaign initiative involved destabilizing his opponent in the Valle Alto. His aim was facilitated by an internal rupture amongst the leaders of the Ucureña peasant central. One of the Ucureña's second-level leaders, Miguel Veizaga, felt that the main leader, José Rojas, was holding him back, since he had not been allowed to ascend the chain of command. Miguel Veizaga was born in 1919, and was a colono in the Santa Clara hacienda in Ucureña. He attended school until the first grade and never enlisted in the army. After the April 1952 revolution, he was influenced by the POR. Although elected as Ucureña's peasant central

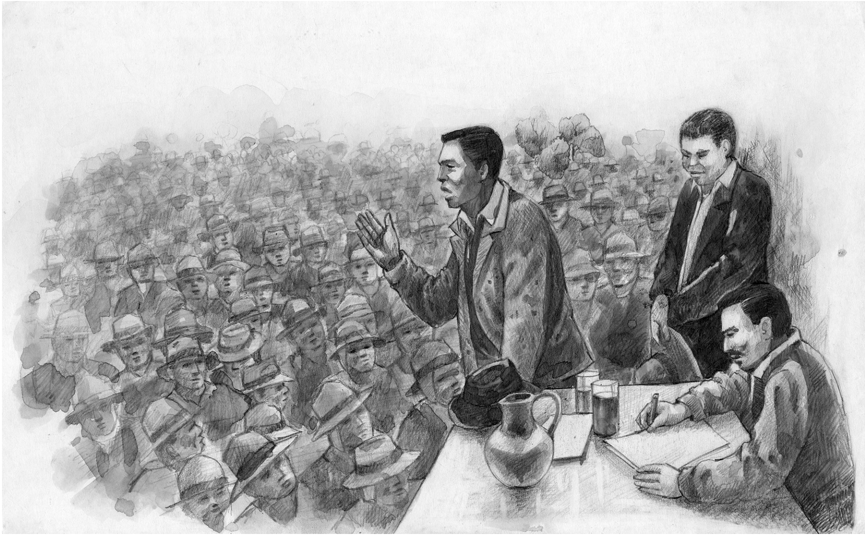


FIGURE 4.1 Peasant Assembly in the Valle Alto. Cliza's peasant leader, Miguel Veizaga, delivering a speech (Second Peasant Departmental Congress at Ucureña, July 28, 1954).

general secretary in 1954 (see figure 4.1), José Rojas opposed his appointment. In 1959, Veizaga was elected as Cliza's peasant central general secretary and, from that position, he began challenging José Rojas' leadership in the Valle Alto. In 1962, he was imprisoned by the military and, later on, exiled to the city of La Paz. In 1965, the military uprooted him to the city of Cochabamba and banned him from ever returning to the Valle Alto.

The first signs of Veizaga's breakdown with Rojas came during sessions of the fourth conference of peasant leaders at the El Morro (Sacaba) peasant center, in May 1958. At this event, Veizaga questioned Rojas's power and dared him to delegate command to a new cohort of leaders emerging in Ucureña. This position followed the government discourse line demanding an end to *caudillismo* (big man leader personality cult) in union leadership. After the conference, Walter Guevara contacted Veizaga proposing an agreement of aid and mutual support in their plans for accruing power. From his post as minister of state, Guevara backed up Veizaga's political campaign. This support allowed Veizaga to win the elections for the Cliza peasant central's general secretary at the head of a committee,

a committee partially composed of leaders that would later constitute his cadre of dissident supporters. As such, Veizaga began his term in the Cliza peasant central as an infiltrator who inserted Guevara's right-wing political interests into the heart of the peasant union line, which, in the Valle Alto, supported Víctor Paz. Veizaga's political actions and his connection to Walter Guevara seeded significant tension amongst peasant leaders in the Valle Alto (see figure 4.1).

Meanwhile, aspiring candidate Víctor Paz, as the MNR's national leader, appointed two trusted soldiers—Gualberto Olmos and Eduardo Rivas—as prefect and chief of the Comando Departamental del MNR (MNR's Departmental Commando, CDM) in Cochabamba, thus guaranteeing that the direction of regional politics would be controlled by his sector.[5] This political maneuver snatched the control of the CDM from the right wing of the party, which was the main instrument used by the MNR's right-wing faction to manipulate the peasant movement. Following this loss, the right-wing faction tried to retake the peasant union movement through the ministry of peasant affairs, creating an Avanzada Sindical Campesina (Peasant Union Vanguard) which would lead and control the peasant unions' future political actions. These reactionary measures taken by the right-wing faction led the FSTCC to demand the resignation of the minister of peasant affairs, Vicente Álvarez Plata.[6]

Counting on the support of the main Cochabamba political authorities, the Ucureña central became the guiding force behind the Cochabamba peasant movement, directing the interests of the movement to align with the interests of the Paz's left-wing faction and attacking the pro-Guevara's Quillacollo peasant central. A plan conceived by the Ucureños to consolidate its leadership over the peasant movement was put into practice. First, Ucureña renovated its own revolutionary image by organizing a Bolivian peasant parliamentarian round table, contrived to strengthen the ties to Víctor Paz. Second, as the Quillacollo right-wing peasant central leaders Alejandro Galarza and Jorge Campos had recently commanded an armed intervention to the Quillacollo municipality, aiming to unseat the mayor, the Ucureña-controlled FSTCC set up a special tribunal to investigate and punish them. Thereafter, FSTCC took direct control over the Quillacollo central, nominating Jorge Solíz, a peasant leader from Ucureña, as its ad hoc general secretary (see figure 4.7). The special tribunal members

FIGURE 4.2 Peasant Cadre in the Valle Bajo. Second row, to the center: Enrique Encinas and Sinforoso Rivas (Cochabamba, Quillacollo, 1960).

were Salvador Vásquez (Ucureña), Facundo Olmos (Sacaba), and Enrique Encinas (Quillacollo). Enrique Encinas was a leader from Juan Lechín's faction, who took control over the Quillacollo peasant center (see figure 4.2). He was born into a landless peasant family in the valley and never attended school. He had worked in the mines and was a miner's union activist, who collaborated with Sinforoso Rivas in the Valle Bajo.[7]

At that moment, when the power of Ucureña was undisputed in the Cochabamba valley, the government observed that peasant support was tilting in Víctor Paz's favor. In an effort to assimilate these forces under government management and lead them towards the MNR's right-wing political aims, President Hernán Siles attempted a short-term political maneuver. He offered Salvador Vásquez the ministry of peasant affairs but then gave José Rojas the office.[8] According to Vásquez's testimony: "Don Hernán Siles told me that he was going to give me the ministry of peasant affairs [leadership position]. … José Rojas, who was an enemy of the

right and of Hernán Siles, when he got to know [the invitation], he went to suck up to him and requested that he should be the minister of peasant affairs."[9] This presidential maneuver, borne of an attempted split of the peasant cadre in Ucureña, did not have the immediate expected effect, but it did indeed sow discord among the peasants. In any case, Hernán Siles obtained Ucureña's transitory support at a crucial moment, when he was trying to institute a monetary stabilization plan to get Bolivia's currency under control and confront the oppositional power of the miners' unions.

Precisely when José Rojas was sworn in as minister of peasant affairs, a group of miners, backed by railway workers, began a strike which set the workers against the government.[10] The Cochabamba peasant militias declared themselves to be in a state of emergency. They argued that the strike was organized by reactionary forces and declared that they were ready to be mobilized at any moment to any place in danger of an uprising.[11] A few days later, in the presence of minister José Rojas and the government representative Colonel Eduardo Rivas, the Cochabamba peasant militias, along with loyal miner's militiamen, ratified an inter-union pact in defense of the government. The pact was signed in La Paz by the Ucureña, Quillacollo, and Sacaba peasant centrals and by the Huanuni, Colquiri, Japo, and Morococala miner unions.[12]

Once the government gained control of the conflict with the help of the peasants, it allowed the FSTCC to launch the fourth departmental peasant congress at El Morro (Sacaba), in May 1959. It was during this congress that the final rupture between Rojas and Veizaga occurred. As the votes were counted, Veizaga received the majority of the ballots but Rojas did not concede defeat, but instead declared his candidate Crisóstomo Inturias the winner of the vote, backing his decision with the latent violent power of the Ucureña militia support. The Ucureña unionists dominated the proceedings of the congress and managed to direct debate sessions to reaffirm peasant support for the candidacy of Víctor Paz of the left-wing faction. Peasant leader Salvador Vasquez, in a report he presented to the congress regarding his term at the FSTCC, identified the right-wing faction of the MNR as the chief source of counter-revolutionary action and organization. As the election date approached, Vásquez claimed that the MNR's right wing was seeking peasant leaders to counter the current leaders in their respective peasant unions, and in this way stunt the ability

of the organized peasants to violently resist a right-wing power grab. In an interview with the press, Vásquez declared: "[The right] insists that Víctor Paz will not return to power again, this is the order of the old landlords to bring down the peasantry and set themselves up in power. But we will not allow this, Víctor Paz Estenssoro must return to rule our country."[13] When the congress ended, a national conference of peasant workers took place in Ucureña, and again this congress proclaimed support for Víctor Paz's presidential candidacy. Yet, when the time came to select the vice-presidential candidate, Juan Lechín and Ñuflo Chávez remained on the table as viable options. The candidates were put to vote and Chávez received an overwhelming majority, demonstrating the peasants' distrust of the miners' leader Lechín.[14]

In mid-1959, the conservative Falange Socialista Boliviana (Bolivian Socialist Phalanx, FSB) attempted to assert control over Santa Cruz's municipal government, and thus demonstrate their opposition to the MNR. The Cochabamba peasant militias were once again called to restore order, but the FSB organized protest demonstrations in Cochabamba city, mobilizing students from local high schools.[15] Although limited to the urban areas, both the radical conservatives and the extreme left attacked the peasant movement and its leaders. For these political factions, the peasants presented a stalwart obstacle to their realization of political power. In the case of the right-wing faction, the peasant organizations and their militias provided peasants a bulwark against their attempts to unseat the revolutionary MNR government and replace it with a right-wing government. In the case of the extreme leftists, the peasants prevented them from radicalizing the revolution. In any event, both the conservative right as well as the workers' left fabricated representations of peasants that depicted peasants as barbaric, politically capricious, and disloyal. These fabrications originated in as part of a backlash to the many mobilizations of the peasant militias that had been used to quell anti-MNR uprisings. The symbolic violence communicated by the deployment of these militias had generally mitigated the political aspirations of both the left- and right-wing factions in practice and upheld the revolutionary government. Consequently, for instance, the FSB's lawmakers issued a draft law in 1958, which proposed the disarmament of the peasant militias in Bolivia: "[peasant militias] will

hand over their weapons and ammunition to the national army or to the armed police, subject to a strict inventory and in a mandatory manner."[16]

In September 1959, political campaigning in Cochabamba grew increasingly intense, beginning with the first presidential aspirant to make an official visit to Cochabamba, Víctor Paz, who was proclaimed the peasants' candidate in massive peasant gatherings that took place in Quillacollo, Sacaba, and Ucureña. As a peasant leader declared to the press: "We are united in our support for the MNR, because thanks to them we are free. We will not allow alien interventions by the *rosca* (clique) of PORistas or Trotskyists. They have not given us freedom. It was the MNR [that gave us freedom]. The only leader recognized by us is Dr. Víctor Paz Estenssoro."[17]

Walter Guevara arrived a day later and was proclaimed the chosen candidate of Cochabamba city, but not in the countryside.[18] In the following month, Guevara visited the town of Cliza for an important gathering of peasants. At the meeting, the peasant leader Ramón Torrico—Miguel Veizaga's right-hand man—told the audience that, some days earlier, several peasant unions had abandoned the Ucureña central and: "the 43 unions organized in Cliza now have their own central, as they want to get away from the demagogues who try to divide the peasantry." In a speech given to the gathering, Walter Guevara claimed that there was a risk of a confrontation between the Cliza and Ucureña centrals. Guevara blamed José Rojas and the Ucureña leaders, describing them as "those who for some times have made use of the militias and continue to use those militias to punish and arrest their own brothers."[19] It is clear that both candidates fed and encouraged divisions and conflict between the peasant leaders and their organizations.

On the last day of October 1959, both candidates published campaign messages on the front page of the official *El Pueblo* newspaper, which when printed defined the pinnacle of political cynicism in Cochabamba during this period. Víctor Paz exhorted the peasants to maintain their unity and Walter Guevara demanded peace and brotherhood among the peasants[20] That very afternoon a shooting match broke out between the Cliza and Ucureña militias, marking the beginning of the bloodiest period of peasant wars in Bolivian history. During this period politicians and peasants constantly fomented violent confrontations, and the tragic consequences

of this violence cut deep marks into the memories of people who lived in the region then.

The Champa Guerra in Cochabamba

In response to this outbreak of violence, the regime mobilized officials to attempt to enforce the signing of a truce between the Ucureña and Cliza militias. Peasant violence in and around the Cochabamba Valle Alto was one of many violent confrontations in Bolivia that occurred during the 1960 presidential campaign. The minister of peasant affairs, José Rojas, was forced to resign in the political turmoil of the campaign, as a result of the demands of the right-wing faction of the MNR, who frequently and publicly accused Rojas of rural parochialism. The peasant clashes in Cochabamba and also the murder of Vicente Álvarez, the former minister of peasant affairs, in Achacachi (La Paz), were added to the list of charges against Rojas, with the reactionary side even accusing him of covering up Álvarez's death. Álvarez had been an MNR right-wing militant who opposed peasant power in the altiplano of La Paz. A peasant parliamentarian, Toribio Salas, was accused of assassinating Álvarez and the deputy chamber opened an investigation, but the results were never made public.[21]

It was not only prominent peasant leaders that were removed from their posts because of political pressure, Walter Guevara was relieved from his post of minister of state and appointed to the ministry of foreign affairs, where he would have little influence over domestic policy, because of pressure from the left-wing faction of the MNR. Despite this setback, Guevara intensified his campaign in Cochabamba, which consisted of issuing public proclamations in a few valley towns, where the MNR's right wing held some grassroots support. In Achamoco and Capinota he was well received by the townspeople (see maps 1.2 and 1.3). In his welcoming speech, peasant leader Jorge Campos disavowed, "the false preaching of those bad elements who try to confuse the thoughts of the majority, depicting Dr. Guevara Arze as a reactionary, when in fact he is the joint author of the fundamental policies of the agrarian reform."[22] The peasants, however, associated Guevara's political image with the upper echelons of the MNR's right wing and—as that sector was holding power and applied anti-union strategies—the association was difficult to deny. Therefore, despite his efforts, Guevara did not manage to convince the peasantry that

they shared common interests. Although he used the Quechua language in his harangues, the content of his rhetoric centered around a characterization of his peasant opponents as the "bad" leaders, trying to divert attention away from his own reputation among the peasants. In a speech at Capinota, for instance, Guevara pointed out that some peasant leaders were becoming substitutes for the old abusive landlords and that, "it was mandatory to destroy this evil."[23] Guevara further intensified his attempts to split peasant unionism through the founding of a parallel FSTCC under Miguel Veizaga's command, who ratified his support for Guevara's presidential campaign.

In early January 1960, the MNR's right wing organized a national peasant conference in La Paz which proclaimed their support for Guevara's candidacy, but the party's militiamen violently dispersed it.[24] Meanwhile, in Cochabamba, the original FSTCC held a departmental conference that demanded Guevara's resignation and the expulsion from the union ranks of Miguel Veizaga, Alejandro Galarza, Jorge Campos, and Agapito Vallejos.[25] Such factional confusion soon extended far into the MNR's contingent organizations; in Cochabamba, two CDMs coexisted and they began fighting, each accusing the other of corruption.[26] As the eighth MNR convention approached, both Paz and Guevara intensified pressure on the peasants, resulting in an extremely bellicose political context wherein violent confrontations and massacres took place one after another. This situation resulted in the deployment of a military contingent to the conflict area.[27] Once the war climate was solidified, both candidates visited the Cochabamba Valle Alto on the same day, each competing to demonstrate that they were the most effective and committed peasant pacifier. Paz had managed to whip up his peasant supporters into a frenzy in Ucureña and Guevara had done the same in Cliza, yet this feverish and violent atmosphere was only the beginning. Soon, in an act of utter humiliation for Paz, Guevara's militants ambushed him on his way to Cochabamba city and took away his revolver and other personal effects, which only further fostered the mutual belligerence between the two politicians and their respective supporters.[28]

In February 1960, the eighth party convention decided to support the Paz-Lechín formula for president and vice-president, provoking great discomfort in the ranks of the MNR's right wing. Roughly a month later,

the rebellion of a police battalion—which was part of another failed FSB-planned coup d'état—occurred in La Paz.[29] The fact that a high-standing member of Walter Guevara's newly founded Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario Auténtico (Authentic Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNRA), was involved in the coup suggested a political alliance between the MNRA and the FSB, who had decided to seize power by force.[30] In later interviews, Guevara put forth the idea that his party was ready to set up an oppositional front with the Partido Liberal (Liberal Party, PL) and the Partido de la Union Republicana Socialista (Republican Socialist Union Party, PURS), both on the extreme political right. Furthermore, Guevara demanded the reform of the electoral statute in order to give "a greater possibility of representation to the minorities and the inhabitants of the cities."[31] Both controversial ideas further alienated him from the peasant voters. Moreover, his proposals further inflamed the spirited peasants in the Cochabamba valley; rumors that militiamen from Ucureña would soon try to capture Cliza town ran rampant, which added even more fuel to the fire of their violent cacophony.

Following the election, the electoral court confirmed the victory of the Paz-Lechín ticket in Cochabamba by a wide margin. In the Esteban Arce (Tarata) and Germán Jordan (Cliza) provinces, the votes favored Guevara (see map 1.2). In Quillacollo he almost drew even with Paz, but in the rest of the provinces Guevara got very few votes. In the Cochabamba, in total, with slightly more than two hundred thousand votes, the MNR got 75 percent, the MNRA 22 percent, and the FSB 2 percent.[32] This illustrates the localized nature of Guevara's campaign and how low peasant support for his candidacy—really limited to just the departmental capital and a handful of towns—actually was. As soon as the election result was made known, Cliza leaders became nervous, realizing they had put themselves into a politically precarious situation. Meanwhile, the Ucureña peasant leaders considered themselves victorious in the election and believed that they had bested the peasants of their rival town, Cliza.

Ucureña immediately began to put Cliza under political pressure. The government appointed a military commander for Cliza, closing the circle on Veizaga and his collaborators.[33] These events unfolded in a difficult moment since, days before, an army officer had killed two adolescents from the town of Cliza, and clashes among peasant factions had resulted

in several more casualties.[34] Cliza's besieged forces then ambushed an Ucureña's militiamen patrol, slaying several dozens of its members, in what soon became known as the Mulofalda massacre.[35] The massacre reinforced Rojas's demand that Veizaga and his cadre be captured, as he believed them to be instruments of Walter Guevara's policy of violence and confrontation between peasant factions.[36] The government opted instead for opening a dialogue with the Cliza leaders, who had not only rejected Guevara's leadership by renouncing their participation in the MNRA but had also held massive meetings in Cliza reaffirming their loyalty to Víctor Paz.[37]

Paz, as president, did not pick sides, but instead met with and offered support to both the Cliza and Ucureña peasant unions. It is not clear if he did this because he considered Cliza a powerful force that needed to be reckoned with or because he was consciously trying to deepen the split between the two peasant unions and thus weaken peasant power. At the same time, he sent his minister of state to meet with the leaders of Ucureña, Paz held a parallel meeting in the presidential palace with Veizaga and his cadre.[38] In the meeting with the president, Cliza issued three demands: new elections in the peasant centrals, an end to caudillismo in the peasant centrals, and government support for increasing agricultural production.[39] The leaders of the Ucureña central reacted quickly, deciding to blockade the city of Cochabamba and invade the town of Cliza if the government gave no clear signs that Veizaga and his cadre would be arrested. In response, the government ordered the arrest of those implicated in the Mulofalda massacre and sent the police to Cliza to detain them. Veizaga and his supporters agreed to hand themselves over for arrest and they were held for some hours in Cochabamba city, but were released due to local political pressure.[40]

The threat of attacking Cochabamba city, issued by the Ucureños, created an opportunity for urban politicians to enter the political scene in Cochabamba as the leading actors. Among them were the representatives of former landlords, who believed that Veizaga's capture meant Rojas' triumph, that is, the peasants' victory over the townspeople. As a consequence, they further magnified the peasant threat and provoked extreme reactions among the urban population. For example, a civil defense association was organized in Cochabamba city, Chaco War veterans enlisted

as volunteers for the armed defense of the city, and groups of women began to prepare homemade grenades. Diomedes de Pereyra, leader of the town's civil council stated: "There cannot be a satisfactory solution if the only aim is to disarm Cliza. Cliza with arms is, at the present circumstances, the first line of Cochabamba city's defense. Once it has gone, the Ucureños will have an open road to the city."[41]

Right-wing phobia about armed peasant militias was skillfully manipulated by Vice-President Juan Lechín who, immediately after being sworn into office, declared his full-frontal opposition to Víctor Paz's policy. Both of the heads of state clashed with each other during their administration, the president tried to adjust his economic policy to be in line with the United States' capitalist model, while the vice-president, at the same time, kept an ambiguous position between support for socialism and flirting with the United States, whose support was vital if he were to achieve his presidential ambitions.[42] Lechín and other members of the Bolivian left had already begun to approach the Cliza peasant leaders during the 1960 presidential campaign. The Central Obrera Departamental (Departmental Workers' Central, COD), for instance, worked hard to attract the interest of Miguel Veizaga, calling on him to attend their union meetings, when Veizaga had been leading a parallel FSTCC. Another example includes the El Morro (Sacaba) peasant leader, Facundo Olmos, who signed supportive communiqués for Lechín's candidacy for the vice-presidency. As such, the COD and the left ended up organizing demonstrations that rejected the Ucureña peasant's blockade threat, standing arm in arm with right-wing political parties and reactionary sectors of the urban society in Cochabamba. From the left's point of view, it was politically profitable to foster the peasant split. Even though Ucureña and its militiamen gave unconditional support to Víctor Paz, Cliza and Sacaba were now open for the left to assert more influence over them, thus creating an environment that fostered the creation of future rural guerrillas. Trying to further exacerbate the situation, the left insisted on an amnesty for the peasant leaders who had been involved in the Mulofalda massacre, while they were aware that this proposal, rather than being any solution, was indeed part of the problem.[43]

This unexpected turn of events convinced Víctor Paz that he ought to look for support in Ucureña and put an end to the dangerous emerging

FIGURE 4.3 Peasant Leaders' Swearing-In Ceremony. From left to right; Julián Chávez (Cliza), Sinforoso Rivas, (Quillacollo), Facundo Olmos (Sacaba), and Salvador Vásquez (Ucureña). Peasant delegates to the Pacification Committee (Santivañez, December, 1960).

power of Cliza. The president chose a solution which startled the Cliza group and left it paralyzed, while Ucureña took control of the situation: he called a private meeting with his main collaborators in which he decided to take over the town of Cliza and capture its leaders. Paz named new government officials in Cliza, issued judicial orders for the arrest of Veizaga and his principal supporters, and mobilized a force of fifty militiamen from the Ucureña central to capture the fugitives.[44] While attempting to capture the fugitive leaders, however, the Ucureña militiamen committed abuses against the town dwellers, which provoked a violent reaction from Miguel Veizaga's command group. After many hours of fighting, the clash ended with the defeat of the Ucureña militia forces. This government maneuver ignited a political crisis and gave an air of martyrdom to Veizaga. Juan Lechín and the left took advantage of the opportunity to criticize the government and organize violent urban demonstrations. Finally, Lechín went to the town of Cliza, where he met with its leaders and offered to mediate the conflict himself.[45] In the heat of the combat, the commander of the Quillacollo peasant militia, Sinforoso Rivas, was pressured by MNR politicians to intervene in the conflict in support of Ucureña. The peasant

leaders of the Valle Bajo, however, opposed the intervention due to the danger of amplifying the clash between peasant militiamen.[46]

As a public relations measure, the government organized a departmental conference of peasant leaders in Santivañez, where four leaders—Salvador Vásquez (Ucureña), Facundo Olmos (Sacaba), Julián Chávez (Cliza), and Sinforoso Rivas (Quillacollo)—were nominated to conduct a pacification commission (see figure 4.3). Debates at the conference were so passionate that, at one point, Cliza representatives decided not to recognize the authority of the conclusions the body reached.[47] The meeting was riled by the permanent interference of left-wing activists, who purposely misinformed and confused the attendees to avoid any peacefully negotiated solution. There was also an acknowledgement that some of the MNR leaders were deliberately seeding and inflaming divisions between peasant groups, which, in the words of Salvador Vásquez, meant that:

> Although the intellectuals indicate that the differences in the countryside are of a union nature, it is necessary to say that this is a political question. In order to obey Guevara, the peasants of Cliza took up a wrong position. I would like to ask [former landlords and current MNR parliamentarians] Eduardo Cámara de Ugarte and Alfredo Galindo why the agrarian reform was carried out, whether it was for them to bribe corrupt bureaucrats so that they could have their land returned, or if it was to improve the situation of the peasantry.[48]

The pacification commission fostered hope for peace in the valley, but the conflict remained a long way from coming to an end. When the military forcibly inserted itself into the political arena in the 1960s, in response to widespread violent conflict and the reckless leadership of civilian politicians, it forced Cold War tensions to the forefront in Bolivia. The international conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, fought mostly through proxy wars and intelligence agencies, came to drastically alter events on the ground in Bolivia as the 1960s wore on.

The Cold War and the Policy of Terror in Cochabamba

The 1959 Cuban revolution threw the whole Latin American region into turmoil. Havana suddenly appeared remarkably menacing, and remarkably close, to the United States, which was not about to allow for a pro-Soviet Communist regime on an island that until recently had been considered a playground for rich Americans. The Soviet Union provided Fidel Castro and revolutionary Cuba with material support and began to install offensive missile sites on the island, capable of striking all major American cities. These adversarial acts of posturing would eventually climax in the 1962 "Cuban Missile Crisis." During the 1960s, the influence of Cuba's revolutionary ideas impregnated the Latin American political environment, mainly finding support among workers and middle-class intellectuals. The United States considered Latin America to be their strategic area of influence and was not well disposed to risk losing any more control over the area. Therefore, US policy-makers launched the Alliance for Progress program, designed to fuel funds into Latin America and to help Latin American countries adopt a development-oriented approach towards modernization. Moreover, in order to fight communism, a national security doctrine came into practice in the mid-1960s that aimed to strengthen the military forces of Latin American countries. In the case of Bolivia, an additional program of military civic action in the countryside was created, "which aimed to put USAID funds to work in rural development projects carried out by Bolivian army engineering battalions created with US training and equipment."[49] The US was particularly generous with revolutionary Bolivia, "and by 1964 the country was the second highest per capita recipient of US aid in the world, with the Alliance for Progress development program providing roughly 20 percent of Bolivia's gross domestic product (GDP)."[50] In other words, the Bolivian revolution was highly dependent on US influence.

Cochabamba felt the effects of these new circumstances as the influence of the worker's political organizations became more evident in the political actions of peasant unionists. If previous relationships between the peasants and the MNR's left and right wings modulated the political tone of the revolutionary regime, in Cold War influenced Bolivia the COD held more weight in the decisions of the peasant unions, especially in Cliza

and Quillacollo centrals. The peasant leaders most closely associated to the political left, who were both within and outside the MNR, were Miguel Veizaga and Gregorio Arias in Cliza, and Sinforoso Rivas and Enrique Encinas in Quillacollo. A case in point in illustrating the influence of the workers' organizations over the peasants' political actions, was the debate which arose within the COD when the government offered Miguel Veizaga a "study grant" abroad, in order to exclude him from regional politics. Some factions of the MNR, who interpreted the peasant conflicts as personal struggles between rural bosses, suggested ostracizing specific leaders as a means to solve the problem of peasant violence. In response to this proposed plan, the COD surprisingly decided that "the peasant who has been invited [Miguel Veizaga] cannot leave Cliza until the tasks of pacification have been completed," expressing an uncharacteristic interest in mitigating peasant conflict.[51] The left wing faction, which stretched ideologically from left leaning MNR functionaries such as Lechín all the way to hardcore communists and Trotskyism, which were both evident in Veizaga, and also including the Cliza peasant central, a practical and symbolic alternative to counteract and replace the political influence of Rojas and the Ucureña peasant central.

For this reason, the left widened Veizaga's leadership expectations, connecting him with the regional workers' cadres. This situation, in turn, provoked the ire of his opponents in Ucureña, who accused Veizaga of having ambitions to lead the FSTCC. In addition, the left-wing sectors promoted symbolic acts in Cliza, where peasant militiamen from the Valle Alto and northern Potosi paraded in warlike demonstrations of power. At these festivals—which the Cochabamba mayor, provincial authorities, and workers' delegations attended—a cornerstone was laid in the town of Cliza in anticipation of the building of a monument in honor of the "free Indian." This was certainly a challenge to the symbolism of the agrarian reform monument raised in Ucureña. During the Cliza festival, medals were awarded to the "heroes of the town of Cliza defense," and the recipients turned out to be Miguel Veizaga and four other members of his group of supporters.[52]

This confrontational climate between Cliza and Ucureña, which was fostered by the left and upheld from Cochabamba city by means of violent urban demonstrations, drove José Rojas to denounce an impending coup,

which, according to him, was to be led by both the left- and right-wing political factions. In the face of this believing themselves to be in a state of emergency, the Ucureña peasants reaffirmed their faithfulness to President Paz, in contrast to the attitude of "some bad leaders of the COD … who were betraying the national revolution." The Ucureños' political horizons included widespread, important events in Latin America at the time, and understanding and interpreting these events helped them to shape their own revolutionary position in Bolivian politics. As Salvador Vásquez asserted: "just as in Cuba, the counter-revolutionary forces invaded and wanted to drown the people in blood, the reactionaries who have used Cliza to return power to the landlords and Judas [Walter] Guevara wants to do the same to us."[53] The interference of all MNR factions and left oriented political parties in the union leadership of Cliza caused a crisis among its leaders. Three groups emerged, each one supporting a different political line. One, headed by Miguel Veizaga, showed its sympathy for Lechín's left wing. Another, led by Macedonio Juárez, maintained the right-wing line of Walter Guevara. The third was led by Julián Chávez, an agent of Víctor Paz sent to infiltrate the peasant organization in Cliza (see figure 4.4). As the results of the parliamentary elections of May 1962 were favorable for the MNR and meagre for Guevara's newly created Partido Revolucionario Auténtico (Authentic Revolutionary Party, PRA), José Rojas perceived a splendid opportunity to get rid of Miguel Veizaga.[54]

Ucureña sought an alliance with Macedonio Juárez, whose stronghold comprised the communities of Huasacalle, Chillijchi, and Mosoj Rancho, promoting a "peace hug" with Cliza (see map 1.3). The government authorities planned this step with Rojas because they knew that if Ucureña allied with Juarez and with the government-monitored Julián Chávez's faction, Miguel Veizaga would be isolated and unprotected. To witness the formation of this the peasant alliance, regional officials traveled to Cliza, and both peasant sides embraced each other. Once the first part of the plan was accomplished, Ucureña took control of the original "2nd of August" Cliza peasant central and cornered the leaders who were under Veizaga's command. A new "4th of July" Cliza peasant central was organized, under the command of Jorge Solíz (Ucureña) and a committee that included representatives from both sides. Simultaneously, Rojas ordered Juarez's forces to go in search of Veizaga and his cadre. Yet they carried out this

FIGURE 4.4 Peasant Cadre in Cliza (Valle Alto). First row, squatting: Mario Vásquez, Gustavo Sanchez (peasant affairs coordinator), and Leandro Ochoa. Second row, standing: among others, Román Casilla, Fortunato Arispe, Santiago Machuca, Ramón Torrico, and Macedonio Juárez (Cochabamba, Cliza, 1960).

task with such arrogance that the population of Cliza, and Julián Chávez himself, rejected the legitimacy of their presence. This clumsiness allowed for Veizaga's political resurrection, who challenged Rojas to a duel, "so that my class comrades will know that they have not been abandoned." Government officials were denounced as accomplices of Rojas for having sent militias to control the population of Cliza.[55]

The ambivalent reaction of President Paz and his government, who had initially ignited the conflict between Ucureña and Cliza and later on denied responsibility for this act, kept the peasants in a state of permanent tension. With the help of Rojas and the Ucureños, the president and

the regime had managed to quell Cliza central's power grab. Despite this, when the time came that the Ucureños required the support of the president, which they felt was due to them because of their alliance, they were left to face their crisis alone. They became pessimistic as they realized the promises the president had made to them were false and grew ever more of "those damned [government] intellectuals," who they believed had tricked them to engage in political conflict without ever intending to fulfill their part of the bargain.[56] In response, the Ucureños began a campaign of selective violence against leaders of factions that challenged their power.

