

DOWNLOAD PDF COLONIALISM AND ETHNIC RESISTANCE IN BOLIVIA : A VIEW FROM THE COCA MARKETS SILVIA RIVERA CUSICANQUI

Chapter 1 : Bolivia: A 21st-Century Revolution | Socialism and Democracy

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui is an Aymara activist, sociologist, and oral historian who has worked with indigenous movements in Bolivia over the last four decades. Her work provides a valuable critique of certain forms of indigenous identity politics, and a balance sheet of anticolonial struggles in the country more broadly.

It is like the Old Condor of the high mountains with his white crest, who must protect all of us with his powerful wings. It is a new movement, with previously nonexistent actors, with a fresh capacity to link the most immediate demands to the most general national concerns gas, water, hydrocarbons, coca, the republic , and with methods of organization and confrontation that are at once rooted in tradition and informed by the most up-to-date technologies. The Bolivian insurrection unleashed an unprecedented combination of ancient and modern traits and a new level of militant mass struggle. In fact, the violent and triumphant Bolivian insurrection which culminated in October is the first revolution of the 21st century. We must try to understand its content, its motivations, and what it foretells. The very people who since early September had been blocking roads and since October 8 had sustained a general strike. With the violence of their bodies, yes, because apart from sticks, stones, slingshots, three old guns and a few sticks of dynamite, they had no arms. With the violence of their dead, yes, because the army, which to break through the roadblocks had started killing Indians on September 20 in Warisata on the altiplano above La Paz , had already by Sunday October 12 perpetrated a massacre in El Alto. These men and women: And on Tuesday morning the 14th, in processions along the dusty streets, they had carried the dead to their churches, thronging to services in their honor; and had talked in every neighborhood center with their leaders; and had decided then that, yes, they would go down to La Paz, thereby losing another five hundred lives the figure they gave , but this time bringing down the hated killer-president. With the violence of their dead, as I said, with the violence of their bodies. La Paz is situated in a gully, meters below the altiplano. Right at the edge of the drop is the city of El Alto, with almost , inhabitants, living in houses built by themselves, with the splendid snowcaps of the Cordillera Real on the horizon. The slopes fall sharply toward the capital and are totally covered, in that direction, by the old working-class barriosâ€”Munaypata, Pura Pura, Villa Victoriaâ€”which also have their history of struggles and massacres: Villa Victoria was bombed from the air in . Through the avenues, streets, alleys and pathways of these neighborhoods, the torrent of Aymaras begins to descend on Wednesday October . Along the way, their neighbors on the slopes welcome them joyfully, giving them drinks, water, food, and then joining their march. A sign of the universal recognition of their strength. They were preceded by tens of thousands of Aymara peasants from the province of Omasuyos and from other parts of the altiplano, who for a month had maintained a roadblock on the highway. Others arrived from the rebel capital, Achacachi, the site of several historic massacres, where there is a statue of Tupac Katari, the Aymara chief who in laid siege to La Paz and was on the verge of taking it before being defeated by the Spaniards. Also joining them were detachments of coca-farmers from los Yungas and other temperate or tropical regions. They did not let in food, merchandise, or gasoline. The language, the gestures and even the Aymara flag, the wiphala, had become receptacles and vehicles of the major demands of the nation. Ever since , the siege of the city has been the specter that haunts the imagination of the ruling classes: Now it seemed to be coming true. Meanwhile from the South, where the valley of La Paz leads down toward more temperate zones and where the rich have their houses, the siege was tightening with the advance of Indians from the lower valleys, the people of Ovejuyos, who ascended through the fancy neighborhoods without throwing a single stone, without breaking a single window, without picking a single flower. They were simply going uphill like a river in reverse, to go and force out the president. In , when planes were bombing the people of Villa Victoria, El Alto had 11, inhabitants, perched up there at the edge of the drop. In , according to the census, it already had ,, in a country of 8 million. Since then it has continued growing. Seventy percent of dwellings lack sanitary facilities. Hospital services are precarious, as is the educational system. It destroyed longstanding social practices of give-and-take, and brutally implanted a

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new domination. But those who were to be dominated did not consent to this imposition. The neoliberal mode of domination is one which seeks to disorganize and to atomize. It does not negotiate anything with anyone; it only deals with solitary and defenseless individuals. But in the end, it could not do this. The newly formed mass began once again to organize itself in its new territories but with its old wisdom, which resided not in the dismantled institutions but rather in the minds and bodies of the people. The neoliberal order has not succeeded in establishing a hegemonyâ€”an acquiescence that would accompany and mediate the coercion, as was done a half-century ago by Peronism in Argentina, by the PRI in Mexico, and by the revolution and the MNR in Bolivia. This novelty has been duly noted by the dominated classes. In effect, the mode of domination in question has exacerbated the congenital fragility of a racist colonial-type State like that of Bolivia. In this modernizing neoliberal order which is unable to assert its hegemony, we find perhaps a distant echo of the Bourbon reforms of the 18th century, inspired by Enlightenment ideas of rationalization and centralization, but whose application in the Andean region provoked, in and , the massive indigenous rebellions of Tupac Amaru and Tupac Katari. The Bourbon policies increased the economic burden on the Andean communities while at the same time giving them more power to confront the local authorities. Or is it, like the revolution of against the colonial State and the revolution of against the oligarchic State, a precursor to similar responses against the current neoliberal order in other parts of this region of the world? Even if only to answer this question, we must look closely at the insurrection and, above all, not view it in isolation. Among their scarce belongings, the migrants had brought with them the priceless heritage of organizational knowhow. This is true up to a point, but it is not all. In fact, the community wisdom is expressed also in organizations consciously and painfully built up over recent decades: This is why the army lashed out blindly against everyone, without trying to hunt down the nonexistent heads of the movement. The convoy, led by tanks and including water hoses and heavily armored troops, advanced along the Avenida 6 de Marzo to the Ingavi district, with bursts of machine-gun fire which drew dynamite and rocks in response, leaving behind dead and wounded. On the night of Wednesday the 15th, an infuriated crowd moved nine train-cars, weighing ten tons each, and pushed them off the bridge over the Avenida 6 de Marzo, blocking all traffic on that road. Thus, those who began to go down to La Paz were the neighbors, the relatives and the acquaintances of the dead, the wounded and those being soughtâ€”the enraged mass created by years of neoliberalism, the inheritors of communitarian organization and union struggles, Aymaras and Quechuas, Indians and cholos, those who work with their hands, the urban indianaâ€”yes, the urban Indian mass so feared by the anointed caste. Meanwhile, at the other end of the city, the drainage of La Paz was closed off by Indian villagers coming up from the South. At dawn on the 17th, the crowd surrounded Plaza Murillo and threatened the Palacio Quemado the presidential palace , while a first line of police and second and third lines of troops stood in between. The marchers responded that they would do nothing to provoke clashes. I had a long talk with him which I began by saying: In the evening they had allowed a contingent of miners to march through Patacamaya. Weeks later, a certain leftist said to me that what the professionals, intellectuals and artists had done reflected a mixture of fear and hypocrisy. No question about fear, I replied; fear was everywhere, from El Alto to the fancy neighborhood of Sopocachi. It was the sudden shift of allegiance of one class toward another, as happens with great social movements. It was another January 12, â€”the day that vast throngs in Mexico City demanded that the army stop killing the Zapatistas and the insurgent indigenous communities of Chiapas. When the military high command stepped aside, the president and the Embassy were left alone. Despite explicit support from the Department of State in Washington, the collapse was imminent. VIII On Thursday October 16 the whole center of La Pazâ€”avenues, plazas, and connecting streetsâ€”was occupied by the multitude that had come from El Alto, from the altiplano, from Oruro, los Yungas, and the valleys to the South, from the poor neighborhoods, from the universities and schools, from the markets, from the mountains above and from the lands below. La Paz, occupied city. And to string them up, they said. The usual protections had largely dissolved. All that was left was a severely divided High Command, which had already had to execute Indian soldiers for refusing to fire on their own people. It knew all too well about the possibility of five hundred more

