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La Paz, BOLIVIA

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Institute of Current World Affairs
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Dear Peter,

In the days before the Andean Wars of Independence (1809-1826), when Bolivia was still known as Upper Peru, addressing Ferdinand VII, the King of Spain, was no simple matter. And in Upper Peru, the center of Royalist support was the capital La Plata. Located in the Chuquisaca valley, La Plata was the seat of the Audiencia de Charcas that administered the royal edicts -- first under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of Lima -- and after 1776, under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty in Buenos Aires. Not long after silver mining began in Potosí in 1545, La Plata became a principal crossroads of the Spanish Empire. Miners and landowners flocked to Chuquisaca to invest their profits in elegant homes and educate their children at one of the New World's finer institutions, the University de San Francisco Xavier (founded 1674). For both miners and large landowners, there was no question of allegiance. The Spanish monarchy, despite feeble attempts to assure the rights of indigenous peoples after the Conquest, generally tolerated the "mita" and the "pongo." The former sent thousands of Aymaras and Quechuas to the Potosí mines and their deaths. The latter allowed landowners, or "hacendados" to exploit Indian "colonos" who already worked the patron's lands 3-5 days a week, forcing the "pongo" to give up at least one week a year to attend his master's needs in the city of La Plata without pay. So it is not surprising that one native of La Plata, "Nucchu" hacienda owner Josef Calixto de Velda Escribano de Cabildo, should bend over backwards with respect when opening a letter to the King in 1796. He starts out:

> Don Ferdinand, by the Grace of God, King of Castilla, of Leon, of Aragon, of the Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Navarre, of Granada, of Toledo, of Valencia, of Galicia, of Mallorca, of Sevilla, of Zerdeña, of Cordova, of Corsica, of Mursia, of Jaen, of Gibraltar, of the Canary Islands, of the East and West Indies, of Islands and continents on both seas and oceans, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Borgoña, Bravante and Milan, and Count of Hapsburg, Flanders, Tirol and Barcelona, Señor of Viscaya and of Medina, etc., etc.

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One can only wonder where the etcetera leads next. No 18th Century Andean colonist could doubt, however, that Spain was still firmly in control of the New World.

That would change. With the Wars of Independence, Andean citizens determined to throw off the yoke of Spanish autocracy and establish themselves as free men governing free republics. Contemporary observers, from both North America and Europe, were also tempted to consider these wars as wars that would liberate all Andean peoples, including the multitude of Indian societies that lived under the Spanish dominion. And in South America, the great Liberator, Simon Bolívar, argued that indigenous peoples who served in the Armies of Independence should be declared freedmen with landrights after their service.

Unfortunately, Bolívar stood practically alone and almost universally opposed in his position. This month I set out on my first journey to retrace the campaign trails of Simon Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre throughout Bolivia. Though Bolívar and Sucre were by no means the only illustrious rebels who shed blood to rid the Andes of the Spanish, both traveled from La Paz to Potosí in 1825-1826 to confirm the independence of Upper Peru. Sucre, who was honored with the commission Mariscal of Ayacucho after his defeat there of Spanish forces under Viceroy La Serna and General Olañeta in 1824, had marched south from Peru. Once in Upper Peru, the Mariscal was asked to convene a constitutional convention that would be the basis for a new republic. Bolívar, alarmed that such a unilateral move would anger his own rivals in Peru and the Rio de Plata (later Argentina), at first opposed Sucre's involvement in the politics of Upper Peru. Only when it became clear that the Peruvians favored Upper Peru's independence and that emissaries from the Río de Plata were more concerned with Bolívar's aid against the Brazilian Empire, did the Liberator allow Sucre to proceed. By the time both men were reunited in La Plata during 1826, the Republic of Bolívar, later to be changed to Bolivia, was well on its way to being born.

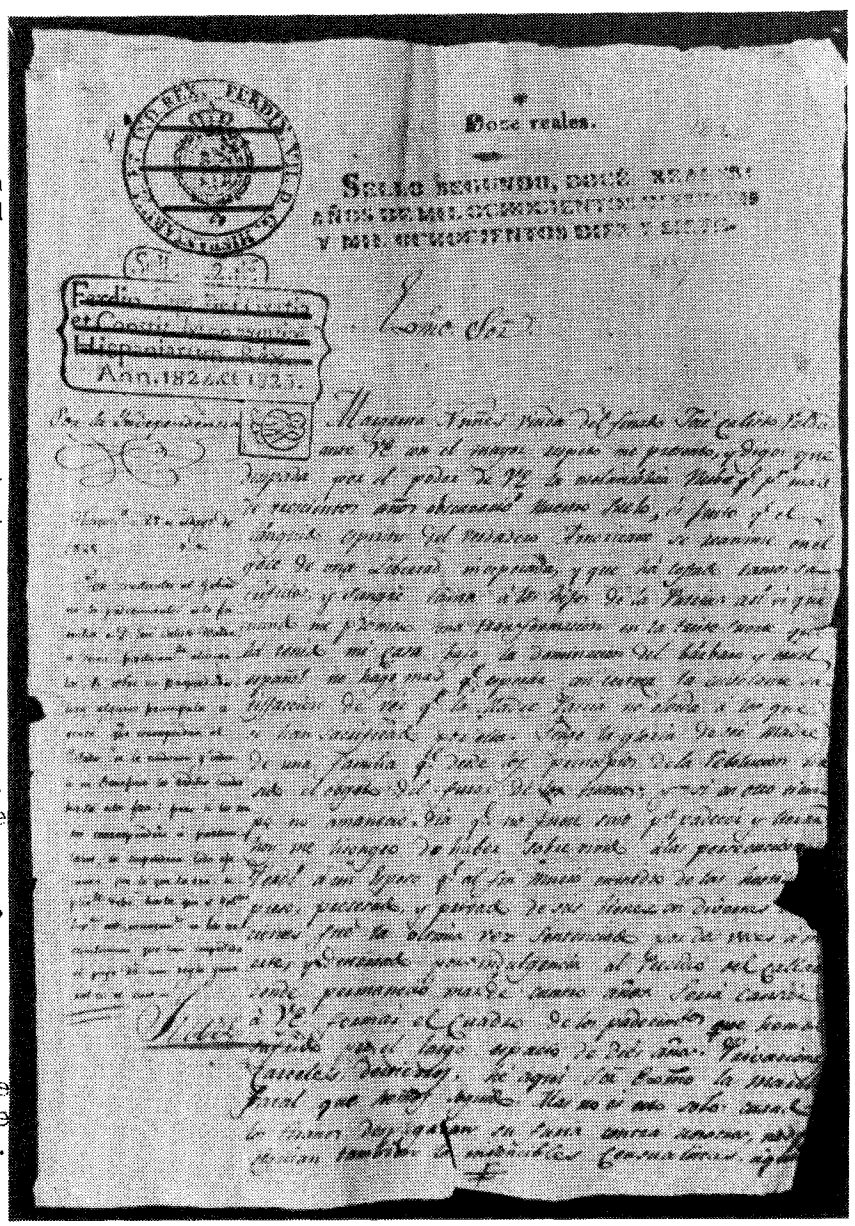
Setting out from La Paz in early March, I had no firm plan, but decided to let myself explore this country, to talk to her peoples -- both indigenous and of European descent -- and reflect on what the course of history and independence has meant for this Andean republic over the last 163 years.

Before leaving La Paz, I had spent previous months poring over essays that analyzed the independence period and Bolívar's role in shaping South America. There is no source like the original, so I found most instructive a collection of the Liberator's military dispatches and personal letters, written from 1810-1830. While almost every letter in this collection lends itself to quotation, I could not push one letter out of my mind. In August 1825, as Bolívar saw that fighting the Spanish was nearly over, he concentrated on garnerning international support for a Pan-American Union modelled on the recently founded United States of America. With a fervour unequalled by his colleagues, he urged Andean statesmen to travel with Godspeed to the Central American Isthmus. There the Congress of Panama was being convened to consider the practicalities of union. With his typical prophetic vision, Bolívar expressed his hopes and worries about the future of the Andean states in a letter to Peruvian delegate Manuel Lorenzo Vidaurre:

> You are indeed fortunate if you have attended the assembly of the American amphictyons, and if the Isthmus

> of Panama has become the second setting for the Isthmus of Corinth, where free ambassadors of glorious republics were assembled. But Heaven forbid that our future history should be that of the Greek nations, which, it appears, could exist only long enough to witness but brief flashes of freedom, followed by fearful tempests of tyranny, instead of surviving to produce upstanding young men and happy citizens ....

Bolívar's word's retain their significance in our own time, when the return of democracy to the Andes has been heralded a sign of progress after years of suffering under various military regimes. While Cabinet secretaries in Washington brandish ever new plans to resolve the Latin American debt problem, I write from La Paz wondering if the poverty and violence that currently engulfs all of the Andean states will not swallow up democracy in the region long before bankers write off that debt. Then too, I fairly ask myself when Andean nations will reform their own economies to



Despite his fame and office, Bolivia's 1st President Mariscal Sucre walked the streets of Chuquisaca in civilian dress and refused the salutes of passersby. The Presidential Palace on the Plaza 25 de Mayo was open to all, and the President personally attended guests who walked in. RIGHT: An 1828 letter presented to Mariscal Sucre by hacienda owner Dña. Margarita Nuñez. Dña. Nuñez begs for tax relief in light of the damage done to her home by Spanish troops during the Wars of Independence. The liberation of the Andes did not come easily. During the 16 years of fighting, it was common for towns to be claimed by patriot Republicans one week and retaken by Spanish Royalists the next. Mariscal Sucre promptly granted Dña. Nuñez's request.

allow freedom in the marketplace for rich and poor alike. Venezuela's February food riots, the spectre of narco-terrorism in Colombia, student protests in Ecuador, the bloody path of Sendero Luminoso in Peru, Chile's increasingly radical "No", and the possible return to the days of the "guerra sucia" in Argentina: when, since the Wars of Independence, has the entire Andean region been in such trouble? Can Bolivia's own, island-like stability last? Frankly, Bolivians know better than I. Like most journeys devoted to discovery, I was surprised, enlightened -- and sometimes, saddened -- by what I saw and heard chasing the ghosts of Bolívar and Sucre on the road from La Paz to Potosí last month.

PREPARING TO TRAVEL

Unforeseen difficulties with the Aymara in the Lake Titicaca island community of Cumana during the months of January and February first led me to think of a change of scenery and inspiration for the month of March. In spite of repeated attempts, I have been unable to convince residents of Cumana that I am merely a fledgling writer interested in their culture. On various occasions I have been searched for weapons, accused of being a spy for the Bolivian Army, and mistaken for the son of a pre-1952 Revolution landowner who had returned to take away the Aymaras' farms. When residents were calm enough to consider the serious merits of my study, they quickly began to link cooperation with guaranteed financial support to undertake village projects such as the construction of a fishery. My own initiative to guide the Cumana mining cooperative also backfired when I could wave no wand and produce magic money for heavy machinery [see WLM-13]. So I took a break from the Aymara in mid-February, with the clear understanding that I would return only when I felt like villagers on the island understood my work, and not before.

I did more than argue with the Aymara in February, however. During the first week of February, I traveled to Oruro, perhaps Bolivia's most important mining center. Then I visited Oruro to witness the indigenous interpetation of the Lenten fiest of Carnaval. Aymara and Quechua dancers from all over Bolivia's northern and central Altiplano congregate in Oruro each year to don devil's masks and brightly beaded frocks to parade through the streets. I wish I could write in more detail about the Carnaval spectacle. But I did not stick around. Honestly, I think the Carnaval has been oversold as an exhibition of indigenous folkways, unless those folkways have been reduced by the pressures of modernity to consuming enormous quantities of alcohol in seemingly manic-depressive dancing.

Accompanied by my Bolivian friend, Sergio Ballivian, we took one look at each other and decided that a bird-watching trip to Lake Poopo, 60 kilometers further south of Oruro, might prove more educational. In a sense, Sergio is exploring his country also, having spent 17 of his 26 years studying in the United States and Canada. Sergio is the grandson of retired Bolivian General Hugo Ballivian. General Ballivian was head of Bolivia's ruling military junta during 1951. But Bolivian history was more propitious for revolution than military juntas in the early 1950's. General Ballivian was forced to flee the Palacio Quemado in civilian disguise by the same forces that brought about the 1952 Revolution. So Sergio certainly possesses a few well-bred thoughts on the nature of radical change in Bolivia, since his grandfather's overthrow ushered in a completely different era for whites and Indians on the Altiplano. He is also an experienced

mountaineer and professional photographer. It is a good combination that tends to make long, harrowing roads a bit more short and sane. And here in Bolivia, where I have learned that anything can happen, it is sensible to travel with a friend in case of sickness or an accident.

The flamingoes that congregate in dense orange packs on the shores of Lake Poopo are actually feeding in the waters of what was once an ancient Altiplano sea. Mineral desposits dating from the Quaternary Period and Pleistocene Era indicate that the entire Altiplano -- from the northern reaches of Lake Titicaca to the southern expanse of the Uyuni salt flats -- was once covered by two larger lakes, known respectively as Lake Ballivian and Lake Minchin. Geologists have theorized that this veritable sea disappeared when fault lines opened up a drainage system to the Pacific Ocean after a period of strong seismic activity. Although this is but a theory, Sergio and I enjoyed ourselves musing on the notion while we kept the flamingoes in focus with his high-powered field glasses.