The first of a series of political murders in this peasant campaign took place in the town of Cliza in early August 1962. A month before this, Ucureños had replaced Cliza's original peasant central with a new one, and placed it under Jorge Solíz's command. When it became clear that this measure had achieved its aim of expelling the Cliza leaders and strengthening the power of Ucureña, Vice-President Juan Lechín held a meeting with the displaced leaders from Cliza and gave his support for their immediate return to Cliza. Even the Cochabamba prefect, General Armando Fortún, was stunned by Lechín's attitude and reported to the minister of state: "I made mister vice-president take note that, for the moment, I considered that this return [of Cliza's leaders] was inconvenient and that it was preferable to wait [until] we take measures to guarantee the safety of those persons in the town of Cliza and the neighboring settlements."[57] Nevertheless, Lechín insisted that the prefect guarantee Veizaga's return to Cliza, which took place in late July. The Ucureños were outraged when they saw their rivals being protected by the same government they were supporting:

> The general secretary of the '4th of July' peasant central, comrade Jorge Solíz, presented himself in this office [of the prefecture] to inform me that Miguel Veizaga, Ramón Torrico, Román Casilla, Liborio Guevara, and others who were leaders of the '2nd of August' central had made demonstrations in Cliza and in other places, expressing that they would reorganize the peasant central which they previously led and that, to that end, they counted with the support of

> the government and that, in case of need, they would take revenge on their pursuers [from Ucureña].[58]

Ucureña militiamen decided to enter the town of Cliza in search of the leaders, under the pretext of looking for arms in their private dwellings (see figure 4.4). They found peasant leader Román Casilla before the army arrived, took him towards the Ucureña barracks and murdered him on the road. When the prefect found out about the crime, he called José Rojas over the radio and Rojas brusquely accused the government authorities of acting ambivalently. In the following day's newspapers, fake stories appeared that claimed José Rojas had threatened to "take the city [of Cochabamba] and cut the throats of its inhabitants." Although the prefect denied such claims, the COD took advantage of the climate of panic to organize mass meetings in the main square of Cochabamba city against Rojas' alleged threats and demand the armed defense of Cliza by Veizaga's forces.[59]

This political set-up by the left stirred up the hatred of urban people for the peasants once again, as it had been consciously orchestrated to do, and directed the focus of this hatred upon José Rojas and Ucureña. The prefect himself ratified this action:

> In the demonstration sponsored by the departmental workers' center [COD] in rejection of José Rojas' threats of entering the city of Cochabamba, there are personal interests, propositions of limiting the political growth of this peasant leader [and] attitudes of vengeance for political and union disagreements … the local press, also in the hands of people who do not sympathize with Rojas, has published exaggerated and alarmist news with the same aim. For that reason, the people vituperated have included the comrades Walter Revuelta and Alfredo Cassab. On the other hand, the reactions, attitudes, and words of Miguel Veizaga, Ramón Torrico, Julián Chávez, and other leaders of Cliza have been magnified.[60]

FIGURE 4.5 Peasant Union Leaders. From left to right: Enrique Encinas (FSTCC), Toribio Salas (La Paz), and Gustavo Sánchez (COD) in 1963.

The left's political push continued until it managed to occupy some key spaces in the Valle Alto and the FSTCC's leadership. First, the left supported the reorganization of the original "2nd of August" Cliza peasant central, placing Gregorio Arias at its head, thus exacerbating the division between Cliza and Ucureña peasant leadership (see figure 4.7). Second, going against the government's attempts to unify the Valle Alto's leadership into a *central única* (sole central), the left managed to set up an additional "5th of September" peasant central, whose committee was formed by delegates from Cliza and Ucureña. Finally, in the fifth departmental peasant congress held in the city of Cochabamba in October 1962, Facundo Olmos (Sacaba) and Enrique Encinas (Quillacollo), both from the Lechín sector, were elected as heads of the FSTCC. As expected, the El Morro (Sacaba) peasant central supported the proclamation of Juan Lechín as the candidate for the presidential election in 1964, a motion that the peasant congress approved (see figure 4.5).[61]

In November 1962, another peasant leader from Cliza (Narciso Escobar) was murdered. Several leaders from Ucureña were blamed, Jorge Solíz and Salvador Vásquez among them. When both leaders were arrested, the Ucureños reacted on two fronts. First, they demanded the police arrest the Cliza leader, Gregorio Arias. Second, the Ucureña militiamen, together with army troops, besieged the hamlet of Toco (Cliza) searching for weapons and looking Miguel Veizaga, who they believed to be hiding near there, based on the allegation that the Toco population had built-up political connections with sectors of the radical left.[62] Once again, the left took advantage of the situation to present itself as the defender of unionism by loudly calling for the protection of Cliza leaders.[63] Meanwhile, José Rojas launched a solitary counter-attack on his left-wing detractors by having himself proclaimed as the presidential candidate in a mass meeting in Totora. In his speech to the crowd, Rojas proclaimed:

> Víctor Paz does not realize what is happening in our country while the political situation becomes more difficult and delicate due to the action of the demagogues, who after forming factions, leave Bolivia with ambassadors' positions [referring to Juan Lechín], as if they were little angels. … We must combat these false communists and traitors, history will judge them, including Juan Lechín Oquendo.[64]

At this moment, the morale of the Ucureña peasants reached its lowest point. The ambivalent attitude of President Paz—who had centralized the management of peasant politics in his office but directed it with short-sighted perspectives—was eroding the support of the Ucureña central, his most loyal ally in the Valle Alto of Cochabamba.[65] Disputes between the left-wing faction and its peasant allies in the FSTCC came to light when the workers organized an economic departmental conference to debate regional problems. The FSTCC asked for an increase in its delegation because the peasants made up the vast majority of the population in the region. Many of the delegates drawn from the urban workers opposed the petition, claiming that, "the peasants cannot have [so many] delegates because they still do not know how to think," implying that the peasants lacked the consciousness to grasp their position of exploitation, and that

only workers could lead a communist revolution, a conceit central to literalist Marxism.[66]

The spate of politically motivated murders continued in the Valle Alto. Isidoro Borda—a Cliza trader who was possibly involved in arms trafficking—was assassinated in his own house by peasants from the Veizaga faction. A few days later, Ucureña retaliated, killing two peasants from Cliza. The requisite judicial trials were opened and the suspects were arrested, but it did not take long for judicial authorities to end the trials, and the government itself ordered the release of those detained. As the press offered ample coverage of these events, public opinion grew more hostile to the MNR regime, which was characterized as too permissive and incapable of calming the violence. The MNR was quickly losing what little governing legitimacy it had left.[67]

At the same time as peasant violence grew to out of control levels, a press campaign began in which the military was represented as a benevolent friend of the peasant. Front page news stories depicting the military handing over school buildings to peasant communities and promoting medical aid programs in the countryside became commonplace. The social programs described in these stories were funded by the civic action plan, which was managed by the Bolivian armed forces under the leadership of the air-force General René Barrientos. Financing for the civic action plan came from the United States, again through the Alliance for Progress program. Consequently, a developmentalist military discourse stood out, which implicitly challenged the MNR's nationalist revolutionary project and established the military as a viable political alternative.[68] Thus, when the press asked general Barrientos to describe military policy, he cleverly declined to state that the military had political aims, pointing out that they could not take sides in the factional struggles of the MNR.

> I believe that the military speak the language of the revolution for the peasant comrades. Keeping watch day and night in self-sacrifice so as to avoid that any peasants kill or wound each other, providing well-built schools. … At present we have plans to provide drinking water and health posts. This is our revolutionary language.[69]

Paradoxically, the first actors to occupy the new political spaces created by the military were the left-wing leaders of the FSTCC. In their pursuit to block the Ucureña leadership, they took on the task of reorganizing several Valle Alto unions with the help of the army. Essentially, the left allowed the soldiers to insert themselves into the peasant unions' area of province by permitting them to expand their role in the region from one of simply benefactors and distributors of aid, into an additional political role as monitors of the peasant organizations.[70] Political campaigning for the upcoming 1964 presidential election started in 1963 and Víctor Paz again presented himself as candidate for president. The government put José Rojas in charge of organizing a national peasant congress in the city of Santa Cruz, which proclaimed Paz as the MNR's presidential candidate.[71] Left-wing leaders abandoned the Santa Cruz congress and installed another parallel congress in Cochabamba, complaining that the government had manipulated the one in Santa Cruz. The COB supported the Cochabamba congress, which, before closing, issued a concluding manifesto employing Marxist and anti-imperialist rhetoric calling on Bolivians to radicalize the revolution. This was in concordance with other contemporary national liberation movements in Latin America and the world. Despite this revolutionary discourse, however, the left could not reach an agreement to nominate Juan Lechín as its presidential candidate, and this discord weakened the final decisions of the congress and watered down its practical political goals.[72]

Government officials were effective mobilizing peasant support, as proclamations for Víctor Paz's presidential candidacy took place rapidly all over the Valle Alto. The MNR's military cell in La Paz took advantage of this moment to express its sympathy for the nomination of General Barrientos as a candidate for the vice-presidency. They clarified, however, that "the military will not exercise any kind of pressure to advance this plan." When the military proclamation was published, Barrientos declared that he was surprised by the recent news, "because we members of the armed forces have no interest in provoking proclamations in favor of the military, particularly in my favor."[73] According to Field, "General Barrientos visited the US Embassy on 24 April 1963, just before he was to depart to Washington for the Inter-American Air Force Chiefs Conference. Accompanied by Colonel Fox, Barrientos explained that the armed forces

were preparing to declare themselves in support of Paz's re-election, with Barrientos as running mate. … The wily general was perfecting the art of a reluctant leader, confidently telling Colonel Fox that his political career would extend twenty years or more into the future."[74]

While the military continued to increase their focus on their innovative communication strategy, the left maintained its aggressive rhetoric against the official candidate and the military aspirant for the vice-presidency. When Gregorio Arias was sworn in as leader of the "2nd of August" Cliza peasant central, for instance, the left-wing peasant leader of El Morro (Sacaba), Facundo Olmos, declared:

> We will not make proclamations, neither with outsiders nor with little generals (*generalcitos*), as we will wait and accept what the MNR convention decides. If Lechín is proposed, we will back him up, and we will do the same if Paz is elected. But at present, we will not lend ourselves to any maneuver in favor of either of the two.[75]

This doubtful position of the left regarding Juan Lechín as its presidential candidate, was because of Lechín's vacillating political behavior. Initially he attacked the government, but later on accepted their offer of a journey abroad as a diplomat, leaving his followers without a leader. When Lechín arrived in Cochabamba and visited the Quillacollo and Sacaba peasant centers, Facundo Olmos asked him to stay on to fight in the country together with the peasants. Lechín assured him that his trip to Italy as an ambassador was only going to be for a short time. Nevertheless, when leaving for Europe he declared that he was going on "a journey without an itinerary or time limits."[76] Popular opinion mocked Juan Lechín for his decision to travel abroad, funded by the government, but without having any concrete purpose, calling it "*la dolce vita*."[77]

At this point, the left unrolled a plan to radicalize its political actions against the regime by demeaning Víctor Paz as a presidential candidate. A coalition of miners and valley peasants signed a worker-peasant pact at the El Morro (Sacaba) peasant center, and this act was further ratified by the Quillacollo and the Independencia centers, but was ignored by the rest of the regional peasant centers. The Ucureños threatened to organize

a parallel FSTCC, because "the current federation led by Facundo Olmos, Enrique Encinas, and others cheated the hopes of the peasants and instead of carrying out a purely unionist labor, they deviated into sectarian political aims."[78] A peasant congress in Ucureña elected the leadership of their new parallel FSTCC, which stayed under Jorge Solíz's command and whose first resolution was to expel Facundo Olmos and Enrique Encinas from peasant unionism.[79] Meanwhile, ever-present proclamations of the Paz-Barrientos ticket resounded throughout the valley, in contrast with the left's indecisiveness. The left-wing leaders decided to start their electoral campaign by promoting an alternative Paz-Lechín ticket, which was really more a bit of political theatre than a real electoral possibility. During celebrations for the agrarian reform day in Quillacollo, worker and peasant speakers renewed their loyalty to Paz and Lechín. A few days later, the "2nd of August" Cliza central proclaimed their support for the Paz-Lechín candidacy in a public gathering.[80]

It became increasingly clear that the Lechín sector was beginning to fall apart, and its worker and peasant leaders were shuffling around for alternative policies and alliances, that would allow them to readjust to the leadership of President Paz. The Ucureña peasants noticed this situation and sent a categorical message to the leaders of Cliza: after a peasant gathering in Cliza, where left-wing peasant leaders proclaimed their support for Víctor Paz's candidacy, they ambushed leader Basilio Lizarazu and shot him point-blank, killing him instantly.[81] Cliza's revenge followed quickly. A week later, leader Lorenzo Pedrozo was kidnapped, tortured, and cruelly murdered. The Ucureños accused Miguel Veizaga of the crime and began preparations for a final attack on the town of Cliza. In the midst of the combat among Cliza and Ucureña troops, Veizaga's house was raided and set on fire. The Champa Guerra reached its climax when a total confrontation between both sides took place. An army patrol group arrested Veizaga and sent him to the political control office in La Paz. There, he was held until Paz ordered him to be freed, on the condition that Veizaga would not return to Cochabamba and much less enter the Valle Alto.[82]

Although the government now controlled the Valle Alto peasant unions, the Sacaba and Quillacollo peasant centers' loyalty was unclear. In both centers, their leaders, Facundo Olmos and Enrique Encinas, enjoyed peasant support and, in contrast to the Valle Alto, they did not have any

FIGURE 4.6 Soldiers, Peasants, and Politicians. From left to right: General René Barrientos, Gregorio Lopez (Punata), and Eduardo Soriano Badani (FUN) in 1965.

opposition. However, they openly confronted both the traditional networks that circled President Paz and the emergent political apparatus of the military forming around General Barrientos. Facundo Olmos' criticism was especially cutting towards both of these power networks, thus placing him in a crossfire that eventually resulted in his murder. Olmos stated that the massacres in the Valle Alto were "part of a plan prepared by the ministry of state."[83] But, he also criticized the military assistance program: "While the Alliance for Progress, with a great fanfare, hands over one or two little classrooms, we have provided comfort for all our students, handing over classrooms wherever there is a peasant union."[84]

Such powerful political enemies did not dally in brutal response. First, Facundo Olmos was ambushed and murdered by mercenaries who were protected by the government to avoid being trailed. The accused murderer, Donato Urey, soon became General Barrientos' right-hand man and one of the most dangerous thugs of the peasant unionism movement in Sacaba.[85] Second, Enrique Encinas was miraculously saved from death when another group of mercenaries assaulted his office at the Quillacollo peasant center.

The person involved in the murder attempt, Rómulo Burgoa, declared that the plan was prepared by the MNR's Frente de Unidad Nacional (National Unity Front, FUN) accusing Eduardo Soriano Badani, General Barrientos' closest collaborator, of being the one who provided material assistance for the attack (see figure 4.6).[86] In his memoirs, Enrique Encinas asserted that the minister of state, General Eduardo Rivas, and the head of political control, Colonel Claudio San Román, had offered him arms and money to murder Sinforoso Rivas, his union colleague in Quillacollo.[87]

These attacks on the left-wing peasant unionists were no longer part of the Champa Guerra clashes, but rather were the result of the strategies of the anti-communist struggle that the military put into practice in Bolivia. Moreover, it was clear from the attacks in Sacaba and Quillacollo that the central intention of the military in all of this was the replacement of the peasant leaders with urban mercenaries who would then control the unions. General Barrientos threw his advocacy behind this new political tactic, but faced resistance from the Quillacollo peasants, who refused to accept "controllers" (interventores) in their centrals. FSTCC leader Jorge Solíz supported the Quillacollo's central position in a communiqué denouncing the controllers as elements from the city, who had attacked and stolen money from the Quillacollo peasant central and who would soon be brought to justice.[88] Nevertheless, General Barrientos' practice of bribing the leaders who succumbed to military policy ended up corrupting some members of the generation of peasant leaders that emerged with and in the revolution.

Once the Cliza, Sacaba, and Quillacollo peasant centrals were under military control, General Barrientos called a joint meeting of the Ucureña and Cliza leaders at the air force base in Cochabamba on 25 September 1963, to sign a memorandum of mutual understanding.[89] In the memo, peasants recognized the MNR as the only party of the national revolution, ratifying Víctor Paz as its leader. José Rojas and Ramón Torrico were named as the peasant peacekeepers in the valley. At the meeting, the peasants requested that the government exchange their militia weapons for ploughshares and exile the peasants known to have incited violence from the valley. After four long years of violence and murder, the peasants had had enough, and they were only too grateful for the military intrusion to pacify the region.

The Political Stage Returns to the City

Once the truce pact between Cliza and Ucureña had been signed, the focus of political activity in Bolivia was transferred from the countryside to the city. This shift did not mean the end of violence, but only a change in how it was carried out. From massive confrontations among contending peasant militia troops, violence shifted to selective Fabian tactics which intended to eliminate, through terror or death, the key opposing figures in the political arena. The older generation of peasant leaders who rallied with Víctor Paz throughout the revolution had participated dynamically in the political arena, however, they abandoned their ideals and loyalties after they felt they had been betrayed by the MNR's ambiguous policies. They believed that while the MNR had accepted their support, the revolutionary government had only paid lip service to the social and economic projects they had planned to help peasants. Some of these leaders retired from politics, while others continued with General Barrientos' clientelist project. The remaining old peasant leaders, together with an incoming generation of leaders and political mercenaries who took over the peasant union leadership, all aligned themselves with the military.

In late 1963, President Paz's government was mired in a conflict with the COB and with the leaders of the miners, who both supported Juan Lechín's candidacy. In an effort to reduce Lechín's political influence, the government decided to create a union organization parallel to the COB. It was named the Central Obrera Boliviana de Unidad Revolucionaria (Bolivian Workers' Central of Revolutionary Unity, COBUR) and was led by a railway worker, Hugo Paz Torres.[90] The government, as part of their plan, arrested several opposition leaders, sparking off a political conflict in the midst of a miners' general protest strike, an event in which the miners took four North American visitors to the mines as hostages. The hostages were two USAID labor officers, Bernard Rifkin and Michael Kristula, a USIS labor officer, Thomas Martin, and Peace Corps volunteer Robert Fergerstom, all of whom were later freed by their captors.[91] Local newspapers published alarmist news regarding a march of around three thousand militiamen from Ucureña towards the mines, in defense of the government, a narrative that was entirely speculative.[92] What really happened, as told by the Ucureña peasant militias' commander, Salvador

Vásquez, was that José Rojas held a meeting with the minister of peasant affairs. Both politicians commissioned Vásquez to recruit a peasant force of three hundred men in Arani. The group marched towards the mines and was intercepted by an army emissary in the town of Sacaca, where they set up camp, while Vásquez traveled to Oruro in a military vehicle. In Oruro, the military ordered him to stop the march towards the mines. Vásquez considered this action to be a mockery of the peasant movement, for it was planned in such a way that the militiamen were simply bogeymen used by politicians with the aim of shocking the public. When Vásquez returned from Oruro, on his way to Sacaca, he was intercepted by a miners' patrol commanded by Juan Lechín. Lechín ordered Vásquez to be shot for his betrayal of the revolution. Vásquez faced Lechín and declared that he, Lechín, was responsible for the current situation of the peasants, for he had willingly abandoned the peasants to travel around the world. Vásquez also reminded Lechín that, in November 1953, it was his peasant militias who saved him from being shot by coup supporters. Lechín—according to Vásquez's testimony—"canceled his order for my execution."[93]

On January 1964, the ninth MNR convention gathered in La Paz to elect its presidential and vice-presidential candidates. It was a tense event, even in its preparatory stages, for it brought together powerful internal forces with contradictory political aims. The first force was Víctor Paz's palace gang, better known as "*la maquinita*" (the little machine). This was a team of power usufructuaries, which was trying to maintain the privilege they enjoyed under Paz and believed General Barrientos to be their primary enemy, as he represented a credible threat to their own vice-presidential nominee, Federico Fortún. The second force was that of the military, sponsored by their patrons from the United States and reinforced by anti-communist discourse. Although the military vowed to respect Paz as a political figure, its discourse burst out against the corruption that appeared to spread from the bureaucratic functionaries surrounding the president. The members of *la maquinita* believed, correctly, that the military had no intention of sharing power, but rather that they were preparing to take over the government wholesale with a coup d'état. As a result of their contention, they persuaded President Paz of the real intentions of Barrientos, triggering a political battle in which the army would eventually prove victorious. A third force was an amalgam of the MNR's left and

right wings, which sought to get into power at any price. On one side of this motley group was that of Juan Lechín and the miners, who held enough electoral power not to be discounted but were always in disarray because of the divisive and sectarian attitudes of the left-wing supporters. This faction did not hold much influence within the MNR and abandoned that convention to form the Partido Revolucionario de la Izquierda Nacional (National Left Revolutionary Party, PRIN), which quickly proclaimed Lechín as their presidential candidate.[94] However, a minor political force supporting Walter Guevara still remained, although its party apparatus, the PRA, was so worn out that Guevara had to seek out bizarre alliances with groups such as the PURS, the FSB, and the PIR, and with them he set up the milk-and-water Alianza Popular Boliviana (Bolivian Popular Alliance).[95] There was also the marginal figure of Hernán Siles, the MNR's second-in-command, who began his campaign by attempting to mediate and settle conflicts within the party but it was all for naught, as he was left waiting in the wings for a nomination that never arrived.

After several stormy sessions and obscure councils, the ninth MNR convention decided Víctor Paz and Federico Fortún would be their candidates for president and vice-president. All of this took place in the midst of widespread social and political criticism and protest that weakened the legitimacy of an alleged prefabricated and authoritarian election. When the final decision became known in Cochabamba, around five thousand peasants gathered in the air force base, and from there their leaders, accompanied by some soldiers, marched to the prefect's office. Once there, the peasants demanded the resignation of the prefect, the mayor, and the head of the CDM. The prefect was replaced by Walter Revuelta and, after an outbreak of violence, both the CDM and the mayor's office were under the control of politician Eduardo Soriano Badani, who was General Barrientos' trusted aide.[96] The violent actions conducted by General Barrientos' forces, who managed to then occupy key regional political posts, took place before Paz even considered the possibility of offering Barrientos the vice-presidential candidacy. In a masterly political set-up, the characterization of Barrientos as a selfless martyr, a reputation he had already acquired after being marginalized from the candidacy, was magnified when he supposedly suffered a murder attempt and had to travel abroad for medical assistance. Without any eyewitnesses to back up the

narrative, the military explained that a bullet had been shot at Barrientos but had been deflected by one of the insignias on his uniform. A few hours later he left for Panama in a United States Air Force plane. The news of the supposed assassination attempt increased political tension in Bolivia to such a dangerous level that Paz was forced to replace his previous vice-presidential candidate, Federico Fortún, with General Barrientos.[97] The people saw this as a political victory over the hated *maquinita*. The return to the country was Barrientos' apotheosis, and a crowd received him in La Paz airport. The next day, he was acclaimed with "Barrientos, president!" cries when arrived in Cochabamba.[98]

Facing a weak opposition, whose electoral expectations were quite dismal, the struggle to control union leadership and occupy political posts was refocused on the competition between the *maquinita* and the military. Although the peasants were now aligned with the army, Lechín made a last attempt to split this alliance by trying to attract support from the powerful El Morro peasant central in Sacaba. Those who were on Lechín's side denounced the arbitrary conduct of the leaders who supported Barrientos, pointing out that they were not peasants, "but rather drivers, blacksmiths, and delinquents, given that Jaime Guamán, Donato Urey, and Nemesio Sánchez have evaded truces and also have accounts to settle with justice for the murder of comrade Facundo Olmos."[99] Generals René Barrientos and Eduardo Rivas—the latter promoted to head of the Comité Politico Nacional del MNR (MNR's National Political Committee)—were the mediators in this conflict. They solved the problem by ordering that both rivals be placed in charge of the El Morro peasant center, which would be guarded by militiamen of the FSTCC to avoid any violence. That same night, Donato Urey and Jaime Guamán occupied El Morro center with armed militiamen. They also sacked the house of left-wing El Morro leader, Víctor Torrico, and attempted to murder him. The message was clear; the military was not prepared to negotiate their newly acquired control over the peasantry, and threatened that the terror tactics they had employed in the recent past could be applied again if necessary.[100] A peasant-military pact of mutual defense had been agreed upon on 25 September 1963 and was to be signed in Ucureña on 9 April 1964, providing even more fodder for a furious reaction against Torrico.[101] Although this pact was oriented towards guaranteeing "the stability of the

revolutionary government headed by the Paz-Barrientos formula," it was, in reality, an instrument for backing Barrientos' candidacy and upholding the army's planned power grab, which was later realized through a military coup mounted against the MNR on 4 November 1964.[102]

While soldiers and MNR politicians were busy tuning their own political arsenals, the opposition sunk into a state of anxiety as they were unable to envision any possible route to power. Although the target of the opposition's attack was the tarnished public image of Víctor Paz, the fact that the military now appeared to be on his side led to the evaporation of any immediate hopes of achieving a general alliance against the president. Hernán Siles and Juan Lechín did not lose hope of turning themselves into the armed forces' civilian support, in the eventuality of a confrontation between the military and Víctor Paz. For this reason, Siles initially maintained a respectful silence concerning the military and its candidate. Meanwhile, Lechín chose to send the soldiers public messages displaying his willingness to agree to a political pact. Juan Lechín declared to the press that, "it was a serious mistake to claim that in the days of 9 April 1952 the army was defeated. What happened is that the soldiers did not wish to kill their brothers."[103] In full election campaign mode, Lechín also declared "that he had congratulated general Barrientos for taking the candidacy with much elevation, and for always soliciting unity in the MNR."[104] As election date came closer, the opposition lost control. Lechín's party (PRIN) called for abstention, claiming that electoral fraud was planned.[105] Siles went even further, heading an opposition front that openly asked the armed forces to take power "to avoid the attempts made by President Paz to remain in power."[106] An opposition commission met the commander-in-chief of the armed forces to ask him to lead a coup. Afterwards, they issued an explanatory document signed by the following political parties: PL, PURS, FSB, PIR, PSD, PSC, PRA, and PRIN. The military replied that they were apolitical, leaving the opposition without any viable political support.

In what would be their final and pathetic attempt to interfere in the presidential elections, Siles and Lechín mounted together a hunger strike in the San José mine (Oruro), which they declared as "the basis of pacific civilian resistance with the aim of getting Víctor Paz to revise his position [of seeking re-election]."[107] Despite their attempts to stifle the elections,

FIGURE 4.7 Post-revolutionary Peasant Politics. Víctor Larraín (leader of the Movimiento Popular Cristiano, MPC) delivers a speech supporting General René Barrientos, in a meeting at the Valle Alto. To his left are Jorge Solíz (Ucureña) and Gregorio Arias (Cliza). (Cochabamba, Cliza, 1965).

the opposition watched as the Paz-Barrientos ticket won the elections by a wide margin. Shortly after, Siles was expelled from the MNR, after being accused of conspiring against the revolution and, together with Lechín, declared themselves to be the opposition leaders.[108]

Instead of appeasing Barrientos' political spirit, the electoral victory encouraged him to intensify his endeavor in the countryside. He visited peasant communities all over rural areas, reinforcing his propaganda campaign. In Cochabamba, Barrientos worked hand in hand with the FSTCC to control the elections of the CDM and place the former prefect, Gabriel Arze Quiroga, as the head of the CDM.[109] Along with Arze, a group of the MNR's "old militants" went into political action, functioning as a fifth column which upheld Barrientos' coup plans from inside the governing party. With the pretext that there were conspiracies against

the government in public offices, the MNR's "old militants" organized a pressure group, which demanded Paz to place them in key posts with the supposed aim of defending him. In fact, these bureaucrats were the traditional members of the party's right wing, which were now supporting the military's coup attempt. At a national level, Vice-President Barrientos demanded that President Paz nominated José Rojas as minister of peasant affairs. The president refused to accept this demand, because he knew that Rojas was no longer faithful to him.[110] Víctor Paz finally realized that he was besieged in the presidential palace. On 4 November 1964, the army forced President Paz to give up power.

The time frame of this study ends at this point in Bolivian history. Twelve years of MNR's revolutionary rule came to an end in November 1964 and it was the military who inaugurated the post-revolutionary era. After twelve years of relentless struggle for political autonomy, the valley peasants of Cochabamba entered the post-revolutionary era renewed but exhausted. The renewal was achieved through regional and national political representation by way of their peasant unions. Peasant unionism was fully consolidated into the new regime and the peasants' political image was now an integral part of Bolivian politics. But they were also exhausted from the four years of conflict during the Champa Guerra, which had completely discredited the older generation of peasant leaders in the view of the rank-and-file peasants. How did the new generation of peasant leaders in the Cochabamba valley negotiate power with the post-revolutionary military regimes? This is a fascinating query that ought to be investigated in a different study.

Old Discourses and New Actors: Peasants, MNR Politicians, and the Military

In this final revolutionary period (1959–64), peasant participation in regional politics reached its climax, although cities gradually displaced the countryside as the stage for political activity after the military began to assert influence over Bolivia's political arena. Two moments can be identified when analyzing public discourse in this period. The first (1959–62) is related to the MNR's left- and right-wing antagonistic power struggle, before and after the 1960 national election. The second (1963–64) corresponds to

the military's emergence as a political force that participated in the 1964 presidential election, and culminated with their coup against the MNR in November 1964.