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dead, and that such slaughter would signify, for themselves, defeat and disgrace. The rumor of his resignation spread through the streets; at 1 p. Three hours later, together with his closest advisers, he escaped from his residence by helicopter. From the airport of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, they all flew that night to Miami. Once the plane had taken off, someone sent the letter of resignation by fax from the airport to the president of the Chamber of Deputies. The insurgents had won. Vice-President Carlos Mesa, who on the 13th had distanced himself from the president, took over the presidency. Peasants returned to their communities; miners returned to Huanuni. But they had obtained what they had been seeking ever since the February rebellion in La Paz, which had already cost them another 33 dead—many of them felled by army snipers. This time they forced out the murderer. Again the question arises: Was this insurrection just a violent episode of a single week, only to be quelled in a return to the normal routines of State oppression, or was it a harbinger of something yet to come, or of something already underway? I cannot answer for now. And what about all those dead, wounded, and maimed? Was it for this that we put our lives on the line? Violence continues to incubate in Bolivia: IX But is this a revolution? What kind of revolution is it if all it did was bring down a president and his clique of murderers? What kind of revolution, if the insurgents did not stay in La Paz, if they just returned to their communities, their plots of land, their mines and workshops, their neighborhoods and their homes—in sum, their daily lives? What has just occurred in Bolivia is an age-old phenomenon of rebellion, but it is also, at the same time, radically new. All questions are therefore valid; let us try to answer them. A revolution is not something that happens in the State, in its institutions and among its politicians. It comes from below and from outside. It happens when center-stage is taken over—with the violence of their bodies and the rage of their souls—precisely by those who come from below and outside: It happens when these erupt, give themselves a political goal, organize themselves in accordance with their own decisions and awareness and, with lucidity, reflection and violence, insert their world into the world of those who rule, and obtain, as in the present case, what they were demanding. What comes after will come after. If we take the revolutions of the twentieth century as examples, we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are both bourgeois revolutions. He did not define them by their leaderships, their programs and their results, but rather by their protagonists, their dynamics, and their facts. He sought to define and to name what was new. At the beginning of the 21st century, after another expansive wave of domination of capital in recent decades, we are once again facing the unknown. It is not easy to have to deal once:

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Chapter 2 : Bolivia: Latin America's Experiment in Grassroots Democracy | New Politics

"Since the early nineteenth century, the United States has repeatedly intervened in the affairs of Latin American nations to pursue its own interests and to protect those countries from other imperial powers or from internal threats.

Nayrapacha means ancient times. But not in the sense of a past that is dead, incapable of renovation. It implies that this world can be changed, a past that can also be the future. Paradoxically, this was a region where a market economy and private property had predominated for centuries, where mestizo or culturally mixed Quechua peasants had been in the fore of the government-sponsored peasant unions formed to help carry out land reform following the nationalist revolution. In the Aymara-speaking region miles away, where ethnic consciousness has been high since the eighteenth century, the massacre was considered an intolerable affront. Promoting instead an anti-colonial identity, these "Kataristas" denounced the "political serfdom" to which Andean peoples had been subjected through public schools, universal suffrage, and the undermining of community life. The new generation of leaders that emerged developed innovative ways of organizing. The participation of Aymaras with high-school or college degrees gave these organizations a new and particular character. The Kataristas focused much of their anger on the Peasant-Military Pact, which the de facto regime of Gen. By denouncing the "pact," the Kataristas helped unveil the overt U. They worked from within the official unions, and by had succeeded in transforming these into a political arena for challenging a broad array of state policies. Such efforts paid off in early , before the overthrow of the Banzer dictatorship. This newfound unity was put to the test in November and December of that year, when tens of thousands of peasants staged a protest campaign that paralyzed major highways throughout the country. The Kataristas proposed that indigenous identity become the core of a new society. They drew on Aymara oral traditions and the writings of Indian intellectuals such as Fausto Reynaga, as well as the memory of the anti-colonial rebellions and the anti-liberal struggles of the nineteenth century, to recreate this vision. In the process, the long-term memory of eighteenth-century anti-colonial struggles acquired new significance. Just before his execution, Tupaq Katari had prophesized: Yet they recognized the structural impact of the revolution, and viewed peasant unions as the most important arena for building a multi-ethnic society based on "unity in diversity. Ironically, it was the colonial experience which imposed a certain unity by grouping distinct indigenous cultures into the homogenizing category of Indians, a colonized people. Despite the distances involved, these achieved an ecological complementarity, not by trade, but by intra and inter- ethnic relations of redistribution and reciprocity, which did not seem to require the presence of a strong central state. Andean society has been compared to a Chinese box toy: But it did so based on the metaphor of blood relationships, and thus codified a system of domination in which tolerance for ethnic diversity was not violated. At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, Tawantinsuyu was embroiled in a particularly bitter war of succession between two brothers, Waskar and Atawallpa. The looting of temples, the "death of the gods," and the brutal aggression against all aspects of indigenous society wrought more than the destruction of a symbolic order and a political system. It was open genocide. The new gods brought with them plagues such as the Andean people had never seen. Disease, warfare, and the massacre of civilians caused the population of seven or eight million to plummet by two-thirds from to The Vilcabamba rebellion was more explicitly political, launched in by Manqu Inka, who sought to drive out the Spanish or, failing that, to negotiate the recognition of a parallel Inca state. After a long siege of the ancient Inca capital Cuzco and a failed attempt to take it back from the Spaniards, the rebels withdrew to the subtropical region of Vilcabamba, where they held out for more than three decades in a kind of "liberated zone" although they were not free from European disease. His death recalled the murder of the emperor Atawallpa 40 years earlier and seemed to confirm the cosmic rupture of the Inca world. Colonial rule was firmly in place by the end of the sixteenth century, under the administration of Viceroy Francisco Toledo. Ecologically disperse communities were relocated into nucleated settlements, made to pay tribute in silver and in labor, and forced to accept Christianity, the "colonization of the soul. Colonial