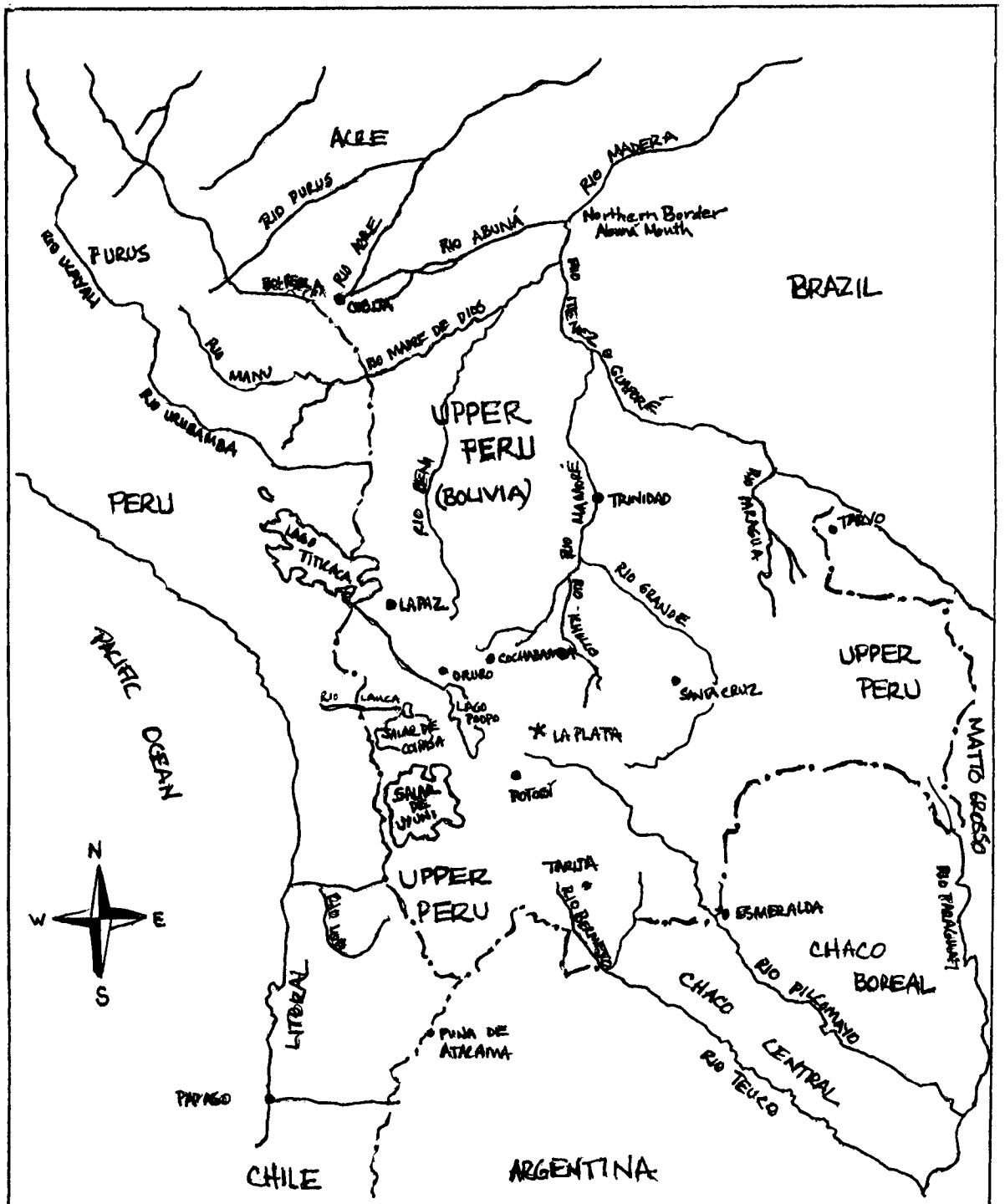
It seemed appropriate that I should begin to practice an ancient idiom like Quechua in the neighborhood of a now disappeared sea. Although rural-dwelling Quechua around Lake Poopo are no less skittish when confronted by outsiders than their Aymara counterparts on Lake Titicaca, I did find I was on better ground once the conversation moved beyond mere salutations. My Quechua professor had warned me already that the most common reaction to a Quechua-speaking gringo would be amazed flight by surprised Indians. He was right. In one instance, I approached a woman tending her sheep to inquire about the possibility of buying food. When she saw me coming, she rounded up the flock and turned on her heels quickly. But those Quechua who were not fearful seemed genuinely curious and eager to chat, so Sergio and I did not starve. One meeting produced a pleasant surprise. While talking with an old Quechua farmer about the effects of this year's drouth on agriculture, I was shown how the Quechua survive the unpredictable weather of the Altiplano . To my untrained eye, the mesa surrounding Lake Poopo was barren save for the mossy mounds of "thola", the thorny scrub brush "yoleta", and the grassy tufts of "paja brava". Paja brava brings to mind the buffalo grass that is so common on the midwestern prairies of the United States. Unlike buffalo grass, however, paja brava stings like the dickens when the grass points and edges are touched with the bare hand. It is a testament to the hard life led by Altiplano Indians that they can rip tufts of paja brava out of the ground without putting on gloves. And, as the old Quechua farmer cheerfully demonstrated, hiding wells between large groupings of paja brava is a fine way to keep sheep from drinking water meant for humans. These small wells, usually excavated to a depth of 2-3 meters, fill with rain water. Since the waters of Lake Poopo are too salty for human consumption, these wells constitute the local water supply. In times of drouth, Indians are not too particular about the water being brackish.

Little encounters like the above convinced me that I could learn more traveling among the Quechua of the southern Altiplano than arguing with the Aymara to the north. It was not very difficult to convince Sergio Ballivian to drop whatever he was doing at the beginning of March and keep me company on my way to Potosí. Since January, when I purchased a 1975 Toyota Landcruiser (courtesy of the Institute), Sergio has assisted me in outfitting the vehicle for extended travel over challenging terrain. This trip to Potosí would be the Landcruiser's first real test.

Although a three-week to month-long journey is not forever, road conditions in Bolivia demand preparation. Paul Walle, a Frenchman sent to survey Bolivia by his country's Ministry of Commerce in 1912, summed up the terrain quite succinctly, "Although travel in the interior of Bolvia, and especially in the eastern regions, is still full of surprises, it is easy to exaggerate its difficulties and dangers. Everything is a question of determination and patience." Determination means that spare parts one would never think of carrying elsewhere need to be chucked into a trunk for emergency road repairs. A short list includes: front and rear shocks, suspension leaf springs, air and gas filters, spark plugs, windshield wipers, points and condenser, belts, spare tire (or tires) and lubricants. Most roads are fairly deserted, except for the occasional passing of a large truck carrying agricultural produce to local markets. The concept of a pleasure drive -- or in our case, an exploratory trek -- is pretty alien to most Bolivians, particularly indigenous peoples bound to the land by poverty. So there are no rest stops or petrol stations along the way. We carried along an extra 90 liters of gasoline (the Landcruiser tank holds only 55), and 40 liters of water to tide us over in the stretches of high-altitude desert we would pass through in the Department of Potosí. Since we would be camping out most of the time, we also packed a dome tent, high-altitude stoves (these stoves use either gasoline or white gas, perfect for desolate spots where white gas is unavailable), down sleeping bags (at 4200-4500 meters above sea level, it can get nippy), plenty of powdered soups, canned tuna, and whatever else we could think of.

By early March, I had also mounted a 5,000 lb. capacity electrical winch on the front of the Landcruiser. Sergio and I joke around, calling the winch "ICWA's private ICBM". But when a thunderhead appears out of nowhere, and a sudden downpour drenches Altiplano roads, a winch can be a lifesaver. The aircraft-strength steel cable is wrapped around a tree or any other suitable anchor, and the Landcruiser is pulled along the slippery surface 50 meters at a time. Before the winch was mounted, I had already buried the Landcruiser up to the wheel wells twice while crossing rivers where soft beds took the place of bridges. It took me 3-4 hours each time to dig out.

Near Lake Titicaca, wind, rain, and heavy trucks create tracks often more than ½ meter deep. When the road surface freezes over in June, these tracks and corresponding road ridges leave a driving plane so irregular and hard that one bad bump can easily break an axle. And when I visited the Beni rain-forest last October, I found to my amazement that the roads there are even worse. Irrational logging practices that bring to life fellow Fellow Judith Mayer's newsletters from Indonesia are omnipresent. The visitor is greeted with horizon-spanning landscapes that have been desnuded entirely. With the rain forest canopy gone, the fragile topsoil is left to the ravages of the rainy season that inundates the Beni from October to May. The silt-like red clay that is left exposed to the rain becomes more slippery than North Dakota sleet. Whether in the eastern lowlands or the Altiplano, most paved roads in Bolivia have been constructed in the last 20 years, and then only between major population centers. Off the beaten path, there are no guarantees of any kind. So, as with a winch, it is better to bring along your own.



UPPER PERU DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD 1535-1825

W.L. Mebin 1989

SCALE 1:12,000,000

120 60 0 120 240 KILOMETERS/CM

LEGEND
* capital
• city
national limits
RIVERS

Adapted from original (1982)
Source: IGM - NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS, LA PAZ

LA PAZ TO COCHABAMBA

Since I had already traveled the first part of this route (La Paz-Oruro) in early February, I was most eager to reach the Cochabamba valley. The name Cochabamba is derived from the original Quechua term for the valley: "Cochapampa". Cochapampa -- which literally translates to "lake plain" -- was used by the Incas to describe the valley during the rainy season. Settled by the Spaniards in 1565 in a rare act of appreciation for lands promising agricultural fecundity, Cochapampa was renamed Oropesa by the Virrey of Lima, Don Francisco de Toledo, in 1579. Fittingly enough, neither local Quechua Indians nor newly arrived Spanish settlers took to the name change, though the original Quechua was vulgarized a bit so that "Cochapampa" was pronounced "Cochabamba. Finally, the name Cochabamba was accepted officially after the arrival of Mariscal Sucre in Bolivia in 1825. Confusion still reigned among contemporary cartographers, however. Frenchman Alcides D'Orbigny, who traveled the South American continent from 1826-35 making a myriad of notes on wildlife, geology, geography, indigenous peoples, and political systems, writes that even Brue's "Map of the Meridion World" (1826) still marked down two cities -- Cochabamba and Oropesa -- side by side in the same valley.

The Cochabamba valley was also site of some of the the most vicious fighting between Royalists and Republicans during Alto Peru's struggle for freedom from Spain. One of the most fascinating accounts of the war in the Cochabamba valley comes to us from the diaries of Jose Santos Vargas, which recount, often in macabre detail, this soldier's daily vision of the conflict. Rising from a reluctant drummer boy in 1814 to the rank of "Comandante" by the cessation of hostilities in 1825, Santos Vargas provides a glimpse into the Wars of Independence that is sadly reminiscent of the violence that grips Peru and Colombia today. The following excerpt is illustrative:

> On 14 November 1814, around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, 7 men, armed and on horseback arrived [in Oputaña]. Much later I would know these men: Eusebio Lira, Pedro Zerda, Pedro Graneros, Andrés Simón, Miguel Mamani, Julián Tangara, and one "moreno". Passing first by the house of Don Manuel Morales, which was near to the house of the Mayor, Don Fermin, [they asked about for the Mayor] ... But as the Mayor was in the countryside, attending his crops, he could not be found.
>
> Three men -- Pedro Zerda, Julián Tangara, and the "moreno" -- came up to the Mayor's house. Don Pedro dismounted his horse, encountering only the Mayor's wife, named Doña Paula Brañes. He said to her:
>
> "Where is your "marido"?
> The woman responded, "He's not here."
> Zerda repeated himself to the wife, "Where is he? Speak clearly. If you don't tell the truth, you die right here."
>
> [Zerda] pointed the muzzle of his carbine at the woman's chest. She cried out:

> "For God's sake, don't kill me. I'm just a poor woman with children. I do not know about my husband's affairs ... After he arrives, you can take him away and judge him as your justice demands, but I know nothing and I never get involved in men's actions."
>
> Taking hold of the muzzle that was at her breast, Dña. Brañes pushed it to one side. Don Pedro Zerda then erupted into a fury and shot her, taking no time to aim, but shooting from the hip. The woman fell, wounded ... and her son named Ciriaco, threw himself to his knees before Pedro Zerda saying:
>
> "God, not my mother", whereupon she died.

Cochabamba today is hardly the bloody battleground it once was. The closest reminder of warfare that Sergio and I saw upon entering the suburbs around the city was a multitude of triangular white flags flying from bamboo poles. Lest I think a truce was in effect, Sergio leaned over and smiled, "Chicha." Since I described before the indigenous population's penchant for this crude corn liquor in WLM-4, I will not repeat myself here. But suffice to say that the average "Cochabambino's" ability to drink chicha is so great that D'Orbigny felt moved to dedicate long passages recounting his stay in Cochabamba to the subject. It seems that the Frenchman forced himself to drink chicha only when confronted with the embarrassing possibility that an Englishman at the same party would prove himself more diplomatic and open-minded when the Englishman quaffed the drink unreservedly.

Beyond the white flags advertising chicha, the modern city of Cochabamba startled me with its evident prosperity. Sergio, who had been in Cochabamba last in 1980, was amazed also by the number of new clothing stores and restaurants that have popped up. I saw little sign of begging, even though Cochabamba has experienced serious problems in the past with poor children who take to the street and seem to survive solely by smoking cocaine-laced cigarettes. And the vendors of the informal economy so prevalent in La Paz were rarely to be seen. With newspapers claiming a recession during these months of pre-electoral anxiety, the prosperity seemed out of place.

When Sergio and I stopped off to visit one of his uncles living in the the city, Cochabamba's prosperity was put into perspective quickly. "It's the drug trade, plain and simple," remarked Sergio's aunt over tea. Indeed, the center of coca-leaf production in Bolivia is the Chapare jungle region located in the north of the Cochabamba Department. There U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officials work in tandem with Bolivia's own anti-drug unit, UMOPAR, to persuade campesinos that they would be better of growing corn instead of coca. It is an argument that usually falls on deaf ears, given the comparative price advantage of coca over corn for the producer.

Later in the day, I made my way around town speaking to the owners of several hardware stores. Since these merchants are well-tied into the construction business, I asked about the increase in housing starts. Around Cochabamba, the number of new houses under construction or recently completed stands out in stark contrast to the poor neighborhoods that ring

La Paz. Although the hardware store owners were unable to provide me with irrefutable statistics, they agreed to a man that the construction industry in Cochabamba has experienced enormous growth, evidenced by the increase in orders for cement, iron pilings, and paint. One owner even gave a name to the homes that have seemingly appeared from midnight to dawn in the last five years, replete with swimming pools, lush gardens, and high walls. "Narchitectura," he cynically remarked. There really did not appear to be any point in asking further about the supposed origins of the housing boom.

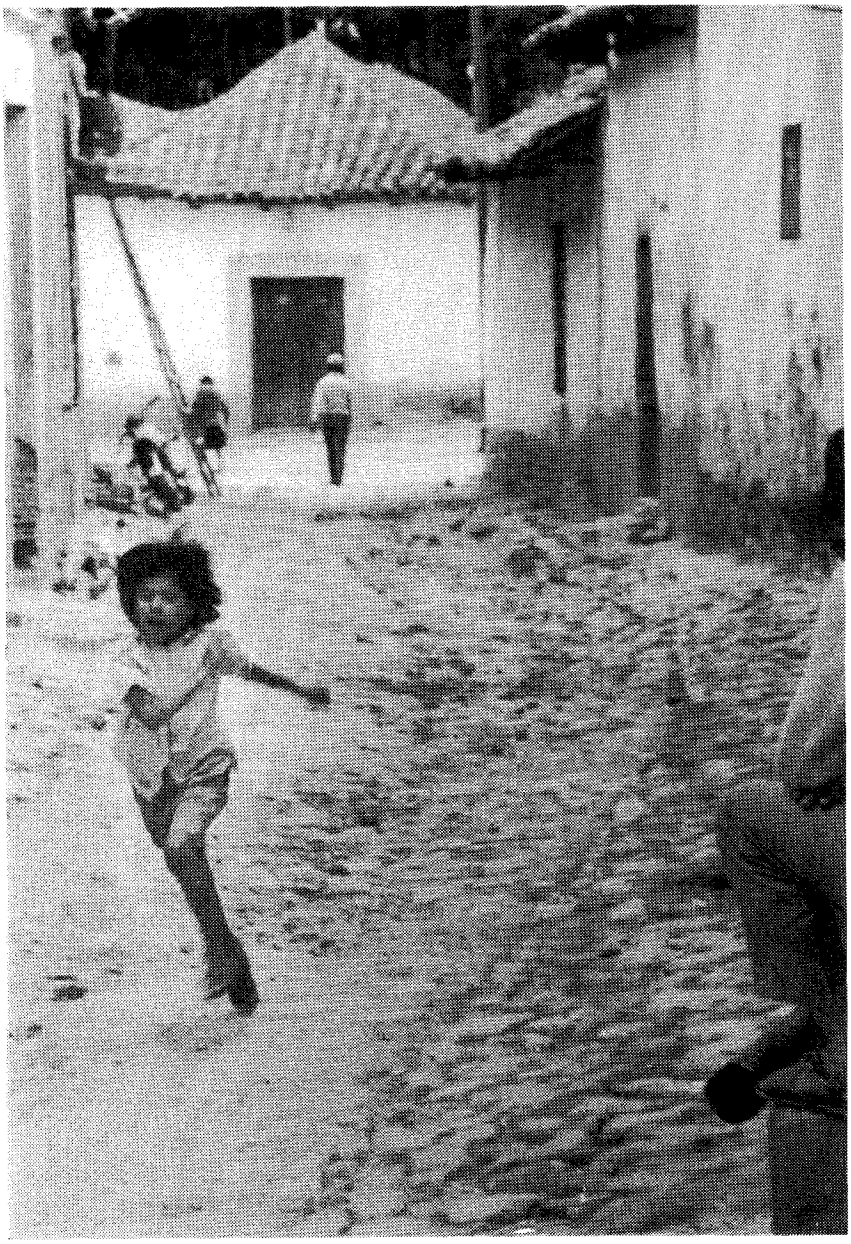
It would be ludicrous to assume that everyone in Cochabamba has dirtied his hands in the drug trade. On the contrary, most Cochabambinos are polite, hospitable, and law-abiding citizens. But these same Cochabambinos increasingly feel threatened by the higher incidence of crime that has accompanied the growth in coca-production and cocaine smuggling in the valley. In March there were four separate bomb threats directed at small, legal businesses located in the city center. Earlier this year, the two daughters of a Cochabamba industrialist were kidnapped. Complained Sergio's relatives, "This is not the kind of Cochabamba we knew as children. And now we have to worry not just about robberies and assaults, but the possibility that our own children will be attracted to drugs as well."