Editorials in the first historical moment focused on what was interpreted as a struggle between the country and the city. Editorialists usually argued that urban politicians manipulated the peasant leaders in order to take advantage of their political influence in rural areas. They asserted, for instance: "the peasant forces, instead of being canalized in a constructive way, have been pushed toward infantile positions [which caused] a sharpening of the separation between the city and the countryside, as the criterion that the agrarian reform lacks an economic content and only answers to demagogic political ends is consolidated in our municipalities."[111] These calls for reflection to create "a climate of harmony and cooperation between the town dwellers and the peasants,"[112] gradually changed their tone as the conflicts in the countryside intensified and the peasants defined their political stance as oppositional to the interests of the town dwellers:

> [The city of Cochabamba] has trembled at the possibility that its streets and squares may come to be the place where sectarian irresponsibility leads the peasants to fight for interests which are not their own … those who instigated these incautious' mobilizations are, of course, men of the city. [It is fine] that the peasantry should be considered as the most positive electoral material, but they [the urban politicians] do not have the right to take advantage of its healthy ingenuity.[113]

Initially, by using a paternalistic tone, editorials criticized the "use" that urban politicians made of the peasant's alleged ingenuity. Very soon, however, editorials gave way to a biting polemic, here distilled is the vecino's profound contempt for the peasantry:

> The actual peasant fight lacks a real content of demanding their rights, as was the case, in every era, in the peasant wars, which really deserve such a name. … But what is also needed is a certain level of understanding among the city

> dwellers. It is true that, hardly seven years ago, the peasant was everything apart from a man. But in that time, a short while for history, a radical transformation has nevertheless taken place: the beast (*semoviente*) has become a citizen, or at least is going through a notable process in that direction.[114]

It was obvious that despite the revolutionary transformations, many backward components of the liberal discourse concerning the peasants continued to be deeply rooted in the minds of the vecinos, and counted among their ranks were the urban progressive intellectuals. These biases against peasants were further reinforced by public discourse when the armed clashes began and put the peasants on the offensive, demonstrating the relative weakness of the urban sectors in comparison to the rural groups. For instance, when the Ucureña peasants threatened to besiege the city of Cochabamba in an effort to pressure the regime to support them over their rivals from Cliza, the townspeople reacted by publicly contrasting the states of civilization and savagery regarding the attitudes of vecinos and campesinos.[115]

Under these circumstances, urban rhetoric that sought to discredit peasant political action flourished: "It should not be forgotten that the peasantry, due to its secular backwardness, does not have its own revolutionary objectives nor an ideology which it could call its own. It is obliged to act either under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie … or under the proletarian rudder."[116] Therefore, urban activists were exhorted by editorial writers to recall the peasant's subordinate role in national politics and to protect the revolutionary process that peasants had joined through inertia:

> Given the peasant agitation as a prelude to the agrarian reform—although those who gave it its initial life were ex-workers, miners, and proletarianized intellectuals, in summary people alien to the countryside—the choice was made of taking the comfortable but dangerous option of inventing the armed peasant militias with an excessive dose of fetishism, considering them as the genuine proof that the

> peasantry, with respect to the working class, was in a *sui generis* situation as "*primus inter pares*," that is to say, first among equals.[117]

This class discourse, however, ran into serious limitations when applied to the interpretation of regional politics and attempts to understand the reasons for the fight between vecinos and campesinos in rural areas. The editorial writers queried the motive of such fights, alleging that they were senseless, for the editorialists considered that vecinos as much as campesinos belonged to a single social class with common interests, given that in Bolivia there was neither a bourgeoisie nor a proletariat:

> How can the former labor tenant who has seen his plantations and house destroyed by unthinking hordes of class brothers be a *rosca parte* [an oligarchy supporter]? Or how can the smallholders, the primary school teacher, and the small artisans and traders of the provincial capitals be enemies of the peasants? Should it not rather be emphatically affirmed that one and the other have a solidary interest in taking the agrarian reform to its final consequences?[118]

The obvious conclusion was that those who instigated the confrontations and confused the rural inhabitants were the peasant bosses (*caciques campesinos*). Thus, the extirpation of caudillos in the rural areas was in the interest of both the peasantry and the country as a whole.[119]

Two aspects stand out in this kind of reasoning, which was also shared by many urban politicians. Firstly, the notion that the personal attitudes of the caudillos alone was causing the unrest in the countryside was a ludicrous fabrication, yet it was also a powerful one, as at the time, historical national political experience and its side effects of sectarianism were seen as marginal or even non-existent causal factors. Secondly, the concept of social class (together with its assigned territorial attributes) masked the important role of ethnic identities in the context of the neo-colonial Bolivian experience. Peasants complained about journalistic interpretations concerning rural conflicts, while journalists stressed the faithfulness of their news. In reality, the lack of communication between the country

and the city was not due to the unreliability of the news (although it was often sensationalist), but rather because of an urban bias concerning the political behavior and consciousness of peasants, which further widened the breach between these two disconnected worlds. When severe crises erupted, peasant leaders came to intervene, protesting the sensationalist headlines of the press.[120] On other occasions, peasant leaders' angry protests were interpreted as a sign of the lack of democratic education among the people.[121] Or when there was definitive evidence, journalists accepted that their sources were weak: "It often happens that some busybody or self-interested informers magnify the facts as is convenient for them."[122]

The obsession in public discourse over the characterization of peasant bosses (*caudillos*) reached a climax in 1962, when confrontations between peasant militias were followed by the selective elimination of their leaders. Editorials started demanding an end to the caudillos' power, arguing that these men had done much damage to the nation.[123] Meanwhile, editorials also continuously denounced the government's lack of clear agrarian policy from the government and its permissiveness with the peasants in allowing them to maintain armed militias [124] Finally, editorials demanded that bosses be replaced by leading peasant cadres (*cuadros*), that had been sufficiently politicized and vetted. [125] In most cases the weight of editorial criticism fell upon peasant leaders and in only a few instances was there an attempt to analyze the relationship between rural conflicts and urban political interests. Editorials argued that the overweening bosses often concealed their prioritization of their own personal interests in the countryside, thus representing the caudillos as the worst enemy of the peasants, even more so than the former landlords themselves.[126]

Peasant discourse, for its part, was present in the newspapers in a profusion of press conferences and communiqués, which were generally produced by the Cliza and Ucureña cadres. When expressing themselves, the leaders of both peasant unions analyzed the day-to-day political situation from their own political perspectives. Ucureña expressed its support for Víctor Paz while Cliza swung back and forth between Walter Guevara's right wing and Juan Lechín's left wing. Ucureña's public discourse constantly used historical reflection as a means to give perspective to its political struggle. For instance, when the right wing accused Ucureña peasants of being communists during the 1960 election campaign, José

Rojas reiterated that his union had always had a Marxist orientation, ever since the PIR had collaborated in organizing the union in 1936. He also reminded the public that in those days Walter Guevara was a Marxist and that the Ucureña peasants had helped him earn a parliamentary seat for the Arani province. However, Rojas continued, "after the national revolution's triumph, once Walter Guevara was in the regime's foreign ministry, he had Crisóstomo Inturias and myself taken to La Paz as prisoners. What morals does this politician have who is now an ally of the landlords and gives arms to Cliza so that they can attack us?"[127]

The Mulofalda massacre—in which Cliza militiamen ambushed and killed a patrol of Ucureña militiamen in June 1960—deeply shocked the Ucureña peasants and opened a space for reflection about the role of the revolutionary state in the administration of justice, as discussed in chapter three. As the regime had ignored their requests for punishment for the criminals, the Ucureña peasants threatened to blockade the city of Cochabamba and occupy the town of Cliza to put pressure on the authorities to either prosecute or hand over those suspected of having led the massacre. The Ucureños complained that the Cliza militiamen had been able to commit acts of heinous violence against them because of the government's complete lack of authority in the region. In the end, they considered the government to have been the accomplice of Cliza, for it did not punish the criminals. As the Ucureña peasant leader, Salvador Vásquez, put it: "There are no longer guarantees or justice for all those men who sacrificed themselves for the national revolution. It would seem that neither authorities nor the government exist, because otherwise these savageries would not have taken place."[128] According to the Ucureña peasant leaders, the root of the problem was in Hernán Siles' policy that gave rise to disorder and provoked the party's division, for the promises of progress had not been kept and politicians had taken advantage "to deceive the Indians and make us fight among brothers."[129]

These problems were of a political nature—the Ucureña leaders argued—because elements stripped by the revolutionary measures taken by President Paz have infiltrated themselves in the MNR's right wing and in the Comité Pro-Cochabamba (Committee for Cochabamba), and from these positions had continuously attempted to split and abolish the peasant movement and thus return to power. The peasants in Ucureña had

a clear idea of the political right's machinations: "The absurd pretension of disarming the peasants is only with the aim of arriving in power once more, when there will no longer be anything with which to defend the revolution and its conquests."[130] Thus, while at least four political forces were influencing Cliza, and Cliza vacillated over who to support, Ucureña had always been faithful to the MNR. In spite of this, the MNR betrayed Ucureña.[131] The Ucureños conclusion regarding the MNR's political behavior towards their peasant union was definitive:

> Ucureña is not the fruit of the MNR or of any political horse-trader (*politiquero*). Ucureña has grown up alone and since 1936 has sacrificed itself for its cause without going beyond human rights, the laws, and the authorities, nor betraying any cause, and this is its pride. Ucureña is the MNR, but does not belong to the MNR.[132]

Cliza's public discourse, in contrast, lacked a historical horizon for it did not possess any retained experience of collective organization from before the revolution, nor of the consequent MNR project of peasant unionization. Although Cliza's rhetoric revolved around their rejection of the caudillos, in reality, it was a discourse directed towards attacking José Rojas. It was under these terms that the speeches of the presidential candidate Walter Guevara and the Cliza peasant leader Miguel Veizaga coincided, as did their political ambitions. Both Guevara and Veizaga sought to destroy José Rojas in order to obtain the power he held. Guevara wished to have the peasant vote in the valley and Veizaga desired the regional peasant leadership.[133] When the Cliza peasant center proclaimed Guevara as its candidate for the presidency, their leaders justified this decision by claiming that the climate of terror in the Valle Alto was because of Ucureña and Rojas.[134] Cliza attempted to cover up its ideological flaws by using a discourse that exalted its leader's political independence and allowed Miguel Veizaga to assert that he was not at the unconditional service neither of Walter Guevara nor of Víctor Paz, "since we are not interested in personalities."[135] This position would later on allow Veizaga to move closer to the left-wing line of Vice-President Lechín, thus displacing Guevara as Cliza's favorite ally. As a result, Veizaga negotiated on his own behalf with

Lechín for the conducting of peasant elections in Cochabamba, "with the exclusion of the regional authorities and under the auspice of the COD and the COB,"[136] thus continuing his relentless race towards the FSTCC leadership.

Both wings of the MNR took advantage of the incoherent and confused political behavior of the Cliza peasant union cadre, leading to a very tense political climate. Thus, when Ucureña threatened to blockade the city of Cochabamba amid its struggle against Cliza, the COD and the Committee for Cochabamba joined together in their protests of this threat. The former, seeking to undermine Ucureña's prestige and, the latter, requesting the disarmament of the peasant militias. Cliza's alleged support for President Paz contradicted with a permanent campaign of sabotage against his plans. For instance, when President Paz's representative invited Veizaga for a meeting in La Paz, the Cliza peasants first accepted and later on refused to accept it, despite the previous agreement. The jilted government representative reacted in anger: "I can no longer talk to people who are not serious like comrade Miguel Veizaga."[137] In contrast to Ucureña, Cliza's discourse focused upon the social but not the political aspects of the peasant conflict in the valley.[138] Although Cliza's conceptualization of the "peasant problem" was never completely clarified, it was mainly based on a discourse that identified the Ucureña leaders with the old Indian curacas or the foremen of the haciendas.[139] From this point of view, it was evident that the problem was less political and more sociological. The preference was to stress alleged essential features of the Ucureña peasant's behavior which differentiated them from those of Cliza, giving rise to tainted ethnic discourse. Cliza had always been incapable of constructing a rhetorical foundation for a common ground where vecinos and campesinos might coincide.

When the military presence began in the Valle Alto, the editorials—which still insisted on the polarity between country and city as a central indicator of the difference between barbarous and civilized behavior—emphasized the responsibility of the MNR's political factions in fomenting tension and protecting the perpetuators of acts of vandalism.[140] The government—the editorial writers argued—encouraged both Cliza and Ucureña peasant unions to obstruct any unification efforts.[141] This situation stimulated the persistence of local bosses whose actions reached

an openly criminal nature, resulting in repercussions for peasants and a suspension of the norms of day to day social conduct that lasted for years. For this reason—editorialists insisted—instead of keeping a complacent posture, the government should have led the peasants towards a state of normalcy, even if it meant making use of their right to repressive force if necessary.[142]

Editorials shifted their rhetoric when General René Barrientos launched his candidacy for the vice-presidency, supported by the Tarata (Valle Alto) peasants of Cochabamba. The previous call to the peasants to avoid mixing their union activities with politics contradicted the tone of condescendence they began using when commenting on the "spontaneous mass meetings" of peasants who proclaimed their support for the Paz-Barrientos candidacy:

> With reference to the peasant masses, almost all affiliated to the MNR, their thoughts already seem to be defined. The proclamation [of the Paz-Barrientos ticket] which we are commenting on, reflects in its depths, a strong internal tendency that exists in the governing party and which may well give the pattern for future actions by the peasant unions' organizations.[143]

From the urban point of view there was no intention to emphasize the peasant's right to political autonomy. Instead, the goal was to pressure the government to define mechanisms able to control the political actions of the peasants. Therefore, the editorials' rhetoric swung within the limits of the old molds of liberal discourse, which still dominated the minds of Bolivian intellectuals and politicians despite their attempts to modernize. The intelligentsia in Cochabamba was still unable to consider peasants as citizens, despite the social changes brought on by the revolution.[144]

When the government attacked the left-wing peasant leaders and covered up the murder of peasant leader Facundo Olmos and their sacking of Enrique Encinas' office, editorials continued to depict the peasants as those who had perpetrated the terrorist acts.[145] There was no mention of the fact that the spiral of violence was fomented by right-wing politicians and the military, and that this was the result of contextual Cold War

contradictions. On the contrary, a discourse favoring military participation in politics began to form deeper roots in the regional consciousness. Despite initial suggestions that the army's participation should go hand in hand with the MNR—and the MNR indeed continued to be seen as the primordial political actor while the army was beginning to be seen as the possible executor of violent internal action in defense of the government—the partnership quickly led to the notion that the military ought to possess greater political autonomy.[146] The turning point in the balance of power relations came when General Barrientos managed to get the peasants of the rival peasant centers of Cliza and Ucureña to sign on a peace accord. After this, not only did Barrientos' public image grow a great deal in the political spectrum but it also was projected as being atop the highest spheres of national power. The editorials were thankful for his mediation in the conflict:

> It would seem that the peasant's pain and anguish did not cause serious worry to the persons called to intervene and put their influence in favor of pacification. This step has now been taken by a well-intentioned soldier whose labor should reach a peak in the months to come.[147]

Editorialists argued that it was not only the fact that this soldier [General Barrientos] had listened to the peasants' anguished voices, but that he had also carried out a task that other politicians had been incapable of, thus placing Barrientos above the politicians and arm in arm with the peasants.

The participation of the military in national politics also generated a rhetorical intrusion by the armed forces into the political arena, with General Barrientos as its spokesman. Initially, Barrientos alleged that his discourse came from the armed forces, emphasizing that his presence in the political context was due to the army's political participation in the revolutionary process and not to any kind of personal impulse:

> For us [the military] politics is the alternative for the nation to overcome the anti-fatherland (*antipatria*), human backwardness, to materialize the ideals of liberation and fatherland which were initiated by Busch and Villarroel and

> which are now directed by Víctor Paz. … The armed forces in Bolivia, when they act in politics, are acting in the space of the fatherland, that is to say, in the space of the nation's supreme interests, because no soldier is allowed to take politics as a simple instrument of his personal convenience.[148]

However, Barrientos considered that the soldiers' participation in the political arena put the preservation of the institutional unity of the armed forces at risk, as he believed politics tended to deteriorate said unity. The central topic of his discourse, which he addressed to the military and to civil society, revolved around this issue of unity. This concept was quickly assimilated by Barrientos' interlocutors into their rhetoric, in response to the state of political anarchy in Bolivia. Unity would allow the country to work towards economic development, but this unity would have to be based upon the ethical foundation of the armed forces, and upheld by order and discipline. According to military rhetoric, it was only through unity, discipline, and order that Bolivia could begin the task of constructing itself as a nation.[149]

The military discourse's moralizing character was accompanied by a concomitant approach of benevolence in which the armed forces provided social assistance programs to the peasantry. Thus, when General Barrientos declared that "the armed forces have never had so much prestige as now," he simultaneously claimed "we have handled publicity very well so as to inform the people about the armed forces' involvement to make a platform not for a personality but for our institution."[150] General Barrientos meant that the military was using publicity to shape a new image of itself as an institution and this was begin done in preparation for it to enter into the political field and finally reach power. Consequently, when the armed forces suggested that the Paz-Barrientos ticket should run in the 1964 elections, Barrientos reacted with feigned surprise at the news, but his response was taken from a prewritten script. This carefully planned reticence improved Barrientos' public image, as it characterized him as benevolent and politically naive. When journalists asked him about his vice-presidential candidacy, General Barrientos said that he had found out about it from the press and indicated that the issue "is not only premature, but also somewhat upsetting for me."[151] Afterwards, General

Barrientos gave himself over to working with the peasants to agree to a negotiated truce. This not only allowed him to control an explosive political situation, but also put him in a highly visible spot, given the power which the peasant militias had at that time. This was a very laborious and slow task for Barrientos and his backers—one he had begun months prior, in strategic places in the valley where the military was setting up schools and health posts—before wading into the dispute between Cliza and Ucureña. Reports of his intervention in the countryside in the newspapers were printed alongside with well-planned photographs. The portrait of General Barrientos in military uniform surrounded by groups of grateful peasants was generally the icon that circulated in the press, reinforcing his paternal image.

The discourse Barrientos offered to the peasantry was intentionally broad so that it could be easily assimilated by the populace. His message offered the public a peaceful alternative to the violence promoted by MNR politicians. In a press conference, for instance, he stated that: "Every revolution means change, justice, effort, and work, but no aim can be fully achieved if unity is not maintained and the disagreements and different opinions come to an end. Rivalry is not revolution."[152] Barrientos' rhetoric skillfully combined the revolution's mystique with the promise of a peaceful and productive society in the near future.[153] Moreover, when linked to a chronological perspective, his discourse led to the conclusion that the new stage of promised harmony he envisioned was not a possibility under the MNR regime, as they had already fulfilled their historic mission:

> In a first period Busch and Villarroel gave an impulse to the people's aspirations, opening a horizon for the revolution. The second period which began on 9 April 1952, served to destroy the machinery of the old system. Now we are entering a third period which has to be built with affection and love … the armed forces are a guarantee for all Bolivians, [because] unlike in other eras [the military are] now building schools, roads, and health posts.[154]

The implication that the MNR's political practice lacked the ability to provide unity and peace—which was quite prevalent in military

discourse—was reinforced on another level by employing ethnicity-based arguments that questioned the political manipulation of peasants. When Barrientos was campaigning for his vice-presidential candidacy, he stood by the peasants, warning the MNR leaders that old times were coming to an end: "I believe that although there are chasms of hate, these should not be deliberately deepened and that the so-called intellectuals or white leaders should know that the party will be most effective with the unity of all Bolivians."[155]

General Barrientos' posturing was related to another element of the military discourse' criticism of the violent political struggle in the countryside, which he depicted as barbarous and uncivilized: "There is a need of incorporating civilization in our political life; [we must] put an end to current methods of barbarism and imposition … we argue for the use of democratic procedures of struggle." [156] The peasants always issued complaints against the urban intellectuals who often had manipulated peasants through their monopoly on dispensing political information. When the military managed to consolidate their political pact with the peasantry, they promoted a discourse which legitimized both the military and the peasantry in detriment of politicians and intellectuals. The military rhetoric asserted that the social policies of the armed forces had allowed peasants to grow beyond their bondage to the old MNR politicians and achieve entry into a new stage of modernity, with the end result being their transformation into citizens. Barrientos' discourse emphasized this issue constantly, attracting the peasants' respect and admiration.

> To the peasant comrades of the valley of Cochabamba and those of Cliza and Ucureña, I wish principally to manifest my absolute solidarity with them and my joyful applause for the form in which they are consolidating their worthy life together, their fruitful union, and their extraordinary understanding, drawing the applause and respect of all the citizenry. One sees that the peasant comrades have definitely won civilization and they will never go back down to the darkness of quarrels, of rivalry, of hatred or of pain.[157]

When General Barrientos was finally nominated as candidate and later on elected as vice-president, the media focused on his benevolent public image until the military coup d'état on 9 November 1964. After the coup, the military's rhetoric shifted its institutional character towards a more personalized discourse, centered on Barrientos' public image. Consequently, a messianic tone flourished in his discourse, relating his rural origins (he was born and raised in the town of Tarata, Valle Alto) with his mission of redeeming the peasant masses: "I have the mission of explaining to the peasants and the workers the achievements of the revolution, with the aim of drawing them out of that kind of sophistication of which they have been the object due to their poor understanding of national problems."[158] The military discourse—which originated from an institutional source and later on reached its peak when personalized in the image of General Barrientos—was contested by a dissident peasant discourse proposing an alternative socialist model. General Barrientos, as the military discourse's spokesperson, pointed out that his electoral proposals were within the framework of a North American model and that he would be supportive of all United States' efforts to improve the well-being of Bolivians: "When we can no longer do anything with our own resources, [the United States] help will come and will be very welcome. There are people who are interested in collaborating with us, but only when we give everything on our part, showing interest in seeking solutions for our problems."[159]

In contrast, the leftist discourse emanating from the peasant centers of Quillacollo and Sacaba portrayed their political position as anti-imperialist and antifeudal. The left's goal was to take the national revolution even further, with the final aim being the institution of a popular worker-peasant government. Accordingly, pacts between the peasants' and workers' unions were required if the regime was to attempt agricultural mechanization. The leftist-oriented peasant unions in Quillacollo and Sacaba joined the miners' unions in demanding Bolivia accept a proposal by the Soviet Union to install blast furnaces in the mines to promote industrialization in the country. In the Quillacollo national peasant congress (February 1963), the left issued a political platform focused on class struggle, an idea to which left-wing workers and peasants subscribed.[160] However, this internationalist and pro-Soviet Union line—whose model was the Cuban

Revolution—was not firmly supported by the left-wing peasants, who gathered instead around the figure of Juan Lechín. The left's discourse was weak and divided, as it was promoted by workers but contradicted by their peasant allies. The division in the national peasant congress was evident, when the COD's delegate, Oscar Sanjines, asked for a worker-peasant alliance to achieve national development. He pointed out that, "we should look at the socialist project because it is capable of giving us machinery, while the only thing the North Americans do is send us their agricultural surplus." The peasant leader and parliamentarian, Sinforoso Rivas, replied that, "four or five communists, who speak prettily about aid, about blast furnaces, are those who divert the worker's mission, because the miners' leaders who dress in rags when they go to their grassroots, are precisely the main reason why the nationalized mines do not produce anything."[161]

The left-wing peasants were grouped in the FSTCC under the leadership of Facundo Olmos (Sacaba) and Enrique Encinas (Quillacollo) and their political position was ambivalent, given that they were pressured by the workers to radicalize their demands and by the peasants to maintain their political autonomy. The result was an ideologically ambiguous peasant movement that was also confronted by the rest of the viable political actors. This confrontational situation was another reason behind the peasant leaders' obsession with exerting total control over their own territories and clienteles. As a consequence, the left's discourse concerning the peasants lashed out at José Rojas and the Ucureña peasant center, criticizing them for using a bellicose rhetoric against their rivals in Cliza. Hence, when Ucureña proposed reorganizing the FSTCC to purge the left's ideological influence on its ranks, Rojas' image was tarnished by left-wing leaders from all political factions:

> [José Rojas] has shown that he never at any moment acted on political principles, because he has none, but only in search of his personal interests, the protection of his abuses and exactions, his crimes and dirty deals (*negociados*), and his primitive and brutal hatred of the cities.[162]

Ucureña fought back against its political enemies by issuing the document titled "Ucureña Faces up to Deviations," which was published in the

press. In this declaration, Ucureños reaffirmed their trust in José Rojas and in the nationalist line of its union. The Ucureña peasants asserted that since the founding of their union in 1936, they had been faithful to the postulates of the national revolution and the agrarian reform program, without deviating towards left- and then right-wing orientations as other peasant unions like Cliza had done.[163] By the end of the 1964 presidential campaign, José Rojas and the Ucureña peasants sent a rupture message to Víctor Paz, letting him know that:

> [He] was surrounded by a circle of people who lie to him and falsify the facts, who have dynamited the party and left him without friends. This circle has already dug the grave in which they wish to bury him … the [MNR] old leaders will not be the ones who solve these problems because there is no one who will follow them, only the young soldiers can do it but not alone, rather with us the peasants and the workers.[164]

From the moment of rupture with Víctor Paz onward, the military was able to effectively monitor the peasant movement in Cochabamba by placing their political agents into key posts within the union apparatus. Peasant discourse at this point in time ceased to entirely signify the opinions and concerns of agrarian unionists and instead transformed itself into a textual production that became significantly influenced by non-peasant insiders, seeking only their own political ends. How and when peasant political discourse recovered its autonomy is a matter belonging to another different historical inquiry that goes beyond the time frame of this study.

Conclusion

The Champa Guerra (1959–64) in the Valle Alto of Cochabamba was ignited by the resistance of both politicians and urban dwellers to acknowledge the peasants' mounting political power and autonomy, which had only been reached after more than a decade of revolutionary transformations. The political maneuvers by politicians aiming to split the peasant movement further exacerbated peasant factionalism, thus unleashing pervasive ethnically and racially-based perceptions, and representations, of alleged

relations of domination and subordination between town dwellers and peasants.

To fully understand peasants' political factionalism, however, it is necessary to approach the problem from different analytical angles. Firstly, due to revolutionary changes, peasants were empowered by a number of fortuitous events and, at the same time, the previous relations of domination and subordination that had always connected rural and urban societies were in the middle of a process of full reconstruction. Thus, while reluctantly accepting the issue of the homogeneity of the citizenry that was proposed in the discourse surrounding the modernizing processes of revolution, urban politicians built a negative image of the *cacique campesino* (peasant boss) with the conscious and unconscious aim of keeping peasants as subordinate political actors. Secondly, the struggles between the MNR's left and right wing to take control of the government should also be considered: The two sectors sought peasant support, but both had an authoritarian position vis-à-vis the peasantry. The party's right wing was affixed to the preconceived idea of the peasants' inferiority due to their alleged ignorance, while the left wing believed that the peasantry represented a proto-social class with no independent political goals. Consequently, both factions of the MNR reinvigorated the ideas of domination and subordination which pitted city dwellers against peasants. It was this oppositional discourse that finally opened the door for the intervention of the military into the political arena. Lastly, Cold War tensions influenced the political context in Bolivia in the 1960s. The guerrilla warfare tactic that was adopted by the international left had alarmed the United States government, which launched a military-commanded control campaign over the peasantry in Latin America. As a consequence, a military nationalistic doctrine emerged that transformed Latin American soldiers into active political players. The plan to prevent socialist revolutions proved to be partially successful, for national armies defeated the so-called insurgents in practically all Latin American countries. In the case of Bolivia—after a decade-long revolutionary struggle for political autonomy—peasants did not participate in any guerrilla endeavor, but instead they supported the military's fight against radical left-wing guerrilla warfare.

The Champa Guerra between Cliza and Ucureña had a mixed outcome for the peasants searching for political autonomy. On the one hand,

the peasant movement had consolidated itself within Bolivian politics and the revolutionary peasant's image was now firmly ingrained in the political arena. But, on the other hand, the older generation of revolutionary peasant leaders that led the conflict ended up politically exhausted and discredited in the eyes of the peasantry. The final peasant-military pact—in which peasants rejected their role under the MNR, which was mainly to serve as voters and shock troops for the regime—put them firmly under the political umbrella of the military. Ominously, General Barrientos' government normalized a practice of rewarding loyalist peasant leaders with large sums of money, at least until his death in an accident in April 1969. The following military regimes chose terror as their preferred political weapon to control Bolivian society. Therefore, new research is necessary to write the history of the Cochabamba peasant movement more completely during the transitory period of General Barrientos rule (1964–69) and the military dictatorship era until 1982, in order to unveil the political fluctuations and strategies used by the peasants to continue negotiating power with the post-revolutionary state.

5

Living the Revolution and Crafting New Identities

This chapter analyzes the character of the revolutionary Cochabamba valley peasants in the mid-twentieth century. Who were these revolutionary peasants and how did they build their ethnic and cultural identities? As discussed in chapter one, the genesis of Cochabamba valley peasants' collective identity can be traced to the shifting regional political economy of the late eighteenth century, when the haciendas' economic crises (provoked by the declining silver production in the Potosi mines) fostered the formation of local mercantile networks. *Chicha* (maize beer) and *tocuyo* (homespun cotton cloth) produced by domestic peasant industries began circulating locally, allowing the peasantry to gain additional family income over and above their wages from the estates. In the early twentieth century, the crises in the haciendas worsened when the markets around *altiplano* (highland) tin mines were lost after railways were built and cheaper imported agricultural products made their produce uncompetitive. Simultaneously, however, the tin mining boom allowed peasant-miners to consolidate their economies and acquire plots of land in the valley, which bankrupt landlords had put on the market. By the 1950s *piqueros* (smallholders) thrived in the Cochabamba valley.[1]

The Chaco War (1932–35) weighed heavily upon the national and regional political consciousness and diluted the fragile cohesion of the elites. Elements within the elite population of Bolivia embraced modernizing infrastructure and other projects, which often also addressed peasant issues. By the late 1930s, peasant movements arose on the haciendas, demanding the abolition of *pongueaje* (personal services), and also securing access to land ownership and education. The first peasant unions in

the Cochabamba valley emulated miners' unions. They were organized by the peasants with the help of urban militants from the post-war reformist political parties.[2] Before the 1952 revolution, peasants in the valley had not yet established any permanent power network that would allow them to build a sustained and direct political relationship with the state. The generation of leaders who led the pre-revolutionary peasant movement had emerged from post-war political conflicts, placing them in an oppositional position relative to the landlords. From 1952 to 1964—a time period that began when the MNR seized power and ended with the military ouster of the MNR from power—revolutionary processes developed in Bolivia. During the revolutionary period, peasants in the Cochabamba valley were dynamic actors who played a pivotal role when pursuing agrarian and political change in their area. As previously discussed, the Cochabamba valley peasants led a struggle for unionization and political autonomy during this time, which resulted in the consolidation of the peasant movement and the recognition of the peasants as central, self-directed actors within the national political arena.

While they fought for political representation during the revolutionary period, however, the peasantry in the Cochabamba valley also struggled to establish their particular ethnic and cultural identities. Based on their centuries-long experience of territorial mobility and cultural interrelation, the mestizo valley peasants rejected their proscribed colonial Indian identity and assumed instead a *campesino* (peasant) identity. Campesino identity in the Cochabamba valley—as was also the case in revolutionary Mexico—originated in the physical and discursive interactions of state formation and the lived experiences of rural participants in agrarian reform. The word "campesino" was rarely used in Cochabamba before the 1952 revolution. It was during the period of revolutionary peasant conflict with the landlords and the state that "campesino" became a fundamental word in political discourse, responding to a need to explain the specific social position as peasants by adopting the term themselves into their political lexicon. When people in the valley began calling themselves campesinos, they implied their belonging "to a class-like group of rural folks who worked the land and were locked in an inherently conflictive relationship with large-scale landowners and other dominant social groups."[3]

Interviews with peasants who lived through the revolutionary events are examined in this chapter in order to explore their experience of the political culture in revolutionary Cochabamba and Bolivia. Focusing on the interrelations of gender, ethnicity, and class, these interviews allow for interpretation and reconstruction of the local context of power at that time. Peasants' testimonies illustrate the patriarchal character and strong sexual content of perceived images of authority and power in the rural society. They also exhibit the subtleties of peasant negotiation contesting the top-down application of their colonial Indian identity, and their reclamation of the campesino identity. Peasant discourse in the public sphere of peasant unions and in the private sphere of the *chichería* (maize beer tavern) opened up the spectrum of ethnic relations linking *vecinos* (town dwellers) with *campesinos* (peasants). The existing relationship, based on domination and subordination of the campesinos by vecinos, constituted an axis of contradictions that ignited revolutionary peasant consciousness and the resultant political clashes. Narrations given by those who lived the revolution illustrate a renovated representational image of the "campesino" in the valley of Cochabamba during the revolutionary period. Their testimonies confirm the idea that the revolution had a profound impact upon peasant society, economy, and politics. Peasant accounts, furthermore, allow for a nuanced understanding of the revolution as a cultural process, a process of change that fundamentally transformed both the personalities and subjectivities of those who experienced it.

Authority, Power, and Gender in Peasant Society

Cochabamba landlords had managed to maintain servitude within their haciendas over the years by employing an ethnically-based segregationist system, a system which had endured from the colonial era to the mid-twentieth century.[4] When the landed elite, confronted with alternative modernizing projects in the first half of the twentieth century, however, everything began to fall apart. The 1952 revolution initially opened the door for the political participation of peasants, but peasant politics ignited when the hacienda system was dismantled and replaced by a smallholder system. In conjunction with structural changes, peasant subjectivities were also transformed, giving rise to a campesino identity. These atomized valley peasants—who historically found in *mestizaje* (a process of shifting

ethnic identities or mixing cultures) an escape route from elite and state pressures—experimented for the first time with subjective tools that allowed them to articulate a collective identity as campesinos in the process of negotiating their demands with the revolutionary state.