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law partitioned the Andean world into dual entities, the "Republic of Spaniards" and the "Republic of Indians," each with its own separate courts, laws and rights. But from the perspective of the indigenous population, the idea of "two republics," which implied some kind of mutual recognition between colonizers and colonized, came to embody complex Andean territorial concepts, including not only physical space but legal or political domain-the political space for self-government. If the Conquest itself could not be reversed, at least the vanquished could use the *Leyes de Indias* to conserve what remained of their territories and traditional authorities. These "rights" became ingrained in the Aymara collective memory as a sort of "social pact" between the colonizers and the colonized. Indian land rights were formalized through land titles settlement and sale agreements granted by the colonial administration to Indian authorities. After independence, colonial land titles and the notion of legal rights embodied in the *Leyes de Indias* were used to defend indigenous territories against the voracity of large landowners. These two dimensions of the colonial experience remain part of indigenous identity today. Thus, what in Spain were policies inspired by the humanism of the Enlightenment became in the Americas new and "enlightened" ways to deny the humanity of Native Americans. Measures that in Spain led to the modernization of the state and the creation of a national *laissez-faire* economy were unable in the colonies to clear away restrictions on commercial activity or control the compulsory sale of imported goods to commoners, a lucrative practice in the hands of local officials. Much has been written about the Indian rebellion led by José Gabriel Tupaq Amaru and his successors; less is known about the Chayanta and Sicasica revolts which occurred at the same time, the latter led by Julian Apasa Tupaq Katari. In mid-1809, an apparently spontaneous revolt broke out in Macha, in the province of Chayanta, to free an Indian cacique authority, Tomás Katari, jailed after a dispute with local mestizo authorities who had tried to usurp his position. The rebellion was crushed by the beginning of 1810. Diverse and often conflicting world-views were at work within the rebel movement. The leaders-most of them educated people, capable of translating indigenous concepts into Spanish terminology-had a vision of politics that derived from the colonial world. Their use of words, paper and "collective negotiation," and their belief that victory bestows rights, marked a radical departure from the ways of most native people. Most Indians viewed politics within a framework of ritual and symbolic codes, based on the ancient capacity for tolerance and unity among the diverse homologous cultures and societies of the Andean world. The colonial notion of "two republics," whereby colonizers and colonized could coexist, was also an element in the rebellion. But the Bourbonic reforms had eroded this idea to such a degree that coexistence among Indians, cholos acculturated Indians, mestizos and Creoles only seemed possible through the restoration of the world balance *pacha* by means of an upheaval *kuti* in which the ancient sovereigns would return to the peak of the segmented social pyramid, an outcome that Spaniards and Creoles, as well as the majority of mestizos and cholos, obviously would not tolerate. The rebel leadership called for a *pachakuti*, but was also prepared to accept a minimum programme to assure coexistence: For the farmers, labourers, and Indian women who formed the rank and file of the rebellion, and who experienced daily exploitation at the hands of the colonial rulers, coexistence with the colonial world meant continued abuse. For these groups, only the expulsion of the invaders could restore equilibrium to the indigenous world. This may help explain some of its radical tactics. The restoration of the cosmic order - what a linear perception of time condemns as "turning back the clock of history" - is expressed by the Andean concept of *nayrapacha*: In the pre-Columbian world was not restored. The defeat of the rebellion was played out like a reenactment of the Conquest, and it left a bitter legacy. The terror of the siege of La Paz, ingrained in the memory of the conquerors, became the foundation for future relations between the Andean countries which became independent a generation later and the dominated Indian population. Set against the Europe of the Enlightenment, indigenous culture was portrayed as "barbarian," "heretic," "savage"-and more recently in liberal-Marxist thought, as "pre-capitalist. The punishment for the leaders of the rebellion was particularly grisly: In these ceremonies, the Spaniards and Creoles-as well as many mestizos and acculturated Indians, out of fear or by conviction-reaffirmed the right of conquest as the foundation of their society. For the Indians, this drove home vividly the message of their defeat, but only as one of the pendulous swings of the cyclical

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movement of history. Even the most "enlightened" Spaniards carried out these violent acts as a "civilizing mission," a holy war against the infidels, or an exorcism of the devil - and sometimes all three at once. One of the most rabidly anti-Indian pronouncements in the wake of the defeat of Amaru and Katari is attributed to a prosperous resident of La Paz: From now on, [Indians] should pay double tribute to the Crown. The King should abolish Indian communities and sell their lands to Spaniards, [he should] turn the Indians over to the Holy Office of the Inquisition, since they are more malicious than us, and burn the Leyes de Indias. The new Andean republics emerged branded by their conflictive history, which ratified the irreconcilable division into two worlds, but without the legal safeguards of the colonial "pact. Slaughter was and continues to be employed preventively, rather than punitively, to ensure "stability. The two major efforts at liberal reform-in and following the revolution-invariably turned into ways to obscure and preserve the old colonial structures, due to the insecurity and double morality of the reformers. Under the "citizenship" granted to Indians in the liberal legislation, "equality before the law" applied only to individuals. The law denied protection to indigenous communities, whose only "right" was the right to sell their lands. The agrarian reform broadened the meaning of individual to mean property-owner, by parcelling out large holdings and communal lands to peasant families. In both frameworks, indigenous culture was considered an obstacle to social progress. Indians would gain human rights only after they had given up their culture and assumed a Western identity as educated, mestizo producers, property-owners and consumers. Extremes of violence against the "pre-Western" Indian world could thus be tolerated. More than two decades had gone by since the populist and nationalist revolution of In the interim, indigenous movements tended to oscillate between two widely disparate goals, successively or simultaneously expressed in legal struggle and armed struggle: By accepting the union as the main forum for peasant organizing, they had to confront the unpleasant legacy of government tutelage and, more broadly, that of the entire citizen model. They also had to deny, in practice, the cultural and organizational pluralism of existing native societies. The Kataristas lost influence, while the ethnic consciousness they championed became little more than a banner anyone could hang. In fact, the Left itself came to adopt a pro-Indian discourse as a way to deal with its own crisis. Elite leftist politicians continue to believe they are the proper owners of the political arena. Some even envision themselves at the top of a pluri-national, pluri-ethnic future state, analogous to the position occupied by the King of Spain in the eighteenth Century. Indian autonomy territorial, social, cultural, linguistic and political is the starting point for building a new egalitarian, multi-ethnic nation. These ideas were present in the struggles of Manqu Inka in and both Amaru and Katari in But, as in the past, indigenous struggles today clash head on with tenacious colonial structures that condemn Indians to a fate of punishment and mutilation. History teaches us that this dialectic gives rise to separatist sentiment. If co-existence is impossible, it is only logical that indigenous groups acquire an identity based on exclusion, and adopt a radical posture calling for the expulsion of the invaders and the recuperation of sovereignty lost in At the other end of the spectrum, the question of citizenship and participation in "Bolivian" society is a point of much debate. The evident crisis in the paradigms of "progress" and "development" has opened up the discussion of the potential of an Indian vision for the future. What sort of social and political organization would make an egalitarian multi-ethnic society possible? What sort of state could give institutional expression to such a society, and ensure equality and mutual respect? The notion of a multi-ethnic state raises a question as old as the Inca: In a complex, multi-ethnic "nation" composed of diverse societies, who should constitute the umbrella authority that would link its many segments? The fact that they can be freely debated is a hopeful sign that the future of Bolivia is still open. The march turned into a multi-ethnic festival that coat-and-tie Bolivia could not quell. At that moment, the clear calm sky suddenly clouded over and unleashed a downpour. The thunder and rain lasted only a few minutes, then the sun again shone. But the blindness of the official nation - for which reform means simply the jockeying for power among political parties - raises a darker spectre.

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Chapter 3 : RIVERA CUSICANQUI Silvia - The Historical Horizons of Internal Colonialism - [PDF Document]

These include an analysis of the nature and dynamics of imperial domination, an assessment of financial relations between the United States and Latin America since the end of World War II, an account of Native American resistance to colonialism, and a consideration of the British government's decision to abolish slavery in its colonies.