With cocaine readily available to those who want it, such parental preoccupation is not farfetched. While no Bolivian city has yet to experience cocaine-addiction or drug-related crime on the scale experienced in our own capital, Washington, D.C., (over 365 violent homicides were registered in the capital last year, of which approximately half are thought to be related to cocaine trafficking), Bolivian physicians and researchers have noted an increase in drug consumption among Bolivian youth. The National Institute for the Investigation of Drug Dependence logged in 254 outpatients seeking drug therapy in 1982. By 1984 that figure had nearly tripled to 614 outpatients in search of counseling. Bolivian clinical psychologist Jorge Blanco Krasnik also provides interested listeners with another alarming statistic: there are currently more than 80,000 "pitilleros" in the country. These pitilleros are most often poor youth addicted to smoking cigarettes laced with cocaine paste. Editorials in the nation's newspapers often focus on this new and aggravating problem for Bolivians. The La Paz daily El Diario responded to the release of a U.S. study that claims drug consumption has jumped 10 times in the last decade by commenting, "Today, a new challenge stands before Bolivian society, and this challenge must be confronted with intelligence and rigor."

While I have not seen the U.S. study, my own experience here tells me that Bolivians cannot isolate themselves from the problem of consumption when their country is a major producer of coca-paste. Again, Bolivians do not come close to consuming the amount of cocaine that their neighbors to the North do. Few conscientous persons living in Bolivia wish to see the consumption figures become comparable either.

THE MISQUE VALLEY: ONE SURPRISE AFTER ANOTHER

From Cochabamba, Mariscal Sucre and Simon Bolivar made their separate ways to La Plata via the Clisa and Misque valleys. After spending the night in Cochabamba, Sergio and I stayed just long enough to patch the muffler. It had been pierced by flying rocks. Once in order, we set about picking up the Liberators' trail again.



A young Bolivian girl chases down her friend in the streets of Tarata, birthplace of General Mariano Melgarejo.

southern interior of the Cochabamba department. By early afternoon, we pulled into the small pueblo of Tarata, intrigued by the plentiful evidence of colonial architecture that could be seen from the road.

As we stretched our limbs in the Plaza de Armas, I discovered that Tarata had been the birthplace of one of Bolivia's most infamous post-Independence despots: General Mariano Melgarejo. A young Catholic catechist, who also spoke Quechua, took great pride in showing Sergio and me around town. After guiding us through the renovated cathedral in the Plaza, he asked if we desired to visit the ruins of the house where Melgarejo was born. It sounded like a good diversion, so we set out for the house.

Since General Melgarejo was president of Bolivia from 1865-71, I expected to find a house dilapidated, but not in utter shambles. A plaque commissioned by the Tarata village council last year was the only indication that the adobes once belonged to a former President, and did not now serve as a corral.

Some Bolivian historians might suggest, however, that a plaque is all the tribute General Melarejo deserves. Mariano Melgarejo first entered the Bolivian Army in 1835. After distinguishing himself on the field of battle at Ingavi in 1841, where General José Ballivian turned back invading Peruvian forces, Melgarejo was promoted to Lieutenant. It was a fateful promotion. Over the next twenty years, Melgarejo would plot and conspire at almost every turn to overthrow the presiding Bolivian governments. Finally, in March 1865, Melgarejo -- who by now had been promoted to General -- succeeded in defeating General Isidro Belzu in a battle for control of La Paz. The victorious and jubilant Melgarejo, resplendent in full dress uniform and menacing behind a black, flowing beard, ascended the steps to the Palacio Quemado at precisely the same moment that a shot rang out and General Belzu fell dead. Historians argue still over who was the assasin of Belzu. They agree , nevertheless, that Melgarejo lost no time in taking advantage of the moment. The bearded general opened a window of the Palace and exclaimed to the crowd below, "Belzu has died! And now, who lives?" The crowd assembled below in the Plaza Murillow shouted back, "Viva el General Melgarejo!"

So began six years of unabashed personal plunder and caprice on the part of General Melgarejo, the likes from which Bolivia has still yet to recover. Apocryphal stories of the General abound. One has it that the General was surprised one morning by his aide-de-camp reading a national gazette upside down. Unfortunately for Bolivians, Melgarejo was not engaged in an exercise to test his eyes. He was illiterate.

But it was Melgarejo's partition of Bolivian soil in return for personal gifts from neighboring countries that continues to defy the imagination. In 1866, the Bolivian General added another star to his epaulette when he was given a general's commission in the Chilean Army. Thereupon followed a treaty with Chile that allowed for the equal exploitation of phosphates, salitres, and any other profitable minerals found in the Bolivian territory of the Atacama Desert known as the "Litoral." From 28°38´ south to 24° north, Melgarejo also effectively declared a free-trade zone, exempting Chileans from any taxes on minerals found in the area. This concession would later have tragic consequences for Bolivians. The War of the Pacific in 1879 began, in part, because a subsequent Bolivian government tried to impose a 10 centavo tax on each quintal of salitre. The Chileans cried foul, citing the treaty signed with Melgarejo 13 years earlier. Not mentioned by the Chilean plenipotentiary sent to La Paz to eventually sever diplomatic relations was the fact that General Melgarejo received 10,000 Chilean pesos and two fine hunting dogs (some historians talk about stallions: who knows?) in exchange for his signature on the treaty. Melgarejo's excesses became Bolivian losses when Chilean troops disembarked in Antofagasta in November 1879 to occupy the Litoral. Bolivia lost the ensuing war, and to this day claims an outlet to the Pacific Sea [see WLM-11].

Before Melgarejo was overthrown in a violent "golpe de estado" on 15 January 1871, he managed to inflict more material damage on Bolivia's future generations. In exchange for receiving the decoration "Gran Cruz de la Imperial Orden del Crucero de Brasil", the General ceded the 6,000 square leagues of Bolivian territory named "Mato Grosso" to the Brazilian Emperor. Today, there are quite a few Bolivian gold miners who wish that territory still belonged to Bolivia.

General Melgarejo died as he lived. Fleeing to Lima, Peru, after his overthrow, he was assasinated there by the brother of his concubine in November 1871. A 19th Century Bolivian historian eulogized Melgarejo with these words, "[Melgarejo] laughed while contemplating the burning of a town, and cried in the presence of a small child."

After our Quechua guide was satisfied that we had heard enough of Melgarejo, he led us back into to town, talking readily about the fervent political campaigning currently underway in Tarata. A campaign worker for the MNR party, he sneered at all of the propaganda exhorting Tarata natives to elect Bolivian brewer Max Fernandez president. "The Union Civica Nacional (UCN -- and Fernandez's party) politicians throw money and beer around to get votes. Everyone who registers as a party member gets a free litre of "Paceña" and five bolivianos (equivalent of US $2). But our campaign is clean. The people here know that MNR gave them the land in 1953."

Of course, accusations of political campaign irregularities are made everyday now that elections are so close. Far from Tarata, near Lake Titicaca, I personally know of towns where Aymaras have banded together to support a particular party based on the promise of a development project to be centered in their respective communities. There are smaller incentives too. One small Aymara community just received two brand-new soccer goals for its playing field. Democracy is young in Bolivia, and it would seem that is already carries birthmarks particular to this Andean country. I honestly do not know what to think of these pre-electoral tricks. On the one hand, it is an opportunity for campesinos "to git while the gittins good". On the other hand, it undermines the integrity of the electoral process. Observers can only hope that future governments will be able to do more during their actual terms of office, and let the elections stand on the proof of the public record. "Pork-barrel" legislation at least receives the aprobation of Bolivia's House of Deputies. Pre-electoral donations, whether in the form of bottled beer or soccer goals, often comes from political parties' private funds, with little or no public scrutiny.

Sergio and I let off our Quechua passenger, and thanking him, took off in the direction of Misque. On the map, Misque did not look that far, but it was 2:30 by the time we reached Clisa, the next big town. So Sergio and I resigned ourselves to another day on the road. We were in no hurry anyway, fascinated as we were by the wide and ample valley in which both Tarata and Clisa sit. Occasionally we would pass the ruins of abandoned **haciendas** and I would stop the Landcruiser to climb out and take photos. While some haciendas around Cochabamba have been taken over by farmers' syndicates or cooperatives to be used as warehouses during harvest time, the majority that I have seen stand like eerie momuments to the "patrones" forced off the land in the wake of the 1952 Revolution. Ostensibly, the

1953 Agrarian Reform expropriated only the lands surrounding the homes of "hacendados", or hacienda owners. But most hacienda owners with whom I have spoken recount tales of returning to maintain their homes, only to be confronted by angry Quechuas or Aymaras who refuse to allow them back. As a result, most of the homes are falling down in disrepair. Perhaps four centuries of oppression justifies the indigenous peoples' anger, but it seems that this anger could be put to better use. The haciendas could have been used as schools if nothing else. After the 1917 Revolution in Russia, exploited serfs there took part in their fair share of looting and burning. But the Soviet government since has tried to preserve the homes on the old estates, turning them into museums in some cases or headquarters for cooperative farms in others. It is an example that the Bolivians would have done well to follow.

Between Tarata and Clisa, I was also interested to note that the only trees in the valley were those planted on the grounds of the old haciendas. These trees -- mainly willows and euculyptus -- are presently in a horrible state. Quechuas in the valley have stripped most trees of their bark in order to have cooking fuel. Other trees that have not been stripped have been cut down without regard for soil conservation or wind protection. Needless to say, the agreeable climate in the Cochabamba region could support many more trees than it actually does.

Driving into Clisa, we were forced to stop and ask directions for the old road to Sucre. We were helped by a young, well dressed Bolivian, who did more than provide us with directions. He spoke with cryptic candour about the presence of so many new Toyota pick-ups in the town's Plaza de Armas. "Yes, there is a lot of movement through Clisa these days. A couple of years ago, nobody came through here." To what did he attribute the revival of Clisa? "Business, just business," he replied as he pointed us down the dirt tract to Arani and Sucre beyond. "Yeah, business. If you follow that road, you're right on the heels of Bolivar."

We pulled into Arani just as the afternoon was fading into evening. We relaxed for a moment in the vegetable market on the outskirts of town, enjoying the view of Quechua Indians taking down their stalls and hurrying to catch the last trucks out to their more remote villages. While Sergio ambled off to take advantage of the setting sun for some color photographs, I made my way on foot to the Plaza de Armas to take a peek at the colonial church dominating the square.

The huge, bronze-plated doors to the cathedral's nave were not open, so I had to satisfy myself with an exterior view of the tiled dome so uncharacteristic of other churches I have seen in Bolivia. The cathedral seemed straight out of Florence, Italy, not a small town in the Andes. I was not scratching my chin long before an old native of Arani sidled up beside me and introduced himself. "Holá, what brings you to Arani? I'm Humberto Cairo, correspondent for the Cochabamba daily, Los Tiempos "

I explained the purpose of my trip to Señor Cairo, and he became quite animated. "The church you are looking at was the seat of the bishopric of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Until the Wars of Independence, this church was home to bishops appointed to serve in Bolivia from as far away as Venezuela and Colombia. From Arani, these bishops exercised jurisdiction all the way to Asunción (in modern-day Paraguay)."

In fact, the degree of influence enjoyed by local clergy among Quechua and Aymara communities during the colonial period was matched only by that of hacienda owners. In some instances, this placed priests in direct competition with their secular counterparts. After 1751, Catholic Church authorities became frustrated when the Spanish Crown legalized the practice of "reparto". Reparto refers to the forced distribution of imported, finished goods among the Indians. The reparto functioned as a "de facto" tax on the poor, since Indians were compelled to purchase silks, knives, indigo dye, paper, and anything else local prefects and hacendados thought would be profitable.

As a result, priests looked on in resentment as their own ecclesiastical taxes were neglected. The local cleric's main source of income was derived from surcharges attached to the performance of various liturgical services. According to a rate schedule printed by the Archbishop of La Plata in 1770, priests were allowed to charge the following fees: 2 pesos for a mass with prayer; 4 pesos for a mass with song; and 12 pesos for a solemn mass complete with a procession. Charges were also levied for burials and commemorative services for the dead. And what priests could not earn "legally", they sometimes earned through less scrupulous means. In Scarlett O'Phelan Goody's A Century of Anticolonial Rebellions: Peru and Bolivia, 1700-1783, the author details the activities of one such priest in Peru: Don Manuel Joseph Arrayo. In 1739, Indians in the priest's countryside parish of Asillo accused the cleric of having confiscated lands and livestock that actually belonged to the community. Father Arroyo was accused also of having rented out those same confiscated lands; on the lands he kept for himself, Indians complained that they were paid rarely. Father Arrayo later worked in small village outside Cusco, where he jumped on the bandwagon of other priests protesting against the burden of the reparto. Rather hypocritically, the priest sent a letter to the Viceroy and Archbishop in Lima, citing "the ruin that the repartos produce ... by which [hacendados] take Indians as prisoners and force them to work ...." As Miss Goody points out, this humanitarian argument would be truly moving if the reader did not already know of Father Arroyo's past doings.

This double weight of taxation imposed by both secular and ecclesiatical authorities stretched the resources of most Indians to the breaking point. Small wonder, then, that these taxes were frequently mentioned by indigenous leaders when inciting Quechuas and Aymaras to revolt in the 18th Century. The most famous of these uprisings was led by José Gabriel Tupac Amaru from 1780-81. Tupac Amaru claimed royal ancestry from the Inca line. When his effort to gain recognition of his indigenous title failed to attract the positive attention of the Spanish authorities in Cusco and Lima, Tupac Amaru roused Indians to his side by promising to free them of the reparto obligation and the mita service in the mines of Huancavelica and Potosi. It would not be too wild an idea to argue that these same grumblings, albeit in different form, exist today in the Andes [see WLM-8 in particular]. The complaints once voiced against direct taxation are now directed against unemployment in the region. Indeed, Sendero Luminoso's main competition in the struggle to "liberate" Peru is another radical guerrilla group that calls itself "Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru" (MRTA).

That afternoon in Arani, however, my conversation with Señor Cairo continued peacefully, interrupted only by the evidence of past violence in the Andes. Señor Cairo was proud to point out that Simon Bolivar had rested

in a Jesuit mission to the east of town. If Sergio and I hurried, we would just be able to reach the mission site before nightfall.