Although the process of campesino identity formation was slow and painful, it ripened in a violent social context, and eventually the idea proved socially substantial as a response to the experiences of those who lived through the depths of cultural and revolutionary processes of change. In an effort to explore the peasants' revolutionary experiences, open interviews were carried out with men and women from the Valle Alto. The men interviewed were former peasant leaders, *chicheros* (chicha producers and sellers), and vecinos. The women interviewed were wives of leaders, chicheras, and vecinas. The main purpose of the interviews was to explore discourses generated in the peasant union (public sphere) and in the tavern or *chichería* (private sphere), as both of these were places where peasants socialized and shared their everyday life experiences during the revolutionary period.

Cochabamba valley peasants' historical memory remained rooted in the post Chaco War (1932–35) during this era, recalling their fights against the landlords and the pre-revolutionary state. Peasants reiterated the important influence that Chaco War veterans had over their political consciousness, especially in regard to the issue of social injustice. The contact the peasants made with urban politicians and activists during this time further impacted their political consciousness, and they began to conceive of themselves as members of a society composed of citizens with equal rights and duties vis-à-vis the state.[5] The social memory of the peasants was imbued with their own struggles to gain and hold these fundamental rights. The mythical time in the peasants' common past was characteristic of a primordial society, just and balanced, which was held in stark comparison to the injustice of the present.

In her work on Namiquipa (Mexico), Ana María Alonso describes the importance of the patriarchal image of a primordial society in the northern frontier, where "brave men" struggled against "savages." The notion of creating a just society in Namiquipa was contrasted with the present, which she characterizes by outlining the peasants' subordination to the centralizing post-revolutionary state. As Alonso posits: "Although situated

in a historical time, however, this past is epic and remote, simultaneously remembered and beyond memory."[6] In contrast to Namiquipa, the mythical time in Cochabamba was contemporary, while the immemorial time, that which is lost in the depths of memory, was the situation of injustice which had oppressed the peasants since before the revolution. As a peasant leader stated: "We have been born slaves since our great-grandfathers. There was not even a hut for us to live in. We lived under the landlord's yoke."[7]

Yet, as explained by another peasant leader, the revolution transformed the dark period of servitude into something new: "The landlords did evil things in their time, [whereas after the revolution] we were in order. [Although actually] not anymore, since everything is in disorder for there is no unity anymore, the peasants don't pay attention [to their leaders]." This mythical time was located within the moment of apex for the peasant movement's power and autonomy; a time when the unity of their action and direction, and the power wielded by their leaders, was unquestionable. When peasants compared the mythical time with the "then current" time (in which disorder and the lack of unity predominated), they referred to their previous experience during the era of extreme peasant violence (Champa Guerra), a period which had made them distrustful of their leaders: "Well, people have found a direction. We cannot pay attention to a leader because when we bring him [to power] with the majority, then he leaves, he occupies high posts and makes a lot of money. … But when something important happens, of course, we always unite."[8]

The concept of authority has always been, until recently, associated with the patriarch. The patriarch wielded authority both physical and symbolic and rationalized this right by claiming to have received wisdom, accumulated through years of experience and tradition. In the Bolivian revolutionary context, when considering the emergence of campesino identity, "father" and "school" must be considered the two institutional benchmarks propping up social harmony and peace in Cochabamba (see figure 5.1). According to two former peasant leaders, the struggle for education did not end when the revolutionary state assigned their peasant union a budget for the construction of a school and the hiring of teachers, but rather when peasants themselves realized what the school meant.

FIGURE 5.1 Rural School Parade. Peasant leaders and the school principal are carrying the banner, while teachers are conducting the Cocapata rural school students (Ayopaya, 1964).

At first, they recalled, the school was built in an uninhabited area where domestic animals invaded its precincts. As such, they agreed to build a wall and later on their houses around the school and only then, after they had protected it, did they claim that they "have made the school great." Anyways, they continued, the teachers could not agree and fought among themselves for they did not have someone to lead them: "One wants [to work] and the other one doesn't and there were fights among them, like without father, that's how the teachers began to fight among themselves … by going to La Paz, we got them a father [a headmaster] so that this school would be strong. Now with a father the school is respected, for as you do with a father the teachers have to pay attention to the headmaster."[9] As the patriarch's authoritarian image guaranteed social harmony, however, it also served to legitimize access to land:

> Not one leader, not José Rojas nor Miguel Veizaga gave us the land, rather it was our work. Our fathers had worked in Santa Clara convent, we've got hold of the work which our fathers went through. For what they suffered, that's what the land was gained for. … But our fathers weren't ambitious, they just wanted to get hold of the plot of land where they had worked.[10]

The significance of authority as in contrast to and different from power is explicit in the previous quote. The father as a symbol of authority legitimates the taking of land, and from an ethical point of view, this action is reasonable, given that it is only carried out on the lands where an ancestor had already laid down a duration of generational occupation and improvement. The union leader's role is limited to controlling the redistribution of land based on the power that peasants have delegated to him. However, the peasants recognize the leader's power because land redistribution is fair among peasants and leaders, which means that ancestral authority is equal among the peasant community members. The hacienda *colonos* (tenants) in the Valle Alto had a leading role at the time of distributing the land, for peasant logic signaled them as the beneficiaries with most rights. As another peasant leader explained: "The former colonos and the leaders got land equally. … The colonos threw us out like lodgers (*arrimantes*) into the marginal lands, but since the land was for those who had none, we joined the union and after that we too received land titles."[11]

These were the foundations of the primordial peasant society, of its mythical time, or as peasants posed it, "of the times of order." But as the revolutionary state began to centralize power in party bureaus, peasant leaders focused their attention on gaining bureaucratic power and saw their interests as diverging from the interests of their communities. The *centrales sindicales campesinas* (peasant union centrals) in the countryside—the geographic loci of peasant power—became differentiated from the rural towns that slowly seeped power until there remained only a pale memory of the old landlords' power. The towns' public spaces and the chicherías—as the centers of socialization that aimed at amusing local elites—were invaded by the "overweening" peasant leaders. In both public and private social spaces, the peasant leaders showed off their power, not

only occupying their sacralized spaces but also linking themselves with the towns' women, in an attitude seen by the townspeople as a challenge to the traditional, patriarchal social order of the inhabitants of the towns.

The logic behind this sexualization of power originated in the violence landlords used to obtain peasant subordination, which peasant leaders later replicated, using the same tactics to reformulate the power structure around themselves in the countryside. As a peasant described: "The leaders around here devoted themselves to being womanizers, because it really was like that. I asked them why they did that, and they said: 'Before, the landlords abused our daughters, now we have to abuse their women.' That's what they told me."[12] Thus, just as authority was associated with the patriarchal image, power was associated with the symbolic representation of woman. Public displays of women as a symbol of power were further instrumentalized when the distribution of estate lands to former colonos was completed and the conflictive issue became the distribution of marginal lands among other peasant groups.

> The leaders changed a lot and got involved with lots of women. Yes, that was brought about by [the fact that] there was land. And so that the leaders would give them land or they were ruined, they made them leave their wives and they made them marry others. There was that interest on the part of the women too; as they [the leaders] had the power to give the women land, the women gave themselves to the leaders as well.[13]

Although the union leaders' authoritarian attitude had a decisive influence for diluting the image of the all-powerful landlord as a rural power referent, it also provoked a reaction among members of the next peasant generation, who criticized their predecessors for the methods used to exercise power:

> At that time, politics was power for the leaders, power to decide, and they didn't reckon the consequences. The main leader sometimes changed his wife up to five times, do you understand me? How powerful he is, isn't he? Because

> nobody said anything, he left his wife and shacked up with another, with another, and so on. So that got to be a habit, for the man was ignorant, a jerk (*huaso*), and he bossed [people around] with a revolver. So, he didn't want to let go of that power and he did whatever he wanted to do.[14]

Criticism of a leader's power did not only emerge in the public sphere of the peasant unions, through the rebellious discourse of the new peasant generation, but also in the domestic sphere of the peasant family, because their members experienced the dissolution of the cohesive links of their family. A widow of a peasant leader narrated that she belonged to a smallholder's family, which before the revolution had managed to purchase some plots of land. Beginning in her youth, and ever since then, she had worked as a market trader (*q'atera*) selling cooked maize (*mote*) and fresh cheese (*quesillo*) in local markets, products which she had obtained from the family plot (see figure 5.2).

> We, the daughters, we bought clothes with our work, we earned money with our work, my mother and father didn't buy clothes for us, even though we were in their power [they lived with the parents]. And so, it was always a good way for us to live with our independent work. … In those days it was all right, it was peaceful, without serving anybody, working for ourselves whether we were men or women. The father or mother as well, if we got married, they gave us cows, with that we set up a house. That's how we lived in those days, not being at the service of the estate.[15]

Women usually did not attend school in that era, but illiteracy was not a problem when it came to the widow's commercial dealings: "In those days it was better to count the money in Quechua language, we knew everything by memory in our heads. … I even beat my husband in counting lots of money. He'd been to school [he was literate], but when we went to sell a cow or something, while he was adding it up, I said to him: 'It's this much!"

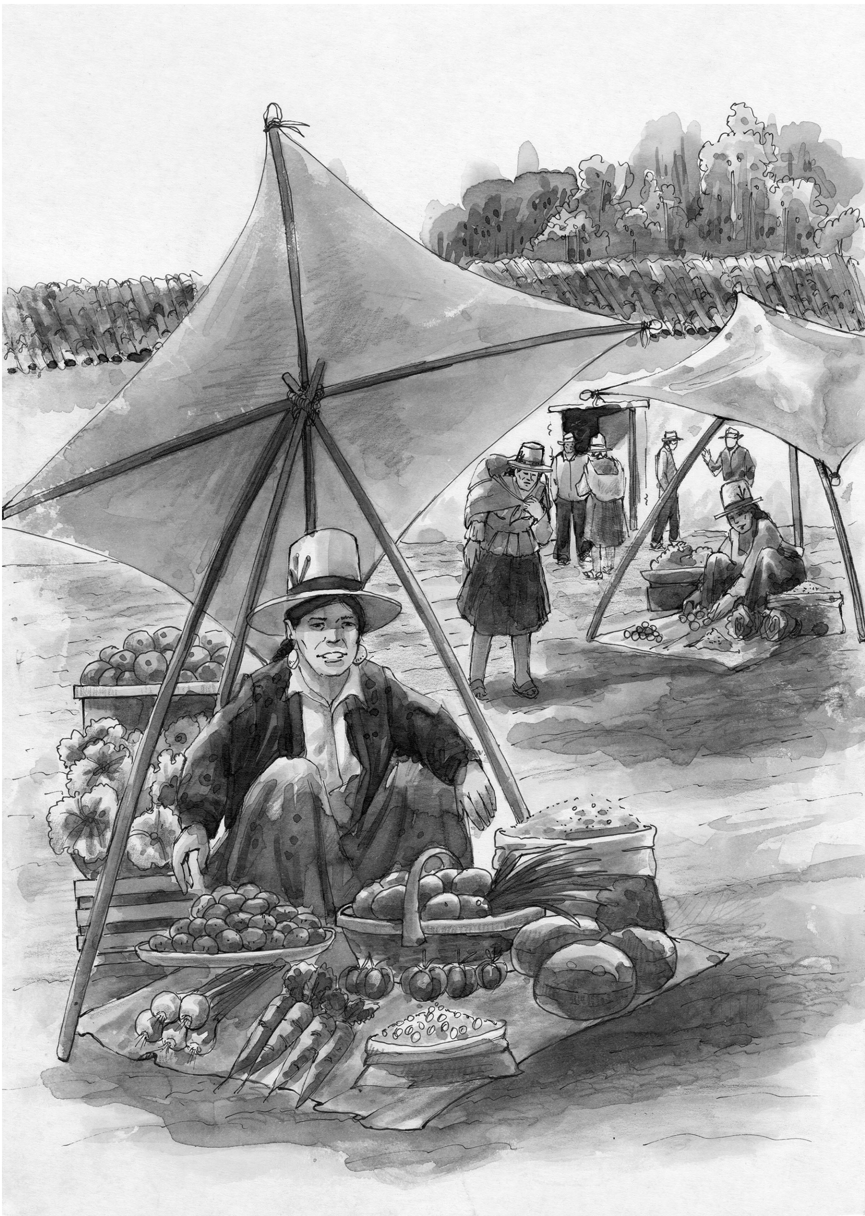


FIGURE 5.2 Market Woman. Peasant woman selling vegetables at the Quillacollo market (circa, 1963).

The widow's problems began when she married a landless peasant and her father had to put them into service on an estate. She stopped working for herself, and was dedicated to looking after her family, while at the same time working as a servant (*mitani*) on the estate (see figure 5.3): "With the service on the estate we became fools, I wasn't a market trader anymore and just attended the estate." After the revolution, her husband obtained a plot as a former tenant and they both worked together on their new property, but the man dedicated himself to unionism and their lives definitely changed:

> Ever since he became a leader during the agrarian reform, everything came to a stop. He just went around [as a leader], the work in the house didn't go anywhere either. He didn't want to save anymore, rather he wanted to make me poorer. I suffered a lot in those days, after the agrarian reform happened, he got into bad ways … he just ran after women. My children worked with me, he went around, he arrived [home], he asked me for money and when I didn't give him any, he beat me, he got money out of me by force.[16]

Revolutionary violence infiltrated peasant homes, producing great family imbalances; violence was exacerbated by chicha consumption, which became a common habit among the valley population. As the same peasant widow continued explaining: "Men were always drinking wherever they were, wherever they went. We women in our houses, and men always off anywhere drinking." Drunkenness unhinged marital relations in many homes, but even worse were the arms and ammunition stored at the houses of peasant leaders. Every weekend social festival often ended with leaders brandishing their weapons to restore order during moments of crowd euphoria, and this, in turn, lead to running battles. "During the Champa Guerra there were guns here in my house. My husband even went after me with those guns, it was awful, I was more like an enemy, hiding away, I just lived hidden away."[17]

The violence perpetrated by peasant leaders created an association of perceived perversion of values, which alienated the leaders from the peasant population. In the end, the peasants obeyed the union leaders

FIGURE 5.3 Women Harvesting Potato. Peasant women working in a Valle Alto hacienda (Cliza, March, 1953).

due to fear, similar to their old relationship with landlords and curacas: "[After the agrarian reform] the leaders totally changed, they all became like landlords, in those days they behaved like that ... they lifted up their heads, as if they were landowners."[18] Urban politicians made use of this perception of the leaders of peasant unions by producing and disseminating symbolic representations of the *cacique campesino* (peasant boss), through different media, characterizing him as a brutal leader that oppressed peasants as they had been oppressed by the previous landlords. The negative images of and stories about the peasant leaders were useful to political opponents, who could easily argue against initiatives that came from the grassroots peasants. Revolutionary regional literature exploited the representation of the "brutal" valley peasant leader and identified with the "*taras*" (defects) of the mestizo, in the hopes of restoring the idyllic image of the pre-revolutionary Indian. The two most notable writers in the literary movement to characterize union leaders this way was Nestor Taboada, who wrote short stories and Jesus Lara, who wrote novels. Lara politicized his narratives by representing the power of the mestizo valley leaders as connected to and derived from the MNR. According to Lara, it was not the perverted mestizo boss but the pristine Indian with his ancestral virtues who should be the future rural leader in Cochabamba. As a member of the Communist Party, Lara's ideal image of a rural leader was a militant peasant who was obedient to the policies of the communist left.[19]

In contrast, the discourse surrounding women living in the rural towns was embedded in sexuality as well as ethnic differentiation. The image of the powerful peasant boss awoke unsettling feelings in the minds of urban women, who associated their power with perceptions of arrogance and strength, letting loose fears and anxieties. A town woman narrated the visit of the Ucureña peasant leader, José Rojas, to the town of Cliza, when he was the minister of peasant affairs: "He came in his car with his hat and his overcoat, and the doctor who worked with me in the public assistance centre went up to him and said: 'Dear José (*Josesito*), how are you?' I don't know why, but it really made me angry. People went up to him to suck up to him."[20]

The traditional rural hierarchy, marked by a paternalistic relationship with the townspeople holding power over the peasants, ceased to have any meaning when the peasants organized themselves into armed and militant

unions, led by powerful leaders. The town's political brokers lost influence and were harassed by peasant leaders. It was a complete inversion of traditional power relations that, no doubt, influenced the perceptions of the valley population on gender and sexuality. A schoolmistress from Cliza, for instance, married to a former pre-revolutionary state official, displayed two different perceptions of the peasant leader's image depending on whether her story was situated in the private or the public sphere. In the first case, her relationship to peasant power was a result of the need to intercede for her husband's life, as he was being pursued by Ucureña's militia to render account for the abuses he had committed when he was Cliza's *intendente municipal* (municipal director).

> A group of Ucureña peasants went by my door. One of them said: 'Don't pay attention to her [don't greet her], her husband is sick, he's on the point of death.' My co-godparents and godchildren were with them, they had the order not to speak to me or greet me. I went to speak to José Rojas to tell him that my husband was innocent, so that he could order his troops not to go after him. 'Nothing holds my troops back, because when he was the director, your husband did a lot of bad things.' He said to me. [Some days later] it was José Rojas' birthday. He was in his room, in bed, covered in flowers, ponchos, scarves, and sheep [as presents]. 'Just come on in,' one of his bodyguards said to me. 'What is he going to do to you? Just say hello to him.' I'm not going to say hello; I'm just going to see him! 'Don José, how are you doing? How are you?' I said to him. 'Very well, Mrs. Angelina.' He answered in Quechua. 'Have you forgotten what I asked you?' I said to him. 'Don't make me remember that anymore!' he replied.[21]

Her memory recalls the bucolic scene, the exotic image of the peasant leader at the height of his power. It is a vivid image still intact and alive in her memory. The fear that his power provokes on her does not hide her disdain for the peasant, nor does it diminish her interest in staring at the

dominant leader. She is not interested in greeting authority, but cannot resist contemplating power.

These intimate manifestations of power, however, are absent from her discourse when the same woman enters the public sphere and goes on to describe her political experience with peasant power.

> From one moment to another I heard that José Rojas aimed to become Cliza's mayor. Cliza's townspeople didn't sit there with their arms folded, but a lot of Cliceños were in favor of Rojas. They went to Ucureña even though they were decent people! What was that Indian going to do in the town hall! I was nominated as Cliza mayor's candidate by those of the town and those of the countryside. They asked me to be mayor, but I wasn't going to go and get drunk with the peasants. I refused because I could not leave my other post [schoolmistress] and here they're used to mistreatment. They made the town hall treasurer buy chicha and pickles. The peasants were abusive, they followed the mayor to the chichería and then he had to pay for their drinks.[22]

The woman recalls the narrow limits that framed female participation in revolutionary politics (see figure 5.4). She expresses her frustration by despising the source of José Rojas' political power, and her descriptions of him are colored by denigratory ethnic allusions. Consequently, she was convinced that Indians could not occupy urban spaces in society. What did she consider to be the role of Miguel Veizaga, who, as the rival of José Rojas, led Cliza's vecinos in their struggle against the Ucureña peasants? "Miguel Veizaga just defended Cliza's municipality. He was not interested in being mayor. He stood up [to Rojas] defending the town, because Veizaga was *acholado* (citified). Rojas was not an educated man, he was mean."[23]

The cholo or urban Indian ethnic category denoted a higher rung on the ladder of social hierarchy and was associated with the archetype of the town's artisan and manual workers. Miguel Veizaga was as much a peasant as José Rojas, and both were literate. However, the fact that Veizaga had defied Rojas' peasant power, and had done so in the name of the town of

FIGURE 5.4 Female MNR Militants. Women participating in a MNR meeting at the town of Sipe Sipe (Cochabamba, Valle Bajo, 1953).

Cliza, lifted him into a superior social category. Yet this characterization of Veizaga in comparison to Rojas required a generous twisting of reality, as a Cliza's retired army sergeant claimed: "José Rojas was a natural-born peasant. Miguel Veizaga was a peasant too, but he was educated, he wasn't so ignorant. Rojas didn't even know how to read and write; he was totally ignorant."[24]

Chicha and Peasant Violence

Physical and symbolic violence had always mediated Cochabamba's social hierarchy and factional relationships, in both pre-revolutionary and revolutionary times. The struggle of the peasant unions to expel landlords from their estates and take possession of the land was successful, yet this did not mean that peasant power was consolidated solely in rural areas. The defeated remnants of pre-revolutionary power groups had concentrated themselves in rural towns, looking to rebuild their old domination

networks over the peasantry. The populist discourse of the MNR provided an ideal cultural context for the vecinos to regain some of their lost political influence. The vecinos proceeded to make use of their advantageous position, by producing a rhetoric that exalted the position of town dwellers as natural leaders, which was explained as right and meet because of the "inherent" ignorance of the peasants (they lacked modern education, which the vecinos possessed).

The modernizing transformations that the Bolivian revolution triggered—in contrast to state-induced changes that occurred during the first half of the twentieth century in other Latin American countries—energized the peasant grassroots movement, fostering a new generation of union leaders. These were the peasant leaders who contested the state's attempt to centralize power, and instead proposed bottom-up, alternative projects in hopes of redefining the revolutionary power structure. The first confrontation between the peasants and the revolutionary state came about when the "agrarian revolution" and the "agrarian reform" projects clashed, as described in chapter two. State centered interpretations described this situation as a political fight between the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR) and the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers' Party, POR), a view that demonstrates how authors and scholars at the time underestimated peasant political autonomy.[25] When confronting the state, however, peasant leaders also struggled to defend the internal cohesion of peasant communities. Once estate lands had been seized, peasants believed their citizenship rights had already been earned and legitimized. This contradiction of interests was not an easy problem to solve given the surrounding political context of MNR initiated political sectarianism and the MNR's dissemination and use of rhetoric propping up ethnic segregation, a rhetorical device inherited from the Bolivian liberal past.

The peasants' social memory put the burden of peasant violence on the union leaders' shoulders, through their claim that the Champa Guerra between Cliza and Ucureña was caused by the personal ambitions of peasant leaders alone. There were only a few peasants who drew the connection between violence and the divergent, oppositional political positions within the MNR regime. As a peasant leader stated:

> During Víctor Paz's first term [1952–56], peasants supported him a hundred percent [for] they had opened their eyes, it was a freedom they had never seen before … in the second administration, that of Hernán Siles [1956–60], we were a bit weaker by then because Siles was more inclined to the oligarchy. … Siles himself cleverly allowed the division between Cliza and Ucureña.[26]

The peasant's individual memories of their experience of violence and abuse during the Champa Guerra remained heavy in their minds and colored their discourse. For example, peasants identified, in anger, those who had led during the Champa Guerra: "They made us fight like the owners of fighting cocks, forcibly like in the ring. We called them [the leaders] cock-owners (*galleros*), because they made us fight forcibly like the cock-owners." Peasants also explained away their participation in that war by claiming they had only fought because of coercion: "[If you did not obey] they got you out of your house even if you were in bed with your wife. If you didn't go out to the line [of battle] they killed you like a dog. That's what those damned leaders were like."[27] Peasants tried to separate their personal responsibility for the war and their part in it from the consequences of their actions: "We didn't get angry [among peasants]. We were angry at night, we only fought at night, in day time we talked to those who were enemies. [The people from Cliza] paid attention to their leader Veizaga and we here [Ucureña] paid attention to José Rojas. That's the only reason why there were fights, our leaders made us fight like that for stupid things."[28]

In the eyes of higher-ranking peasant leaders, peasant society had fallen into anarchy after the estate lands were expropriated, and this was the sole cause of the violence. They said that, when the peasants saw that they were free of landlord control and could make use of their time and their surpluses, dedicated themselves to the habit of chicha drinking, and union discipline slacked. The state retreated on promises of support for rural development projects and preferred to provide support to urban politicians looking to centralize power in the cities. Thus, peasant leaders' authority was questioned from both sides, and their situation became precarious despite their apparent power. As peasant leader Miguel Veizaga declared:

> In a meeting at the peasant center, I complained that the peasants didn't want to work in groups, collectively, because a lot of them were lazy, drunken, they liked festivals, because there was no discipline anymore and they've entered into complete anarchy, where they didn't respect their leaders anymore … the union leaders charged ten pesos as a fine to those who didn't turn up to meetings and with that money they sent out for chicha.[29]

Although many interviewees were themselves peasant union leaders, they referred to "the leaders" when discussing the era of violence, artificially creating the image of a different "other" to whom they assigned the defects of the cause and with whom they contrasted peasant virtues. Only those who were high-level leaders assumed their role and justified it, thus personifying a discourse of positive against negative values that located them as historical subjects and also legitimately within a hierarchy of status and power.

The chichería, the private sphere of peasant socialization, was a social space centered around the drinking of chicha (see figure 5.5). The drinking of chicha was an act that "proposes a relationship between a collectivity and the extra-social world,"[30] and this social institution, as a place of exchange, community and drunkenness, must be considered when one searches for the context from which peasant violence arose. The chichería was the space where political alliances were negotiated between power groups that were related through clientelism. As Dwight Heath posits it:

> Alcoholic drinks have a value comparable to dividends in this system of 'social credit' because they are appreciated, but not prohibitively expensive, they are infinitely dividable, they are laden with symbolic associations, apart from their economic value, and they are frequently consumed in rituals of commensality, where they increase the prestige of those who give and the gratitude of those who receive.[31]

The chichería became the theater where the peasants' debut in the political arena was acted out, and it became the revolutionary peasants' main

Figure 5.5 Chichería. A maize-beer tavern in the Cochabamba valley (circa 1960).

political, social, and cultural center after the power relations between town and countryside had flipped.

> The peasants came to this chichería before there was separation [between Cliza and Ucureña]. We [the townspeople] lived a lot with the peasants from Ucureña … since we had no land, we used to go [to Ucureña] and we had potato and maize sown and for that they used to come here to get drunk, for as long as they liked … but after that everything was a lot of boozing. The peasants didn't work in agriculture and much less we from the town [of Cliza], they didn't let us. Meetings here, meetings there, meetings all over the place, that's what their business was.[32]

Chicha consumption reached higher levels than ever before during the revolutionary era, awakening the interests of regional authorities who yearned to reimpose a production tax—a tax that had been halted due to peasant resistance. Historically, taxes on chicha production favored Cochabamba city's municipality and university. The peasants refused to pay it, because, they argued, the tax financed urban development in the capital and the education of the children of the regional elite.[33] From the peasants' point of view, the split between the union leadership of Cliza and Ucureña originated in the attempt to reimpose the chicha tax. José Rojas wanted the tax to be collected by the peasants, while Miguel Veizaga headed the rejection movement, backed up by Cliza's chicha-sellers and producers.

> José Rojas had gotten into company with the beer producers [in Punata] … so he began to collect, he sent someone called Demetrio Torrico from Punata to Cliza, that guy got the chicha tax contract, from then on, Rojas began to fight with Veizaga … we [Cliza] didn't want to pay the chicha tax any more. Why? Because we were making it and we were paying the tax with our labor. And, José Rojas wanted to have the peasants collect as well.[34]

Veizaga not only refused to pay the tax to the tax collector imposed by Rojas, but also rejected the idea that peasants should collect it. Instead, Veizaga argued that the tax should be collected by their own union and that Cliza's municipality ought to control the money involved. Ucureña leaders polarized these arguments, for they claimed to be the poor peasants'—who were in favor of the taxes—defenders, whereas the Cliza leaders defended the rich chicha sellers' interests.

> The quarrel came from that foolishness. Even in some of those disputes, one of the leaders who helped the chicheros [of Cliza], Román Casilla, who was my friend, I hit him because he defended the beer-sellers: 'We won't put an end to exploitation that way, we have to go together, don't divide [the peasant movement]. Are you going to defend the chicheros or the exploited people?' That's what I said to him.[35]

Ucureña's position on taxes, however, weakened its leadership role in the countryside because taxes on chicha production did not only affect the large producers but also the peasants' family economy, which for a long time had relied on home brewing as a source of extra income. Moreover, brewing chicha at home and redistributing it at festivals was a reciprocal obligation amongst peasants that renewed community links during religious festivals.[36] Hence taxing chicha production was a crucial issue when peasants negotiated power with the state:

> In the Champa Guerra, tax-collectors came to the countryside. I was the sponsor of Our Lord of Toco feast, of the *diablada* (the devils' dance), and they made me pay as well. That's why I rebelled: 'I'm not going to pay! I'm not making beer to sell it but for the festival.' They even wanted to take a garment from me as a guarantee, so the bell was rung, we threw all tax-collectors out and we took away the women's skirts they had seized and I don't know what other things as guaranties that they had taken off from people. From that time, we rebelled.[37]

Cliza leaders had, in fact, promoted the organization of a beer-sellers' union to help Cliza confront the power of Ucureña, thus the Cliza leaders had involuntarily contradicted the basic principle of patriarchal authority ruling peasant society. As the majority of the chicha sellers were women, peasants immediately identified the newly created beer-sellers' union as a women's union, despite all its leaders being men: "That women's union had hardly been set up [in Cliza], there it was, there was fury … women, a women's union, well, they'd set up a women's union, that couldn't be solved. So, when Miguel [Veizaga] put a stop [to José Rojas], all the leaders from Ucureña came to the meeting [in Cliza]."[38] Although peasant women were not banned from directly participating in the peasant union's leadership or even attending the union's meetings, they did not involve themselves in politics because the patriarchal character of peasant society was so ingrained in that era. Women in the main cities of Bolivia, however, had participated in politics by organizing their unions since the early twentieth century.[39]

To understand the fracture at the highest echelons of peasant leadership in the Valle Alto and the consequent outbreak of violence, it is necessary to approach the issue from several different angles. The fracture was not only due to the MNR's political factionalism but also because of the peasant leaders' bureaucratization and the grassroots lack of union discipline, all framed in a context of alcohol consumption and abuse. Alcohol consumption, according to Thierry Saignes, "opens a space of discussion or criticism of the established forms of authority and hierarchy,"[40] becoming a channel for protesting the established order and a way for inverting social values until they are turned upside down. But what happens when people drink in a world that the revolution has already turned upside down? That was the case in Cochabamba. Valley peasants who resisted the power of the union leaders, emboldened by their drunkenness, challenged them in the public and the private spheres, and provoked violent reactions from leaders attempting to re-establish their authority. Peasant leaders' drunkenness, in turn, allowed them to hold on to their precarious power, thus inflaming the conditions of extreme violence within peasant society.

Peasant violence had a different character in the 1950s compared to the 1960s. In the 1950s, crimes generally happened in taverns or in peasants' households when people contested the authority of union bosses.

Exchanges of bullets followed, which restored union authority. The result usually involved wounded and occasionally dead peasants.[41] Afterwards, peasant leaders imposed themselves upon the authority of both the police and on judicial figures, intimidating them to block legal actions through symbolic rather than real violence (displays of armed force, liberation of prisoners, threats, *et cetera*), but without necessarily inflicting physical damage.[42] The violence of the 1960s, in contrast, worsened amid the political tension in the countryside, and crimes began to take place in public areas (streets, squares, the countryside) with destructive results in terms of human lives. Union leaders entered into a spiral of murders and vendettas, and they took up for themselves the role of thugs, ordering personal assaults on their political enemies and commanding peasant patrols. All of this, in concert, sowed terror in the countryside. In both decades, alcohol abuse was a norm, statements from witnesses invariably assert that violence started after several hours or even days of heavy drinking. What was different in the 1960s, however, was that judicial trials became a parody. The regime had, in effect, totally subordinated the justice system, as authorities always ended up protecting criminals in exchange for political favors or deals.[43]

Ethnicity and Territoriality in the Valleys

Historiography invariably indicates that the Cochabamba valley population faced an early and accelerated process of ethnic and cultural mestizaje. Explanations for these phenomena are various, ranging a gambit of demographic, sociological, economic, and cultural sources. Although a common factor remains, the distinction was made between the valley mestizo and the altiplano Indian.[44] This interpretive trend extends throughout the historiography of the 1952 revolution, by asserting that liberal principles influenced the political elite that had led the revolution. As discussed in the introduction of the book, this trend of development concluded that the price for integrating citizens into the nation was the creation of a mestizo culture, a culture that transformed the ethnic differences that had existed during the colonial and republican periods.