She co-founded the Workshop on Andean Oral History and has taught throughout the Americas, most recently at the University of Pittsburgh. Her book, *Oppressed but Not Defeated: The MAS confronts a series of paradoxes*. One is the absolute attraction and fascination that power holds for middle-class intellectuals and mestizos, many of whom have historically carried out ideological pirouettes of all kinds in order to achieve or maintain power. Everyone who collaborated in previous governments is discredited, but certain mestizo sectors have considerable influence through NGOs and universities. The MAS has tended to recruit these people for the state apparatus, and in the process it has progressively lost its indigenous profile. In addition, the MAS faces a structural inertia within the colonial state, which in recent years has been rearticulated in neocolonial forms. For example, the United States has superimposed its imperatives on the state apparatus through financing that is conditioned on adopting certain policies, like eradicating coca. The United States has invested a great deal in state management, not only in the ministries involved in the struggle against drugs, but also in a good part of the Justice Ministry. These mechanisms have created a structural dependency of the Bolivian state on U. Another problem is the system of buscapegas, or job spoils, which degrades citizenship through providing benefits to party loyalists and fostering clientelist relationships. This predominantly masculine, clientelist inheritance facilitates the subordination of peasant and indigenous citizens, and persists despite there being an indigenous president. This is the dead weight that the MAS has inherited in terms of political culture, and it reflects patriarchal authoritarianism, vertical subordination, and a lack of transparency. So there is a dynamic of continuity with past neoliberal governments, along with efforts to bring change, efforts that are not always successful. How has the U. The United States makes use of a particular pressure mechanism, which is to threaten to cancel the Andean Trade Preference Drug Eradication Agreement, which supposedly provides work to thousands of people in El Alto. In addition, the right-wing political parties and the governors are constantly lobbying to sign a free trade agreement with the United States. This means that there are many complex battlefronts where the United States has very strong pressuring capacity. As a consequence, it has been successful in ensuring some coca eradication, as well as confiscation and intervention in coca markets. On the other hand, the coca growers have increased the number of marketing licenses granted and have managed to broaden the traditional market. The price of coca has remained high despite the greater supply because of an accumulated unsatisfied demand and because coca is reaching more remote corners of the county. Neoliberalism itself has meant an increased number of unregulated productive activities, like logging and rubber tapping, whose workforce consumes coca. Coca grower leaders are now in charge of government agencies, and if the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Narcotics Affairs Section of the U. Embassy are indeed pressuring them, they are at the same time being pressured by their base, which is demanding even greater market openings. The reaction to this can be seen in the recent comments by Philip Onagwele Emafo, president of the UN International Narcotics Control Board, who said chewing coca is damaging. Thus we see a panorama in which there are certain initiatives that civil society can take to expand the legitimacy of coca, and in which there are different approaches to control and eradication. What are the power dynamics like now between the eastern elites and the Morales government? The flooding in the eastern region in February provoked a crisis that demonstrated the incapacity and falseness of Bolivian right-wing discourse. For example, conservatives were distributing foodstuffs only to those who had party membership cards—this delegitimized the eastern oligarchy. Now popular civic committees are emerging, further challenging the elites. For these reasons, the hegemony of the eastern elites is receding. Moreover, the floods have put them on the defensive because the regions are forced to depend on the support of the central state to

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get through this crisis. Their biggest achievement is that, because of the flooding, the government has announced a delay in enacting the agrarian reform passed in 1986, which calls for expropriating land in the eastern areas where people work in slavelike conditions. So they are at a dead end. For them the best thing that could happen would be if the Constitution remained as it is now because the changes they propose are absolutely banal in comparison with the MAS reform agenda. For example, the Coca Commission is in the hands of the coca growers, a team that will perhaps only produce five lines in the Constitution, but on the basis of this an entire state policy will be built. The same is happening in every commission. It is not only the constitutional text; the Constituent Assembly is generating state policy under the leadership of the MAS, which in turn is influenced by grassroots sectors from the social movements. The Constituent Assembly is a far more accurate representation of Bolivian society than the Parliament. What is your view of the role of coca in the process of decolonization? Coca forms exactly one of those spaces that demonstrate long-standing indigenous modernity. It occupied a major space in colonial commercial activity, as the Peruvian historian Luis Miguel Glave has described. Through mule transport, indigenous coca merchants linked a vast physical space that today would stretch from the north of Argentina to Ecuador. But coca reflects a market memory that is both modern and a space of cultural resistance because the Indian in the market is not the same as others. Indians generate community reproduction strategies through the market, and while they were subordinated to a huge number of colonial requirements, they created a flourishing market that permitted them a modernity and a connection with the urban world. These commercial networks could not have existed without indigenous labor at the edges of circulation and production. An important change is just having Evo in that position: Indigenous people see themselves mirrored proudly every day. This has an immeasurable impact on self-esteem. It recognizes the value of their own culture, of their roots, of their forms of dress, and it allows many people who previously were ashamed to be Indians to lift their heads. And for the many acculturated Indians called cholos who have denied their cultural origins, having an indigenous president makes them turn around and recover their heritage. This is an important ideological and cultural phenomenon of symbolic decolonization that will have future effects without a doubt, particularly for children. The straitjacket that most limits how much this can flourish is, I think, the educational system—the most colonized system in Bolivia. This failure is yet another reflection of the colonial legacy. For example, I am a postgraduate professor in a program called Intercultural Public Administration, which is an attempt to decolonize public functionaries so that they are capable of valuing the indigenous as equal to the Western, of overcoming discrimination, and of recognizing that indigenous peoples have their own forms of resolving conflicts and their own forms of distributing public goods. But in some measure this problem that the MAS has had with Aymara and Quechua in public institutions demonstrates how deep the colonial roots are inside public institutions. Can you describe how an indigenous presidency has affected the katarista indigenous rights movement that emerged during the 1970s? I believe that katarismo has been fundamental to the changes we are now seeing. It was the first proposal from the indigenous world that articulated its own voice; prioritized overcoming colonial oppression, the negation of Indian selves, and political servitude; and promoted autonomy. Part of what later became the MAS gained control over the CSUTCB until the end of the 1970s, when it was taken over by the radical katarista Felipe Quispe, known as El Mallku, who went on to achieve prominence in the blockades of 1995. There was a dialectical process driven by resistance to the aggressive neoliberal policies of Ugo Velasco. Kataristas were the first to unite the national with the ethnic in the context of a demand for independence and autonomy. As a result, they questioned colonial structures that are also transnational structures. Through the MAS, the coca leaf has become the nexus between popular anti-capitalism, peasant and class analysis, and indigenous anti-colonialism. For example, since water and coca are gifts from the Pachamama mother earth, an indigenous interpretive frame is formed that encompasses the notion of sovereignty over national resources: For this reason, they see the gas as theirs, not as belonging to the eastern departments of Santa Cruz or Tarija, where it is actually located, because highland indigenous peoples died in massive numbers in that war. In order to ameliorate some of the damage structural adjustment caused, a series of policies was promoted, including official multiculturalism, which

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seeks to place Indian expression in an acceptable form of ethnicity. The permitted Indian allows for domination under the name of a multicultural alliance, which is really a form of tokenism. Additionally, the permitted Indian is one who can export values and resources. The term occurred to me when I saw an advertisement for Hewlett-Packard in one of those airline magazines. HP was distributing computers to communities that proposed projects, and the accompanying picture was of an Indian in his traditional chullu hat bottling water from his glaciers in order to sell it in the world market. This type of Indian is capable of selling his sacred godsâ€”because the glaciers are godsâ€”for Western consumption. An example is ecotourism, in which the Indian is like an extinct species, just like trees and birds, continuing to be an object of pillage while recognized as a cultural decoration. In Peru, the tourist industry is based on the exploitation of indigenous symbolic and cultural resources at the same time that Peruvian society is one of the most racist on the continent. This kind of racism is among the most tenacious because it is masked behind a discourse of valuing indigenous culture. So this is the permitted Indian, in contrast to what I call the indigenous hegemony expressed by the MAS, which asserts that those who are not necessarily dressed like Indians, such as the coca growers, reflect a modern indigeneity. An indigenous product like coca breaks the scheme of the permitted Indian because it positions the Indian as a modern being who has a role in the world market. This is exactly what the struggle for decriminalizing coca is aboutâ€”opening a world market for coca products. It is possible to think of a successful international circuit, given the enormous interest in organic, natural, and alternative products and indigenous remedies of all types. In your work, you argue that civil rights and human rights are based in conceptions of citizenship that are Western and male. Do you think the MAS government is considering citizenship from a different perspective? One citizen, one vote; formal equality. To date there has been no reconceptualization of citizenship that, for example, considers the collective rather than the individual. On the other hand, the formal recognition of indigenous forms of organization, like CONAMAQ and the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia, can prove beneficial for indigenous peoples to the extent that they are already articulated collectivities. For example, the Association of the Guarani People can generate a collective citizenship and negotiate with the state for an autonomous space. But in places where this articulation is more precarious, such as urban indigenous sectors and the altiplano, this model is less viable. There is discussion about this within the government. Most attention is focused on how to incorporate systems of community justice and how to turn jurisdiction over to indigenous communities. In other areas this discussion is poorly developed and to date has been very male because the union structure is very masculine and corporatist. The whole concept of the nuclear family, introduced with the revolution, transformed women into wives and mothers before anything else. There was a failure to see women as subjects. In this sense the modernization of representative structures went hand in hand with masculinization and the extension of patriarchy. Do you see this changing? Women have been undeniably present in the social struggles of the past few years at intermediate levels of leadership, and they have had a very strong capacity to articulate demands. There are visible changes: And in the Constituent Assembly, where there are women in traditional dress from all over the country, you really appreciate the change that has occurred. These women are symbolically confronting the oligarchy. For example, when a woman constituent member began to speak in Quechua, a representative from the right-wing party Podemos complained that she should learn to speak Spanish better. She continued to speak in Quechua, however, and ever since there has been simultaneous translation for both Quechua and Aymara speakers.