I excused myself politely to round up Sergio, and we were off once more. On a small knoll overlooking Arani, we found the crumbling walls of aged adobe that had been the home of the Jesuits. Ironically, it was Simon Bolivar who was most instrumental in curbing the power of the religious orders in the Andean countryside. One of his first measures upon entering Alto Peru in 1825 was to instruct Mariscal Sucre to confiscate the properties of monasteries and convents. Haciendas owned by religious orders, usually "obrajes" devoted to the spinning of wools and cottons, were also turned over to the state to recoup the loss in revenues caused by the expensive years of fighting the Spanish. Deprived of their main sources of income, most missions simply closed up shop and moved into the cities or sent their priests and nuns back to Europe. That might have been the best for Bolivia, but I wish I could have seen the mission in its original state. As it was, Sergio and I had to content ourselves with picking "tuna", a delicious orange and purple cactus fruit that bloomed in a cactus field below the mission.

However close Misque had seemed when we checked the map earlier in the day, it was obvious now that we would have to find a campsite and rest for the evening. We drove up and out of the Arani valley, surprised by the abrupt change in topography and climate. Paja brava reappeared as rapidly as trees disappeared. And the temperature dropped quickly as we continued to ascend. Several times we thought to stop, but every flat spot seemed occupied by a small field planted with beans or barley. We were mindful, too, of the wolf-like dogs that are commonly kept by campesinos to guard their livestock. While it would be a rude to bother a campesino at this hour, it would be downright unpleasant to suffer a dog-bite.

By now quite dark and without a moon to illuminate the landscape, we were forced to turn down a service road that ran parallel to a state-owned gas and oil pipeline, hoping to find an old clearing used by engineers inthe the construction of the pipeline. When we finally came across a suitable spot, it was late and we were exhausted from a long day. To have kept on the lights of the Landcruiser to scan the country for nearby houses would have only aroused the very dogs we wanted to avoid. As it was, the yelp of distant dogs was soon upon us. We shrugged our shoulders, set up camp, and decided that the morning would tell all.

At 7 a.m. the following day, we had our answer. From inside the dome tent, we were awakened with the Quechua greeting of "Imaynalla kasanki?" Sergio groggily moved to open the tent fly, and I followed his motion with my still sleepy eyes. What I saw made me sit up quickly. Our tent was surrounded by appromixately 15 Quechua men. They looked upset.

The men were from the village that was now clearly visible some 100 meters distant. Their leader, who introduced himself as the "secretario-general" and school teacher, wasted no time in coming to the point. Why were we camping in such a deserted spot? Were we "pitchicateros" (Bolivian slang for drug smugglers)?

Sergio began to explain that we were on the trail of Simon Bolivar. I fumbled for the Quechua texts that I had brought along. The men were not

buying our truthful story. They made clear that they did not like all the foreigners who had been passing through the area recently. From what they said, I gathered that DEA agents had been in the village trying to convince the Quechua campesinos to stop cultivating coca in the nearby Arani valley below. This would make sense, since it is very common for campesinos' small, individual plots to be separated by great distances. In any case, I was not pleased. Situations like this one can get out of hand all too easily.

I stepped out of the tent to begin treating with the men in Quechua. I asked if they knew anything about the passage of Simon Bolivar and Mariscal Sucre from Cochabamba to La Plata on this road. I only got back stoney glances and more questions about drug smuggling. The Quechuas' suspicions began to fade at last when I brought out my tape recorder so that they could listen to my Quechua lessons taped in La Paz. And they began to warm a bit when I began to tell them of my interest in indigenous culture. But one youth refused to be moved. He protested that he did not understand why I -- a North American -- spoke Quechua, while Sergio did not? Was Sergio the drug smuggler?

Thereupon followed a truly fascinating exchange of ideas. The village secretary-general and schoolteacher chimed in to criticize Sergio for his ignorance of Quechua. Sergio excused himself, explaining that he was back in Bolivia after many years in the United States, and actually spoke better English than Spanish. From there the conversation turned to the problems of the Quechuas living in isolated, rural areas. When Sergio took the position that lasting change in the countryside would take place only when educational standards had been raised, the schoolteacher was adamant in opposing Sergio's opinion. "No," he argued, "our problems are racial. The white Spaniard was lazy, and he infected our people with that disease. The Quechua is honest and hard-working. We knew how to work the land before the Conquest. What we must do is remove every last trace of remaining Spanish influence from Bolivia."

Sergio and I shot each other a quick glance upon hearing this remark. This kind of ethnocentric "indigenismo" is one of the principal characteristics of guerrilla movements in neighbouring Peru. And the school teacher brought to my mind the political program set forth by the Ayllus Rojos that I described in WLM-8. While I have no idea whether Sendero Luminoso, Tupac Amaru, or the Ayllus Rojos work in the Cochabamba area, listening to this man certainly provided reason to reflect.

After announcing his point of view, the schoolteacher left. Sergio and I continued talking with the Quechua crowd, which by now had grown to over 30 men and women. Besides their original suspicion, camping equipment always draws attention on the Altiplano. Finally satisfied, the crowd broke up. Said one Quechua youth, "You should return to live with us. But your friend who does not speak Quechua: he must go."

And with that, one of the remaining Quechua announced that we had a flat tire. Sergio and I determined to treat the news casually. Had the someone in the crowd let out the air to prevent our sudden escape? It seemed odd and unlikely, but then again, the entire morning had been

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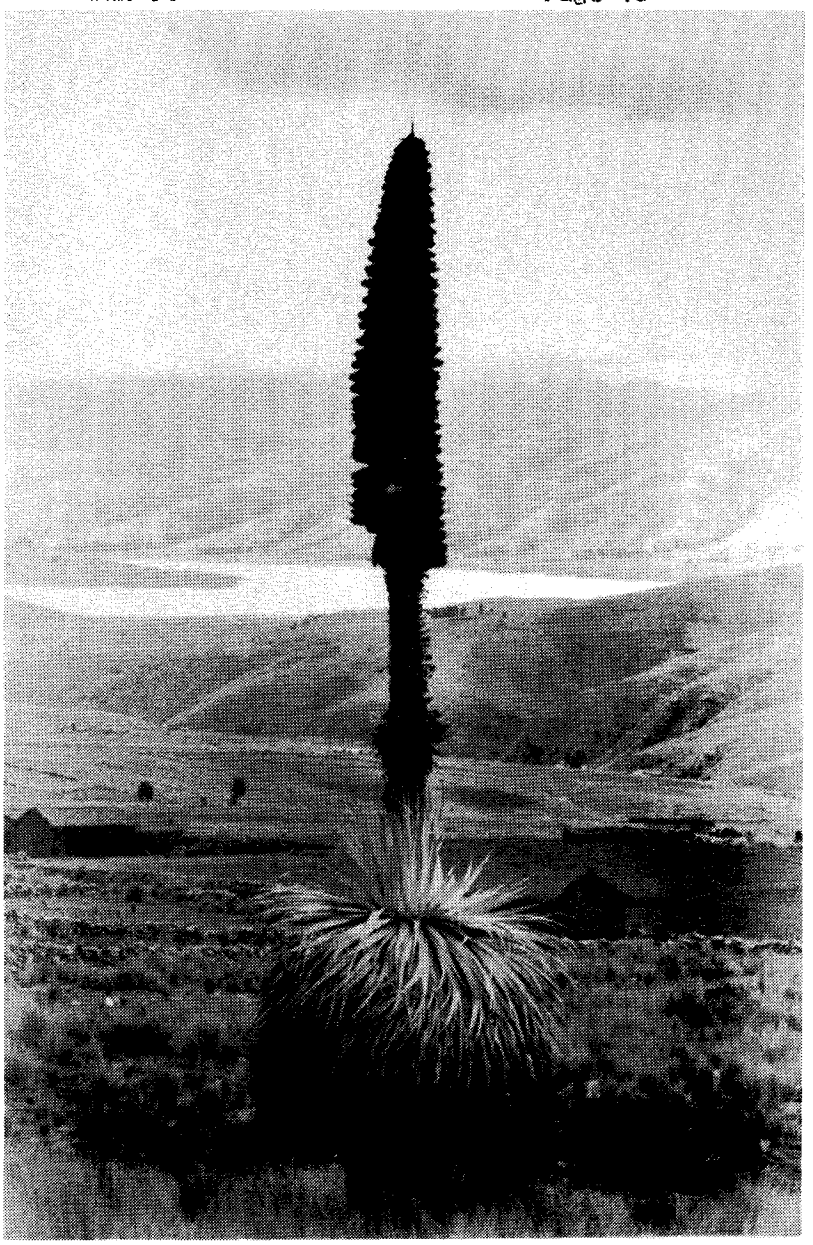
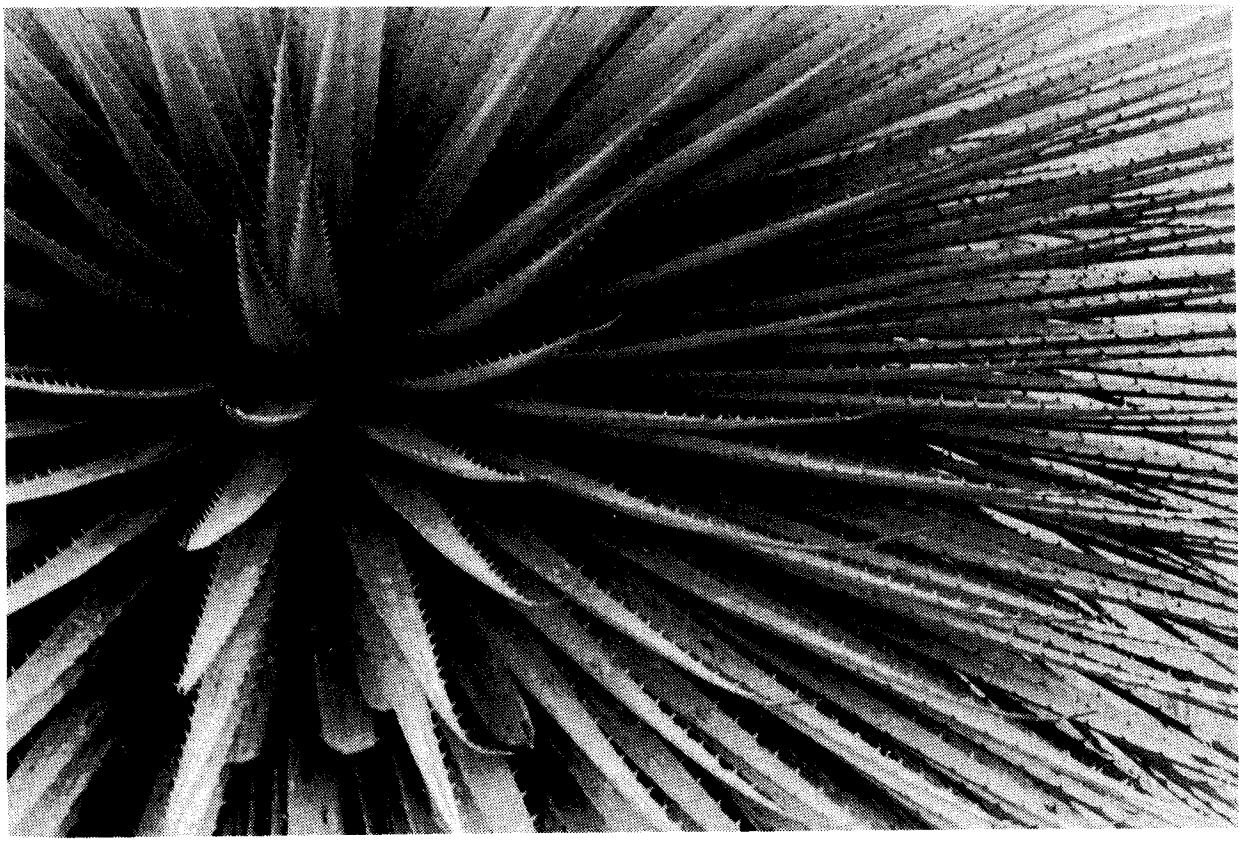


The Andean landscape is dotted with hundreds of exotic cacti and rare flowers. One of my favorite is the tatanca, or puya raimondi, pictured above. Growing to 12 meters in height, this plant of the bromeliáca family is a relative of the pineapple. The puya raimondi takes 100 years to mature, after which time the plant flowers. Once the flower has bloomed, the plant automatically begins a process of self-combustion in which it burns to death. I saw this puya raimondi near Rodeo, in the lower Cochabamba Department. The puya raimondi is also found southeast of La Paz, near Comanche, and in the Ancash Department of northern Peru. The puya raimondi is now faced with extinction. Campesinos have taken to burning the plant long before nature runs its course, complaining that the spiny base of the puya raimondi damages the fleece of sheep who feed too close to the plant.



A close-up of the puya raimondi spiny base.

The Altiplano also supports a wide variety of mammals, reptiles, and birds. Pictured above are two of the most common small animals. To the left is the Altiplano chinchilla, often hunted for its fur. On the right, the rabbit-like viscacha. Sporting a long tail resembling that of a squirrel, the viscacha hides on rock ledges and scales cliffs to avoid detection.

WILDLIFE ILLUSTRATIONS: (this page and page 33) taken from, Javier Pulgar Vidal, Geographía del Perú, Lima, 1987.

odd and unlikely. Our gear stored, we took a look at the tire and watched as the tube received air quite readily with the small pump we had brought along. Up to pressure, we wasted no time getting back on the road to Sucre.

HACIENDAS IN THE CHUQUISACA VALLEY

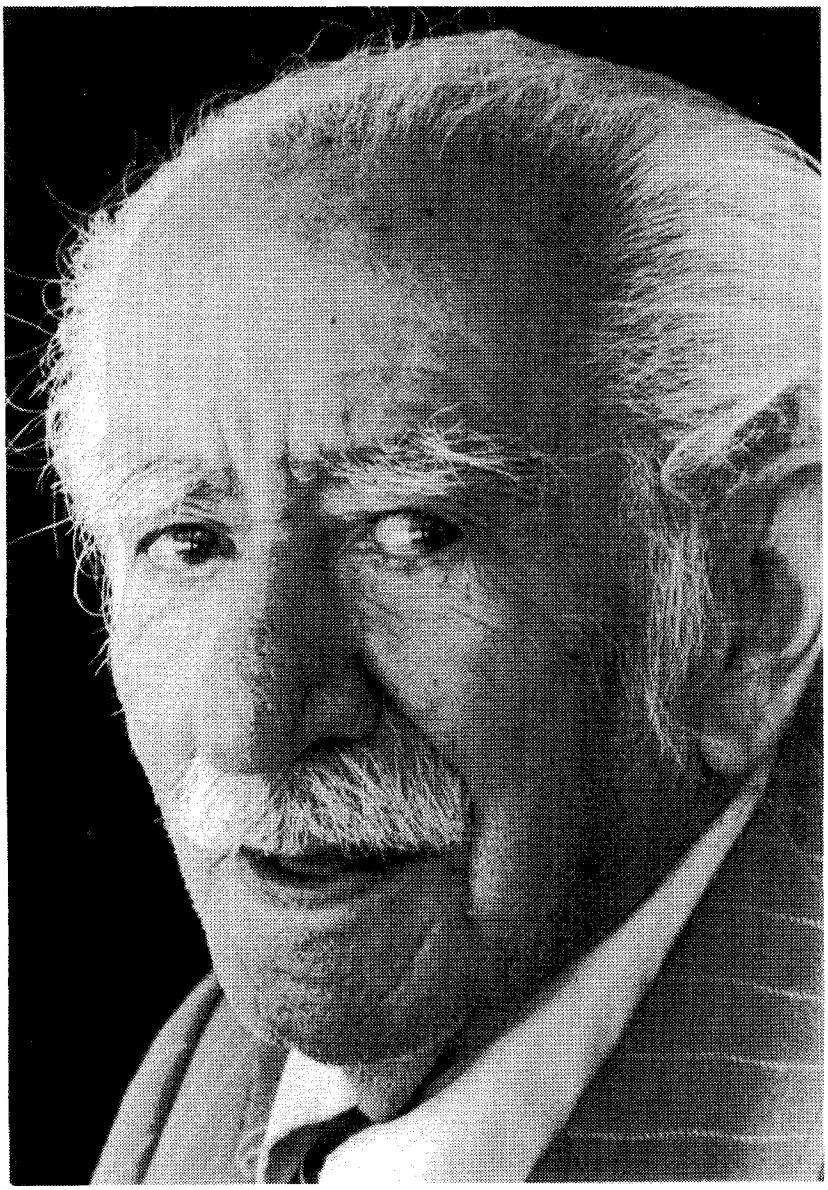
Before reaching Sucre, we were delayed unexpectedly for two days in Misque. Heavy rains further up the valley made it impossible to cross the Misque River, so there was nothing to do but wait. And Misque, though quite small, boasts its own history analogous to crossing charged rivers. One of Misque's more interesting citizens was Mariano Mendizábal. Mendizábal served as a captain in the Royalist Army until 1820, when he switched sides to the Republican forces. Mendizábal's conviction was fleeting, though, and in 1822, the Royalist turned Republican became a Royalist again. When Mendizábal was captured in a skirmish with Republicans around 1823, the Republican commander General José Miguel Lanza wanted to execute the turncoat on the spot. Exactly how Mendizábal escaped death by firing squad is not entirely clear. The diary of Comandante José Vargas tells us only that, once pardoned, "Mendizábal never shamed himself again."