Paradoxically, the mestizo's privileged place in academic and political rhetoric did not occupy a similarly important place in the regional elites' discourse, or in the peasants' rhetoric. A mestizo solution for the agrarian

reform, for instance, was only proposed by a small elite faction, while no faction of peasants fully identified themselves with a mestizo project of any kind, as argued in chapter two. Notwithstanding this, the social memory of the valley peasants explored their ethnic identity by digging into the relationships of domination and subordination that had linked the peasantry to the pre-revolutionary landlords and town dwellers:

> The only ones who gave us that name of Indians were the landlords. The landlords called to us 'Indian hicks' (*indios laris*). They brought that name, no one else brought it apart from them. Because they had more strength (power), because they had more value [wealth], they had everything to eat, they had good clothes, that's why they called the peasant an Indian.[45]

By using class terms, peasants emphasized that the chief differences separating them from the town dwelling "other" were power and wealth, which had always been employed together to the landlords' and vecinos' advantage, in efforts to subordinate peasants. The essential difference between the city and the countryside was the possession of media-based means to define and reinforce the notion of ethnic difference based upon a geographical criterion:

> Those rich folks who lived in the city called the man an Indio and the woman an India. That's what they called us because they owned their houses and everything, that's what they said to us. Of course, for them there was justice, but if we had said something to them, oh! The soldier came right then and punished us.[46]

The resistance to identifying themselves as Indians is not a coincidental happening employed in efforts to build a campesino identity. Rather, the Indian identity is perceived of as the result of a historical misunderstanding that the landlords had imposed to subjugate the peasants. From the peasants' point of view, there was no deep-rooted historical experience that linked them to the possession of communal territories and, thus, the

Indian identity simply lacked any historical meaning whatsoever. They perceived that the revolutionary state had done no more than restore order when it identified them as campesinos and when it handed to them the land that they had always worked on.

> Before, the landlords treated us as Indians. But now we're peasants because we're conscious people, we're not like before. That's why we struggled in the peasant congress at Santivañez [June 1953]. 'We're not Indians, Indians are from India,' we said. 'We're proud of being peasants, so we're peasants.' From that moment on things have changed, we're not Indians anymore.[47]

The negotiations pursued by Cochabamba peasants with the state aimed at framing peasant social identity within a framework of the revolutionary order, and the MNR's plan to implement *indigenista* policies helped them in doing so. During this period of Latin American history this sort of approach was fashionable, many countries instituted policies similar to the above described MNR indigenista policies.[48] The fact that peasant identity, at that historical moment, was a functional aspect central to the state's goal of integrating Indians into the national identity in no way meant that the transition from Indian to peasant was a non-violent process. On the contrary, everyday social relations were impregnated with violent feelings and attitudes, which often defined peasants' and vecinos' places and roles in the power hierarchy that emerged after the revolution.

> [The townspeople] called us Indians, hacienda *q'ara huasas* (hacienda servants with naked backs). '*Chay q'ara huasas yayugamuskanku'* (those servants have come to town), they said to us. 'If these get to know [to be educated] they won't respect us, they don't have to know.' That's how they opposed our education. They didn't call us cholo, they called us 'useless Indians.' The landlords said we weren't people, that we could only work if they kicked us, punched us, and beat us. 'These asses are animals.' That's how they treated us. … Those who were from the town were citified (*acholados*).

> It was our turn to be cholos after the revolution. Between ourselves we said: 'He's a cholo now.' Almost since 1953 we were refining ourselves because we were orienting ourselves with the school.[49]

Education represented a route that allowed the peasants to rise from the bottom of social hierarchies and to wipe out the Indian identity that had always subordinated them. When the traditional hierarchy based on vecino domination and peasant subordination evaporated during the revolutionary period, the new social structure and hierarchy that emerged placed vecinos and peasants in tense confrontational positions, each vying for power in what was essentially a vacuum.

The first wave of violence in the l950s displaced the former landlords and they moved into Cochabamba city. In the rural towns, however, old groups of intermediaries remained powerful, alongside emergent artisan groups. Both of these groups were backed by the MNR's right-wing faction, as that faction wanted to be able to counter the power being gathered by the peasant unions, and saw an ability in both these groups to do just that. The second wave of violence in the 1960s was marked by the confrontation between the divergent interests of vecinos and campesinos, and by that time each group was allied with a different faction(s) of the regime, which elevated the intensity of the struggle to the level of a local civil war. In geographical terms, there were two spatial referents linked to the emergent revolutionary campesino and vecino identities: the Ucureña hamlet in the countryside for the campesinos and the town of Cliza for the vecinos. As a peasant leader explained:

> *Q'aras* were all the landlords who lived in the city. Behind their backs the Ucureña peasants said: 'Those *q'aras* have come [to the countryside]'. On the other hand, to their faces they said: 'Dear child (*niñituy*)'. Talking like that they pled and humiliated themselves kissing their hands and feet.[50]

The same Ucureña peasants, however, looked down on the rural town dwellers, reducing the differences which separated them: "We called the vecinos [of Cliza] 'little *q'aras*' (*q'arillos*) and they called us peasants. 'I

don't know who's coming to visit the countryside, it must be some *q'arillo*.' Talking like that, we looked at them."[51]

Cliza dwellers employed a loaded and negative discursive process to establish differences between themselves and the Ucureña peasants. As a peasant leader from Ucureña recalled: "Those from Cliza called us [from Ucureña] *huanuqollus* (those who collect animal dung), because time before that was how we toasted [cooked]. We collected dung (*guano*) and on the following day we lit the fire and stripping the maize off the cobs we toasted it."[52] The pejorative terms used to identify the Ucureños indicated the extreme conditions of poverty they lived in under the old estate regime and shows the depth of the efforts the townspeople made to differentiate themselves from them. After the revolution, however, when Ucureña peasants held great political power, Cliza dwellers modified their discursive approach to be based upon ethnic differentiation. Although the Cliza town dwellers acknowledged the power that the Ucureños had acquired, the vecinos vastly underestimated the capacity of the Ucureños to use it.

The image of the *cacique sindical* (union boss) was an urban creation, for the vecinos observed with disdain how the revolution had elevated those miserable peasants to a higher social level. "They called those from around here [Ucureña] 'bosses', they called us 'red jackets' (*wilasacos*), we were the '*wilis*'. I don't know what they meant to say with *wilasacos*, but those from Cliza called us that."[53] In fact, *Wilasaco* (red or bloody jacket) was Paulino Quispe's nickname. Quispe was a notable peasant leader from Achacachi, in the altiplano of La Paz. He became famous for his belligerent attitude towards the town dwellers of the area, and he terrorized them as head of militia group.[54] As a peasant leader from Cliza recalled: "They [from Ucureña] were better armed than us [from Cliza], but they didn't know how to handle their weapons, they didn't know how to command their troops, they went [into battle] like animals and after that they didn't know how to protect themselves, and that's why they died."[55]

Cliza dwellers who were artisans, civil servants, and intermediaries adamantly rejected any possibility of bearing Indian ancestry, thus drawing imaginary frontiers between social and geographical territories separated by specialized productive functions. The countryside was the territory of agricultural laborers, a place of traditions but also of backwardness, of ignorance; it was the natural location for the Indian. The town was the

territory of independent manual workers and public employees. It was the locale of progress and knowledge; there should be no Indians in a modern town. Vecinos referred to themselves as "decent people," although they always avoided identifying themselves with any specific ethnic category. They were not Indians, nor did they identify themselves as whites, mestizos, or cholos in their everyday discourse.

> The term 'peasant' was born through all those people who went to work in the fields, in agriculture, due to illiteracy. The man of the fields, the man who wore sandals and his costume of a carrying cloth (*aguayo*), homespun cloth, the weavings they themselves produced, they were called 'Indians.' The man from the highlands (*puna*), the man from the country, he was called 'peasant.' Now, well, we called him 'Indian' if we wanted to distinguish the race.[56]

Bolivian racist, liberal discourse kept its vigor well into the mid-twentieth century, when the 1952 revolution transformed power relations. This change allowed subordinated people to forcibly oppose the prevalent racialized rhetoric. As a town dweller and former nurse from Cliza explained: "'*lndioyoy miercoles!*' (Filthy Indian). That's how they bawled at them. '*Imataj indio?*' (Who's an Indian?). '*Mana indiochu!*' (Not an Indian). 'I'm a peasant, miss! Now we're all just one (we're all equal).' That's how they answered."[57] According to this interviewee, vecinos believed that "the Indian was the last person after the dog" and, thus, their spirits were exalted by the presence of campesinos in the town, for it was perceived as a transgression of the natural geographic limits for each race. Another vecino and *chichero* from Cliza recalled: "At that time the peasants were up in arms and no-one said anything to them. So, the peasantry from over there [from Ucureña] also took up positions in the municipality, in the subprefecture, in the directorship (*intendencia*). It was all occupied! Occupied by peasants!"[58] Vecinos did not interpret these striking new conceptualizations of position, occupation, the transgression of the normative social order and the flipped power dynamic of the defined territories as the result of the previous power imbalance between the city and country. Instead, vecinos simply rejected the reconfiguration of order, while they

took up the revolution as a historic event, at the same time they minimized its social outcome. They laid the whole burden of "disorder" at the feet of the peasant leaders and militiamen, accusing them of spreading and encouraging revolutionary social anarchy.

The urban political environment during this period became so toxic that it verged on collective hysteria. Town dwellers awaited the moment of an always "imminent" invasion by peasant militias, which would sweep away every vestige of civilization from the town. As a retired army sergeant from Cliza stated:

> Yes, [the peasants] did it in Cliza [they invaded it], they did the same again in Tarata, in Punata, all over the Valle Alto. Not satisfied with that they came to Cochabamba city, because they had threatened to do it so many times. They came as far as Angostura to tear down the dam to flood the city of Cochabamba. So, there were previous offences, they wanted to do away with the whole world. It was too much![59]

The revolution had, the vecinos could easily see, brought the campesino from the countryside into the rural towns. This was not necessarily a destructive process but rather an outgrowth of the greater economic capacity campesinos now possessed, which allowed them the ability to purchase houses in towns. As a chichero from Cliza explained:

> The peasants of Ucureña are in the town of Cliza now because they have money. Those of Ana Rancho, of Khochi, all of them dripping with money now because all the harvest they have is theirs, no one takes it off them anymore. Right now, they're coming in bit by bit into the town of Cliza; meanwhile, the people of Cliza are going to Cochabamba and they're the ones who buy [houses in the city].[60]

The memory of vecinos nostalgically recalled the times when, from their urban bastions, they had controlled rural society and subordinated the peasantry. After the revolution, they no longer possessed any functional power "lever" to manipulate their surrounding social context towards

their own interests: "Nowadays there are many educated and professional people in the countryside, it's another kind of life now. It's very rare for people to dedicate themselves to agriculture, it's only those who haven't been able to get out, who haven't been able to move up. Now even the Indian girls (*cholitas*) can't be conquered, for instance, to bring them here as a maid. 'I am never going to serve!' That's what they tell you."[61] From this vecino's perspective, the world had turned upside down.

Campesino Political Experience in Cochabamba

When Cochabamba peasants recalled the revolutionary past, they invariably weighed up the scope of the transformation of their personalities as the protagonists of a violent process of social change. Comparing the conditions that they lived through before and after the revolution, and recalling the violent acts that were generated in its duration, was a painful but also gratifying experience for them. It was painful because they all felt sorrow when returning to the past, but gratifying because they were conscious that their actions had established the conditions of their present life. In other words, they considered themselves active agents in the making of their own history.

Although they valued their political autonomy and clung to their campesino identity, they also realized that, paradoxically, the modernizing transformations they struggled for were one and the same with those that were currently undermining the basic foundations of peasant society.[62] This did not, however, diminish the peasant's confidence, which was largely derived from their belief that they had acted intelligently and correctly in their effort to solve their own political problems. In doing so, however, they had to confront the centralizing efforts of the revolutionary state and the paternalistic schemes of the military. Thus, the claim that the initiative for pacifying the Champa Guerra came from the peasants themselves, and not from the politicians nor the military, is indeed impressive.

> Neither the army nor anybody else intervened in the [Champa Guerra] pacification. The peasant leaders from all around here gathered together and those who volunteered did the pacification. It happened with hugs, they danced to band music. That was how Huasacalle united with Ucureña.

> … We peasants said: 'We're not going to fight and we're never going to believe anybody ever again, because they made us fight like fools.' After that one lot retreated and the other lot retreated as well.[63]

This perspective led the peasants to supply a subsidiary contingent to the Bolivian armed forces and General René Barrientos as part of the peasant-military pact (April 1964), which put an end to the peasant war in the Valle Alto, as discussed in chapter four.

> General Barrientos pacified us, but that was for all of us. He pacified us all, because he called us to Cochabamba, he didn't come here. The peasant leaders, all of us went to Cochabamba, he had us hug each other there. But that was when we had already talked [we had already made peace], after that he came to Ucureña and there he pacified us all.[64]

The peasants' interpretation of their own political initiatives often opposed the idea that the peasantry—despite the political and military power they might have held—always reacted, whether actively or passively, in subordination to external forces that manipulated them.[65] From the perspective of many peasants, this alleged subordination was diluted by their awareness that powerful forces existed beforehand, against which they struggled to build the space for their own political action, although the results were not always as advantageous as they might have wished. In each historical moment, the past peasant experience of struggles with external forces allowed them to understand not only where the limits of power and subordination were located but also to construct a value system that could challenge the existing power structure.

This is precisely what James Scott labeled as the "moral economy" of the peasantry. That is to say, the moments of defiance of or deference to the powers which oppress them are carefully assessed and this guided the future action of the peasants, for peasants were familiar with the rigors of state repression. Thus, whether in moments of upheaval or political tranquility, their strategies for facing power were almost always veiled by an aura of submission and humility that allowed them to negotiate political

spaces in moments when social tension had reached its limit.[66] Therefore, when a peasant was asked why they had not confronted the revolutionary state directly, he replied with a laugh:

> What could we say? We can't say anything [to those in power]. For example, if I'm in power and you're small [weak], you have to respect the one who's in power, because he's a [big] person. We can't say [a word]. We can't even talk, because he knows and he has the power. He can have us taken [arrested], to have us punished. People just talked for themselves.[67]

This reverence for power, or the peasants' pragmatic attitude towards the powerful, should not be seen as an incapacity of peasants to negotiate in the political arena. On the contrary, this reverential attitude responds to what James Scott calls the "hidden transcripts" of peasant political action.[68] In other words, the peasant's discourse was not formulated for the entire comprehension of the state, landlords, or politicians. Rather, it was the other way around, because these were languages that power does not entirely comprehend but which enclose the oppressed fantasies about the moment of vengeance to come against the powerful. In reality, these hidden languages form the foundation of a permanent subversive attitude that stores up pride in the oppressed group and allows them to maintain a latent resistance to the everyday humiliations that power imposed on them through the exercise of political power.

From this point of view, the Champa Guerra had a crucial effect on the peasantry when the time came to consolidate peasant political identity, through the state and other powerful groups within Bolivian society during the revolutionary period. The unleashing of peasant militia power by the state allowed peasants to find a privileged place for themselves in the struggle for a new balance of power, thus strengthening the peasants' self-esteem when bargaining with different power groups. As explained by a peasant militia commander:

> Not even the army could stop us. When Colonel Cirilo Flores was the commander [of the army], he arrived with

a platoon of soldiers and me with a platoon of peasant militiamen. He gave the order [to his troops] and I gave the order [to my militia]. But we never let them take the arms off us. 'That is enough,' we said one day. 'Let Ucureña hand their arms over first of all and we [Cliza] will be prepared to hand our arms over afterward.'[69]

The Cochabamba peasants' war during the revolution can be interpreted as a political ritual that ultimately unfurled peasant power symbols before the national society, cementing the foundations of a campesino identity in Bolivia. For this reason, peasants believed that—despite the legacy of violence the Champa Guerra left behind—it was part of a constructive process that shaped their social character and added a central element to their collective identity.

The revolution served us a great deal; it was a total change. A lot of people say that we peasants just settled for getting the land. No! The land was already ours by right. … If it hadn't been for this revolution, we wouldn't have had the Champa Guerra, or anything. Today we would still be going on just the same under the boots of the landlords. This is an experience, now we know how to argue, now we've learnt … so now we know for ourselves without them saying anything to us. We ourselves make out the documents now and we give them out to public opinion, now we don't need any little lawyer (*abogadillo*) to do them … this is the second revolution in the world, because the first one was in Mexico, where the peasants rose up, the second one was in Bolivia.[70]

The symbolism used by peasants to affirm their political identity, relative to regional and national power groups, also held great importance when the time came to define their alliances and pacts. When recalling General Barrientos, for instance, peasants always highlighted the importance of personal face-to-face relationships, as these allowed the display of symbolic acts and rituals which legitimated the relationship between authority and subordination. During Víctor Paz's second presidential term

(1960–64), he centralized his activities in La Paz and only sporadically visited the Cochabamba Valle Alto. In contrast, General René Barrientos was in the valley quite often: "When he came to the valley, General Barrientos began to dance with peasant girls there, with everyone. While doctor [Víctor Paz] never danced with peasant girls, he never went to the countryside. General Barrientos took advantage of that and just made a coup [d'état]."[71] General Barrientos was one of the politicians who best understood this facet of peasant character. He made successful use of it when political tension erupted in Cochabamba because of the right wing of the MNR's push to centralize power in their hands, and the left wing's ambition to seize power by any means possible. These political attitudes were detrimental for the peasant movement, as both the right- and left-wing factions attempted to relegate the new status of the peasants and also manipulate them to their advantage. At the peak of the Champa Guerra, General Barrientos traveled throughout the valley towns addressing peasants in their local Quechua language. This memory vividly survived in the peasants' minds and was associated with sincere friendship symbology: "He [Barrientos] left his tears to the peasants. He talked to the peasants weeping. He wept when advising us: 'Don't do that [don't fight] between brothers. We're brothers, let's not do that among us.' He left his tears, he cried."[72] Contrary to right-wing authoritarianism or left-wing pragmatism, General Barrientos used shared symbology that immediately connected him to the peasants and therefore elevated him to a position of legitimate authority in the eyes of the peasants.

> We used to go to his house with machine guns as his guards. How many times did we shoot! Barrientos was a gentleman, he called us to his birthday parties, or he would call us to a meeting any day. The chicha was there in cut-off drums, from here to there or back again, in the order we entered his house in he passed us the beer with his own hands. General Barrientos was a gentleman![73]

General René Barrientos' skillful communication strategy, however, became a road towards authoritarian paternalism, which was used by the military to control the peasant movement, and which eventually

degenerated into a sort of pork-barrel politics (*prebendalismo*) that corrupted the peasants' leading cadres.

> He brought us together in the meetings and told us: 'You'll never find anyone like me. I'm getting myself spat on by the rich, really bad, they're spitting shamefully in my face, those *q'aras* (city dwellers). Soldier! On the side of the peasants! Indian race! That's what they say to me.' He advised us as if we were his sons: 'Why do you get angry with each other? It's not good to get angry. We have to be one [united]. If you are divided and something bad happens to me, that'll be it! You won't exist anymore and you won't find anyone like me.' And when he was advising all that to us, the tragedy[accident] happened in Arque.[74]

Many peasants still believe that General Barrientos' death, when his helicopter crashed in Arque on 27 April 1969, was not an accident but an assassination plotted by anti-peasant sectors.[75] Nevertheless, the peasant-military pact of 1964 provoked a generational conflict within the peasant cadres, for old guard members disliked military presence in the valley: "'It is a revolution within the revolution.' General Barrientos used to say to get in with the peasants. But that wasn't his purpose, his tactic was to get rid of unionism. He had his youths (*lloqallas*) ready and it was all set up. He had to become dictator, that was his aim."[76] Meanwhile, younger leaders blamed General Barrientos' failure on the fact that he surrounded himself with old-guard leaders and did not leave room for the new generation: "Barrientos had the idea of forming new leaders, but he didn't manage it. So, what did he do? He hired the same ones; he was surrounded by the same [old guard leaders]."[77]

The generation of older peasant leaders—those who rose under the hacienda system that had kept them in ignorance—was challenged by the new generation of peasants who managed to study and educate themselves and left the countryside (see figure 5.6). The children of the old generation asked them: what did the peasants fight for? The common answer was that they struggled for their rights, although the result they finally obtained

FIGURE 5.6 Top Revolutionary Peasant Leaders. From left to right: Miguel Veizaga, Juvenal Castro, Sinforoso Rivas, and Salvador Vásquez (Cochabamba, August 2, 1997).

was that of perpetuating poverty in the rural areas of Bolivia. However, as a summation of the older revolutionary generation's state of mind:

> I am as I should be. Bit by bit among peasants we've become closer. For example, he's my friend, he's my friend too. 'How are you, Don Mario?' They ask me. 'How are you, mates?' I answer. 'Have a drink.' They invite me in the tavern. I invite them as well and we hug each other. There's no problem, we ourselves have realized (*de por sí nos hemos orientado*).[78]

The revolutionary violence is now buried in the past, but it still survives in the minds of Bolivian peasants as a reminder of the heavy price they were forced to pay to consolidate their campesino identity and to keep their political autonomy intact.

Conclusion

The Cochabamba peasants' political experience was forged in the heat of their struggles with the landlords, which were exacerbated after the Chaco War (1932–35). Peasants' efforts to integrate themselves into a national project and seek citizenship were backed up by factions of the local elite, who joined the post-war political parties opposing the liberal regime. Supported initially by external agents, peasants fought to organize their unions and demand their civil rights. The 1952 national revolution encouraged unionization and promoted the wider presence of peasants in the political arena. In the late 1950s, violence that combined political, ethnic, and economic issues broke out in the valley of Cochabamba, and the Champa Guerra (1959–64) started. The MNR's internal political divisions, the city versus country opposition, and the increased consumption of chicha during the revolutionary period inflamed peasant politics and promoted armed confrontations between the Cliza and Ucureña peasant militias. The military intervened in the conflict, paving the way for state control of peasants and their unions and fostering a coup that ended the revolutionary process in 1964.

The revolutionary process transformed peasant identity and subjectivity, thus developing a new political culture in the Cochabamba valley. The everyday life experience of revolutionary valley peasants reaffirmed the truth of their patriarchal perceptions of authority and the related conceptualization of power as associated with female subordination. During the revolutionary period, a process of ethnogenesis took place that linked ethnicity to the territorial origin of people. The town dwellers reclaimed their vecino identity by rejecting ethnic links with the despised Indians, who lived in the countryside. Although avoiding mentioning a white or mestizo ethnic identity, vecinos drew a line of separation between themselves and rural dwellers by emphasizing their daily economic activity as traders, artisans, professionals, or state officials. To develop such skills, vecinos argued, required fluent use of the Spanish language. This identified vecinos in contrast to Indians, who were Quechua speaking agriculturalists that were mainly illiterate.

Rural dwellers, for their part, rejected the colonial identity of Indian and instead they proclaimed their campesino identity. In terms of both

ethnicity and class, valley peasants fought to find their own positive differential characteristics to establish distance between themselves and vecinos. They named the vecinos *q'aras* (white or mestizo people living in the towns), who were different from them just because they were wealthier. However, they argued, campesinos possessed their own private land and were more educated now than they ever had been before the revolution, therefore, they were not Indians anymore and instead they were citizens with the same rights and duties as vecinos. When campesinos moved into the towns, they transformed themselves into *cholos* (citified Indians). From their point of view, the word *cholo* was not pejorative, in sharp contrast to vecinos who abhorred the "*cholification*" of the peasantry and vilified rural migrants arriving to the cities.

The word "campesino" (peasant) was barely used in the pre-revolutionary era and it was finally accepted only after violent political struggles between rural and town dwellers during the revolutionary era. The Champa Guerra was the catalyst event that consolidated the campesino identity in Bolivian society. The display of peasant militias' power and the violent confrontations they endured amongst their factions finally convinced vecinos that campesinos had exceeded the town dwellers' traditional power. After the Champa Guerra, it became evident that campesinos were fully autonomous actors competing for power in the political arena. The struggles of valley peasants for education, land property, unionization, and political autonomy paid off and campesinos were by and large successful in fulfilling their aims. But the road to social advancement took a heavy toll. The Champa Guerra left the campesinos exhausted and their leaders discredited in the view of the grassroots peasant organizations. At this point in time, the military cleverly filled the void of authority in the valley peasant society by manipulating the paternalistic projection of General Réne Barrientos, who pacified the peasantry as part of his seizure of power. The old generation of peasant leaders that had emerged with the revolution gave way to a new generation of leaders who were born within the context of the Cold War and the military dictatorship in Bolivia. Campesinos during the post-revolutionary era faced different challenges, for political power had returned to the cities. How did they reconfigure their political agenda? This is a fascinating query but beyond the scope of this work.

Conclusion

When asked to elaborate upon the political relationship between valley campesinos and altiplano *Kataristas* (members of a highland ethnic movement) in the mid-1990s, a former revolutionary peasant leader in the Cochabamba Valle Alto discussed that situation from his past in frustration and anger:

> We tried to make a deal with the Kataristas, with their group in La Paz. But they are no more than political traffickers. They don't leave their nest; they stay in their altiplano. They think that the altiplano is everything. No, that is not true! When we met, I told them: 'Gentlemen, forget that you are Kataristas, we are all campesinos. Why don't we talk just one language? Aymaras, Quechuas, Guaraníes, let's all talk a common language and organize a single political party! You have funds coming from many countries. Let's organize a unique party!' They didn't accept the deal and we told them: 'All right, then you keep going with your Katarista movement, let's see what you will get from it. In the meantime, we will keep begging power to the politicians.'[1]

The valley peasant leader, it seems, was transposing his revolutionary experience in his effort to create a political party that would allow peasants to negotiate power with the elites. He did not realize that times had changed. He did not perceive that one historical cycle was slowly petering out amidst others still going or just arising. The ethnic movements of the 1990s in Bolivia did not seek to negotiate leverage with the state but instead the direct seizure of power from the elites. This old campesino leader

could not foresee that ethnic movements would indeed take power in 2006 and rule Bolivia until 2019, during the Evo Morales era.

Mestizaje and Popular Resistance

The generation of revolutionary peasants in Bolivia had generally been born after the Mexican revolution (1910) and—from a broader cultural perspective—their lived experience had inscribed itself and grown alongside the modern nation-state formation process in Latin America, beginning in the early twentieth century. During this era, some progressive sectors of the elites implemented "civilizing" statist projects, in an attempt to transform traditional socio-economic structures. Elites sought to discipline the individuality of people below them in their perceived social hierarchy with the aim of constructing subjects who could be interlocutors with the modern state. The modern bureaucrats, soldiers, peasants, miners, artisans, and workers needed to become tax-paying, responsible participants in the continued subsistence of the national state, which is to say, a society of devoted citizens whose responsible behavior could guarantee the advance of modern progressive civilization in Bolivia. This high-modern philosophy of progress that guided the nation-building process and the modeling of responsible citizens with equal rights and duties vis-à-vis the state, however, clashed with some of the ideas culturally inherited from the colonial past, which influenced the minds of both those who resisted and those who advocated for social change. Racist messages soaked in positivist rhetoric were disseminated from world power centers in the late nineteenth century, further exciting and inciting the imagination of Latin American intellectuals regarding the status of the so-called "inferior races" in nation-building processes.[2] The twentieth century witnessed the resurgence of an old colonial controversy concerning the status of the mestizos and their role in the modernizing process. The conservative sector of the Latin American elite adopted a discourse that painted the Indian as an inferior race to be marginalized from the process of modernity. Meanwhile, another sector of the elite, one more inclined to *indigenista* and Marxist ideals, considered the "Indian" as a race that had to be transformed in order to be integrated into the national project of modernity. The idea of transforming the Indian into a citizen revived the image of the mestizo. Defined by exclusion—they were and

are considered neither white nor Indian—mestizos were converted into a symbol of the tenuous balance between two social groups whose interests were historically opposed.[3]

Beginning in the colonial era, the Cochabamba valley had the highest concentration of mestizos in Upper Peru, or the geographical area now composing Bolivia. Seeking to avoid colonial tribute, Indians fled from their *reducciones* (colonial Indian territories) and sheltered in the valley haciendas, simultaneously shifting their Indian identity to mestizo. In the late eighteenth century, mestizos were a third of the total population of Cochabamba and a century later they were more than a half.[4] In the early twentieth century, the crisis in the haciendas worsened because of the loss of their markets for agricultural produce in the altiplano, as railways were built to export minerals and import agricultural products. At the same time, the tin mining boom allowed peasant-miners to consolidate their economies and purchase plots of land, put on the market by bankrupt landlords. By mid-twentieth century, *piqueros* (smallholders) were thriving in the Cochabamba valley.[5]

The outcomes of the political economy of Cochabamba, however, found a counterpart in the ideological struggle carried out by peasants and landlords. Despite the crisis of the landlord class (or because of it), the more conservative factions of this class clung to neo-colonial ideas that blocked the insertion of the Indian into the regional economy and society. Simultaneously, intellectuals of these factions elaborated negative representations of mestizos, who were depicted as a social group that had shifted from their original Indian identity, calling them *cholos* and claiming that they endangered the social stability of the nation.[6] A dissident group of the regional elites contested this "scapegoat narrative." The members of this dissident group were mainly the children of the financially bankrupt *hacendados* (landlords), whose daily interactions with the mestizo peasantry in their haciendas had allowed them to build real and symbolic spaces of cultural syncretism, i.e., the market and the *chichería* (tavern).[7] Nevertheless, the privileged status of the chichería as a space of cultural syncretism—where discourses of social justice and equality brought together mestizo peasants and dissident members of the elites—was more appropriate to the tavern's pre-revolutionary role.[8] Once the peasants rose in arms during the revolutionary period, the chichería

ceased to be conciliatory and was transformed into a center where revolutionary discourse was generated, but which was mainly uttered by defiant peasants.

The revolution acted as incentive for the formation of peasant unions, which were the quintessential sphere of political debate and indoctrination. The unions gathered together the dispersed rural mestizo population, and for the first time in Bolivian history campesinos built their own political space of public representation and identity vis-à-vis the rest of society. The impact of unionism on the subjectivity of the peasant was extraordinary, for the union allowed a previously atomized, marginalized, and despised mestizo people to feel as acting members of a national project, under the common identity of campesino.

Neither the political rhetoric nor the everyday discourse of Cochabamba's rural peoples fully employed the term "mestizo" to identify any of its members. Instead, it was the identity of "the campesino" that was seen as able to negotiate effectively with the revolutionary state and with the other social groups. This was because, from the perspective of the hacienda *colonos* (tenants) who had led the struggles for civil rights and access to land in the valley estates, the context of negotiation for both sets of demands was primarily political and only secondarily ethnic. Class position was fundamental to the social and political contexts of the 1952 revolution, and consequentially the peasants used it to formulate their alliances and identify their opponents. Additionally, they assimilated two key referents which also guided their political struggles: the experience of *piqueros* (smallholders)—who had obtained land through the market—and that of the mineworkers—who negotiated social justice via politics. It was the combination of both these strategies that most accurately represented revolutionary peasant politics in 1950s Bolivia. However, this does not mean, that peasant identity was devoid of ethnic content. On the contrary, class and ethnicity were intertwined in peasant identity in such a complex manner that it is hard to understand them as separate components of it. When negotiating their identity—in the context of a society in which ethnic bias was predominant—peasants found political advantages by crossing ethnic and class border lines. Firstly, because it allowed the peasants to engage in dialogue in class terms vis-à-vis the intellectuals, politicians, and the workers' vanguards. Secondly, it allowed the peasants

to defend themselves in ethnic terms from the attacks of the elites. The peasants fought and negotiated their lives on two fronts and by making pragmatic use of ethnic and class positions.

There are some issues that have emerged from this discussion that must be highlighted. Firstly, that mestizaje is not a contemporary trend that should be solely associated with the modernizing efforts of the twentieth-century nation-building process, but instead that its origins can be traced as far back as the early colonial period. Colonial mestizos contested the apartheid-like state model by assuming mestizo identity, consciously manipulating the ethnic terms imposed by the colonial state. In other words, mestizos' resistance undermined the colonial model that segregated Indians from Spaniards. Secondly, although the state promoted and sponsored ethnic rhetoric basically for political aims towards social control, subordinate groups could, and in fact did, manipulate ethnicity and identity to resist state control and exploitation.