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Chapter 4 : Project MUSE - Economic Globalization and Bolivia's Regional Divide

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I want to state frankly that I do not agree with the term decolonial, nor with all the redundant literature that has stemmed from it, to the point that it has almost become a school of thought and theory, with more followers in the South than in the North. For me, it is a rather infelicitous galicism that hurts my ears, and since I mistrust all forms of branding, I have come to dislike the unintelligible, elitist, and utterly boring debate that it has provoked up to now. Above all, I find the term practically useless for action in the streets and for engaging with concrete indigenous struggles. It has, nevertheless, been cleverly adopted by new aspirants to internal colonialist power, in Bolivia and elsewhere, and this is an even more pressing reason for remaining outside its lure. Gesture is a nice word, and writing for this issue is a form of recognizing that most of the authors here go beyond the straight jacket of the decolonial towards the performative and the imaginary. In doing so, we have resorted to a textile-spatial metaphor, one marked by the ritual function of the kipus and their power to structure Andean space in its stately horizon. It is the lived experience of that rituality in the present that grants intuitive force to our desire for reconstitution. It is sensing the presence of the mountains, listening to the voices of the landscapes, and all the substrates of memories that speak to us from their summits, lakes, ponds, or from its multiple apachetas and roads. The paintings and churches that set the itinerary of this overview inscribe themselves in this space. A new and modern centralization—“that of the museum”—functions as a powerful force of de-territorialization and loss of meaning. The traces of their spatial inscription—“pilgrimages, commemorations, and devotions”—have been lost; the paintings hang on empty space, decontextualized. What paradoxically persists is the act of expropriation, the colonial emblem of financial accumulation; the circulation of the Andean baroque as a spectacle and as a commodity of high symbolic and monetary value. We will deal with this patriarchal and totalizing dimension in the right side, the white and masculine face of this book. This is where the paintings are re-inscribed in the context of the community of devotees who worship them and dance in their honor. They insert themselves in the networks of signification that connect them to their dead ancestors, with the cycles of water, with the apachetas and the celestial phenomena. Devotions are not professed specifically towards paintings, but towards the deities they represent. The Virgins and the Saints dig their roots in the Andean cosmos and are associated with the contradictory energies of each place, in a palimpsest that uncovers various horizons of meaning throughout each annual cycle. Stemming from the materiality of the carved plaster or the oil painting, the holy image is at one time singular, many-faceted, and multiple. It is not an epiphenomenon of a unique and abstract deity. Virgins and saints encompass different and peculiar connections, meanings, entwined mythical accounts, which are constantly transformed and reread. The territorial fabric inscribes itself finally in the bodies, in the ways of drinking, dancing, and sharing food and love, in the ways in which each person feels the surrounding space in their flesh—the powerful force of the sacred. The symbolic travels of the images involve disputes, transfers, and re-foundations. The cities and the vast transnational Diasporas are routes that lead the urbandinos and quechumara cholos¹ to expand their cults and enthrone their saints and virgins in the confines of the world-system. In each locality, imaginary lines emerge from the churches, reaching the mountain peaks and chapels in their environs. An ensemble of enfolding semantic layers unfolds from this central seed, clothing itself in overlapping materiality. In their columns and baroque arches one can see the vestiges of the ways indigenous carvers found to give shape to their cross-dressed deities. The four corners of the plaza are oriented according to a larger design, which the ritual cycle transcribes in the dancing bodies, in the cult images, the fraternities, and the ayllus articulated in the marka. We observe their east, their north, their west, and their south. We see the marks in the surrounding landscape: The roads are lost in the pampa and connect

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the plaza with the places of worship and with mountains no one can see, but which every inhabitant is aware of, both metaphorically and experientially. In the plaza the dances succeed one other; the population groups and ayllus are interwoven in a game of oppositions and alliances that renews the contentious dynamics of local societies and that each dancing couple re-actualizes in the loving tinku encounter of dance. A labor of millennia has constructed these sacred territories that, since the sixteenth century, have been ravaged, fragmented, and drastically reorganized. The vertical articulating logic between plateau, valleys, yungas, and Pacific coast has been confined in successive colonial borders: The current routes of contraband, between the Andean territory of Bolivia and its neighbors, Peru, Chile, and Argentina, evoke, despite their multiple transformations, this successively woven and reconfigured fabric. A vital layer of the palimpsest continues, just as in the sixteenth century, to set an order to the territoriality and subjectivity of the Andean people: His factory, together with the network of micro-enterprises that it articulates, gives jobs to hundreds of his countrymen from the province as piece-rate day laborers. He also provides work for many of his godchildren and retailers from other localities. It is said that the Limachi family spent fifty thousand dollars in the week of excesses, intense pilgrimages, and dancing circuits. People did not sleep that night, not just because of their ethylic enthusiasm, but because it was impossible to find lodging. The collective delirium lit up, together with the immense fireworks structures made of cane, which visually heated the exalted day, marked by an intense and penetrating cold. As the first rays of the sun shined, they healed their bodies with a rehabilitating infusion of herbs sold by the women in the plaza. Soon enough, another round of beer libations began in preparation for the mass. The audience, who had looked on respectfully under the sunlight at the spectacle of morenada dance ensembles, became also, during the night, a variegated, dancing mob. The multitude had unleashed amorous energies, brawls, and fistfights. It all prompted a change in the atmosphere: The fights and bloody events of the festivities were perceived as further signs, messages from the earth, manifestations of its whims and demands. It is also said that there are two entwined serpents in its towers that undergird the Church and root it in the earth. These serpents are an enchantment of sorts. If someone could bring them back to life, the upside-down world would turn upon itself; the flipside of history would be brought back to the surface. The patron of the second ensemble is also an entrepreneur of the textile sector, but he devotes himself to large-scale contraband of fabrics produced in one of the thousands of sweatshops in some industrial neighborhood of Beijing. He hired a famous cumbia villera band, which has reaped considerable success in Buenos Aires with its lyrics that speak of the pain and suffering of migration, but also of the agency and success of hard working families. The vitality of this process of recombination broadens this frontier, rendering it into an intermediate interwoven fabric, a *taypi*—an arena of antagonisms and seductions. Of Trinities and Dominions We can picture the four suyus of the Inka Empire as the quadrants of a diagonal cross. But the relations between them were not framed by territories or maps, nor were they fenced in by borders: This chronicler, a converted Jew who arrived with the first conquistadors, describes the chants of the Indian women as follows: They used a sort of romance or chanting, with which they were able to retain a memory of their happenings, never forgetting them despite their lack of writing. They allude to a sonorous territoriality that displaces itself through space-time. It is through this *qhipnayra* vision on the density of language and space, that we want to understand the popular imagination of colonization as a self-fulfilled prophecy, in which the violence of the conquest was formulated in terms of a symbolic dispute. Both societies confronted the challenge of transmuting the geography into some intelligible form. Ones understood their task as one of domination and extirpation. While the others—the many—understood it as a gesture of restitution and reconstitution. Ones brought syncretistic cults long tied to the holy word and the scholastics of a patriarchal God. The many traversed the colonial and postcolonial centuries walking, dancing, and producing life over this semantic density inscribed in the landscape, in the cosmos, in the *pacha* [both masculine and feminine]. The songs and paths of the present reveal the threads of this palimpsest. Successive layers and patches of the States—colonial and postcolonial—are imprinted in the clothing of each dancing *Diablo* or *Moreno*. In the polychromatic and confusing space of the postcolonial city, the symbolic stem-cells—the