When Sergio and I finally were able to cross the Misque River, it was quite an experience. Rising around 5 a.m., we broke camp and were at the river's edge by 6 a.m. Misque natives had told us that this was the best time to cross the river, since its level would continue to rise throughout the day. Even so, the crossing was tricky. Water swirled around the jeep half-way up the doors, and we could feel the current pushing the Landcruiser downstream. It was with a considerable sigh of relief that we reached the other side.

But the two day delay in Misque was costly. When we reached Sucre later the same afternoon, we were told that we had missed the Quechua celebration of Carnaval in Tarabuco. "Tarabuceños" are noted for their dress, wearing leather helmets modeled after those worn by the Spanish conquistadors. Weavings from the Tarabuco area are also of the first quality, since the Quechuas there take great pride in preserving intricate patterns that are being lost elsewhere.

After a good night's sleep, Sergio and I called on Dr. Joaquín Gantier, the director of the Casa de Libertad in Sucre. Once a former Jesuit monastery, the Casa de Libertad now houses artefacts and documents from the Independence period, including a copy of the Act of Bolivian Independence. We found Don Gantier to be lively and enthused, and his eyes sparkled when he discovered that an American had hooked up with a Bolivian for a journey such as mine. "This is what I've been preaching for years," he roared, "union, union, union!"

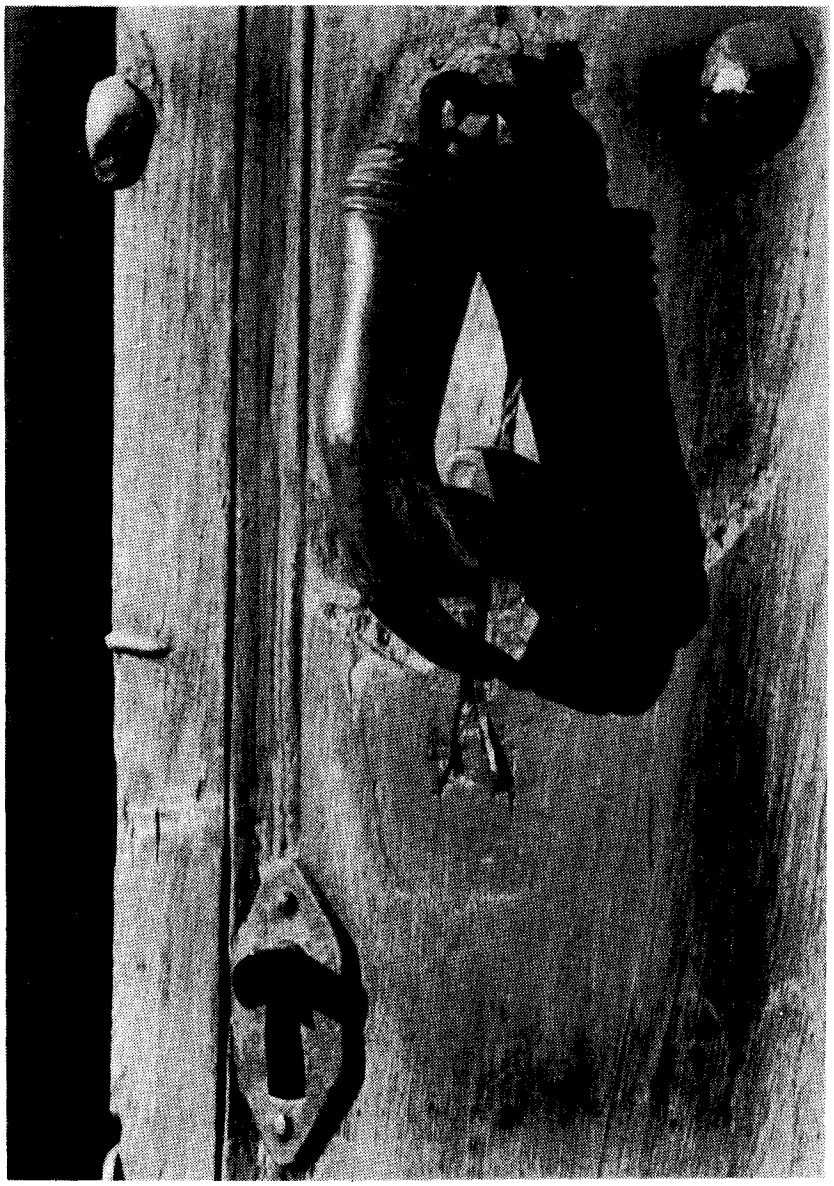
In fact, the Casa de Libertad was the seat of a meeting devoted to Pan-American problems last fall. Presided over by Bolivian Vice-President Julio Garrett, conference attendees tried to formulate a common front to tackle the external debt problems faced by each Andean country. Diplomats from Spain were also there, lending support as part of a concerted iniative to work more actively for this region's development as the 500th Anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America draws near. Don Gantier spoke with reticence about the practical significance of the summit. "Many fine speeches were made, but I fear that this continent's integration is as far off as ever."



Dr. Joaquín Gantier, Director of the Casa de Libertad and President of Sucre's Geographical and Historical Society

Signs of dissension among Andean statesmen were common even in the first days of the Bolivian Republic. On 14 November 1826, troops under the command of Colombian Capitan Domingo López de Matute in Cochabamba rebelled against the government of Antonio José de Sucre. The Colombian Grenadiers accused Sucre of being a "despot", but evidently could not convince many other Bolivians, for the uprising failed. A year later, in December 1827, the principal enemy of the newly formed Bolivia, Peruvian General Augustín Gamarra, incited Colombian troops to rise up against Sucre once again. This time the rebellion was crushed by the 2nd Bolivian Battalian, which defeated the Colombians on the plains of San Roque de Ocomisto outside of La Paz.

Perhaps most bitter was the attack on Mariscal Sucre's life that took place in the city of La Plata on 18 April 1828. Sucre had just returned from putting down the La Paz rebellion the month before. When soldiers of Colombian Grenadiers stationed at the San Francisco barracks made known



A bronze hand knocker adorns this oak door to a colonial residence in the center of Sucre. Details like this, along with engraved coats of arms and elaborate balconies, are characteristic of domestic architecture in the well-preserved city.

their plans, Sucre rode out to confront the troops in the company of two adjutants. In the shooting that followed, Sucre was wounded gravely in the head. Another musket ball broke his arm.

Had it not been for the abundant admiration that Mariscal Sucre enjoyed among the distinguised matrons of Chuquisaca, the hero of Ayacucho might have died. Instead, the "tea set" of the capital pulled together to escort the wounded President outside the city, taking him to the hacienda of Nucchu. It should be noted, however, that these same matrons pressured the President to call forth a notary public so that Sucre might be married -- in absentia -- to Señorita Mariana Carcelén y Larrea. In doing so, Sucre honored a commitment he had made earlier in Quito, Ecuador to the the young woman.

On 27 April 1828, Sucre arrived in Nucchu, leaving a provisional government in the hands of General José María Pérez de Urdininea. So Sergio

and I decided to visit Nucchu. Actually, it was not so much a decision as a discovery. One afternoon in Sucre, after we had tired of museums and archives, we simply set off for a drive. By sheer luck, we headed into the Pilcomayo River valley near the small pueblo of Yotala. We were unprepared for what we saw. All along the Pilcomayo sat enormous mansions that had once been the homes of hacendados until the Agrarian Reform. Surprisingly, the majority seemed to be in good shape; even more shocking was that they seemed inhabited. And the most magnificent mansion of all was Nucchu, its white columned facade set back only meters from the Pilcomayo's edge.

The hacienda Nucchu as it stands today. Unseen in the rear courtyard stand the remains of the original 17th Century dwelling that was home to Mariscal Sucre while he recuperated from his wounds suffered in 1828.

I cannot recall how many haciendas I have visited since I have been in Bolivia. But until that day in Nucchu, I had never met a hacienda owner at home. So you can imagine how thrilled I was to be greeted heartily by Nucchu's owner, Don Alberto Marion Argandoña. Wearing dungarees, a faded polo shirt, and a straw hat to protect himself from the sun, Sr. Marion hardly seemed to fit the stereotype of the hacienda owners who fill history books on 19th and 20th Century Bolivia. He spoke in a mild-mannered voice to his campesino helper, asking him to fetch a round of sodas for his unexpected guests. There was no baton, no horsewhip, no arrogance or abuse of authority. Sr. Marion looked like any other farmer in the midst of a hard day's work.

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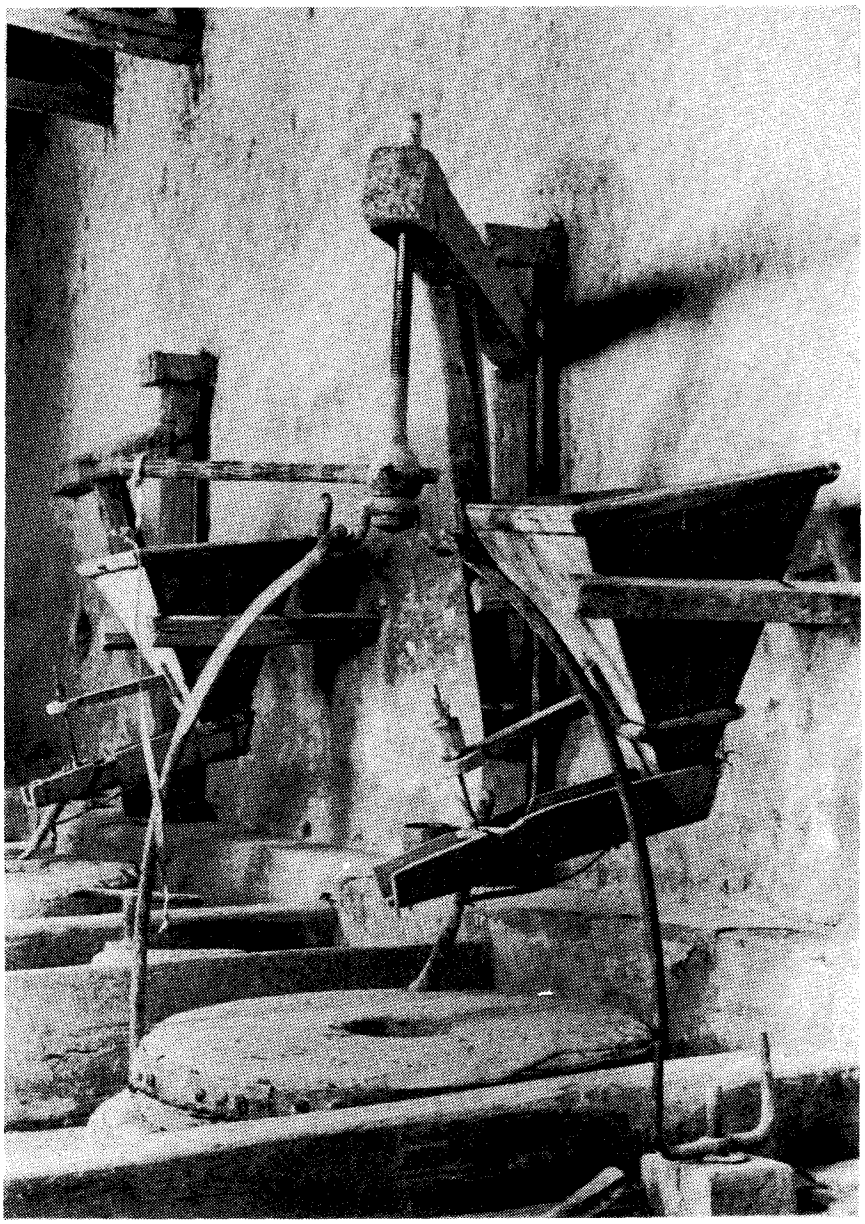
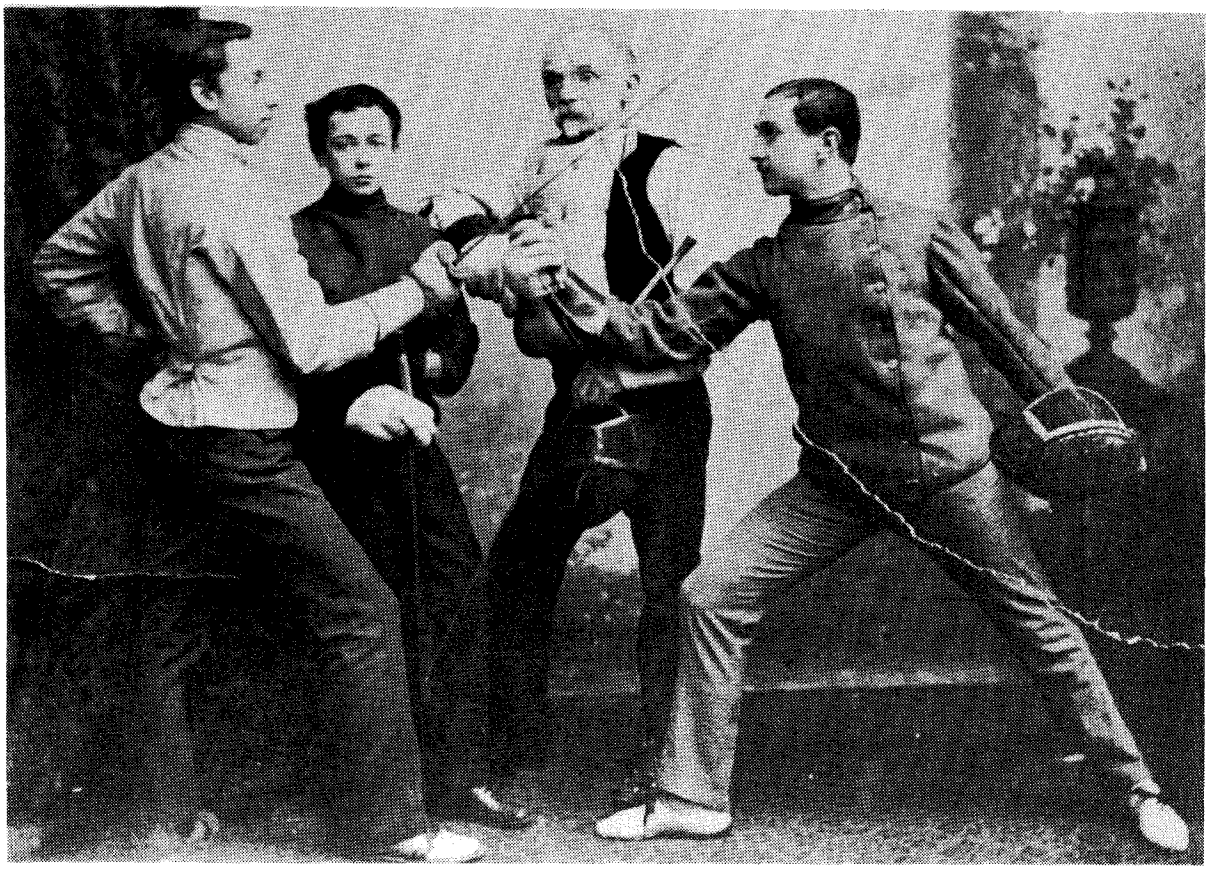


The millworks at Nucchu. Still used to grind oats, grains, and cereals for campesinos, this mill and others like it compete with mining for the honor of being considered the oldest industry in continuous existence in the Andes.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Different generations living in worlds apart:

ABOVE: President of Bolivia, 1884-1888, Don Gregorio Pacheco relaxes with his sons in a London photographer's West End studio in 1885. To avoid charges of nepotism, Pachecho sent his entire family abroad while serving as President. Family relatives who remained in Bolivia were barred from public office. The President was noted also for his magnanimity in the capital of Sucre and on the Nucchu hacienda. Pacheco donated a large mansion to the city of Sucre for use as an insane asylum. And as early as 1880, the statesman had enacted already his own version of agrarian reform in the Pilcomayo Valley. He granted campesinos small parcels of land for their own use, complete with titles, and even constructed housing for day laborers.