This is true of modern mestizaje, a process that was initially based on altering ethnic terms, but which gradually decanted into what is Cochabamba's current campesino identity. When a connection is established between mestizaje and campesino in political action, it is possible to observe how the process of social identity formation is fully immersed in William Roseberry's "field of force," which is the space where the state is constantly recreated as an everyday form of political and cultural activity.[9] In Cochabamba, the political and rhetorical agendas of peasants, landlords, politicians, and the military clashed within the revolutionary field of force. Political actors were divided into diverse groups with divergent proposals, but each of them negotiated in search of a position of power vis-à-vis the rest of society. In the mid-twentieth century, the proposal of mestizaje as ethnic equality put forward by a sector of the elite, was assumed and (re)interpreted by the campesinos so as to negotiate their own identity in fundamentally class terms.

Revolutionary Campesino Politics

Just nine months after the April 1952 revolution, peasants in the Cochabamba valley were already radicalized. By then, the Ucureña peasant union in the Valle Alto had loudly demanded "agrarian revolution" instead of "agrarian reform." The Ucureños strategy consisted of

transferring political power to redistribute land to the grassroots unions, thus circumventing established political authorities. Urban intellectuals and politicians were terrified. Peasant activists of the Trotskyist Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Worker's Party, POR) were blamed for radicalizing the peasantry, and both rural POR activists and peasant leaders of Ucureña were arrested by the police and deported from the Valle Alto. Meanwhile, the upper echelons of the POR and the Marxist-oriented Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Party, PIR) decided to collaborate with the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR) to carry out the agrarian reforms envisioned by the state.

This early revolutionary event defined the *campesinista* (pro-peasant) position of the Ucureña peasant union and elevated the political status of its leader, José Rojas, to that of chief commander of the Valle Alto peasant militias. In contrast, peasants in the Valle Bajo supported the official agrarian reform project, adopting an *obrerista* (pro-worker) position that emanated from the Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers' Central, COB) and the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (Federation of Peasant Workers of Cochabamba, FSTCC), whose top leader and commander of the Valle Bajo peasant militias was Sinforoso Rivas. The hamlet of Ucureña in the Valle Alto and the town of Sipe Sipe in the Valle Bajo, therefore, became the two oppositional geographic poles of campesino politics during the revolutionary era (see map 1.3).

What forces were at play behind this dichotomy of peasant power in the revolutionary-era Cochabamba valley? Historically, the peasants' incorporation into the nationalist 1952 revolution was not in any way spontaneous, instead, it was preceded by a pre-revolutionary past rife with coordinated and intense political activity. In the altiplano of Cochabamba, as noted by Laura Gotkowitz, the "forces of the law" were at play when comunarios demanded the restoration of their communal lands.[10] While, as argued in this study, the "forces of the market" were at play when the valley peasants demanded their right to private land ownership through their unions. The valley peasants were also not politically homogeneous, for they had contrasting interests regarding their access to natural resources. The Valle Alto peasants were more focused on land distribution, while

in the Valle Bajo the focus was on access to irrigation water. Historical context was the core source of this dichotomy, for lands in the Valle Bajo had been fragmented when the communal territory was sold in the late nineteenth century. In 1952 the Valle Bajo was populated by a large number of smallholders, but former landlords still controlled the irrigation sources. In contrast, haciendas persisted in the Valle Alto and were the principal target for land distribution among the colonos and the landless local peasantry.

Social forces were also at play in the power dichotomy between peasants in the Valle Alto and Valle Bajo. The Ucureños' main leader was José Rojas, a former colono of the Santa Clara hacienda, whose cadre was composed by his fellow colono comrades. Almost all of them were illiterate and their political actions were initially influenced by the PIR and the POR. Although Ucureña never broke its links with the MNR revolutionary regime, its radical position challenged the official agrarian policy when "agrarian revolution" was proclaimed by the Ucureña central versus the MNR's official "agrarian reform" project. The government worked hard to realign Ucureña with its official agrarian policies, but it was finally unable to convince Ucureña to apply the MNR's left-wing agrarian-cooperative's project in the Valle Alto. The political clash between vecinos and campesinos was central to the contradictions inherent to rural society in the Valle Alto during the revolutionary period. The MNR's plan to centralize power was rejected by the Ucureña peasants, for it would have transferred power to the town of Cliza. In fact, the Champa Guerra (1959–64) between Cliza and Ucureña—far from just being a local feud among peasant leaders—was the result of Ucureña's defense of peasant autonomy vis-à-vis the central political authority. In other words, from the Ucureños' point of view, to be campesino meant to own individual plots of land in a rural society ruled by local union leaders.

In contrast, the Valle Bajo's main leader, Sinforoso Rivas, was born in Catavi (Siglo XX mines), and his father was a Valle Bajo peasant migrant. Rivas was an educated man, as were many of the leaders who surrounded him. He had worked in the mines and had practiced politics in the mineworkers' union, which was by then heavily influenced by the POR. On 6 August 1952, the FSTCC was founded in Sipe Sipe and Rivas was elected its general secretary. Rivas was close to Juan Lechín, who was the leader of

the COB and by then the minister of mines and oil. Both Rivas and Lechín worked together to implement the official "agrarian reform" project by expropriating the remaining haciendas in the Valle Bajo and organizing a number of peasant-miners' agrarian cooperatives. The cooperative project failed, and the lands were redistributed to the peasants and miners on an individual basis.[11] Conflict between campesinos and vecinos was not as entrenched in the Valle Bajo as it was in the Valle Alto, and, therefore, local ethnic confrontations in the Valle Bajo never reached the level of violence experienced in the Valle Alto during the Champa Guerra. In other words, to be campesino in the Valle Bajo meant to be a rural smallholder, a person who was integrated into a larger society ruled by the authority of the central government.

Long-term historical processes in the Cochabamba valleys had finally produced two socially differentiated campesino groups in the Valle Alto and the Valle Bajo. Although the division between "agrarian revolution" and "agrarian reform" has been usually attributed to debates at the top, within the MNR leadership, this study has shown that this divide was in fact a power struggle between campesinos themselves.

The Champa Guerra in the Valle Alto, was marked by bloody confrontations between the Ucureña and Cliza peasant union militias. Although triggered by an internal MNR leadership conflict, this peasant war was in fact a power struggle between *vecinos* (town dwellers) and *campesinos* (peasants). Both right- and left-wing factions of the MNR distrusted the participation of the campesinos in politics and attempted to control and subordinate the peasant unions; the former through the party's urban power network and the latter through the worker's union network. The Valle Bajo peasant federation aligned early on with the COB and remained close to the miner's political initiatives throughout the revolutionary period. In contrast, the Valle Alto peasant federation was not aligned with the COB, but was also not subjected to the MNR. Thus, Ucureña's political position was always vulnerable to criticism from both the right- and the left-wing sectors of the MNR. When political campaigns for the 1960 presidential election began, Víctor Paz and Walter Guevara competed for peasant support in the Cochabamba valley, and both aspirants for the MNR candidacy stirred up peasant divisions in the Valle Alto to weaken the power of the unions. Guevara and the right-wing sector of the MNR

backed up the political ambitions of Miguel Veizaga (a former member of Ucureña's cadre), allowing him the command of the Cliza peasant union. The Víctor Paz-Juan Lechín binomial won the 1960 election, but far from mitigating the Champa Guerra, Vice-President Lechín further instigated the conflict by supporting Cliza and Veizaga's leadership. José Rojas and the Ucureña militias aligned with Paz against Lechín and a period of extreme internal conflict within the MNR began, which further exacerbated the fight between Cliza and Ucureña.

In the early 1960s, the Cold War was being perpetuated in earnest and the Cuban revolution intensified the United States' defensive policies in Latin America. The militaries of Latin American countries became the new political actors, able to defend the continent against the communist threat, and this shift was supported both ideologically and financially by the government of the United States. The international left assigned a new political role for the peasantry, as the supportive force behind a broad social insurrection leading towards eventual socialist revolution. Mobilized peasants in Bolivia were perceived as a potential threat to democracy and warnings also arose related to the radicalization of some peasant union centers in the Cochabamba Valle Alto and Sacaba. Politics in revolutionary Bolivia took a sudden, favorable turn for the military, and air-force General René Barrientos emerged as a prominent political figure. The military was in charge of a civic action program funded by USAID, which allowed Barrientos to plan and build infrastructure works in the conflictive areas of the Valle Alto. Ucureña supported Barrientos' vice-presidential candidacy for the 1964 presidential election, running on a binomial ticket with Víctor Paz who was up for re-election. During this turbulent period in Bolivian politics, the military cleverly constructed Barrientos' image as the protector of the peasants against the socialist rhetoric of the left, which empowered workers and denigrated peasants by depicting them as conservative. Prior to the June 1964 presidential and vice-presidential election, a peasant-military pact was signed on 9 April between Barrientos and the peasantry, which allowed Barrientos not only to reach power in hand with that of President Paz, but later on seize total power through a military coup d'état.

As important as making the revolution, however, was thinking the revolution. In Thomas Benjamin's words: "The past, as well as power, is

contested in politics, war, and revolution. In the course of any struggle, the more powerful favor certain memories and myths over others and seek to create an official (and in aspiration dominant or national) memory in order to legitimize existing political authority."[12] Throughout the revolutionary era, the valley peasants were engaged in a discursive struggle against the landlords, MNR politicians, and the military. Local newspapers were the rhetorical arena where political actors debated their interpretations of ideas and events. Initially, debates were centered around ethnic issues, such as whether revolutionary rural workers should be considered Indians or peasants. This was indeed no minor issue at that time, as the revolution's character itself was at stake. If rural workers were to be considered Indians, then all previous colonial and liberal ethnic biases and racist arguments regarding "inferior races" would reemerge in the debate over the constitution of a revolutionary society in the valley. If rural revolutionaries were to be regarded as peasants, however, the debate would be addressed in class terms and peasants would be in a position of equality vis-à-vis the other social classes. The revolutionary context favored the campesino solution, for the intense rhetorical struggle came together within a context of practical empowerment of the valley peasantry. The landlord class was in retreat, seeking refuge in towns and cities, and unionized peasants were occupying their rural properties.

Reality, in this case, exceeded the whirling discourse, and the representational image of the powerful revolutionary campesino gradually displaced that of the traditional Indian. Notwithstanding this, the fight was far from being over, for the ethnic struggle shifted towards a confrontation (both rhetorical and practical) between vecinos and campesinos. The MNR's attempt to centralize power and control the peasant unions was in fact a political move to transfer power from the countryside to the city. The MNR revolutionaries, however, could not simply reinstate the liberal karma of the "barbaric" campesinos versus the "civilized" vecinos to establish in practice its project for the transfer of power to the city. Instead, the regime (which then monopolized the media in Cochabamba) began to fabricate a representational image of the *cacique campesino* (peasant union boss), who allegedly always compelled campesinos to act against the law. The depiction of peasant bosses as outlaw agitators was instrumentalized by the government in efforts to repress dissident

peasant leaders. This was all done without compromising the MNR's alleged admiration for the revolutionary peasantry. The local press covered the Champa Guerra unflaggingly, propping up the notion that unhinged Ucureña bosses were instigating peasants to confront vecinos and occupy the cities. In the early 1960s, the military's tactics to gain the confidence of the Valle Alto peasantry involved not only handing over schools, hospitals, and roads, but also elevating the peasants' political personalities to the same level as urban politicians. In other words, the military treated the campesino leaders (at least in rhetorical terms) as equal political contenders vis-à-vis the rest of society. Once the military seized power, however, its patronizing policy towards the peasantry was transformed into a system of peasant political coercion.

Revolutionary Campesino Identity

How did campesinos in the Valle Alto remember the revolution? How did the revolution shape the campesinos' political culture? How were revolutionary peasants able to reconstruct their previous ideas of authority and power in their communities? All these topics regarding peasant culture have been elaborated upon in this study from a revisionist theoretical perspective. Peasants in this study are considered dynamic political actors, and the makers of their own history. Thus, as stated by Boyer, peasant attitudes were not simply "inferred from structural categories, as if rural people's worldview was somehow governed by their form of land tenure."[13]

A first step in analyzing the valley peasants' identities and subjectivities revolves around decentering the hegemony of the regime, as this approach is useful in outlining the heterogeneity of the ruling MNR party. A second step is to make gender central to the analysis of power. These approaches together provide insights into cultural differences amongst peasants, which had been forged by distinct historical relations to land, the state, local elites, and the market. From the interviews conducted with Valle Alto peasants included in this book, two important issues emerge. Firstly, during that period, authority was associated with the patriarch's image, and this was also linked to the commonly held conceptualization of wisdom at that time and place. The father's symbolic image was the most meaningful concept in efforts to reestablish social harmony, for the peasants believed that just as the patriarch's authoritarian image guaranteed

social harmony, it also served to legitimize access to land. Therefore, when hacienda lands were distributed and each colono received his own plot, the process of distribution of land was fair, because from the peasants' ethical point of view this action was reasonable, given that it was carried out on the lands where their ancestors had through multigenerational toil and inhabitation developed their land into agriculturally efficient and productive plots. When land was distributed, the union leaders' role was limited to exerting controls over the process, and this role was based on the power that peasants had delegated to them. They acknowledged that the leaders' power for land distribution was fair between leaders and peasants, which also meant that authority was equal among community members. Secondly, the interviews also unveiled the fact that power was sexualized and that this behavior originated in the violence landlords used to subordinate the peasantry. Peasant leaders replicated the previous landlord's behavior by using the same level of violence in reformulating the power structure in the countryside. Just as authority was associated with the patriarchal image, power was related to the image of woman. Public displays of women as a symbol of power were instrumentalized when the distribution of hacienda lands to former colonos was completed and the conflictive issue became disputes over the distribution of marginal lands amongst other peasant groups, especially women.

Agrarian reform transformed not only social relations, but also the individualities and subjectivities of the peasants. The Cochabamba Valle Alto peasants' "selective tradition"[14] concerning their land rights was an inherited trait from the work their parents invested in each plot they had cultivated on the estates. From their perspective, the seizure of hacienda lands, without awaiting the mediation of the state, was nothing but a legitimate act that imposed justice. This perspective shaped their own ideas of how the political relationship between the peasants and the revolutionary state ought to be reformulated. As a consequence, the Valle Alto peasants opposed the revolutionary state attempt to replicate the Mexican model of *ejidos* (communal lands) through arranging and maintaining the organization of agrarian cooperatives in their territory. This MNR left-wing project handed over hacienda lands to groups of miners and peasants, explaining this action with the argument that lands ought to be exploited in common under the miners' direction, who in theory were the sole bearers of the

revolutionary ideology that would eventually lead the peasants down the socialist road. The project was a failure and the peasants demanded that the agrarian properties again be divided into individual holdings. Under the administration of the miners the cooperatives were plundered and the miners attempted to subordinate their peasant partners.

In Cochabamba the communal option for land reform was weak or at least constrained to the highlands, while valley medium property holders and smallholders pursued their interests in the political arena. With the failure of the agrarian cooperatives' project and the subsequent loss of prestige for the MNR's left wing, the regime leaned to the right and backed up the medium property owners. Desperate, the smallholder peasants quickly became afraid that this would give rise to a counter-revolutionary process that could take away the plots they occupied but also held without legal title. Thus, during the Hernán Siles administration (1956–60), the peasant unions and their leaders were under pressure from two fronts. On one side, peasants were pressured by the government to oppose the workers' movement and support the MNR's monetary stabilization program, in exchange for guaranteeing (even if only discursively) the legality of smallholding property. On the other side, both the left and the workers' movement also pressured peasants to conform to a political front against the regime's plan, but without clarifying the fate of the smallholding property in the event that the left-wing sector regained power.

In the Cochabamba valley, peasants lived scattered on their plots and their community links were created through the union. Consequently, the peasant communities represented by their unions were socially and geographically separated from the rural town dwellers. When the MNR began to centralize power, it did so from the towns. These conditions created the perfect environment for violent confrontations between peasants and town dwellers. The MNR's internal division only further inflamed the political conditions that had ignited the conflict among the Valle Alto population before the Champa Guerra (1959–64). Vecino versus campesino antagonism was at the heart of the peasant conflicts in the rural areas of the Cochabamba valley at the very moment that the agrarian reform began to be publicly debated. The two political wings of the MNR manipulated ethnically definitive, symbolic images of the peasants, contrived from their own points of view, although both agreed on the idea

that they were inherently subordinated social and political actors. The MNR's right wing emphasized the virtues of the "progressive landlords" and linked them to the towns, and elaborated idyllic images of humble Indian-peasants obedient to the state, connecting this relationship back to the Andean's Inca ancestors. The MNR's left wing identified the primary role of the vanguard of the worker in their political theory and spread this narrative in the towns, praising the peasants' revolutionary capacity, but this was granted only if they were submissive to a centralist state ruled by the proletariat. Within this discursive context, the terrifying image of the *cacique campesino* arose. This image summed up the deep fear felt by the urban population for the unpredictable character of the mestizo. Unstable, given to fighting, arrogance, and a daring attitude, the cacique campesino became the scapegoat for the revolutionary disorder. Agrarian reform in Cochabamba promoted masculinity in local social relations and encouraged the search for individual autonomy among the peasants. This individuality, however, was always shielded by a collective subjectivity which was the peasant union, personified in the representational image of the cacique campesino or peasant boss.

Finally, the transformations brought on by the revolution affected gender relations in both the local society and the peasant family. At the social level, women obtained the right to vote under the same conditions as men, but they were not allowed to participate in union activities. After all, if the peasants' idea of power was based on women's subordination, male leaders at that time were certainly not ready to accept equal female participation in the unions as political contenders. At the family level, the agrarian reform had patriarchal foundations, for the male (father or husband) was defined as the "head of the family" and he was the official beneficiary of the land title. As a consequence, the situation of young women, divorcees, and single mothers became especially precarious, given that to have access to land they had to depend on their relationships with single or married men and union leaders. As a top peasant leader, Sinforoso Rivas, explained: "Widows, single mothers, and (to a lesser extend) unmarried women, who had worked on landed estates were granted access to smallholder property. All other peasant women were not considered in the agrarian reform law as the beneficiaries for land distribution."[15] This issue

gave rise to the sexualization of peasant power, for the union leaders' will was indisputable when deciding which women would have access to land.

A Revolution After the Revolution?

Revolutions are extraordinary historical events that result in fundamental economic, social, and political transformations. The reasons why the Mexican (1910), Bolivian (1952) or Cuban (1959) revolutions, for instance, are considered to be comparable events are based on the substantial changes that occurred in their respective post-revolutionary societies, which were irrevocably transformed once their revolutionary processes unfolded. This is an undisputable assertion. What is debatable, however, are the causes and consequences of revolutions. Ethnic, ideological, academic, and political concerns—among others—permeate the interpretations of the origins and ends of revolutionary proceedings. Given such circumstances, comparative studies are essential to better understand what triggered the revolutions and the quality of the outcomes they reached.

Through comparison it is possible to enquire as to what circumstances made social situations potentially revolutionary and what defined the internal dynamics of the respective Latin America nationalist (and socialist) revolutions. When comparing Mexico and Bolivia, for instance, Alan Knight asserts that both revolutions "share common characteristics, especially when we consider the collective actors involved."[16] In the colonial era, both Mexico and Bolivia were silver producers and labor was supplied by the native population. In 1910, Mexico's liberal economy was booming; silver mining was not the leading industry anymore and agriculture was an export-oriented activity. Both the mines and the haciendas depended on free labor rather than extra-economic state coercion. Mexico at that point was a mestizo nation, where only 15% of the population was Indian. In contrast, Bolivia's liberal economy in 1952 was declining; tin prices plummeted as did the Bolivian economy, because the mining sector was the only export-oriented industry. Due to the stagnation of mine markets, the altiplano and valley haciendas were also in crisis. The hacienda owners' common solution was to increase extra-economic coercion upon members of the Indian labor force, while bankrupt valley landowners found a complementary solution by selling plots of land to mestizo laborers. Even though Indians were 60% of the Bolivian population at this time,

mestizos made up a quarter of the country's population and the majority of them lived in the Cochabamba valley region. Thus, as Knight asserts: "If valid, this contrast implies that any major revolution which affected 1910 Mexico or 1952 Bolivia was likely to assume somewhat contrasting forms: the former could count on generations of greater social, economic, and cultural integration; the latter would be prey to local, regional and, above all, ethnic particularisms."[17]

Although in 1952 the Bolivian rural population was a majority (80%) of the total population and peasant participation in the revolutionary process was overwhelming, yet the revolutionary icon held up by the MNR and other groups was the mine worker. According to Dunkerley:

> More than any other modern revolution, the Bolivian revolution had a single proletarian sector as its social vanguard. The miners were to occupy a veritable citadel of radical political imagination, not least through their opposition to the dictatorship after 1964 until 1985, when … the neoliberal Decree 21060 [issued by President Víctor Paz] was signed.[18]

This is one important reason why revolutionary campesinos in Bolivia have not attracted the attention of intellectuals, artists, writers, nor political visionaries as was the case of post-revolutionary Mexico, where rural folks also known as campesinos occupy a privileged position in the national consciousness of modern Mexico. Despite the fact that agrarian conflict in revolutionary Mexico lasted longer, was more violent, and ended up with the redistribution of more private lands than in Bolivia, the post-revolutionary Mexican elite "have understood campesinos to be the disenfranchised rural folk whom the revolution could 'redeem' and integrate into the political nation."[19] This was not the case in Bolivia, because the post-revolutionary elite, in general, had demonstrated antipathy for the peasantry and the role it had played in the revolution.

The Mexican and Bolivian post-revolutionary elites took a different approach towards their revolutionary peasantries—it might be argued—due to historical rather than cultural or sociological reasons. Firstly, because the Mexican revolution occurred before the Cold War era, when nationalist modernizing state projects in Latin America were popular and

the peasants' role in social change processes was praised as revolutionary. Meanwhile, the role of the revolutionary campesinos in Bolivia has always been implicitly contrasted with the Sierra Maestra mythology pointing to the Cuban peasantry's alleged role towards a socialist outcome. Secondly, the act of remembering the revolution is "a product of collective memory, mythmaking, and history writing … while it is individuals who remember, social groups determine what is memorable and how it will be remembered. … But collective memory, like individual memory, is never a faithful retrieval or reclamation of the past. It does not just happen … 'the memory of an event is an interpretation of an event'."[20] The Mexican post-revolutionary elites attempted to heal the wounds of memory as part of the state rebuilding process and also institutionalized the revolution by interpreting the revolutionary role of the peasant as central to the revolution. In contrast, the process of institutionalizing the revolution was not completed in Bolivia, as the elites failed to fully historicize the revolution. Lastly, intellectuals in Mexico (and Bolivia) "rather that treat campesino identity as a product of historical processes … [they] have understood campesino identity as a preconstituted fact, an objective social category produced by extrinsic and relatively stable historical structures such as rural people's ancient cultural traditions or the fact that they must work the land to make a living."[21] This structural approach has prevented historians from inquiring into the specific historical circumstances in which both the Mexican and the Bolivian peasantries were (self)constructed as a social entity. As stated by Boyer: "By focusing primarily on the ideologies and political discourses of the political class, [scholars] have left unanswered the critical question of how rural people came to create, adopt, or reject campesino identity, or indeed what it meant to them to be campesino in the first place."[22]

Both the academic and political "ethnic turn" of the 1980s, as well as the election of Evo Morales as the first indigenous president in 2006, gave rise to revisionist interpretations of the 1952 Bolivian nationalist revolution. Scholars in the 2000s and 2010s focused their attention on the indigenous people of the highlands, adopting a de facto altiplano-centric perspective. When analyzing pre-revolutionary conflicts in the altiplano of Cochabamba, for instance, Laura Gotkowitz—in an introductory section entitled "Revolution before the Revolution"—addresses the topic of

extreme violence in the Bolivian countryside. The analysis of four revolutionary conditions prior 1952 led her to conclude that during the 1940s indigenous people in the highlands utilized the legal tools that had been created by liberal governments (aiming to destroy the Indian communities) in efforts to preserve their communal lands: "In waging a revolution for their rights, [the Indians] turned the legal hierarchy on its head."[23] Sinclair Thompson, for his part, asserts that a previous revolution had occurred in the colonial era, when Túpaj Katari—who was a community member of the Indian town of Ayoayo, to the north of Lake Titicaca—rebelled against the colonial state: "Yet the nationalist narrative normally leaves out the single most important revolutionary moment in the history of the country's indigenous majority: 1781."[24] Finally, James Dunkerley argues that Evo Morales' ascension to power in 2006 and the populist economic policies of his political party were important enough to label this political moment as "the Third Bolivian Revolution": "The first strategic plan issued by the government of Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) headed by Evo Morales had as its markedly modest objective the reduction of the proportion of acutely poor to 27 percent of all Bolivians within five years."[25] It might be argued, however, that whatever the level of violence reached, no matter the outcomes of various legal wranglings and maneuverings, or the economic policies proposed, the social conflict that occurred before and after the 1952–64 revolutionary period did not transform Bolivian society in any fundamental or irreversible mode. Therefore, if we do not wish to relativize the concept of revolution in such a way that any major insurrection should be seen as a revolutionary event, there must be some common parameters employed to qualify social conflict at the level of a revolution.

Recent political events culminating in the demise of Evo Morales' regime in 2019 and the resulting call for new elections indicate that the "ethnic cycle" is declining in Bolivia. From 2006 to 2019, Morales ruled three consecutive presidential terms. Although his political party MAS was supported by the politically and economically powerful coca-leaf growers (*cocaleros*) unions in the sub-tropical Chapare region, ethnic discourse portraying him as the first original indigenous (*indígena originario*) president of Bolivia provided his regime with crucial symbolic representation. However, political discourse during the presidential electoral campaign in 2020 did not prioritize ethnicity anymore, instead, class-based issues

received all attention. Moreover, Evo Morales was not the MAS candidate in the 2020 election, and it is foreseeable that—despite the MAS re-election—class will overcome ethnicity as the main referent in future political discourse. Along with political shifts, academic trends are also shifting. The latest publications on the Bolivian revolution have begun to explore a reimagining of the political left and its analytical instruments. Kevin Young, for instance, published a book in 2017 addressing the issue of "resource nationalism" as a political principle that mobilized middle-class intellectuals' and workers' demands "to use these nonrenewable resources as a lever to diversify and industrialize Bolivia's mono-export economy."[26] In 2019, Young published another book that further revises the left's political role in Latin America by uncovering its negotiations over power, platforms, and everyday practices essential to understanding the past revolutionary successes and failures: "Learning the lessons of the past requires revisiting the history of the Latin American left with fresh eyes, unencumbered by Cold War categories and other blinders."[27]

Young's attempt to redefine the political left in Latin America is complementary to a broader scholarly effort to reconsider the peasants' role in contemporary revolutionary movements. Eric Wolf's classic work, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (1969), was reintroduced to the public in a book edited by Leigh Binford, et.al. (2020).[28] The editors argue that Wolf's ideas regarding the engagement of peasants in revolutionary activities, and the kinds of alliances that led to social change in different historical cases, "infused progressive intellectuals, activists, and political struggles with both intense optimism and deep despair, as popular challenges to the established order drove states' capacities for terror."[29] Consequently, the editors continue, in the 1980s revolution seemed neither possible nor desirable and scholars turned away from class to ethnic analysis. This shift was also evident in anthropology, where scholars rejected the "metanarratives" required to understand a changing global order and embraced questions of culture and identity formation. By the end of the twentieth century, the retreat from revolution, both coerced and acquiesced, had erased memories of its emancipatory possibilities. The reintroduction of Wolf's work, the editors conclude, "offers a way to rethink the meaning of revolutionary social change in the twenty-first century and to reestablish continuity with the emancipatory, albeit mostly forgotten, consequences

of past revolutions and the analytic projects that sought to understand and advance them."[30]

The contribution by Forrest Hylton to Binford's book addresses the analytical questions posited by Wolf, but in terms of present-day Bolivian society, politics, and culture.[31] Hylton's article is critical of the anthropological term 'indigeneity', for "[it] has replaced and erased thinking about class, and severed culture from political economy."[32] He is concerned that recent essays and monographs in the social sciences in Bolivia are dominated by anthropology, which "would benefit from returning to Wolf's nuanced understanding of class, community, and state formation, as well as the historical nature of racial/ethnic and regional differences."[33] A key question about power in Bolivia today, he concludes, is a question inextricably linked to the understanding of the "indigenous peasantry" in the twenty-first century: "Why were radical movements and organizations—composed to a large degree of rural workers and cultivators of indigenous and nonindigenous descent, i.e. peasants—unable to sustain momentum for a revolutionary project that would have remade the state along non-liberal lines?"

Whatever the answer to Hylton's query, the fact is that peasants are back as important actors in the political scenario in Bolivia, and their return to politics will have two repercussions: Firstly, it will shift the political and academic attention from the symbolism of the *indígenas originarios* communities in the altiplano to the *cocaleros* peasant unions in Chapare. Secondly, it will broaden the national horizon towards the eastern territories and societies, especially to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, where further research is needed to better understand contemporary Bolivian politics.[34]

Notes

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Robert Alexander, *The Bolivian National Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1958); Richard Patch, "Bolivia: The Restrained Revolution." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 334: I (1961); Dwight Heath, Charles Erasmus, and Hans Buechler. *Land Reform and Social Revolution in Bolivia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969); and James Malloy, *Bolivia: The Uncompleted Revolution* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970).
2. Malloy, *Bolivia*, 197.
3. Malloy, 203.
4. Alan Knight, "The Domestic Dynamics of the Mexican and Bolivian Revolutions Compared." In Merilee Grindle and Pilar Domingo, eds. *Proclaiming Revolution: Bolivia in Comparative Perspective* (Harvard and London: DRCLAS and ILAS, 2003): 55.
5. "In 1966–7 there was certainly sympathy for the strategy of armed struggle on the Bolivian Left, and this had been true in 1959–60. However, it was one thing to be in solidarity with Cuba, and quite another to adopt a distinct and foreign experience as a model for revolutionary change 'at home'." James Dunkerley, "The Bolivian Revolution at 60: Politics and Historiography." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, no. 45, (2013): 335.
6. Dunkerley, "The Bolivian Revolution," 338.
7. Herbert Klein, *Revolution and the Rebird of Inequality: A Theory Applied to the National Revolution in Bolivia* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981); and, *Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1982); Jerry Ladman, ed. *Modern-Day Bolivia: Legacy of the Revolution and Prospects for the Future* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University, Center for Latin American Studies, 1982); James Dunkerley, *Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952–82* (London: Verso, 1984); and James Malloy and Eduardo Gamarra. *Revolution and Reaction: Bolivia, 1964–1985* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, Inc., 1988).
8. Klein, *Bolivia,* 235.
9. Dunkerley, *Rebellion in the Veins*, 69.
10. Dunkerley, 116.
11. Silvia Rivera, *Oprimidos, pero no vencidos: luchas del campesinado aymara y qhechwa de Bolivia, 1900–1980* (La Paz: Hisbol/CSUTCB, 1984). Some years later, Rivera's book was translated to English, *"Oppressed but not Defeated": Peasants Struggles among the Aymara and Qhechwa in Bolivia, 1900–1980* (Geneva: UNRISD, 1987).

12 Rivera, *"Oppressed but not Defeated,"* 5.

13 Xavier Albó, "From MNRistas to Kataristas to Katari." In *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries*, edited by Steve J. Stern (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

14 Brooke Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia: Cochabamba, 1550–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

15 Brooke Larson, "Casta y clase: la formación de un campesinado mestizo y mercantil en la región de Cochabamba." *Allpanchis*, no. 35–36 (1990); and "Dimensiones históricas de la dinámica económica del campesinado contemporáneo en la región de Cochabamba." In *Explotación agraria y resistencia campesina*, edited by Brooke Larson (La Paz: CERES, 1983).