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combinatorial abstract logic that underlies our linguistic and corporal practicesâ€”have not been erased. Their very bodies seem to replicate the sacred configuration of the landscape: Their metonymy is the central plaza of the town: The church steeple is the mallku, with its bells and all. Mallku is also the name of the condor, the holy bird of the mountain peaks. In the indigenous popular actions of the years â€”, all the communal authorities from across the altiplano adopted it; it is the alias of their most famous leader, Felipe Mallku Quispe. This mobilization, as was the case with the Amaru-Katari movement in the eighteenth century, culminated in a siege of the centers of power, which nearly broke the territorial control of the Bolivian state. Thus the polychromatic indigenous polis reemerged and sought to convert itself into a decolonizing state order, although the ages-old combat between reason and sentient thinking ended up transforming that purpose into a mere enunciation. With these experiences, lived and inscribed in our own flesh for more than twenty years, we began to draw the outlines of an intellectual thaki that would not succumb to the truculence and horror vacuum of the Spanish baroque, neither to the irresistible disorder of postmodern cultural plazas, which deterritorialize and inject emptiness into whatever they cannot understand. Our absence seeks to be a presence, which would enable us to think in reverse: The map shown in the catalog page 7, Principio Potosi Reverso represents the space of the Qullasuyu, where the south figures above and the north below. The new language of monetary transactions enabled the reactivation of one of the most ancient associations in the mediation between humans and the sacred: As in all journeys, this spatial structure is also a form of representing time: A calendar has indeed come to life as a form of representing the order and sequence of the spaces traversed, which are, at the same time, a temporal cycle of successive or simultaneous ritual actions. Since the sixteenth century, the colonial pachakuti inaugurated a new world; the world of the individuated and rootless subject. Andeans have deployed an immense laborâ€”both productive and hermeneuticalâ€”in order to domesticate and allow the foreign gods to take root in a new landscape, along with their coins and symbols, in an endless process of self-fashioning [autopoiesis] of their own communal condition. The social frameworks of memory, the polysemic quality of agglutinative languages and the inscription of the sacred in the materiality of the landscape are the building blocks or a transformational practice that has allowed us, century after century, to gaze back in dignity to our oppressors. Lightning represented, at the same time, the violence of the conquering sword, and the gifts of gold and silver generously donned by the deities of lightning bolt and hale to the hard toiling humans. Thus, the icon object of devotion incarnates a gesture of semiotic subversion against the totalizing principle of colonial domination. It is not a pure, uncontaminated icon, nor is it a luck charm: Displacements The idea that human displacements are forced movements, unilaterally imposed on a population, which becomes a passive victim of their impulse, is probably related with the connotation that this phenomenon has acquired in the contemporary world. Slavery was also a form of brutally coercive displacement. Millions of human beings were captured or sold by their own internal enemies and transported across the Atlantic to populate the confines of the planet. Historically, the slave trade has nurtured the colonial principle par excellence: Even if we consider the conflictive nature of this situation and the agency of those who resist it, we have to recognize the radical dislocating mark that this form of displacement carries with it: But the syntax and the interpretive code that emerged from this taypi became the tool that enabled the confrontation and translation of the other, his symbols, mores, and the manners in which he exchanges both messages and commodities. The itinerant mode through which the indigenous polis was constituted, then, persisted throughout the colonial displacements. They used their ability to live simultaneously in both opposite worlds, and became mediators between them, using their strategic position as a source of social capital and competitive advantage. The Qhipnayra of Displacement Upon arriving in Cajamarca in , the Spaniards found a population in constant flux: Llama caravans circulated from the high punas to the valleys of the east manqha yunka and the west: Each family and each dual community, each ayllu, each moiety and each lordship, had access to diverse resources, sometimes located as far as two or three weeks traveling time from the centers in the highlands where the largest part of the population and ethnic authorities lived. These circulatory displacements of living energy, which were crystallized in goods for daily or sumptuary consumption,

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sustained public works for irrigation, the construction of temples, bridges, roads, and fortresses as well as military incursions into hostile territories. The feminine energy was devoted to the production of highly valued sumptuary or symbolic goods: The Inkas generously compensated the tributary population with food, drink, and coca as well as textiles and other sumptuary goods, which served to seal the pacts between them and the royal authorities or the local lordships they gradually conquered and incorporated into the empire.

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Chapter 5 : Empire and DissentThe United States and Latin America | Books Gateway | Duke University Pr

Colonialism and Ethnic Resistance in Bolivia: A View from the Coca Markets / Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui 7. High Stakes in Brazil: Can Democracy Take on Empire?

New trade agreements that embrace the possibility of pan-regional alliances are being forged. Venezuela, Ecuador, and to a significant extent Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, and Brazil articulate some policies of uplifting the poor and challenging US and neoliberal hegemony. Other nations are making their way to this list. Among these synergistic movements, no country in Latin America is better positioned to become a democratic socialist state than Bolivia. It has the poorest and most indigenous population in South America, has overthrown more governments than any other nation in the hemisphere, and has sufficient if yet untapped natural resources, if distributed fairly, to dramatically improve the lot of its people. It likely has the most varied and effective grassroots, egalitarian organizations in the world. Many Bolivian activists speak of a "radical humanism" rather than a strictly class-based society, a multi-leader, multi-movement power and "pluri-national" society that derives ideas and strength from its multiplicity; many seek a movement that exerts control rather than a party or government that seizes control. The struggle for the future of Bolivia poses the most fundamental questions facing socialist transformation. Will the grassroots movements succeed in being independent of the government, continuing to exert power from the bottom and succeed in winning the nationalization of natural resources, economic development, redistribution of land, basic changes in the constitution, expansion of the public sector? Can these changes occur in the face of intimidation and threats and potential military incursions from the national elites representing the interests of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and U. Can the varied visions of a socialist project, articulated by the indigenous, workers, peasants, urban, rural, and varied regions, join together in sufficient solidarity to prevail against the forces of reaction as well as left sectarianism? Can there be sufficient diversified economic development to create the material conditions of a decent standard of living for all? These are the big questions, answered in small and large ways by each of the movements, political actors, and policies in Bolivia. The direction of the story line will have an enormous impact on the nature and outcome of the overall socialist project in Latin America. Its kickoff assault in the first world was the NYC Fiscal "Crisis" which succeeded in crushing the labor movement and signaling the decline of the public sector. The goal of the neoliberal program is to squeeze money from the bottom to the top, from the poor to the rich. It forces a pro-business climate by changing the laws to allow the corporations to simply take over land and industries and lay off the workers. It drives small farmers off the land and creates massive farms using chemically based agricultural practices harmful to the land, workers, and consumers. It deepens the misery of darker-skinned people and uses racism as a means to create social divisions. It buys and sells governments and makes them obey. Collaborating media giants convince the rest of us that "there is no alternative. They pray to the god of the "market" and convince us that this makes "common sense. Like other colonized peoples, the indigenous and later mestizo peoples of the region saw the profits from their labor and land go to the first world, initially through monarchies, then through corporations that stole their natural resources, captured their governments, and created local mestizo elites to do their bidding. Most of these elites were lighter-skinned Bolivians, but not always. With its large indigenous population, most Bolivians who consider themselves mestizos are also dark-skinned; the culture, the national monuments and treasures, the music and dance, the foods, the methods of political protest, are rooted in their indigenous heritage. While indigenous peoples have been consistently repressed, oppressed and exploited, their cultures have remained substantially intact and have served as sources of ideas, solidarity, organizing methods, and power. But still, as in almost all nations of the world, the darker-skinned people have the least power and status and are significantly more likely to live in poverty. Embassy to pay off debts, meant massive firing of public workers, in education, health, utilities, transportation, and sanitation. With international barriers to capital eliminated, the flight of capital from less