BELOW: President Pacheco's grandson, Don Alberto Marion Argandoña, with his own son at Nucchu over 100 years later. Don Marion's son, nicknamed "Tooti", studies at the local countryside school bordering the hacienda and is learning Quechua. Tooti dreams of being President of Bolivia himself one day.



Don Marion immediately warmed to the notion of my study, and invited us to stay for as long as we liked. He enticed us with a quick tour of the hacienda grounds, accompanied by a brief history. First he showed us the remains of the original house built in the 1650's by Claudio Mellendez (and which, incidentally, was home to Mariscal Sucre when he fled his La Plata based attackers in 1828). Outside in the garden, Don Marion pointed out a foundation stone chiselled with the House of Bourbon coat of arms. It came to the hacienda when the bridge that the stone helped to support was swept away in an early 18th Century flood. Don Marion then opened the great doors to the millworks, proving that the mill -- originally built by another Nucchu owner, La Plata mayor Diego Joesph Morillo in 1744 -- was still working after nearly 2½ centuries. Finally we passed through the pebbled courtyard, where Bolivians like General Melgarejo had once danced the "cueca" to folklore music from Tarija. Smiling, Don Marion promised more stories if we only had the time to listen. With an offer like that, there was no way I could refuse the hospitality of this cordial hacienda owner.

Since we had not expected such an invitation, Sergio and I had to return to Sucre to fetch our gear. On the way, we crossed paths with several agronomy students in Yotala waiting for a ride back into town. The Universidad de San Francisco Xavier in Sucre has opened an experimental farm and agronomy school outside of Yotala, and the students were finished with a day of classes. I offered the students a ride into town, hoping to sound them out about agriculture in Chuquisaca.

One of the university students, Edwin, wasted no time in answering my inquiry about the significance of the 1952 Revolution and 1953 Agrarian Reform to Bolivian youth today. "There is no doubt it was necessary and just. Indians would have never built haciendas. They were too community-oriented. Their agricultural production was directed to the needs of the community. The biggest problem with the Agrarian Reform, however, is that once the "patron" left the countryside, the "colono" was left to his own devices. The government forgot about the Indian once it gave him a small parcel of land. That's why I'm studying agriculture. And that's why I will return to my pueblo in Oruro: to teach."

Edwin's companion chimed in, "He's right. I think we need to teach the farming methods used by the Inca civilization to campesinos today. Too many young campesinos have forgotten all about the "ayllu", in which everyone banded together for the common good to work fields and produce food." [See WLM-8 for a more complete discussion of the ayllu].

I wondered whether the clock could ever be turned back so far, and said so. Might not mechanized farming prove more efficient? Besides competing with farmers in Europe and North America, there was competition in Bolivia too. Would ancient, labor-intensive methods of farming pay off, given the presence of Mennonite immigrants in Santa Cruz? These immigrants live in enclaves much like the North American Amish, and farm the "llanos", or lowlands, of Santa Cruz with heavy machinery. Was it time to return to an economy of scale on the Altiplano?

Gregorio, and another student, Diego, disagreed, "In the first place, the Bolivian government should not sell choice farmland to foreigners when there are so many campesinos farming less than a hectare. Second, the Mennonites invest their profits outside the country." (Neither student

could provide statistics to back up the second argument. I simply do not know).

Edwin was less sure, "Some days I wonder whether the haciendas were all that bad. At least the country fed itself. Now we have to import food from Argentina and Brazil. But from a human point of view, the colonial system had to go. My grandparents tell horrible stories of being beaten."

And how did the students feel about state intervention in agricultural markets? Of course, here I was aware that Bolivia is a small fish in a big sea. Attempts to reform the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) during the present Uruguay round have been hampered by First World countries reluctance to do away with subsidies that distort the pricing of Third World commodities.

Gregorio was the only future agronomist who remotely comprehended my question. "The state's presence will be necessary until the campesino is considered the equal of the city businessman. Where else will the campesino obtain credit, if not from the state?" he asked.

Gregorio's motives for defending the public sector over the private sector became clearer when I asked my last question: What did the young men hope to do in the future?

"Work for CORDECH," was Gregorio's unequivocal reply. CORDECH is the parastatal rural development company in charge of the Department of Chuquisaca.

We all shared a laugh over Gregorio's response, and reaching Sucre, said our goodbyes.

Later that evening, after returning to Nucchu and enjoying a fine dinner prepared for us by Sra. Marion, Don Marion and I sat down alone in the parlor to talk about the same issues. How had it been for a white man to return to the Bolivian countryside after the 1952 Revolution?

Don Marion explained, "Well, you must understand that this is a necessary adventure for me. An import-export business that I started up in Santa Cruz went bankrupt, and with the business went most of our money. Nucchu was all I had left. And I say "adventure" because I attended the "university of life". I passed up the opportunity to attend San Francisco Xavier in Sucre, against my parents' wishes. No, I left home when I was 18, and set out to circle the globe. Working my way around the world, I learned that fortune and destiny are not concepts to sneer at. I traveled through Indonesia during the Vietnam War. I happened to be in India when war broke out with Pakistan. I was even accused of being a spy at an Egyptian border post when I tried to enter from Israel. The customs officer could not believe that a Bolivian would have so many entry visas from different countries stamped in his passport."

Offering me a glass of wine, Don Marion continued, "So I knew it would be hard -- that is, to return to Nucchu. Heck, noone had done more than make sure the roof did not leak for the last 20 years. The campesinos up and down the Pilcomayo Valley thought the house had been abandoned. I have gathered since that they were ready to take over the estate for their own

use. Then I arrived, in June 1988, and upset their plans. You can imagine how popular that made me. Since my wife came from Santa Cruz only later, I was here by myself. No one would sell me food. Regardless of what I offered to pay, no one would work for me."

The state portrait of President Gregorio Pacheco loomed over us in the dimly lit room. "But a good number of campesinos, mainly the older ones, remembered my father and my grandfather. Dealing honestly with the campesinos before 1952 was the only reason that this house was not sacked. And I assure you, that was not the case all over Bolivia."

Nine months later, Don Marion is beginning to feel that the Quechua-speaking farmers in the valley are beginning to accept his return. "I do not allow myself pretensions. They saw me working, milking the cows and hoeing my one small field. Tooti, my son, attends the local "colegio" and is picking up Quechua. He and the campesino children play together. Oh, sometimes, the neighbors get bent out of shape when Tooti sicks our dog on their pigs, just to watch to pigs run and squeal. But that's about it. And recently, women in the valley began to sell me produce."

"Then, last week, I was invited to a local farmers' cooperative meeting. It seems that the community finally decided they need me as much as I need them. Several young, recently married, Indian couples want land of their own. They know that if they apply for land under the rules of the Agrarian Reform, they will wait forever. So cooperative leaders asked me if I was willing to sell several small plots out of a larger spread that the family still owns upriver. I was elated. My grandfather did the same thing. I did not think twice. We worked out an acceptable price. The men will pay off the land by working for me in their spare time."

Don Marion then suggested that we take a short break to examine the rare letters and documents he had stored in the library. "You know," he remarked, "the hacienda may have been dusty and full of cobwebs when I returned last year, but not a single piece of furniture or book that had been stored here over the years had been touched. Just look at these letters. What I desire more than anything else is to restore the hacienda to its original splendor and open it to the public as a national monument. It would be something like the castles administered by the British Trust in England."

In fact, the original 17th Century structure that sheltered the wounded Mariscal Sucre in 1828 is in urgent need of repair. The Georgian-style pillared mansion that was built by President Pacheco is in a livable state, but the frescos that adorn ceilings and the walls painted with scenes of foreign wars could use a restorer's fine hand. "It would be a shame for the nation to lose the original home," lamented Don Marion, referring to the outside walls that are crumbling under the weight of 3 centuries' testament to history.

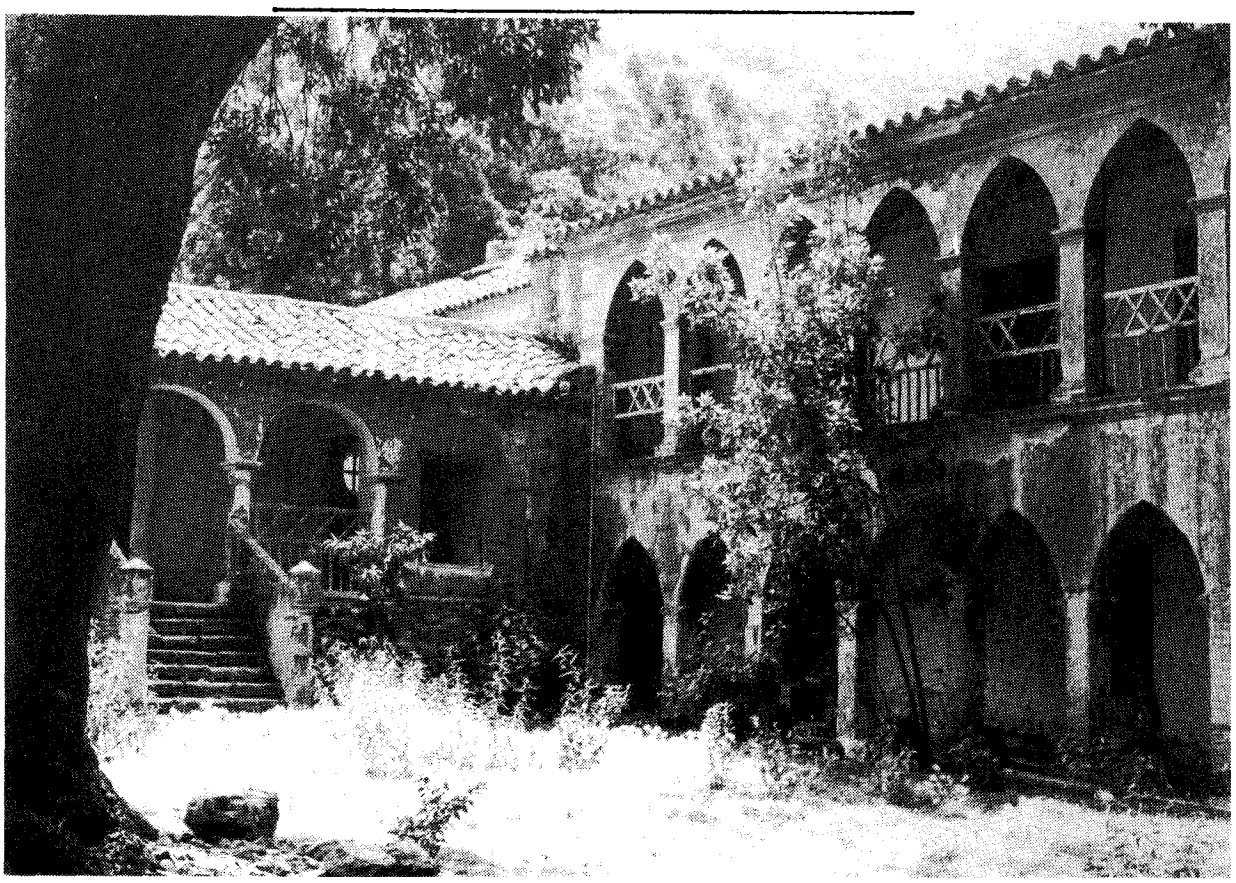
Our eyes grew weary under the strain of reading 17th and 18th Century script, and we retired back to the parlor. It was Don Marion's turn to ask me a few questions about ICWA. After half an hour, he was apparently satisfied that I was not a "scoop" reporter, and he suggested that we ignore the late hour to continue the conversation. The hacienda owner began to speak out with frankness about Bolivian politics and the national economy.

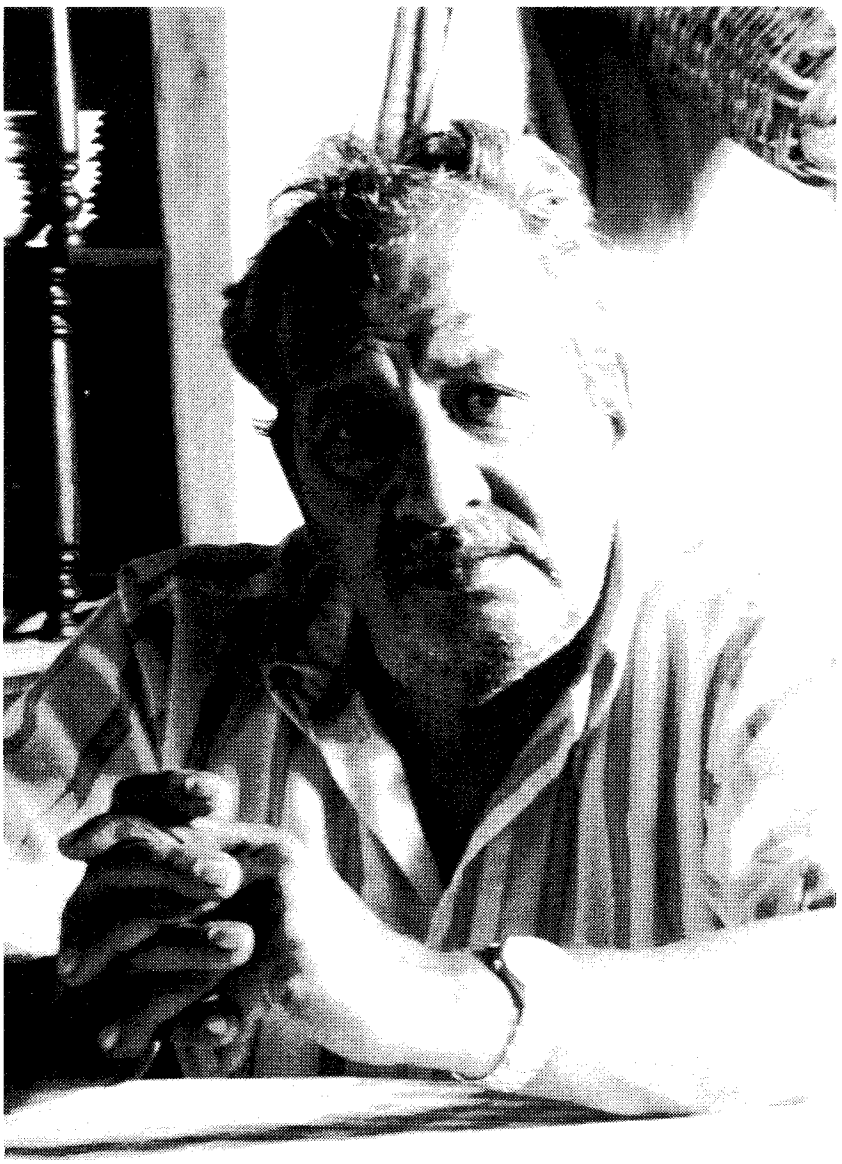
"Anyone who argues that this country could have survived intact without the Agrarian Reform is a reactionary," maintained Nucchu's present owner. "But by the same token, I do not agree with the way the Agrarian Reform has been implemented."