16 The demographic consequences of mestizaje in Upper Peru and in the valley of Cochabamba are addressed in Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz*, Indios y tributos en el Alto Perú* (Lima: IEP, 1978); and José M. Gordillo and Robert Jackson, "Mestizaje y proceso de parcelación en la estructura agraria de Cochabamba: El caso de Sipe Sipe en los siglos XVIII–XIX." *Hisla*, no. 10 (1987). Its social, ethnic, mercantile, and cultural effects are analyzed in Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*; and "Casta y clase,"; Brooke Larson and Rosario León, "Markets, Power, and the Politics of Exchange in Tapacarí, c. 1780 and 1980." In *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*, edited by Brooke Larson, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); and José M. Gordillo, "La región de Cochabamba desde una perspectiva ilustrada. El programa del Intendente Francisco de Viedma a fines del siglo XVIII." *Decursos* 2, no. 4 (1993). Its political consequences in Scarlett O'Phelan, *Rebellions and Revolts in Eighteenth Century Peru and Upper Peru* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1985).

17 Merilee Grindle and Pilar Domingo, eds. *Proclaiming Revolution: Bolivia in Comparative Perspective* (Harvard and London: DRCLAS and ILAS, 2003); Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson. *Revolutionary Horizons: Past and Present in Bolivian Politics* (London: Verso, 2007); and James Dunkerley, *Bolivia: Revolution and the Power of History in the Present* (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007).

18 Robert Gildner, "Indomestizo Modernism: National Development and Indigenous Integration in Post-revolutionary Bolivia, 1952–1964." (PhD dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2012).

19 Brooke Larson, "Revisiting Bolivian Studies: Reflections on Theory, Scholarship, and Activism since 1980." *Latin American Research Review*, 54 (2), (2019): 294–309. From the total number of items listed in the references, roughly 23 percent focused on indigenous altiplano societies, while only 2 percent on campesino valley societies.

20 José M. Gordillo, *Arando en la historia: La experiencia política campesina en Cochabamba* (La Paz: Plural Editores, 1998).

21 Sinforoso Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución: memorias de un líder campesino* (La Paz: CERES/Plural Editores, 2000).

22 José M. Gordillo, *Campesinos revolucionarios en Bolivia: identidad, territorio y sexualidad en el Valle Alto de Cochabamba, 1952–1964* (La Paz: Promec/Universidad de la Cordillera/Plural Editores/CEP UMSS, 2000).

23 Laura Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights: Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880–1952* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

24 See Dunkerley, "The Bolivian Revolution," 341.

25 Carmen Solíz, "'Land to the Original Owners': Rethinking the Indigenous Politics of the Bolivian Agrarian Reform." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 97, n. 2 (2017): 259–296; and, *Fields of Revolution: Agrarian Reform Rural State Formation, 1935–1964* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021).

26 Bridgette Werner, "To Make Rivers of Blood Flow: Agrarian Reform, Rural Warfare, and State Expansion in Post-Revolutionary Bolivia, 1952–1974." PhD dissertation, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018; and, "Between Autonomy and Acquiescence: Negotiating Rule in Revolutionary Bolivia, 1953–1958." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100: 1, February (2020): 93–122.

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28 Researchers emphasize the experience of marginalized social and political actors in the process of modernization in Latin America and call to decentralize the role of the state when exploring aspects related to power in extra institutional levels. See Gilbert Joséph, Catherine LeGrand, and Ricardo Donato Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham: Duke University Press,1998); Joséph and Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Aviva Chomsky and Aldo Lauria-Santiago, eds. *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: The Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Gilbert Joséph, *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); David Maybury-Lewis, ed. *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Gabriela Soto, *Jungle laboratories: Mexican peasants, national projects, and the making of the Pill* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); and Raúl Madrid, *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

29 See James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and *The Moral Economy of the Peasant Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

30 Jeffrey Rubin, *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism, and Democracy in Juchitán, Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Daniel Nugent, *Spent Cartridges of Revolution: An Anthropological History of Namiquipa, Chihuahua* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Ana Maria Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995).

31 Christopher Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos. Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Post-revolutionary Michoacán* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

32 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), and William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention." In *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the*

Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico, edited by G. M. Joséph and Daniel Nugent, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994): 355–366.

33 Jerry Knudson, *Bolivia. Press and Revolution, 1932–1964* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1 Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*, 13–31.

2 Nathan Wachtel, "Los mitimas del valle de Cochabamba: La política de colonización de Wayna Capac," Historia Boliviana 1, no. 1 (1981).

3 José M. Gordillo and Mercedes del Río. *La visita de Tiquipaya (1573): análisis etno-demográfico de un padrón toledano* (Cochabamba: CERES/UMSS, 1993): 27.

4 John Hemming. *The Conquest of the Incas* (Boston: Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

5 José M. Gordillo and Robert Jackson, "Formación, crisis y transformación de la estructura agraria de Cochabamba: El caso de la hacienda Paucarpata y de la comunidad del Passo, 1538–1645 y 1872–1929." *Revista de Indias*, no. 199, vol. LIII (1993); and Raimundo Schramm, "Mosaicos etnohistóricos del valle de Cliza (Valle Alto Cochabambino), siglo XVI." *Historia y Cultura*, no. 18 (1990).

6 Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*, 31–50 and Josep Barnadas. *Charcas: orígenes históricos de una sociedad colonial, 1535–1565* (La Paz: CIPCA, 1973).

7 David Cook, ed. *Tasa de la visita general de Francisco de Toledo* (Lima: UNSM, 1975).

8 Robert Jackson. *Regional Markets and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia: Cochabamba, 1539–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994): 26.

9 In Sipe Sipe, the main ayllus were Soras, Yungas, Cotas, Chichas, Cavis, Urus, and Chuyes. In Passo, Chichas, Urus, Soras, Charcas, Cara Caras, Yamparaes. In Tiquipaya, Carangas, Quillacas, Charcas, Collas, and two ayllus from the Cuzco area: Chiles and Chilques. See Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*, 39; and, Gordillo and Del Rio, *La visita de Tiquipaya*, 39–43.

10 Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*, 72–74.

11 Toledo's policies regarding the mita have striking similarities to Wayna Capac's mit'a policies in Cochabamba. It was due to the influence and ethnographic expertise of Polo de Ondegardo—Toledo's personal adviser—that the viceroy decided to replicate in Potosi previous Inca policies in Cochabamba.

12 Larson, 89–91 and Jackson, *Regional Markets*, 39–43.

13 José M. Gordillo, "El origen de la hacienda en el Valle Bajo de Cochabamba: Conformación de la estructura agraria (1500–1700)." (Bachellor's thesis, Universidad Mayor de San Simón, 1987).

14 José M. Gordillo and Robert Jackson, "Formación, crisis y transformación de la estructura agraria de Cochabamba: El caso de la hacienda Paucarpata y de la comunidad del Passo, 1538–1645 y 1872–1929." *Revista de Indias*, no. 199, vol LIII (1993): 732. Similar fraudulent practices were common in Huamanga (Peru); Spanish local authorities and Lucana's curacas colluded to embellish money from the caja de comunidad in 1578. See Steve Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982): 96.

15 José M. Gordillo, "El proceso de extinción del yanaconaje en el valle de Cochabamba: Análisis de un padrón de yanaconas (1692)." *Estudios-UMSS* no. 2 (1988).

16 Jackson, *Regional Markets*, 34, and Gordillo and Jackson, "Formación, crisis y transformación," 751.

17 Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*, 100.

18 Larson, 111.

19 Francisco de Viedma. *Descripción geográfica y estadística de la provincia de Santa Cruz de la Sierra [1788].* Tercera edición (Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro, 1969).

20 Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*, 175.

21 Viedma, *Descripción geográfica*, 202 and 84.

22 Gordillo, "La región de Cochabamba," 67.

23 Between 1878 to 1900, Sipe Sipe, Passo, and Tiquipaya, sold their communal lands. Farmers, artisans, merchants, and professionals bought 74% of communal lands, while landowners bought only 10%. Regarding the extension of the plots, 1,650 were within the range of 0–9.99 hectares (0–24.6 acres), while 19 were between 10–100+ hectares (24.7–247+ acres). In the lower extreme, 1,436 plots (86%) were smaller than one hectare (2.4 acres). Jackson, *Regional Markets*, 58 and 76. See also Gustavo Rodríguez, "Entre reformas y contrarreformas: las comunidades indígenas en el Valle Bajo Cochabambino (1825–1900)." In *La construcción de una región: Cochabamba y su historia, siglos XIX–XX,* edited by Gustavo Rodríguez Ostria (Cochabamba: UMSS, 1995).

24 *Censo general de la población de la República de Bolivia,* (1904).

25 Between 1900 to 1950, the total number of rural properties in Cochabamba grew from 35,550 to 57,597, a 162% increase. However, rural property fragmentation in the valley area was extreme; in the Valle Alto there was a 396% increase; in the Valle Bajo a 265%; and, in the Sacaba Valley a 202% increase. Jackson, *Regional Markets*, 139, 168, 175, and 179.

26 Antonio Mitre, *Los patriarcas de la plata: Estructura socioeconómica de la minería boliviana en el siglo XIX* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1981).

27 Jackson, *Regional Markets*, 137.

28 Colonos provided labor for working on the hacienda *demesne*; transporting product to the regional market fairs; and, rendering personal service (*pongueaje*) to the hacienda owner. See Robert Jackson, "Evolución y persistencia del colonaje en las haciendas de Cochabamba." *Siglo XIX*, Año III, no. 6, (julio-diciembre 1988).

29 Guido Guzmán. *Patrones, arrenderos y piqueros. Emergencia de una estructura agraria poblacional: Toco-Cliza 1860–1920* (Cochabamba: Editorial J.V., 1999); Larson, "Casta y clase,"; Gustavo Rodríguez, ed. *La construcción de una región: Cochabamba y su historia, siglos XIX–XX* (Cochabamba: UMSS, 1995); Gustavo Rodríguez and Humberto Solares. *Sociedad oligárquica, chicha y cultura popular: ensayo histórico sobre la identidad regional* (Cochabamba: Editorial Serrano, 1990); and Humberto Solares. *Historia, espacio y sociedad: Cochabamba, 1550–1950.* 2 vols (Cochabamba: Honorable Alcaldía Municipal de Cochabamba/IIA-Cidre, 1990).

30 Klein, *Bolivia*, 194. The assumption that the Bolivian army rank and file was composed mainly by indigenous soldiers, was put into question by recent revisionist historiography. See Elizabeth Shesko, "Mobilizing Manpower for War: Toward a New History of Bolivia's Chaco Conflict, 1932–1935." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 95, n. 2 (2015): 307.

31 Herbert Klein, *Orígenes de la revolución nacional boliviana: la crisis de la generación del Chaco* (La Paz: Librería y Editorial Juventud, 1968).

32 José M. Gordillo, "Educación y cambio social en el Valle Alto de Cochabamba (1930–60)." In *Escuelas y procesos de cambio*, compiled by Alejandra Ramírez (Cochabamba: CESU, 2006); Brooke Larson, "Capturing Indian Bodies, Heards, and Minds: 'El hogar campesino' and Rural School Reform in Bolivia, 1920s–1940s." In Merilee Grindle and Pilar Domingo, eds. *Proclaiming Revolution. Bolivia in Comparative Perspective* (Harvard and London: DRCLAS and ILAS, 2003); Toribio Claure, *Una escuela rural en Vacas* (La Paz: Empresa Editora Universo, 1949); and Elizardo Pérez, *Warisata: La escuela-ayllu*. 2nd ed (La Paz: Hisbol/CERES, 1992).

33 Jorge Dandler and Juan Torrico. "From the National Indigenous Congress to the Ayopaya Rebellion: Bolivia, 1945–1947." In Resistance, *Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries*, edited by Steve J. Stern, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987): 346.

34 Dandler and Torrico, 353.

35 Historians Laura Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights: Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880–1952* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) and Waskar Ari, *Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization, and Bolivia's Indigenous Intellectuals* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), both focus their historical work on the highland comunario's political relationship with pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary states in Cochabamba and Bolivia.

36 Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights,* 7.

37 Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights*; and Dandler and Torrico, "From the National Indigenous Congress."

38 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 1947. Carlos Zabalaga contra Hilarión Grágeda y otros.

39 Dandler and Torrico, "From the National Indigenous Congress," 340.

40 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 236.

41 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 14 March 1947.

42 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 13 March 1947.

43 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 14 February 1947.

44 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 14 February 1947.

45 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 17 February 1947.

46 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 15 February 1947.

47 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 23 February 1947.

48 This anonymous woman seems to be Leticia Fajardo, who was a POR militant and activist among indigenous peasants in the Oruro region. See Sándor John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition: Permanent Revolution in the Andes* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2009): 78.

49 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 23 February 1947.

50 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 23 February 1947, 235.

51 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 7 April 1947. Emphasis on the original.

52 ACSJC, AG № 1766, 24 February 1947.

53 *Indigenista* theories that arose in Latin America at early twentieth century emphasized literacy as a route for integrating peasants into national projects. See Henri Favre, *El indigenismo* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998).

54 The term "sexenio" stands for the six years period following Gualberto Villarroel's demise in 1946 to the triumph of the national revolution in 1952. Dandler and Torrico, "From the National Indigenous Congress," 370.

55 Gordillo, *Arando en la historia,* 13–21.

56 Gordillo, *Campesinos revolucionarios*, 42.

57 Shesko, "Mobilizing Manpower," 306.

58 Jackson, *Regional Markets*, 66.

59 The following paragraphs are indebted to Jorge Dandler, *El sindicalismo campesino en Bolivia: Los cambios estructurales en Ucureña*. Instituto Indigenista Interamericano. Serie: Antropología Social, 11. Mexico, 1969.

60 Dandler, *El sindicalismo campesino en Bolivia*, 85.

61 Elizardo Pérez was an indigenista educator who organized the ayllu-school of Warisata in the 1930s. This was an educational project aimed to allow comunarios in the altiplano of La Paz, to take care of their children's education under their own traditions and culture. See Elizardo Pérez, *Warisata*.

62 John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition*, 65.

63 Colonel David Toro's (1936–37) and Colonel Germán Bush's (1937–39) regimes are known in Bolivia's political history as the "military socialist regimes." They attempted to reform Bolivian society from the top down through the implementation of nationalist policies.

64 Dandler, 143.

65 Dandler, 108.

66 Dandler, 110.

67 Dandler, 116.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1 John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition*, 98.

2 John, 131.

3 The most important newspapers in the city of Cochabamba from 1952 to 1953 were *Los Tiempos* and *EI País*.

4 The members of the agrarian reform commission had different political backgrounds. For instance, the head of the commission was the minister of peasant affairs, Ñuflo Chávez (MNR); some other delegates were Ernesto Ayala (POR), Arturo Urquidi (PIR), and Raimundo Grigoriu (Catholic Church).

5 AHPC, Telegramas, 16, 24 April, 19 June, and 25 August 1952; *El País*, 5, 12 September 1952; and, *Los Tiempos* 9, 12, 13 September 1952.

6 Jorge Dandler, "Campesinado y reforma agraria en Cochabamba (1952–1953): dinámica de un movimiento campesino en Bolivia." In *Bolivia, la fuerza histórica del campesinado*, edited by Fernando Calderón and Jorge Dandler, (La Paz: UNRISD/CERES, 1984): 216.

7 The right-wing prefects were Anibal Zamorano (April–May 1952); Germán Vera Tapia (June-November 1952), and Gabriel Arze Quiroga (December 1952–March 1954, first period in office).

8 Steve Stern, "New Approaches to the Study of Peasant Rebellion and Consciousness: Implication of the Andean Experience." In *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries*, edited by Steve J. Stern, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

9 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 17 June 1952, Leg. № 12/52.

10 *El País*, 18 July 1952.

11 See Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights*, 164; and, Dandler and Torrico, "From the National Indigenous," 334.

12 AHPC, Telegramas, 8 May 1952.

13 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 13 December 1952, Leg. № 19/54.

14 *El País*, 19, 20 November 1952.

15 On Arque peasants' complaints in Oruro, AHPC, Telegramas. 13, 16, and 20 August 1952. On peasant alliance with Totorapampa's corregidor, José Maldonado. AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 16 October 1952, Leg. № 19/54. On the Ovejería hacienda owners' complaints against the activist Andrés Mejía and his MNR credentials, AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 13 December 1952, Leg. № 19/54.

16 Information on the Románs' power network, AHPC, Telegramas, 1 and 8 August 1952; and, 1 and 10 October 1952. Concerning their role as intermediaries, AHPC, Telegramas, 26 May, 17 August, 22 September, 17, 18, 31 October, 2, 14 November, and 5 December 1952.

17 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 5 December 1952, Leg. № 8/52.

18 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 12 July 1952, Leg. № 2/52.

19 *El País*, 3 May 1952.

20 *Los Tiempos*, 29 May 1952.

21 Gordillo, *Arando en la historia,* 13; and, Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución,* 43.

22 *El País*, 10 May, 17, 19 June 1952; and, AHPC, Telegramas, 28 April 1952.

23 Los Tiempos, 21 March 1952.

24 Jackson, *Regional Markets,* 201; and Gordillo and Jackson, "Formación, crisis y transformación," 758.

25 *Los Tiempos*, 7 March 1953. See José M. Gordillo, et.al. *¿Pitaq kaypi kamachiq? Las estructuras de poder en Cochabamba, 1940–2006* (La Paz: CESU, DICYT-UMSS, PIEB, 2007): 81.

26 *El País*, 30 April 1952.

27 *Los Tiempos*, 20 May 1952.

28 *El País*, 30 April 1952.

29 *El País*, 3 August 1952.

30 John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition*, 140.

31 *Los Tiempos*, 12 August 1952.

32 *Los Tiempos*, 13 August 1952.

33 *El País*, 6 December 1952.

34 *El País*, 23 December 1952.

35 *Los Tiempos*, 25 June 1952.

36 Rodríguez and Solares, *Sociedad oligárquica*, *chicha y cultura popular.*

37 *Los Tiempos*, 29 June 1952.

38 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 30 June 1952, Leg. № 10/52.

39 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 31 July 1952, Leg. № 10/52.

40 *Los Tiempos*, 27, 29 August 1952; AHPC, Telegramas, 14 August 1952; Gordillo, *Arando en la historia,* 14; and Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución*, 45.

41 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 1 September 1952, Leg. № 19/52 and AHPC, Telegramas, 29 September 1952.

42 *Los Tiempos*, 3l August 1952; *El País*, 4 September 1952; and AHPC, Telegramas, 29 August, 2 and 3 September 1952.

43 The undercover agents' reports to the prefect are in AHPC, Telegramas, 5 and 6 September 1952.

44 AHPC, Telegramas, 5 October 1952.

45 AHPC, Telegramas, 26 December 1952.

46 AHPC, Telegramas, 9 December 1952.

47 AHPC, Telegramas, 29 October 1952.

48 For the pacification journey's chronicle, *El País*, 7 November 1952. For the prefect communication with the district attorney, AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 8 November 1952, Leg. № 8/52.

49 *Los Tiempos*, 8 November 1952.

50 *El País*, 13 November 1952.

51 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 11 November 1952, Leg. № 8/52.

52 *Los Tiempos*, 9 November 1952.

53 *Los Tiempos*, 8 November 1952.

54 *Los Tiempos*, 22 November 1952.

55 *El País*, 11 November 1952.

56 *El País*, 21 November 1952.

57 *El País*, 13 and 15 November 1952.

58 *Los Tiempos*, 23 November 1952.

59 Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights*, 114.

60 *Los Tiempos*, 27 July 1952.

61 *El País*, 26 November 1952.

62 *El País*, 17 December 1952.

63 *Los Tiempos*, 4 December 1952.

64 *Los Tiempos*, 11 June and 12 December 1952; and *El País*, 27 July and 26 September 1952.

65 *El País*, 19 November 1952.

66 *El País*, 19 November 1952.

67 *El País*, 19 November 1952.

68 *El País*, 19 November 1952.

69 *El País*, 19 November 1952.

70 *El País*, 7 December 1952.

71 *Los Tiempos*, 12, 20 November and 9 December 1952.

72 *Los Tiempos*, 23, 24 December 1952; and *El País*, 23, 24 December 1952.

73 *Los Tiempos*, 4 January 1953.

74 *El País*, 7 January 1953; *Los Tiempos*, 7 January 1953; and AHPC, Telegramas, 6 January 1953.

75 *El País*, 8 January 1953.

76 Sándor John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition*, 144.

77 *Los Tiempos*, 4 February 1953.

78 *Los Tiempos*, 6 and 9 January 1953.

79 Sándor John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition*, 145.

80 John, 146.

81 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 16 January 1953, Leg. № 4/53.

82 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 30 January 1953, Leg. № 4/53.

83 *Los Tiempos*, 3 January 1953.

84 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 20 January 1953, Leg. № 14/53.

85 AHPC, Telegramas, 9 January 1953.

86 AHPC, Telegramas, 18 January 1953.

87 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 14 January 1953, Leg. № 14/53.

88 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 14, 19, and 26 January 1953, Leg. № 14/53.

89 *Los Tiempos*, 27 January 1953.

90 *El País*, 30 January 1953.

91 *El País*, 23 January 1953.

92 *Los Tiempos*, l February 1953.

93 *El País*, l February 1953.

94 *Los Tiempos*, l February 1953.

95 *El País*, 1 February 1953.

96 See Sándor John, *Bolivia's Radical Tradition*, 145.

97 *Los Tiempos*, 4 February 1953 and *El País*, 3 February 1953.

98 AHPC, Radiogramas, 3 February 1953, Leg. № 22/53.

99 *Los Tiempos*, 22 February 1953.

100 Víctor Zannier, 22 March 1996.

101 AHPC, Radiogramas, 4 February 1953, Leg. № 22/53.

102 AHPC, Radiogramas, 4 February 1953, Leg. № 22/53.

103 *Los Tiempos*, 15 February 1953.

104 *Los Tiempos*, 22 April 1953.

105 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 31 January 1953, Leg. № 17/53; and, AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 3 February 1953, Leg. № 13/53.

106 AHPC, Telegramas, 31 March 1953.

107 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 11 March 1953, Leg. № 17/53.

108 Víctor Zannier, 22 March 1996.

109 *Los Tiempos*, 11 April 1953.

110 Sinforoso Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución*, 77.

111 Rivas, 66.

112 Sinforoso Rivas, 17 October 1996.

113 *Los Tiempos*, 10 June 1953.

114 Gaceta Campesina (La Paz, 1953), 57.

115 Sinforoso Rivas, 17 October 1996.

116 *Los Tiempos*, 11 July 1953.

117 *Los Tiempos*, 8 July 1953.

118 Sinforoso Rivas, 17 October 1996.

119 *Los Tiempos*, 11 July 1953.

120 *Los Tiempos*, 10 July 1953.

121 *Los Tiempos*, 5 July 1953.

122 *Los Tiempos*, 11 July 1953.

123 Marta Irurozqui. *La armonía de las desigualdades: elites y conflictos de poder en Bolivia, 1880–1920* (Cusco: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas/Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos Bartolomé de las Casas, 1994); and "La amenaza chola: la participación popular en las elecciones bolivianas, 1900–1930." *Revista Andina* 13, no. 2 (1995); Marie Demelas, *Nationalisme sans nation? La Bolivie aux XIX–XXe siècles* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1980); and "Darwinismo a la criolla: El darwinismo social en Bolivia, 1880–1910," *Historia Boliviana* 1, no. 2 (1981).

124 *Los Tiempos,* 15 May, 9 November 1952 and 9 May, 5 July 1953.

125 *Los Tiempos*, 15 November 1952.

126 *Los Tiempos*, 6 December 1952.

127 *Los Tiempos*, 20 February 1953.

128 *Los Tiempos*, 20 February 1953.

129 *Los Tiempos*, 3 January 1953.

130 *Los Tiempos*, 3 January 1953.

131 *Los Tiempos*, 24 December 1952.

132 *Los Tiempos*, 29 July 1952.

133 *Los Tiempos*, 19 April 1953.

134 *Los Tiempos*, 28 February 1953.

135 *Los Tiempos*, 9 October 1952.

136 *Los Tiempos*, 12 August 1952.

137 *Los Tiempos*, 24 August 1952.

138 *Los Tiempos*, 9 September 1952.

139 *Los Tiempos*, 21 November 1952.

140 *Los Tiempos*, 9 September 1952.

141 *Los Tiempos*, 20 May and 15 July 1952.

142 *Los Tiempos*, 27 November 1952.

143 *Los Tiempos*, 3 December 1952.

144 *Los Tiempos*, 12 May 1953.

145 *Los Tiempos*, 20 May; 1, 4, 8 July, and 23 August 1953.

146 *Los Tiempos*, 1 September 1953.

147 Gustavo Rodríguez, "Fiesta, poder y espacio urbano en Cochabamba, (1880–1923)" and "Fronteras Interiores y Exteriores: Tradición y Modernidad en Cochabamba, (1825–1917)" in *La construcción de una región: Cochabamba y su historia, siglos XIX–XX*, ed. Gustavo Rodríguez Ostria, (Cochabamba: UMSS,1995).

148 *Los Tiempos*, 24 July 1953.

149 *Los Tiempos*, 29 June 1952.

150 *Los Tiempos*, 26 July 1952. Emphasis on the original.

151 *Los Tiempos*, 18 September 1952.

152 Dandler and Torrico, "From the National Indigenous," 342.

153 Antonio Álvarez Mamani and Claudia Ranaboldo, *El camino perdido: Chinkasqa ñan, thakhi chhagayata: biografía del dirigente campesino kallawaya Antonio Álvarez Mamani* (La Paz: SEMTA, 1987).

154 *Los Tiempos*, 18 September 1952.

155 *Los Tiempos*, 23 January 1953.

156 *Los Tiempos*, 23 April 1953.

157 *Los Tiempos*, l7 April 1953.

158 *Los Tiempos*, 3 February 1953.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 10 January 1954, Leg. № 1/54.

2 The Cochabamba left-wing prefects during Paz's first administration were Edgar Núñez Vela (April 1954 to February 1955) and Joaquín Lemoine (March 1955 to September 1956).

3 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 29 September 1954, Leg. № 9/54.

4 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 February 1954, Leg. № 18/54.

5 AHPC, Denuncias, 11 January 1954.

6 *El Pueblo*, 24 February 1954 and 9 October 1955; AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 6 May, 11 July, and 9 August 1954, Leg. № 12/54; AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 21 May and 28 August 1954, Leg. № 9/54; AHPC, Telegramas, 9, 12 September, and 4 December 1954.

7 Some of the right-wing peasant leaders were Simón Aguilar (Cliza), José Pedro Ugarte (Arque), Washington Arce (Capinota), Federico Crespo (Independencia), Héctor Román (Aiquile), and Enrique Vargas (Tapacarí). AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 11, 31 May 1954, Leg. № 14/54; AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 5 June 1954, Leg. № 11/54; AHPC, Telegramas, 2, 4 January 1954, Leg. № 12/54.

8 Some of the left-wing peasant leaders were Clemente Censano (Aiquile), Juan de la Cruz Zurita (Liquinas), Lorenzo Pedroso (Vila Vila), Marcelino Vargas (Tapacarí), Marcelino Borda (Independencia), Benito Ricaldez (Arani), Pedro Pablo Bautista (Punata), and Casiano Vallejos (Arque). AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 15 October 1954, Leg. N° 9/54; 19 September 1954, Leg. N° 20/54; 18 May 1954, Leg. N° 21/S4; 8 March 1954, Leg. N° 16/54; 1 June 1954, Leg. N° 1 8/54; 21 October 1956, Leg. N° 5/56. AHPC, Telegramas, 27 October 1956.

9 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 18 February 1954, Leg. № 11/54.

10 Gordillo, *Arando en la historia*, 116.

11 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 16 August 1954, Leg. № 11/54.

12 At that time, the Bolivian currency was devalued 150 per cent. *El Pueblo*, 24 March 1954 and 30 March 1955.

13 *El Pueblo*, 17 December 1954.

14 *El Pueblo*, 7 January 1955.

15 *El Pueblo*, 13 January 1955.

16 *El Pueblo*, 8 February 1955.

17 *El Pueblo*, 15 February and 30 March 1955.

18 *El Pueblo*, 3 April and 15 June 1954.

19 *El Pueblo*, 8 June 1954.

20 *El Pueblo*, 31 July 1954.

21 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 14 July 1954, Leg. № 5/54 and AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 4 February 1954, Leg. № 11/54.

22 Rural violence in this period was analyzed from 125 denounces stored in the AHPC.

23 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 24 October 1955, Leg. № 3/55.

24 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 21 September 1954, Leg. № 22/54.

25 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 20 April 1954, Leg. № 20/54.

26 Dandler, *El Sindicalismo campesino en Bolivia*, 12.

27 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 12 July 1954, Leg. № 9/54.

28 Rodríguez, "Fronteras interiores y exteriores," and Rodríguez and Solares, *Sociedad oligárquica, chicha y cultura popular*. Both authors traced the popular classes' invasion of downtown's public spaces in Cochabamba city during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

29 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 1 July 1953, Leg. № 2/53; and, AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 16 April and 9 December 1954, Leg. № 9/54.

30 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 20 May 1954, Leg. № 17/54; and, AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 30 May 1955 and 19 December 1955, Leg. № 3/55.

31 Carlos Crespo, 18 September 1997. See Mercedes del Río, "Simbolismo y poder en Tapacarí," *Revista Andina* 8, no. 1 (July 1990).

32 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 10 June 1954, Leg. № 14/54.

33 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 20 July 1954, Leg. № 20/54.

34 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 12 August 1954, Leg. № 9/54.

35 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 31 May 1954, Leg. № 1/54; and, AHPC, Telegramas, 25, 26 March, 27 April, and 1 May 1954.

36 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 12 August 1954, Leg. № 9/54.

37 AHPC, Telegramas, 29 October 1954.

38 AHPC, Telegramas, 1 December 1954.

39 AHPC, Telegramas, 4 December 1954.

40 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 28 November 1954, Leg. № 14/54. Emphasis on the original.

41 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 28 November 1954, Leg. № 14/54.

42 AHPC, Telegramas, 3 March 1955. "Another important leader of the uprising was Simón Sanchez, who was a comunario leader affiliated to the FSTCC." Sinforoso Rivas, 17 January 1998. See also, AHPC, Telegramas, 4, 7, and 21 November 1954.

43 Solíz, "'Land to the Original Owners,"'268.

44 *El Pueblo*, 5 January 1956.

45 *El Pueblo*, 2 July 1955 and l7 January 1956.

46 *El Pueblo*, 4 February 1956.

47 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 January 1956, Leg. № 5/56.

48 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 January 1956, Leg. № 5/56.

49 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 January 1956, Leg. № 5/56.

50 AHPC, Telegramas, 21 June 1956 and *El Pueblo*, 1 August 1956.

51 Gordillo*, Arando en la historia*, 161.

52 *El Pueblo*, 3 August 1956.

53 Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución*, 151.

54 Rivas, 153.

55 Sinforoso Rivas, 8 June 1998.

56 *El Pueblo*, 3 January 1957.

57 *El Pueblo*, 12 February 1957.

58 *El Pueblo*, 5 April 1957.

59 *El Pueblo*, 27 April 1957.

60 *El Pueblo*, 5 July 1957.

61 *El Pueblo*, 14 September 1957.

62 *El Pueblo*, 17 September 1957.

63 *El Pueblo*, 26 September 1957.

64 *El Pueblo*, 3 October 1957.

65 *El Pueblo*, 3 October 1957.

66 *El Pueblo*, 5 October 1957.

67 AHPC, Telegramas, 5 October 1957; and, *El Pueblo,* 5 October 1957.

68 *El Pueblo*, 7 October 1957.

69 *El Pueblo*, 7 October 1957.

70 AHPC, Telegramas, 18 October 1957.

71 *El Pueblo*, 24 October 1957.

72 AHPC, Telegramas, 29 October 1957.

73 *El Pueblo*, 15 December 1957.

74 *El Pueblo*, 14, 23 January 1958.

75 *El Pueblo*, 29 January 1958.

76 *El Pueblo*, 2 February 1958.

77 *El Pueblo*, 5 February 1958

78 *El Pueblo*, 8, 9 May 1958.