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profitable labor markets like Bolivia to places with more docile workers like China, further laid off 35, unionized factory workers. Plummeting tin prices and the militancy of the politically powerful miners union motivated the lay-off of thousands of miners: The new "pro-business" laws allowed land to be bought up by foreign and local agribusiness as well as permitting local markets to be flooded with cheap U. This made small scale, even subsistence farming impossible. Newly privatized public service jobs in energy, transportation, and utilities led to multinational corporation control over vital parts of the economy and the further lay-offs of an additional 14, workers in these industries. In a population of just under 9 million, over half under 18 years, these layoffs had enormous impact. Pushed off the land and out of their workplaces, unemployed people searching for ways to earn their living flooded the cities and created impoverished makeshift communities immediately adjacent to them. Most of the jobs they eventually got, often at levels way below subsistence, were in the informal economy, selling in local markets, often sitting at stalls for hours a day with pitifully little to show for it. Many worked in tiny family enterprises doing contract production work. The real income of Bolivians dropped significantly during this period. The majority of people caught in this historic sweep, were the indigenous. The bold moves of the government elites representing the interests of the U. The segments of the population key to riding out this storm and turning it in their favor were the indigenous peoples, unions and marginalized workers, coca growers, landless peasants, women, and students uniting in a "re-articulation" of left-indigenous forces. While neoliberals would rather rule by economic and political power, when those fail they turn to violent repression. Their unity across sectors was based on their shared analysis of neoliberalism with racism as its handmaiden. The poor and working class, the darkest-skinned people in the society, unfettered by a government which had so long ago stopped serving their needs, joined together to take charge of their own government and lives in what became the first revolutionary movement of the 21st Century, ending in an election of a self-described socialist-leaning government. With these changes in employment and urbanization came shifts in the fulcrum of political agency, from class-based organizations, i. These organizations were inspired by and interdependent with indigenous-campesino as well as workplace-based unionism. El Alto is located immediately above La Paz, right below the international airport, at an elevation of about 14, feet. Over the last 20 years, the people of Bolivia have suffered a great decline in their standards of living and the break up of their historic communities and families. Now in El Alto, 67 percent live below the poverty line, 60 percent have no sanitary facilities in their homes, 60 percent of residents are under 25 and only 10 percent over 50; Sixty-nine percent of the adults are in the informal sector or contingent work, commonly in family enterprises, and 43 percent of them are wage-workers mostly in manufacturing and services often in the home--the highest percentage in the nation: Their homes and markets are incredibly densely packed; their commerce, mostly informal, dominates community life. Many mayors of these pueblos reside mainly in El Alto, indicating the political and economic flow between El Alto and the mostly Aymara Altiplano Andean highlands. These solidarities are part of the social and political networks that unify both identity and political action within the nation. New urban activism emerges from the power of being outside the grip of the corporations and the state, outside their hierarchical structures of wages and social control, outside the geographic grid unifying the capitalist cities. Thus the military could only enter the community through the streets and be confronted directly by the people. Zibechi points out that the logic of the factory and of capitalism is the homogenization and hierarchical organization of the working masses. After capital flight, massive layoffs, and abandonment of the factory and welfare state model, we then see a shift toward heterogeneity and horizontal structures and relationships. In El Alto, the neighborhood organizations have a tight representative and service delivery structure Federation of Neighborhood Assemblies--FEJUVE , parent councils connected to schools that have parallel local and city-wide organizations, and participation that builds broad experience and local "organic" leadership. A system of "rotational democracy" has developed in which participation within each family, block, or neighborhood to the higher level of organization may be frequently changed or rotated, insuring very broad involvement and political education as well as frequent turnover of leaders. Multiple leaders are seen as sturdier and less likely to be bought or killed off. Attendance

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is required but once the meeting starts a deep democratic vision is reported to transpire. They even have a local, indigenous and extra-legal structure in which they try criminals according to indigenous values, not written law, and have gone so far as to lynch people they see as having committed crimes. Real challenges rarely come from organizations that mirror capitalist organizations; perhaps they can only come from structures that are formed by an altogether different physics. Using the tactic of "el bloqueo," tens of thousands of their people organize to collectively exert their power in forms that are rooted in their cultural histories and their visions of the future. The Katarista movement, named after the 18th Century indigenous warrior Tupak Katari, began in the mids and joined an analysis of indigenous exploitation and exclusion to that of social class. This influence helped to forge indigenous-worker alliances. They cried out against further taxes on wages and the illegitimacy of the old government. These actions led to the resignation of President Carlos Mesa and a new election for president. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, scholar of Bolivian revolutionary movements, suggests that "The nightmare of the Indian siege continues to disturb the repose of Bolivian Creoledom. They may fear the revenge they might deserve. This revolution, organized by the MNR National Revolutionary Movement succeeded in wresting control from the oligarchy through an alliance of the middle class, professionals, urban dwellers, workers and peasants that accomplished a number of important reforms. It nationalized the mines and Standard Oil in Bolivia, creating local participatory structures, and establishing some land reform. Lack of implementation of the improved laws, exclusion of indigenous peoples from positions of power, and continued economic domination by U. However, it created an historical memory of the possibility of revolution for workers and campesinos and thus informed their alliances and politics. Since the s the main organizational form in Bolivia had been the union: The miners and the teachers union in Bolivia, both heavily influenced by Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky as well as utopian socialists, were major players in the historic labor movement that evolved in Bolivia. The organizational and ideological grounding of the union movement has affected all other progressive movements in Bolivia today. By the s, with the combination of the flight of capital to more compliant labor markets and structural adjustments, mass layoffs occurred and the people became deeply impoverished. These forces created a "new working class," one that looked different from earlier incarnations, but a working class that was able to be organized and politically vibrant. They further concluded that organizing workers into traditional unions would not work. For unions to stay relevant and retain their historic role of defending the working class, they had better do their organizing in the communities where the political action was likely to occur. They decided to use their skills and capacities to create a new venue and organizational form to represent and lead the impoverished working class. When the old government announced that they would sell the water system to a private company, a Bechtel subsidiary, Aguas de Tunari, the people rose up. The people were even prohibited from collecting rainwater as it competed with the privatized water system! The local citizens, Cochabambinos, knew that privatization of the water system they had built with their own hands and given to them by their ancestors and Pachamama. The Coordinadora held meetings, mostly outdoors, with hundreds and sometimes thousands of people debating strategy and tactics, voting in very loosely defined representation, achieving consensus, and then releasing the participants to return to their groups and act. The structure and implementation of decisions was loose but powerful because people felt the importance, seriousness, and agency of their efforts. No checking with the leader. Meetings often went on for many, many hours, sometimes for days, with constant reinforcements of food, etc. Mass demonstrations continued and were further echoed by campesinos in the Altiplano including La Paz and El Alto and the Chapare farm region close to Cochabamba. Ultimately the government capitulated and rescinded the privatization scheme in the face of this resilient and complex movement to protect the natural resources that the people painstakingly developed by themselves. This process of mass organizing through a Coordinadora was repeated in Cochabamba, and in other parts of Bolivia again in with the "gas war" in which the Bolivian people rose up against their misery and demanded that the great wealth of the nation, now natural gas or hydrocarbons, provided by Pachamama, be returned to the people: This demand was echoed across the nation and led to a national referendum supporting the nationalization of gas and the fall of