"From what I have seen in the Pilcomayo Valley, the Indians are not taking advantage of their freedom with responsible farming. Land that was planted in my grandfather's day now lies fallow. Everyone either wants to leave farming to work in Sucre, or if they stay here, just raise enough food to get by. Herds of sheep -- that ran into the thousands when I was a boy -- barely reach the hundreds now."

Don Marion's criticism was balanced with praise of progress. "More Indians can read and write. And that means politicians have a harder time deceiving them. I remember in the years immediately following the 1952 Revolution, it was enough for the MNR to pull up in a big truck, offer "aguardiente" and pack off the drunk campesinos to vote for the MNR. And I say that as an MNR supporter. But things are different now. The campesino is tired of empty promises. If a political party does not come through, the campesinos will shift his vote."

When I first left La Paz, I had no idea that I would spend so much time with a hacienda owner like Alberto Marion. But having worked with indigenous peoples for almost three years now, it was fascinating to hear what a white man thinks of what Bolivian author Alcides Arguedas termed the "raza de bronce." So after two more days at Nucchu, I also accepted an invitation to visit another hacienda. Named Pitantorilla, this second hacienda was located near the "Obispo" ridge, outside Sucre.





A tired and worried Don Iván Tomianovic. Citing continued losses at Pitantorilla, this farmer joked, "Maybe I should get out of traditional farming and get into coca-processing." While Don Tomianovic was not serious, his dilemma is common to conscientous white and Indian farmers alike.

PREVIOUS PAGE: The inner courtyard of Pitantorilla.

Don Iván Tomianovic, the present owner of Pitantorilla, was less optimistic than Alberto Marion. When Sergio and I arrived, we found Don Tomianovic had just returned from dropping off the 60 liters of milk that his cows yield daily. As the farmer complained, he was having a hard time keeping up the farm by himself. Don Tomianovic pays 6 Bs (US $2.35) a day for field work. The national average is 2 Bs. Nonetheless, he can rarely find campesinos who are willing to work for him. Don Tomianovic further explained that, from his monthly milk sales that average 1400 Bs, he offered to pay 400 Bs monthly to any campesino willing to take charge of the dairy. There were no takers.

Had I not worked with campesinos on the Bolivian Altiplano and in the Peruvian desert, I might find Don Tomianovic's story hard to believe. But sometimes, the independent ways of the Altiplano Indian defy logic. As I mentioned earlier, Aymara campesinos in Cumana became upset with me because I could not provide them with "magic" money to get their mining cooperative off the ground. Instead, I put them in touch with a development agency in

La Paz that offered the community US $7,000 in "seed money" to buy mining equipment. When village elders in Cumana found out that the money could not be used to buy foodstuffs or pay daily wages, they refused the project. Many older villagers opposed the project, saying that they would not work for free, when the fruits of their labor would only be evident after they had died. They wanted the money, but to spend as they wished -- and right now.

Don Tomianovic and I discussed my own experience in relation to his problems at Pitantorilla. A former agronomist with CORDECH, Don Tomianovic was quick to lay the blame at the feet of his past employer. "I was constantly in the position of having to select communities for development projects without the authority to make sure the money was spent well. CORDECH was too political. If we did not spend a certain amount of money each year, we would have been accused of ignoring the countryside. It was like putting the cart before the horse."

Don Tomianovic now spends five days of the week in Pitantorilla, tending to his dairy and a small peach orchard. He explained that the family was able to keep Pitantorilla because his father -- a Yugoslavian immigrant who came to Bolivia in 1917 -- had been paying campesinos daily wages almost 10 years before the 1952 Revolution. The present extension of the hacienda is limited to 20 hectares. The rest of the hacienda was divided up among campesinos according to the terms of the Agrarian Reform. Despite the promises of the MNR politicians who administered the Agrarian Reform in the 1950's, Don Tomianovic maintains that "We've yet to be paid for our expropriated land."

Indeed, Don Tomianovic will decide later this year whether it is time to sell Pitantorilla once and for all. It is a decision that pains him, as he spent his childhood on the hacienda. He reckons that he could fetch US $200,000 for the house and grounds, a tidy sum that would allow him to retire. "Then I can spend more time with my wife and children in Sucre," he pointed out.

POTOSÍ AND THE LAND OF CERRO RICO

Spending a few days at the haciendas of Nucchu and Pitantorilla had been a welcome detour, but it was time to continue on to Potosí. As the largest population center in the New World during the apogee of silver mining in the 17th Century, Potosí was known in Europe long before New York or Philadelphia. The Spanish colonial system populated the city with thousands of Quechua and Aymara Indians called "mitayos", in order to work the shafts of Cerro Rico, or the Rich Mountain. The Spanish Crown's share of silver extracted from Cerro Rico (known as the "quinto real", or royal fifth), practically alone financed Spain's wars with England and Holland.

The shipment of silver to Spain was an arduous task. First there was the three-month overland journey from Potosí to Lima, the silver transported on the backs of llamas and mules. From the coast of Peru, the silver was laden on galleons that sailed up the west coast of the continent to Panama. In Panama, another overland trek awaited the silver merchants. Finally, from Panama's east coast, the silver was galleon cargo once more for the final leg of the ocean journey to Spain.

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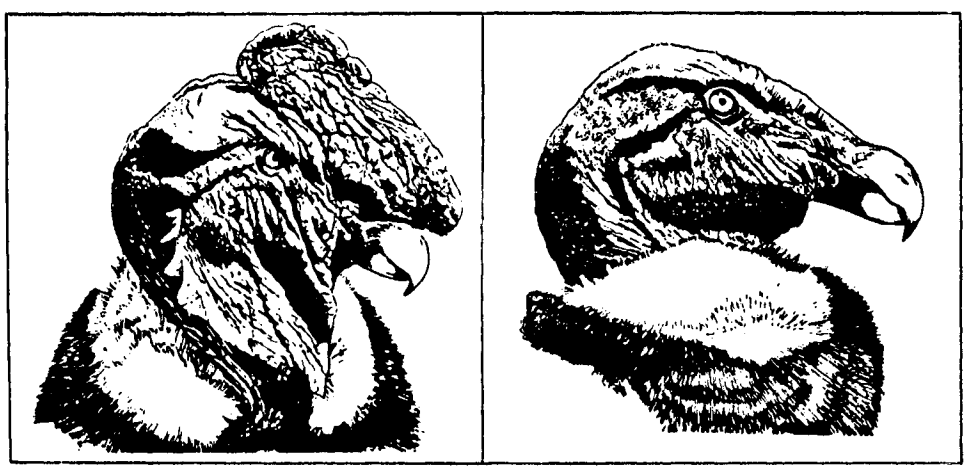
Although simple to the eye, this "four stake" hand loom can be used to produce elaborate and intricate textiles. Neutrally colored wools are often dyed with the pigment of native plants. Along with llamas and other earthly motifs, airplanes and autos are sometimes woven into the pattern, reflecting the Quechua's integration with the modern world.

Artesanal weaving by Andean indigenous peoples began as early as 3000 - 1200 B.C. Weaving was first confined to coastal areas, producing twined cotton fabrics and fishnets. The more sophisticated use of cameloid fibers -- that is, coats shorn from the llama, alpaca, and vicuña -- developed between 1400 - 800 B.C.

Through the centuries, weaving has provided a principle work activity for indigenous women. Teaching is carried out largely in the oral tradition, with skills passed on from mother to daughter. Silvia, the young Quechua woman pictured above, told me that she began to spin wool at the age of 7. As women grow more proficient, producing more complicated designs in a varied hue of colors, it is common for their stature to rise in the community. And when a particularly talented woman dies, her best textiles are often buried with her.

A pink sandstone ridge in the high-altidude desert of Potosí.



The magnificent Royal Condor, or"Sarcoramphus papa", inhabits the Andes from Venezuela to Chile. Above are pictured the male and female, left to right. Sightings have reported condors with wingspreads ranging from 2.5 - 5.0 meters. These scavengers live off the carrion of other animals. The condor also figures prominently in different Quechua rites in Bolivia and Peru. In José María Arguedas's novel, Yawar Fiesta (Blood Fiest), a condor is tied to the back of a bull during a bullfight in the Ayacucho sierra to provoke the bull into greater anger against the Quechua "matadores". There are also stories of Quechua Indians gouging out the eyes of condors and then releasing the birds. The condor flies away, supposedly zooming to the sun in search of its lost vision. When the condor falls to the ground, dead, the wisdom of the condor passes to the Indians below.

Entering the Villa Imperial, as Potosí was known during the colonial era, Sergio and I were greeted by light snow flurries. From the Plaza de Armas in the city center, there was little evidence that Potosí had once been the hub of the Spanish Empire on this continent. Whereas in the 16th and 17th Centuries Potosí's population fluctuated between 350 - 500,000 persons, the mining center is now a shadow of its former self, boasting perhaps 50,000. After the collapse of the international tin price in 1985, that figure dropped even lower, but city dwellers have noted that Quechua Indians and miners have begun to return in the last year. At one point after the tin price collapse, colonial mansions were selling for as low as US $35,000. Increased private sector interest in reworking the tailings of tin deposits left over from centuries of mining has brought renewed economic activity to the city, however. All around the base of Cerro Rico, independent miners can be seen picking over the remains of tin ore, trying to eke out a living. And COMSUR, owned in part by MNR presidential candidate Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada, has even found a way to extract silver from formerly worthless tailings.

As is so often the case in the Andes, the history of Potosí and the Cerro Rico is a mixture of fact and legend. The founding of the city is attributed to three Spanish officers: Capitán D. Juan de Villaroel, Capitán Zantandia, and Capitán Diego Centeno. Setting out from what is now La Paz in 1543, these conquistadors headed south in search of gold and silver. Rumors had reached them of rich mines administered by the Incas in the region of Qolquechaca, to the north of present-day Potosí (originally this was Qolqe llajta -- which, in Quechua, means "city of silver").

In the service of Capitán Villaroel worked one Chunvivilca Indian named Gualca. Notably, Gualca was not a native Quechua speaker. Rather, following a pattern repeated all over the Andes that fell under the dominion of the Inca, Gualca spoke Quechua as the official language of the Inca Empire. And as was the case with numerous tribal cultures that had once been subjects of the Inca, Gualca merely transferred his allegiance from one foreign power to another.

According to accounts dating from the 16th Century, it was the Indian Gualca who discovered silver in Potosí. One afternoon in January 1545, Gualca led his llama up the side of Cerro Rico to graze. The mountain had yet to be exploited by man, so vegetation still covered the slopes. 16th Century engravings and paintings even attribute palm trees and paja brava where now there is nothing but bare earth and rock. Arriving late to pasture, Gaulca was forced to spend the night on the mountain. He lit a fire to stay warm, and in the morning, woke up to see the glint of a silver vein near the ashes of his extinguished fire. Bound by loyalty to his master, Capitán Villaroel, Gualca told noone save the Spaniard. But the secret could not be kept long. By April 1545, the first Spaniards were arriving in Potosí to take up silver mining.

It is nothing short of tragic that Cerro Rico should have been discovered by an Indian. In the century following Gualca's find, Potosí and Cerro Rico became synonyms for death to many Quechuas and Aymaras in Peru and Alto Peru. With demand for silver in Spain continually growing, the Spaniards were faced with labor shortages. These labor shortages were made up for by forced Indian labor in the mines.

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Cerro Rico under the snow-laden skies of Potosí, 1989.

Two visions of Cerro Rico:

"We know how much just one bad night can break the health and spirit of a robust and well-fed man. But for these [porters] every night is awful. They climb and descend overloaded with 4 "arrobas" (weighing 100 lbs.) of silver ore, entering shafts full of horrors and risks that resemble the habitat of demons. The ceaseless cargo of minerals breaks them down in such a way, that for the exhaustion caused by the pitiful work, the copious sweating brought about by the underground heat, and the excessive cold that awaits them upon leaving the mines, they wake to the sun more dead than alive, resembling walking cadavers .... " Pedro Vicente Cañete y Domínguez, describing the "mita" in his report, Guia de la Provincia de Potosí: 1787, sent to Don Antonio Porlier, Marquis of Bajamar, and principal councillor in the Council of the Indies, Madrid.