79 *El Pueblo*, 4 June 1958.

80 *El Pueblo*, 11 July 1958.

81 *El Pueblo*, 2 September 1958.

82 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 21 August 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

83 *El Pueblo*, 7 September 1958.

84 *El Pueblo*, 16, 27 September 1958.

85 *El Pueblo*, 2 October 1958.

86 See Olivia Harris and Xavier Albó, *Monteras y guardatojos: campesinos y mineros en el norte de Potosí* (La Paz: CIPCA, 1986).

87 *El Pueblo*, 10 August 1954.

88 *El Pueblo*, 3 January 1958.

89 *El Pueblo*, 9 January 1958.

90 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 7 February 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

91 Bridgette Werner. "Between Autonomy and Acquiescence: Negotiating Rule in Revolutionary Bolivia, 1953–1958." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100: 1, February (2020): 94 and 104.

92 AHPC, Telegramas, 27 January 1958.

93 AHPC, Telegramas, 29 January 1958.

94 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 7 February 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

95 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 7 February 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

96 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 7 February 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

97 Werner, "Between Autonomy and Acquiescence," 107.

98 Werner, 120.

99 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 June 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

100 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 June 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

101 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 9 June 1958, Leg. № 11/58.

102 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 22 August 1958, Leg. № 4/58.

103 AHPC, Correspondencia Recibida, 22 August 1958, Leg. № 4/58.

104 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 12 September 1958, Leg. № 4/56.

105 *El Pueblo*, 16, 19, and 25 November 1958.

106 An opposed interpretation of the events can be found in Rivera, "Oppressed but not Defeated," and Albó, "From MNRistas to Kataristas," both of whom advocate the idea of actual peasant subordination to the revolutionary state.

107 *El Pueblo*, 2 August 1956.

108 *El Pueblo*, 18 August 1956.

109 *El Pueblo*, 28 July 1957.

110 *El Pueblo,* 19 May, 29 June, 3 July, 29 August, and 8 September 1957.

111 *El Pueblo*, 25 February 1958.

112 *El Pueblo*, 25 February 1958.

113 *El Pueblo* 2, 4 March, 7 May, and 2 July 1958.

114 *El Pueblo*, 3 August 1958.

115 *El Pueblo*, 15 August 1958.

116 *El Pueblo*, 31 December 1958.

117 *El Pueblo*, 2l August 1957.

118 *El Pueblo*, 15 June 1955.

119 *El Pueblo*, 7 April 1955.

120 *El Pueblo*, 23 July, 20 August, 9, 19 September, and 6 October 1954. *El Pueblo*, 27, 29 March, 7, 30 April, 3, 6, 14 May, 12, 16 June, and 27 July 1955.

121 *El Pueblo*, 28 March 1954.

122 *El Pueblo*, 22 August 1954.

123 *El Pueblo*, 19 September 1954.

124 *El Pueblo*, 12 February 1955.

125 *El Pueblo*, 14 July 1955.

126 *El Pueblo* 19 May, 21 September, l6 October, and 15 December 1955.

127 Gordillo, "La región de Cochabamba," 59.

128 *El Pueblo*, 5 January 1957.

129 Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución*, 114. *El Pueblo* 2, 9, 12, 13 February; 24 August; and 8 September 1957.

130 *El Pueblo*, 2 August 1957.

131 *El Pueblo*, 22 November 1957.

132 *El Pueblo*, 3 August 1958.

133 *El Pueblo*, 21 October 1958.

134 Werner, "Between Autonomy and Acquiescence," 119–121.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1 *Champa* is a Quechua word applied to brushwood and tangled things. *Champa Guerra* alludes to an extremely confused conflict where it seemed that everyone fought against everyone else.

2 Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America*, 2nd ed (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Linda A. Rodríguez, *Rank and Privilege* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1994); and Brian Loveman, *For La Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999).

3 Thomas Field, *From Development to Dictatorship: Bolivia and the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

4 Field, 8.

5 *El Pueblo*, 21 December 1958; and, 4 April 1959.

6 *El Pueblo*, 11, 12, 21 January; and, 14 February 1959.

7 *El Pueblo*, 8 February and 1 March 1959. See Enrique Encinas, Fernando Mayorga, and Enrique Birhuett, *Jinapuni: testimonio de un dirigente campesino* (La Paz: Hisbol, 1989): 9.

8 *El Pueblo*, 13 March 1959.

9 Gordillo, *Arando en la historia*, 106.

10 Jorge Dandler, "La 'Champa Guerra' de Cochabamba: un proceso de disgregación política." In *Bolivia, la fuerza histórica del campesinado*, edited by Fernando Calderón and Jorge Dandler, (La Paz: UNRISD/CERES, 1984): 248.

11 *El Pueblo*, 13 March 1959.

12 *El Pueblo*, 19 March 1959.
13 *El Pueblo*, 4 April 1959.
14 *El Pueblo*, 18 April 1959.
15 *El Mundo*, 26 June and 11 July 1959.
16 *El Pueblo*, 12 December 1958.
17 *El Pueblo*, 11 September 1959.
18 *El Pueblo*, 12 September 1959.
19 *El Pueblo*, 25 October 1959.
20 *El Pueblo*, 31 October 1959.
21 *El Pueblo*, 18, 24 November 1959. See Xavier Albó, *Achacachi, medio siglo de lucha campesina* (La Paz: CIPCA, 1979).
22 *El Pueblo*, 29 November 1959.
23 *El Pueblo*, 29 November 1959.
24 *El Mundo*, 12 January 1960.
25 *El Mundo*, 21 January 1960.
26 *El Mundo*, 23 January 1960.
27 *El Mundo*, 28 January 1960.
28 *El Mundo*, 29, 30 January 1960.
29 *El Mundo*, 20 March 1960.
30 *El Mundo*, 22, 23 March 1960.
31 *El Mundo*, 5 May 1960.
32 *El Mundo*, 6 and 21 June 1960.
33 *El Mundo*, 16 June 1960.
34 *El Mundo*, 15 June 1960.
35 This event was widely covered by *El Mundo* during the last ten days of June 1960.
36 *El Mundo*, 1 July 1960.
37 *El Mundo*, 24 July and 12 August 1960.
38 *El Mundo*, 12 August 1960.
39 *El Mundo*, 26 August 1960.
40 *El Mundo*, 3l August and 6 September 1960.
41 *El Mundo*, 6 September 1960.
42 Klein, *Bolivia*, 243; Malloy, *The Uncompleted Revolution*, 242; and Field, *From Development to Dictatorship*, 74.
43 *El Mundo*, 18 December 1959; and, 21 February and 8 September 1960.
44 *El Mundo*, 30 October 1960.
45 *El Mundo* and *Prensa Libre* from 13 to 29 November 1960.
46 Sinforoso Rivas, 17 January 1998.
47 *El Mundo*, 20 December 1960.
48 *El Mundo*, 16 December 1960.
49 Field, *From Development to Dictatorship*, 79.
50 Field, 3.

51 *El Mundo*, 10 February 1961.

52 *El Mundo*, 4, 5 July, and 22 September 1961.

53 *El Mundo*, 20 April 1961.

54 *El Mundo*, 4 June 1962.

55 *El Mundo* 3 to 11 July 1962.

56 *Prensa Libre*, 16 December 1960.

57 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 17 August 1962, Leg. № 1/62.

58 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 17 August 1962, Leg. № 1/62.

59 *El Mundo*, 3, 4 August 1962; *Prensa Libre*, 4 August 1962; and, AHPC, Radiogramas, 1 August 1962, Leg. № 3/61.

60 AHPC, Correspondencia Remitida, 17 August 1962, Leg. № 1/62.

61 *El Mundo*, 31 August, 6 September, and 8 October 1962 and *Prensa Libre*, 30 October 1962.

62 *El Mundo*, 14, 24 November 1962.

63 *El Mundo*, 16 December 1962.

64 *El Mundo*, 21 December 1962.

65 *El Mundo*, 15 December 1962.

66 *El Mundo*, 6 June 1963.

67 *El Mundo*, 29 January, 12 February, and 3 March 1963.

68 *El Mundo*, 6 February, 9 October 1962, and 5 July 1963.

69 *El Mundo*, 10 March 1963.

70 *El Mundo*, 23 February 1963.

71 *El Mundo*, 7 March 1963.

72 *El Mundo*, 9 and 14 March 1963.

73 *El Mundo*, 21 April 1963.

74 Field, *From Development to Dictatorship*, 78.

75 *El Mundo*, 3 May 1963.

76 *El Mundo*, 7 May 1963.

77 *Prensa Libre*, 27 September 1962.

78 *El Mundo*, 23 July 1963.

79 *El Mundo*, 25 August 1963.

80 *El Mundo*, 3 and 20 August 1963.

81 *El Mundo*, 20 August 1963.

82 *El Mundo*, 30 August and 5, 7 and 19 September 1963.

83 *El Mundo*, 26 June 1963.

84 *El Mundo*, 21 August 1963.

85 *El Mundo* and *Prensa Libre*, 7, 18, 21, and 22 September 1963 and 11, 21 January, 1 February, and 26 April 1964.

86 *El Mundo* and *Prensa Libre*, 17 and 19 September and 4, 5, 6, 11, and 12 October 1963.

87 Encinas, et.al., *Jinapuni*, 66.

88 *El Mundo*, 19 September and 6 October 1963.

89 *El Mundo*, 26 September 1963.

90 *El Mundo*, 6 December 1963.

91 Field, *From Development to Dictatorship*, 109.

92 *El Mundo* and *Prensa Libre*, 11 December 1963.

93 Salvador Vásquez, 25 July 1998.

94 *Prensa Libre*, 7 March 1964.

95 *El Mundo*, 20 January 1964.

96 *Prensa Libre* from 18 to 29 January 1964, and *El Mundo*, 1 and 7 February, 11 March, and 25 May 1964.

97 *El Mundo*, 26 February, 8 March, and 11 and 26 April 1964.

98 *From Development to Dictatorship*, 138.

99 *El Mundo*, 15 March 1964.

100 *El Mundo*, 7 and 8 April 1964.

101 *El Mundo*, 11 April 1964.

102 Cesar Soto, *Historia del pacto militar campesino* (Cochabamba: CERES, 1994): 14.

103 *Prensa Libre*, 25August 1964.

104 *El Mundo*, 12 January 1964.

105 *El Mundo*, 23 May 1964.

106 *El Mundo*, 26 May 1964.

107 *El Mundo*, 30 May 1964.

108 *El Mundo*, 4 June 1964.

109 *El Mundo*, 15 July 1964.

110 *El Mundo*, 28 July 1964.

111 *El Mundo*, 23 October 1959.

112 *El Mundo*, 23 January 1960.

113 *El Mundo*, 27 January 1960.

114 *El Mundo*, 14 February 1960.

115 *El Mundo*, 6 September 1960.

116 *El Mundo*, 7 September 1960. See also *El Mundo* 15, 30 November 1960; and, 15 January and 14 July 1961.

117 *El Mundo*, 7 September 1960.

118 *El Mundo*, 5 July 1960.

119 *El Mundo*, 5 July 1960.

120 *El Mundo*, 9 July 1960.

121 *El Mundo*, 21 November 1961.

122 *El Mundo*, 10 August 1962.

123 *El Mundo*, l5 August 1962.

124 *El Mundo*, 26 October 1962.

125 *El Mundo*, 21 November 1962.

126 *El Mundo*, 18, 24 August, 2, 6 September, 14, 16 November, and 5 December 1962.

127 *El Mundo*, 11 March 1960.

128 *El Mundo*, 31 August 1960.

129 *El Mundo*, 31 August 1960.

130 *El Mundo*, 13 September 1960.

131 "We have brought Dr. Paz and his helpers to power with our sacrifice, with our pain, and with our funds, and now we see that the outrages come from our party." *El Mundo*, 30 December 1960.

132 *El Mundo*, 30 December 1960.

133 In a speech by Walter Guevara to the Cliza peasants, he asserted that: "Universal suffrage has not been created so that a few peasant leaders could make use and misuse of it indicating collectively to the rural laborer for whom they should vote." *El Mundo*, 29 December 1959.

134 *El Mundo*, 24 December 1959.

135 *El Mundo*, 24 March 1960.

136 *El Mundo*, 30 November 1960.

137 *El Mundo*, 15 April 1961.

138 *El Mundo*, 30 September 1960.

139 "Could the Ucureña peasants in whose veins run the same blood forget that Jorge Solíz, Salvador Vásquez, and Crisóstomo Inturias were the guard dogs of the properties of Candelaria viuda de Ledezma? That up until 9 April 1952, those who handled the whip of the great estate owners were those who have now once again made themselves chieftains, lords of lives and estates?" *El Mundo*, 13 January 1961.

140 *El Mundo*, 22 March 1963.

141 *El Mundo*, 5 May 1963.

142 *El Mundo*, 9 May 1963.

143 *El Mundo*, 17 June 1963.

144 *El Mundo*, 31 August 1963.

145 "There is, then, an undeniable complication which the government and the authorities cannot contemplate impassively. They have in their hands all the legal and forcible resources to put a stop to the initiatives and the acts of certain peasant groups who believed that they had impunity for their crimes." *El Mundo*, 7 September 1963.

146 *El Mundo*, 14 September 1963.

147 *El Mundo*, 26 September 1963.

148 *El Mundo*, 21 April 1963.

149 "The revolution sees in us [the armed forces] a great realization as an institution and an immense contribution, as an expression of the revolution through roads, schools, economic recovery, etc." *El Mundo*, 21 April 1963.

150 *El Mundo*, 21 April 1963.

151 *El Mundo*, 21 April 1963.

152 *El Mundo*, 26 April 1963.

153 As Barrientos asserted in a press interview: "Revolution is faith and hope; it is not hatred or lack of union or the achievement of the mean aspirations of a small group of people. Revolution is the weapon which conquers all difficulties. It is where all Bolivians meet." *El Mundo*, 3 July 1963.

154 *El Mundo*, 28 July 1963.

155 *El Mundo*, 23 August 1963.

156 *El Mundo*, 5 November 1963.

157 *El Mundo*, 20 October 1963.

158 *El Mundo*, 6 September 1964.

159 *El Mundo*, 17 October 1964.

160 *El Mundo*, 14 March 1963.

161 *El Mundo*, 19 February 1963.

162 *El Mundo*, 26 July 1963.

163 *El Mundo*, 8 October 1963.

164 *El Mundo*, 21 April 1964.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1 Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*; Gordillo, "La región de Cochabamba,"; Rodríguez, "Entre reformas y contrarreformas,"; Jackson, *Regional Markets and Agrarian Transformation*; Rodríguez and Solares, *Sociedad oligárquica*; and Gordillo and Jackson, "Mestizaje y proceso de parcelación."

2 Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights*; Roberto Choque, "Las rebeliones indígenas de la post-Guerra del Chaco: Reivindicaciones indígenas durante la pre-revolución," *Data* no. 3 (1992); Dandler and Torrico, "From the National Indigenous Congress,"; Dandler, *El sindicalismo campesino en Bolivia*; Luis Antezana and Hugo Romero, *Historia de los sindicatos campesinos: un proceso de integración nacional en Bolivia* (La Paz: Consejo Nacional de Reforma Agraria, 1973); Luis Antezana, *La revolución campesina en Bolivia: historia del sindicalismo campesino* (La Paz: Empresa Editora Siglo, 1982).

3 Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos,* 21.

4 Larson, ed., *Explotación agraria y resistencia campesina*; and, "Casta y clase,"; and Jackson, *Regional Markets and Agrarian Transformation*.

5 Herbert Klein, *Orígenes de la revolución nacional boliviana: la crisis de la generación del Chaco* (La Paz: Librería y Editorial Juventud, 1968).

6 Alonso, *Thread of Blood*, 232.

7 Testimony by Salvador Vásquez in Gordillo, *Arando en la historia*, 69.

8 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

9 Damián and Máximo Encinas, 10 February 1996.

10 Damián and Máximo Encinas, 10 February 1996.

11 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

12 Liborio Terceros, 20 January 1996.

13 Damián and Máximo Encinas, 10 February 1996.

14 Leoncio Torrico, 6 May 1995.

15 Petrona Ricaldez, 26 January 1996.

16 Petrona Ricaldez, 26 January 1996.

17 Petrona Ricaldez, 26 January 1996.

18 Petrona Ricaldez, 26 January 1996.

19 Néstor Taboada. *Indios en rebelión: hechos de la revolución boliviana* (Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro, 1968) and Jesús Lara's trilogy, *Yawarninchij. Nuestra Sangre* (Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro, 1974); *Sinchicay: El Valor* (Cochabamba: Los

Amigos del Libro, 1977); and *Llalliypacha: Tiempo de vencer* (Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro, 1977).

20 Rita Cabrera, 12 November 1993.

21 Angelina Ovando, 15 February 1994.

22 Angelina Ovando, 15 February 1994.

23 Angelina Ovando, 15 February 1994.

24 Carlos Montaño, 12 November 1993.

25 Gordillo, *Arando en la historia*, 139.

26 Ramón Guardia, 20 May 1995.

27 Bonifacio Cano, 19 March 1994.

28 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

29 Gordillo, *Arando en la historia*, 119.

30 Thierry Saignes, ed. *Borrachera y memoria: la experiencia de lo sagrado en Los Andes,* (La Paz: Hisbol/IFEA, 1993), 18.

31 Dwight B. Heath, "Borrachera indígena, cambio de concepciones. Comentario en torno a Borrachera y memoria." In *Borrachera y memoria: la experiencia de lo sagrado en Los Andes*, edited by Thierry Saignes, (La Paz: Hisbol/IFEA, 1993): 175.

32 Faustino Arias, 6 November 1993.

33 Solares, *Historia, espacio y sociedad,* and Rodríguez and Solares, *Sociedad oligárquica*.

34 Sixto Soto, 21 August 1995.

35 Germán Delgadillo, 12 March 1994.

36 José Rocha, *Sociedad agraria y religión: Cambio social e identidad en los valles de Cochabamba* (La Paz: Hisbol, 1990).

37 Andrés Villafan, 2 April 1994.

38 Sixto Soto, 21 August 1995.

39 Ineke Dibbits, et.al. *Polleras libertarias: Federación Obrera Femenina (1927–1964)* (La Paz: Tahipamu-Hisbol, 1989) and Zulema Lehm and Silvia Rivera*, Los artesanos libertarios y la ética del trabajo* (La Paz: THOA, 1988).

40 Thierry Saignes, "'Estar en otra cabeza': tomar en los Andes." In *Borrachera y Memoria: la experiencia de lo sagrado en Los Andes*, edited by Thierry Saignes, (La Paz: Hisbol/IFEA, 1993): 17.

41 AJIC, 29 April 1958. Nicomedes Sosa vs Hilarión Alba y otros (Heridas); ACSJC, № 5594, 6 September 1957. Pastor lnturias vs Miguel y Bernardino Veizaga (Homicidio); AJIT, № 48, 14 May 1956. Oficio vs Gregorio López y otros (Homicidio); ACSJC, № 4063, 11 January 1955. Alejandro Torrico vs Román Casilla (Heridas); ACSJC, № 5545, 7 July 1958. José Gutiérrez vs Gregorio López (Heridas); and, ACSJC, № 4699, 24 April 1958. Francisco Jordán vs Lorenzo Pedroso (Heridas).

42 ACSJC, № 4598, 12 May 1958. Oficio vs Gregorio López (Desacato); AJIC, № 16/59, 1 April 1959. Indalecio Linares vs Remigio Crespo (Obstrucción de justicia); AJIT, 31 August 1957. Oficio vs Román Casilla (Excarcelación); and, AJIC, 12 August 1953. Oficio vs Narciso Escobar (Excarcelación).

43 ACSJC, № 1795, 14 April 1962. Oficio vs Juan de la Cruz Zurita (Homicidio); ACSJC, № 4478, 29 August 1963. Oficio vs Flaviano Vega (Asesinato); ACSJC, № 4969, 12 February 1963. Oficio vs Jorge Solíz (Asesinato); ACSJC, № 4449, 13 January 1964. Oficio vs Manuel Maldonado (Asesinato); ACSJC, № 4730, 30 March 1967. Manuel Cuchallo vs

José Rojas (Robo); and, ACSJC, № 5503, 21 May 1969. Antonio Sánchez vs Salvador Vásquez (Ataque armado).

44 Larson, "Casta y clase,"; *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation*; "Dimensiones históricas,"; Larson and León, "Markets, Power, and the Politics,"; Sánchez-Albornoz, *Indios y tributos*; Wachtel, "Los mitimas,"; Gordillo and Jackson, "Mestizaje y proceso de parcelación,"; Gordillo and del Río, *La visita de Tiquipaya*; and Guzmán, *Patrones, arrenderos y piqueros*.

45 Damián and Máximo Encinas, 20 January 1996.

46 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

47 Liborio Terceros, 20 January 1996.

48 "*Indigenista* policy can be defined as systematic action undertaken by the state through a specialized administrative apparatus whose aim is to introduce a controlled and planned change in the heart of the indigenous population with the aim of absorbing cultural, social, and economic disparities between the Indians and the non-indigenous population." Favre, *El indigenismo*, 108.

49 Germán Delgadillo, 12 March 1994.

50 Germán Delgadillo, 12 March 1994.

51 María Quiroga, 27 January 1993.

52 Bonifacio Cano, 19 March 1994.

53 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

54 Albó, *Achacachi*, 48.

55 Andrés Villafan, 2 April 1994.

56 Carlos Montaño, 12 January 1993.

57 Rita Cabrera, 12 November 1993.

58 Paulino Arias, 6 January 1993.

59 Carlos Montaño, 12 January 1993.

60 Paulino Arias, 6 November 1993.

61 Carlos Montaño, 12 January 1993.

62 This paradox was addressed by several scholars who studied peasant societies in revolutionary Mexico. See Arturo Warman, *Y venimos a contradecir: los campesinos de Morelos y el estado nacional* (Mexico City: SEP, 1988); John Gledhill, *Casi Nada: A Study of Agrarian Reform in the Homeland of Cardenismo* (Albany: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, University at Albany-SUNY, 1991); Paul Friedrich, *The Princes of Naranja: An Essay in Anthrohistorical Method* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); and Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

63 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

64 Damián and Máximo Encinas, 10 February 1996.

65 Albó, *Achacachi;* Harris and Albó, *Monteras y guardatojos*; Rivera, *"Oppressed but not Defeated*,"; and Soto, *Historia del pacto militar campesino*.

66 See Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*.

67 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

68 See Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

69 Andrés Villafan, 2 April 1994.

70 Liborio Terceros, 20 January 1996.

71 Víctor Milán, 6 May 1995.

72 Damián and Máximo Encinas, 10 February 1996.

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74 Ramón Guardia, 20 May 1995.

75 Óscar Vargas, *La verdad sobre la muerte del General Barrientos: a la luz de investigaciones policiales, técnicas y esotéricas (*La Paz: Los Amigos del Libro, 1983).

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77 Leoncio Torrico, 6 May 1995.

78 Mario Torrico, 11 March 1994.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1 Leoncio Torrico, 6 May 1995.

2 Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (London: Pluto Press, 2010); Richard Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); and E. Bradford Burns, *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

3 Jeffrey Gould, *To Die in this Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje*, *1880–1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998) and *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912–1979* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Marta Irurozqui, *La armonía de las desigualdades* and "La amenaza chola,"; Florencia Mallon, *The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highlands: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transition, 1860–1940 (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) and "Indian Communities, Political Cultures, and the State in Latin America, 1780–1990," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24 (January 1, 1992); Greg Urban and Joel Sherzer, eds., *Nation-States and Indians in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Alan Knight, "Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo, 1910–1940" In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940,* edited by Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Remo Guidieri, et.al., eds. *Ethnicities and Nations: Processes of Inter Ethnic Relations in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific* (Austin: University of Texas Pres, 1988); and, Marie-Chantal Barre, *Ideologías indigenistas y movimientos indios* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1983).

4 Viedma, *Descripción geográfica*; Jackson, *Regional Markets and Agrarian Transformation*; and Rodríguez, "Entre reformas y contrarreformas."

5 Larson, ed. *Explotación agraria*; Gustavo Rodríguez, ed., *La construcción de una región*; Solares, *Historia, espacio y sociedad*; and Guzmán, *Patrones, arrenderos y piqueros.*

6 Irurozqui, "La amenaza chola," analyzes the fears of the Bolivian elite in the early twentieth century regarding the image of the mestizo (cholo), who was perceived as a voluptuous and politically corrupt human being. Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne and Thierry Saignes, "El cholo: actor olvidado de la historia," *Unitas*, no. 5 (1992), explore the sociological clichés of modernity opposed to tradition which wiped the mestizo out of history.

7 Alberto Rivera, *Los terratenientes de Cochabamba* (La Paz: CERES/FACES, 1992) noticed a lordly and segregationist mentality among a sector of former landlords in Cochabamba; meanwhile, Rodríguez and Solares, *Sociedad oligárquica, chicha y cultura popular,* analyze the dialectic between the local elites and the popular sectors in regard

to the territorial context and the social function of the chichería in Cochabamba city, in the early twentieth century.

8 "If the pubs were 'symbolic oases' of multiethnic contact and fusion, they may have served more to mask social differences than to subvert them." Brooke Larson, *Cochabamba, 1550–1900: Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998): 365.

9 William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention."

10 Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights*, 4.

11 Rivas, *Los hombres de la revolución*, 71.

12 Thomas Benjamin, *Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000): 20.

13 Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos,*11.

14 Daniel Nugent and Ana María Alonso, "Multiple Selective Traditions in Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Struggle: Popular Culture and State Formation in the Ejido of Namiquipa Chihuahua." In *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, edited by Gilbert Joséph and Daniel Nugent, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994): 228.

15 Sinforoso Rivas, 17 October 1996.

16 Knight, "The Domestic Dynamics," 55.

17 Knight, 56.

18 Dunkerley, "The Bolivian Revolution at 60," 329.

19 Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos*, 1.

20 Thomas Benjamin, *Revolución,* 19.

21 Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos*, 2.

22 Boyer, 3.

23 Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights*, 5.

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26 Kevin Young, *Blood of the Earth: Resource Nationalism, Revolution, and Empire in Bolivia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017): 11.

27 Kevin Young, (ed). *Making the Revolution: Histories of the Latin American Left* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019: 3.

28 Leigh Binford, et.al. (eds). *Fifty Years of Peasant Wars in Latin America* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020).

29 Binford, 7.

30 Binford, 8.

31 Forrest Hylton, "History, 'Indigeneity', and the Anthropology of Revolution in Bolivia." In *Fifty Years of Peasant Wars in Latin America*, edited by Leigh Binford, et.al (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020).

32 Hylton, 175.

33 Hylton, 176.

34 Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, *Landscape of Migration: Mobility and Environmental Change in Bolivia's Tropical Frontier, 1952 to the present* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Andrew Ehrinpreis, "*Coca Nation: Labor, Indigeneity, and the Politics of the Coca Leaf in Bolivia, 1900–1962*." PhD dissertation, Stony Brook University, 2018; Nicole Fabricant and Nancy Postero. "Sacrificing Indigenous Bodies and Lands: The Political-Economic History of Lowland Bolivia in Light of the Recent TIPNIS Debate." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 20 (3), (2015): 452–474; Thomas Grisaffi, "We are Originarios … 'We Just Aren't from Here': Coca leaf and Identity Politics in the Chapare, Bolivia." *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 29, no. 4 (2010): 425–439; Hernán Pruden, "*Cruceños into Cambas: Regionalism and Revolutionary Nationalism in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, 1935–1959*." PhD dissertation, Stony Brook University, 2012; Ana Maria Lema, *El sentido del silencio: La mano de obra chiquitana en el oriente boliviano a principios del siglo XX* (Santa Cruz de la Sierra: UPIEB, 2009); and Ximena Soruco, et.al. *Los barones del oriente: El poder en Santa Cruz ayer y hoy*. Santa Cruz: Fundación Tierra, 2008.

Glossary

Agregado	Subtenant who rented land to a tributary Indian in the reducción.
Alcalde de campo	Traditional ayllu authority and cabildo member.
Altiplano	Flat highland area between the eastern and western Bolivian Andes.
Arrendero	Temporary tenant who cultivated land in the hacienda and paid rent in labor, kind, or money.
Arrimante	Subtenant who rented land to the temporary tenant or arrendero in the hacienda.
Ayllu	A kin basic unit of highland Andean society that held common land title and performed collective labor and other activities.
Cabildo	Municipal council.
Cacique	Indian chieftain. After 1952 a strong man who controlled peasant unions.
Campesino	Peasant. A countryside person.
Caudillismo	Personality cult in politics.
Caudillo	National, regional, or local leader who ruled through a combination of charisma and brute force. After 1952 a peasant boss.
Champa Guerra	Brushwood War, which alludes to an extremely confused conflict where it seemed that everyone fought against everyone else.
Chicha	Maize beer. An alcoholic beverage usually brewed in family units.
Chichería	A tavern where chicha is consumed.
Cholo(a)	Citified Indian. A cultural or biological mestizo(a) that rejects his/her Indian identity.
Colono	Permanent hacienda tenant.
Comunario	Indigenous community member.
Corregidor	Rural town mayor.
Curaca	Ethnic communal authority.

Demesne	Hacienda lands worked for the direct benefit of the hacienda owner.
Encomendero	People granted by the Spanish crown with an encomienda.
Encomienda	The right to collect tribute from some native communities and the duty of protecting their population.
Forastero	Foreigner who rented land to the hacienda or the reducción.
Gamonal	A powerful person.
Hacendado	Hacienda owner.
Hacienda	Estate. In Bolivia, larger haciendas were located in the altiplano, while smaller ones existed in the valleys.
Intendente	Police provincial authority.
Lari	Its colloquial use in a Quechua-speaking area has to do with the idea that those who speak Aymara come from remote upland areas and so are more ignorant than local folks who are more urbanized.
Latifundia	Large unproductive estates.
Mayordomo	Person in charge of running the absentee landlord hacienda.
Mestizaje	A process of shifting ethnic identities or mixing cultures.
Mestizo	Person of mixed biological or cultural Andean and European ancestry.
Miliciano	Militiamen. A member of an armed gang usually under the command of union bosses.
Minifundio	A minute, low-yielding, landholding.
Mit'a	A Quechua language term which means turn at some tasks; community labor, rendering services or goods to the ethnic lords in the precolonial era.
Mita	Forced labor draft in the colonial era.
Mitayo	Indian worker serving the mita in the colonial era.
Mitimaes	Highland colonizers to the valleys or lowlands in the precolonial era.
Mote	Boiled maize grains.
Padrón	Demographic record in the hacienda.

Patrón	Landlord.
Pegujalero	Colono who occupied a pegujal in the hacienda lands.
Pegujal	Generally, it means an independent smallholding, but it also refers to the plot occupied in temporary terms by the labor tenant of the hacienda (colono) in which the tenant had usufruct rights, in return for the free labor he or she provided on the estate's lands.
Piquero	Owner of a smallholding or pegujal.
Pongo	A colono who is fulfilling his labor *mita* in the manor house or the city house of the landlord.
Pongueaje	Personal services rendered by colonos to their landlords.
Q'ara	White or mestizo person who usually lived in the town or the city and spoke Spanish.
Q'atera	Market woman or small trader.
Rama	Forced monetary contribution.
Reducción	Colonial Indian territory.
Rosca	Clique. An exclusive group of powerful people.
Señoríos	Pre-colonial and colonial altiplano ethnic kingdoms.
T'ara	Indian person who usually lived in the countryside and spoke Quechua or Aymara.
Tinterillo	Literally 'little inkwell'. They were people who have not formally studied law, but by dint of practice have got to know how the courts function and give legal advice or intervene in court cases for others.
Tocuyo	Homespun cotton cloth.
Tributary	Abled man of 18 to 50 years of age.
Vecino	Town or city dweller.
Yanacona	Pre-colonial quechua term. An artisan, miner or agriculturalist native servant removed from his original ayllu and bound to the Inca.
Yungas	An Aymara word meaning "warm lands." Humid, subtropical region in the eastern slopes of the Andean Cordillera Real.

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JOSÉ M. GORDILLO is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of Calgary.

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