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hated President Lozada. Territorially based organizations demanding control of natural resources, the "price of fire," of the necessities of life, intensified. The population of the Chapare swelled as privatization and then closing of the mines forced mass migrations of politicized, mostly indigenous, miners into farming one of the few cash crops--coca. Chewing coca leaves has been a sacred and social tradition of indigenous peoples in Bolivia since pre-colonial times. They use it like caffeine: Bolivians take a large number of dried coca leaves, chew them intensely for hours into a wad, extract the juice, and enjoy. Cocalero unions grew into muscular power bases in the markets and the communities; they established armed self-defense committees that protected their families from coca eradication programs enforced by the Bolivian military or counterinsurgency forces supported by the United States. Coca leaf production was one of the few viable crops and the coca farmers were not going to let it be taken from them.

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Chapter 6 : e Essay- The Potosí- Principle: Another view of Totality

Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. "Colonialism and Ethnic Resistance in Bolivia: A View from the Coca Markets." In Fred Rosen (ed.), *Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America*.

These struggles are rooted in the long history of Indigenous resistance to colonialism and imperialism in Bolivia. In an interview conducted during her recent stay in Pittsburgh. Could you talk about some of the things that you have uncovered in your research about Anarchism in Bolivia as related to the struggles of the Aymara and Quecha people.? What happened in Bolivia is that there had been two official histories: The communities have leaders but as a rotational thing that is a service to the community. So, that creates a totally different relationship with power structures and, in a way, it decolonizes power and, to a certain extent, gives it back to the people. That is what fascinated us most about the communities and, on the other hand, it led us to discover that communities were not only rural but also urban and worked with Luis Cusicanqui and other anarchist leaders because they had such an affinity between the way they saw struggle, autonomy, domination, and oppression. Could you talk about how anarchism was in line with many of the beliefs of the Aymara and Quechua people and the way their communities were governed. A general point of departure of Bolivian history with the rest of Latin America is that many especially anarchist have had to go through the filter of their own traditions of struggle that are basically anti-colonial. So, what happened is that there was like a mutual breeding, a mutual fertilization of thought and an ability to interpret universal doctrine that is basically European doctrine in Bolivian, Chola and Aymara terms. So we have a majority, even in urban settings and therefore, have a particular brand of anarchism. I would say it is Anarcho-Indianism. And also it is Anarcho-Indianism-Feminism because the Chola figure, the women, the female fighter, the female organizer is part of Bolivian daily life. If you have been there you know what the market looks like, how strong these women are, how in solidarity they are when there is a march coming from the Cocaleros, where there is this sacrifice marches that last ten, twenty days without much to eat. These women prepare like these huge pots of soup they give away to the poorest people. They have such a tradition of union associations that self-organize. And they self-organize basically in the administration of space,. So, you have a very specific Chola brand of anarchism that explains why it was so attractive for so, so many people. And it explains why one of the most salient things in Bolivian and anarchist history is that their leaders made their speeches in Aymara. And just thinking that another non-western language, non-European language is filtering the thoughts of anarchists and helping to phrase, to express the rage, the proposals, the ideas; it gives such richness, you know? Liberalism made their big reforms in the late 19th century which were anti-Indian reforms. They killed the market for Indigenous crafts and goods. They took Indian lands. They jailed all the leaders of the communities. They wanted them to become servants of the haciendas and have a quiet and domesticated, low-paid labor force in the mines and in the factories. You have a second liberalism here now that has basically the same thing except for the issue of haciendas. Haciendas are out of date in Bolivia because of agrarian reform. The communities had many problems just trying to understand the language of the documents that decreed their extinction, or decreed their laws against them. So they created a movement in favor of schools. That was another link with the workers because the workers, especially the anarchists, had their own self-organized schools. The indigenous communities came in search for support for their schools and found a very fertile terrain in the anarchist unions. Could you talk more about the struggles of the Cocaleros. Well, let me tell you, I have been researching and every time I come to the U. I go to the libraries with one question: Why do people believe all these lies. Why can you get any drug but not coca. But the conspiracy against coca was particularly mean and ill because it was a conspiracy against a people. The Indians who had been in touch with coca for millennia and have been able to use it in a variety of ways; as a mild stimulant for work, as a ritual item, as a recreational commodity that you chew in parties, in wakes, in weddings, or even as a symbol of identity and of struggle. So, coca leaves are almost pervasively present in the Bolivian context but there is like this press

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blindness, blindness of the media. Blindness of the media that in many senses is dictated by the U. And so I think the coca issue is very, very enlightening in terms of what the power of interests of corporations can do to truth, yeah. Just veil the truth to such an extent that you cannot separate; common sense has been overcome by this absurd idea that coca is cocaine. I have chewed coca since I was 16 years old. I have an abstinence syndrome of coffee! When I quit coffee I had symptoms of being addicted to coffee but the coca leaves are not addictive. All their pills, all their venoms that make us believe that they are good and then they have side effects and then you go back, then they give you another thing, then you keep on going back and then you end up with having a full pharmacy in your drawer and then you feel miserable and you have lost control of your life. Then earlier you had mentioned one of the marches of the Cocaleros. Could you talk about some of the actions that people have taken to defend their rights to grow coca and their sovereignty? Well, I like to talk about things I really know first and there have been many, many marches. One of the most impressive ones was in and it is really very incredible to be a part of one of these events. And in when things were getting really bad because of forced eradication and assassinations of Cocaleros and army raids where they into the coca fields and destroyed everything was a daily occurrence. And there was this big march that I joined, more or less, half-way; more than half-way. And I was able to get into the rank and file Cocaleros within the march and see how there is this Gandhian ethics of self-sacrifice accompanied with coca. It is the force of the spirit and the force of the belief that goes and carries your body. And, on the other hand, you do some learning of solidarity, community, and self-help, and also sovereignty over the body. You are doing a self-inflicted sacrifice. It is something very important to have something beyond your own belly and to go for something beyond your own belly; and also to go for a cause that is for the whole of the Bolivian people because sovereignty is the missed task. No revolution of whatever kindâ€”liberal revolution, nationalist revolution, Leftistâ€”has really been freed from Imperialism, freed from colonial domination. So, that task requires all the strength and these marches, vigils and hunger strikes have been, always, a typical characteristic of the Bolivian people. A peaceful type of non-violent actionsâ€”but so massive! And that generosity, to be able to spare your own life, is very, very heart lifting, you know? And so, it gives people a strength to overcome many obstacles, to overthrow governments, and to even take governments. To hear the complete interview you can go to [http:](http://)