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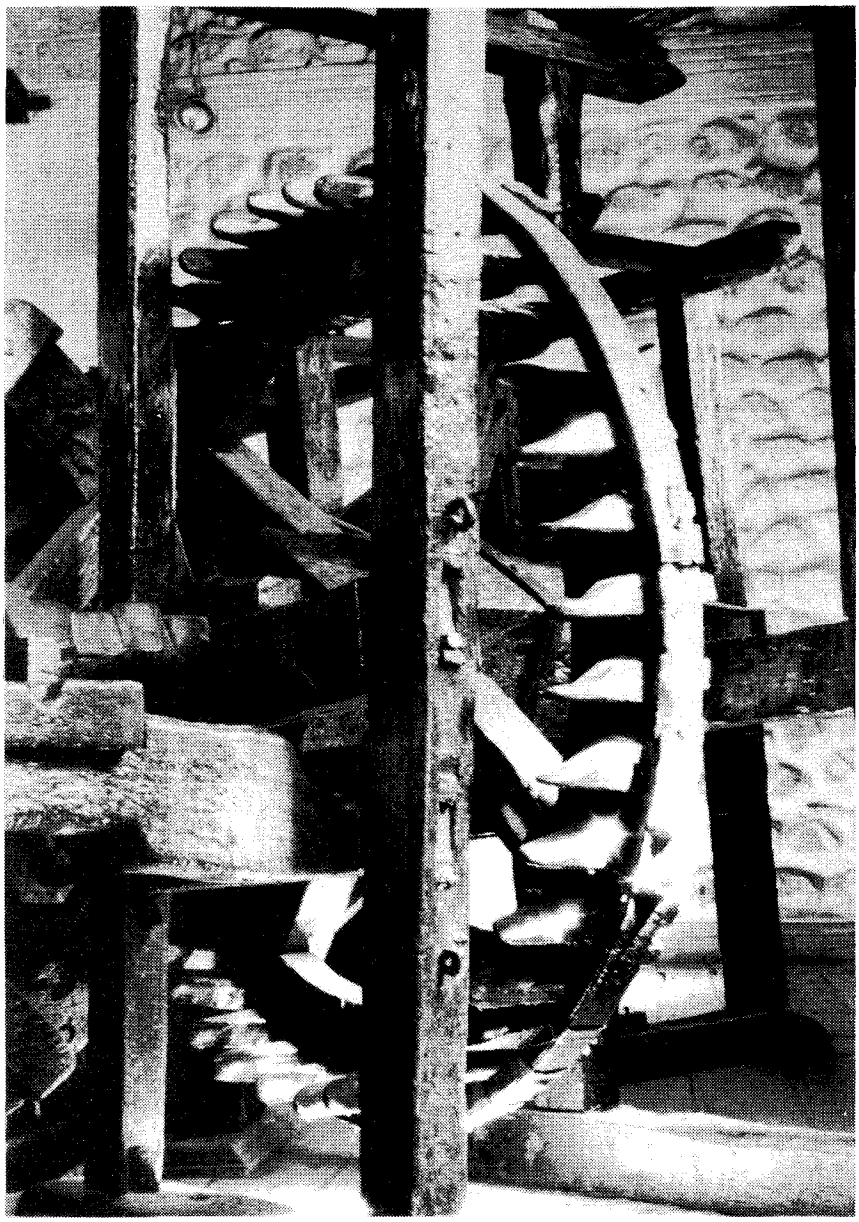
"Victorious we come from the Atlantic coasts, and in the 15 years of this gigantic struggle, we have overturned ... 3 centuries of usurpation and violence. The miserable bones of this [New] World's [Indians] were destined to suffer the most degrading slavery .... As for me, [standing] above this mass of silver called Potosí, whose rich veins were for 300 years the public treasure of Spain, I cannot esteem that opulence when I compare it to the glory of having brought the standards of liberty from the warm beaches of the Orinoco to put them down here, on the summit of this mountain, whose inner wealth is the subject of universal admiration and envy." Simon Bolívar, upon ascending Cerro Rico, 26 October 1825, and declaring the liberation of Potosí while planting the Republican flags of Colombia, Perú, Argentina, and Chile.



A wooden-toothed gear wheel in Potosí's Casa de la Moneda, established to mint royal coinage by Virrey Francisco de Toledo in 1572. Energy to turn the wheel -- used to press silver bars into thin strips suitable for cutting into coins -- was provided by black slaves imported from Brazil. Twelve men worked in conjunction with four mules to rotate the gear axle from the floor below, pulling it round in 12-hour shifts.

The employment of forced Indian labor was expressly prohibited by the Spanish monarch Charles I in 1529. Little attention was paid to the royal decree. Authorities in Madrid were too far away to control effectively events in Lima. And reforming Virreys sent to administer the Empire were frustrated more than once by powerful local interests, who used every form of deception to lure Indians from their lands of origin to work in the mines. Once working in the mines, the Indians usually accumulated debts too great to repay, and were forced to continue working in a state of virtual slavery.

Forty years later, when Virrey Francisco de Toledo arrived in Lima, the Spanish crown was forced to recognize reality. On 20 January 1569, the Virrey was permitted to implement what would become known as the "mita". Under the terms of the mita, provinces in the Andean sierra of Peru and Alto Peru were required to give up a certain number of able-bodied men to work for one year in the mines of the Empire, those mines most frequently

being the mercury mines of Huancavelica and the silver mines of Potosí. That Huancavelica and Potosí should be mentioned so often in tandem is a result of the mercury-based amalgamation process used in the foundries, or "ingenios", of Potosí to refine silver ore into concentrates and bars.

Estimates of how many Indians gave their lives to exploit silver deposits in the Andes vary wildly, even according to contemporary 16-18th Century sources. In a 17th Century report destined for the organization given charge of administering indigenous peoples in Spain's Empire, the Council of the Indies, one P. Calancha maintained that for each peso's worth of silver extracted from Potosí, 10 "mitayos" perished for the effort. Another colonial official, Pedro Vicente Cañete y Domínguez, rejects Calancha's claim. Instead, Sr. Caleñete focuses his attention on a different aspect of the mita:

> It is true that Don Fernando Carrillo y Altamarino ... and Capitán Juan González de Acevedo [in speaking] with King Philip III ... in 1602, affirm that in all of Perú where the Indians are sent to work in the mines, their number has been reduced to ½ -- or, in some cases, to 1/3 -- of the [indigenous] population that existed during the Virreynato of Don Francisco de Toledo, in the year 1581 ....

The mitayos one-year service in the mines was to be balanced with six years' rest, during which time the Indian could not be bothered to work. Theoretically, the Aymara or Quechua would return to his land of origin. The trouble was that most Indians never returned. If they did not die from the stress of working in the mines, Indians usually fell victim to the various plagues that ravaged the indigenous population in the colonial period. If the mitayo did manage to survive, he was often too broke to go anywhere. Indian miners were paid, but wages were so low that many were forced into debt just to buy the candles necessary to illuminate the shafts.

Not surprisingly, dread of the mita created a business all its own: indigenous "caciques" (a title of authority in small rural communities during the colonial period) often acted as opportunistic middlemen between Spanish officials and their Quechua or Aymara brethren. Cash payoffs were arranged to avoid the mita, and the cacique would submit shortened lists of qualified men in his area of jurisdiction. And hacendados, sometimes jealous of the the mining that took precedence over agriculture, often deliberately held back indigenous colonos from the mita service in order to keep the haciendas running smoothly.

There seemed no better man with whom to talk over the colonial mining system than with the present director of the Casa de la Moneda, Don Jack Aitken Soux. When Sergio and I showed up at the mint, now a museum, we found Don Aitken bundled up in a parka behind his desk. Despite being an avid Anglophile (the Aitken in his surname coming from a Scottish father), Don Aitken's choice to wear a parka over his suit was an unmistakable sign of American practicality. Indeed, when Don Aitken first learned of the breadth of my study and ICWA support, his reaction was a friendly chuckle and the question, "Do you have a lifetime to spend in the Andes?"

Nevertheless, the museum director was intrigued, and he invited us to spend Easter with the Aitken family at his own hacienda named Cayara.

Having visited quite few mines during my fellowship, the thought of spending a few days in deep, dark shafts did not sound too appealing compared to passing Easter at Cayara. Cayara is a rare hacienda in Potosí, having remained in the hands of its pre-1952 owner. And as I would discover once on the hacienda, the house was more like a museum than a farm, boasting paintings from the 16th Century, and books that covered nearly every topic that I desired.

Though Don Aitken is 65, he moves about with a sprightly lust for life and a prodigious memory for historical fact. When he drove me out to Cayara that first afternoon, I felt as if I were driving in the company of a rally racer. In between dangerous curves, Don Aitken regaled me with endless stories about the colonial epoch in Potosí. Yes, he admitted, the mita had been cruel and inhumane. He cited the Englishman Walter Bagehot, the 19th Century reformer and economist who argued that slavery was simply economically inefficient: a slave will never work as hard as a laborer paid fair wages. "But if barbarisms were committed during the colonial era, that's no excuse for the state of mining in Bolivia now. Since 1952, organized mining labor has enjoyed more benefits than any other labor group in Bolivia. When hyperinflation threatened to ruin all of us, miners had the pick of subsized foodstuffs in the mining camps (this, by the way, concurs with a 1986 World Bank report on Bolivian mining)."

To emphasize his point, Don Aitken pulled off the road and pointed me to the Palca foundry that is located a mere 15 kilometers from Cayara. "Just look at it. It cost millions of dollars to build and now it doesn't even function. When the world price of tin was at US $7 a fine pound, we in Bolivia were producing it for US $15 a fine pound at Palca. The Russians, who designed and built the plant, were so fed up with Bolivian work standards that they packed up and went home. Utterly inefficient."

The hacienda owner drove on, quickly relating the history of Cayara. The original estate had been granted to an Italian -- the Marquis of Otavi, Don Casimiro Tellacheche -- by Charles I of Spain in 1557. Cayara passed through the hands of the Marquis' descendents until Louis Soux purchased the hacienda in 1885. Don Aitken took over the daily management of Cayara in 1947. He spent the war years studying agronomy in Santiago, preparing himself for just such a responsibility.

Don Aitken stopped the pickup again, this time to admire the trout stream and willow-shaded lane leading up to Cayara. He thought back to the 1952 Revolution. "The first thing I did upon taking over the hacienda was to work out a pay schedule for the Quechua farmhands. Luckily, when news of the Revolution in La Paz reached Potosí, the campesinos remembered. All around us, friends saw their haciendas taken over by angry campesinos. Those friends whose homes were not touched moved back into Potosí for fear of what would happen. It was a crazy year."

"I recall when the Agrarian Reform was announced over the radio in 1953. My brother, Percy, was still helping me out in those days. Together, we called a meeting of the campesinos living on the hacienda. We reminded them of our past fairness in business dealings. We promised to redistribute the hacienda lands as quickly as possible. We also did whatever we could to expedite the process of securing land titles for the Quechua. All we asked was that they leave us with 100 hectares. I honestly

do not know what I would have done if the campesinos had refused. I love Cayara. But as you can see, we reached an accord, and the Aitkens are still farming."

If Jack Aitken has problems with the Agrarian Reform, they concern not so much the Quechua Indians living in the valley as the politicians who drew up the plans for expropriation in La Paz.

Late that evening, while sitting in front of the stone hearth, Don Aitken told the following story:

"When Aniceto Arce was President, he called upon my grandfather, Louis Soux, to receive General Narciso Campero (also President, 1880-84) at a river crossing near Sucre. When my grandfather informed General Campero that he was there to meet the General in the name of the President, General Campero was visibly surprised. What was a French envoy doing traveling all the way from Potosí to greet him on behalf of President Arce?"

"`But Arce is from another political party,' observed General Campero."

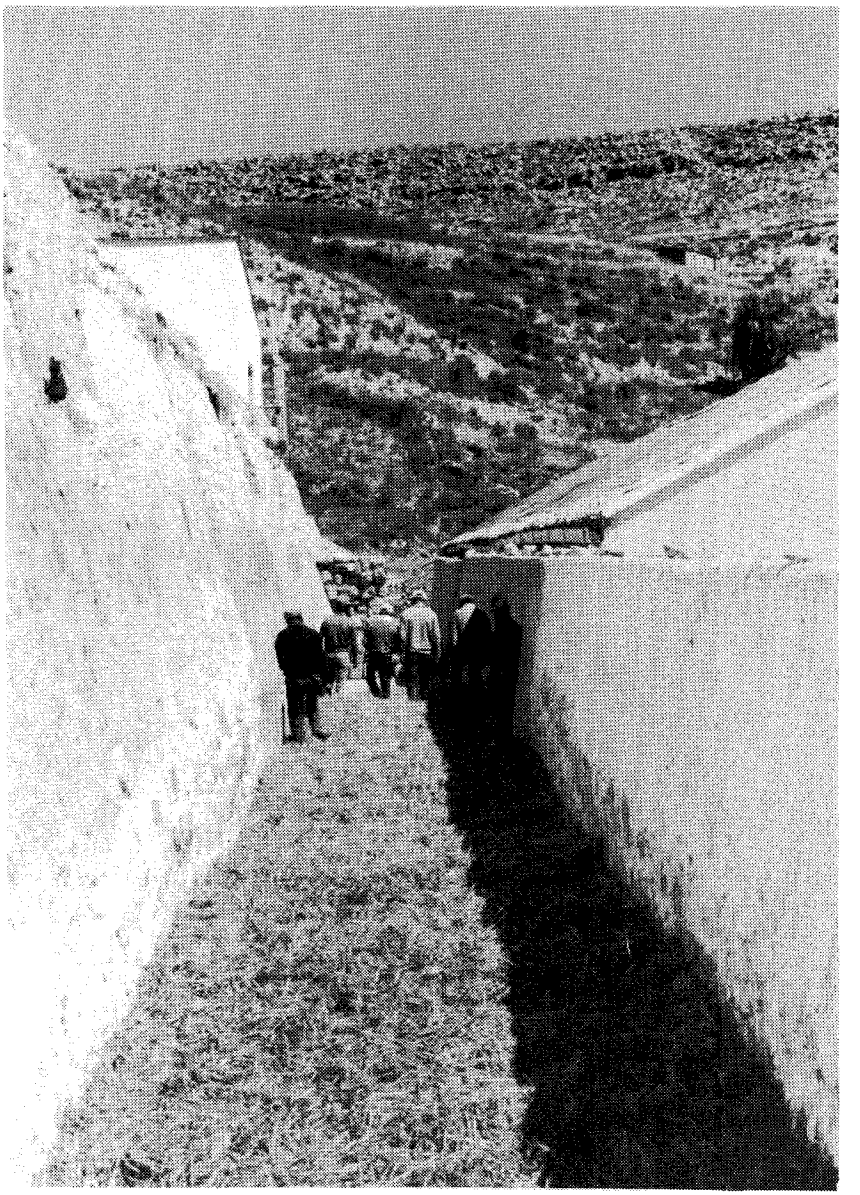
"My grandfather did not know how to respond, but maintained a diplomatic silence. Presently a white stallion was led past him, and he noted that the stallion's ears had been cut off, pared back to the once proud head. Imagine! When my grandfather asked the General why the stallion had been mutilated, General Campero retorted, `Hah! That horse belonged to former President General Melgarejo! We cut off the horse's ears to show our contempt for Melgarejo!'"

Don Aitken had been staring into the fire. He looked up and laughed, "I'm afraid that story sums up the 1952 Revolution. No one in La Paz stopped to consider that the hacienda system was marked by significant regional differences and individual exceptions. We all suffered equally. It did not matter that the pongo had been abolished already at Cayara. It did not matter that the colonos only worked one day for me -- and were paid at that. In La Paz, Aymaras worked three or more days a week for the patron."

Don Aitken and I spent the rest of Easter week discussing the details of Potosí's history. Yet nothing impressed me more than the Aitken family itself. Three of Jack Aitken's children currently assist him on the farm: Pablo, 33, who runs the dairy; Coco, 23, who oversees equipment maintenance and planting; and Cristina, 35, who tends to the hacienda house and gardens.

One day while walking around Cayara with Cristina, I was surprised to learn that she, like her father, spoke fluent Quechua. Everytime we crossed paths with campesina women, Cristina inquired after the health of each one, chatted about the upcoming harvest, and gossiped about the latest events in the valley. Neither Cristina nor the Indian women seemed in a hurry. When I observed that the Aitkens got along well with their Quechua neighbors, Cristina's reply was short, "Of course, what did you expect? Not everyone in Bolivia hates Indians. Do you really think we would still own Cayara if we did?"

On Easter I saw what she meant. Don Aitken opened up the doors of the hacienda chapel to all comers. Inside, a priest delivered the mass



Quechua farmhands stamping down a winter's supply of silage at Cayara.

in Quechua. After the service, the campesinos filed out, embracing and shaking hands with Don Aitken. In mutual respect, Don Aitken and the campesinos saluted each other with the title "cabellero" instead of "patron" and "peon". "Cabellero" means "gentleman" in Spanish.

Watching over the campesinos and the Aitkens, I suddenly realized that Simon Bolívar had no cause to worry here. One might have to look, but "upstanding" men and women there are in Bolivia today. Without being too simplistic, perhaps that explains this plateau of stability in the midst of an otherwise Andean storm.

As ever,

W.L. Melvin

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