

**“The Hope of the Indian”:**

**Mining, Agriculture, and *Indigenismo* in Peru’s Central Highlands**

An honors thesis for the Department of Anthropology

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## INTRODUCTION

*From the Andes will flow, like rivers, the currents of renovation that will transform Peru.*<sup>1</sup>

The Peruvian sierra is the Andean region stretching the entire length of the country, from Tacna in the south to Cajamarca in the north. High altitudes and mountain ranges result in a generally cold climate and rugged terrain. The sierra runs parallel to the coast, an arid region bordering the Pacific and home to Peru's capital city of Lima. The geographic divide between these two regions coincides with the ethnic duality prevalent throughout Peruvian history in which indigenous populations inhabit the sierra and Europeans and *mestizos* occupy the coast.<sup>2</sup> While this dichotomy is complicated by transportation routes and economic exchanges, statistics support the generalization that most indigenous people in Peru are and have been living in the Andes. During the timeframe of this study, from the late nineteenth century to 1930, over 70 percent of the population of Peru lived in the highland region. Around 20 percent of the population was concentrated on the coast, which included over 60 percent of the urbanized population of the country. Out of a population of approximately six million, at least half were of direct indigenous descent (Sáenz 1944:4-5). "The Indian" has long been considered the figure from which Peru derives its spiritual identity, and the highland region considered the heart of the country because of its primarily indigenous population. These suppositions, perpetuated by writers, politicians, and intellectuals, granted indigenous peasants an ideological power that belied the relative weakness of their economic and social positions.

Agriculture shaped the lives and livelihoods of the majority of indigenous peasants in Peru in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before urban migration began bringing thousands of rural Andeans to city centers in the 1920s, most indigenous peasants had a strong

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<sup>1</sup> From *Tempest in the Andes* by Luis Valcárcel (2005:231).

<sup>2</sup> For definitions of Spanish terms, refer to the glossary on page 70.

relationship with the land, whether they owned their own farms, participated in collective cultivation within a *comunidad*, or worked as tenants on a *hacienda*. Most indigenous peasants in the central highlands, particularly the departments of Pasco and Junín, also had a relationship with mining due to the ubiquitous presence of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation (Map I). Mining impacted the lifestyles, incomes, health, and eventually identities of thousands of indigenous peasants employed by this company and other smaller enterprises. The mine workers of Cerro de Pasco began transitioning from unskilled seasonal laborers to experienced professional miners during the 1920s, at the same time socially conscious *indigenista* writers and artists were lauding the close connection indigenous peasants had with the land and exposing the abuses of malicious *hacendados*. While *indigenismo* emphasized the oppression of indigenous peasants by large landholders, it did not directly acknowledge the tyranny of another entity: the mining company.

At the intersection of art and politics, *indigenismo* influenced the national consciousness of Peru and the value of indigenous peasants within that consciousness. But the romanticized image of “the Indian” presented by *indigenismo* concealed the reality of indigenous peasants throughout the central highlands. Instead of subsistence farmers, many were industrial workers who contributed daily to Peru’s modernization through their labor. Instead of the isolation of rural villages, many lived or worked in growing mining centers where they were exposed to national politics and recruited as political bases. Both *indigenistas* and socialist organizers misinterpreted the experiences and motivations of indigenous peasants, especially those who were transitioning from peasants to miners in the late 1920s.<sup>3</sup> The *indigenismo* movement frequently ignored the influence of mining on the lives of indigenous peasants and overemphasized agricultural ties, while political leaders overlooked miners’ continuous

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<sup>3</sup> The usage of the term “peasant” is based on a broad definition in which a peasant is a rural cultivator of low economic and political status (Landsberger 1969).

connections to the land and assumed they possessed a proletariat class-consciousness that did not yet exist. As literary, social, and political movements appropriated the “Indian” archetype, indigenous peasants were caught between agricultural and industrial transition. Until unionization in the 1940s, miners lacked an outlet for publicizing their mistreatment and were unable to significantly change their living and working conditions. A study of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation from 1900 to 1930 reveals the complex relationship between mining and agriculture, foreign investment and internal socioeconomic development, and personal agency and representation.

My research for this project focuses on the central highland departments of Pasco and Junín because of their importance to Peru’s mining industry as well as the availability of information and research about them. What I refer to as the Cerro de Pasco region is the area containing significant sites operated by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation. In Pasco, these are the coal mines of Gollarisquisga and the mining center and department capital city of Cerro de Pasco. In Junín, these are the mines at Morococha and the smelter at La Oroya (Map II). Farther south along the Mantaro River and past Oroya is the Yanamarca Valley and the cities of Jauja, Concepción, and Huancayo. This area is the focus of Florencia Mallon’s (1983) study of the peasant transition to capitalism over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on which I rely heavily in my first chapter for background on the economic and social structures of peasant life before the arrival of North American capitalists. Josh DeWind’s (1987) book on the evolution of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation provided detailed information about the company’s inner workings, and Heraclio Bonilla’s (1974, 1980) research on the Morococha miners was integral to understanding the mining experience. Two studies on the multifaceted influence of

*indigenismo*, by Jorge Coronado (2009) and Priscilla Archibald (2011), guided my discussion of the movement and its effects.

While much scholarship exists on the economic impact of mining in Peru, few authors describe the daily lives of peasants in conjunction with the incursion of foreign capital and the expansion of mining production, and even fewer connect the mining experience of indigenous peasants to the larger social movements of the 1910s and 1920s. In this project, I demonstrate the interconnectedness of three factors—mining, agriculture, and the *indigenismo* movement—and their effects on the lived realities and external perceptions of native Andeans in Peru’s central highlands. Mining and agriculture both involve the successful utilization of natural resources and the participation of a labor force. For indigenous peasants, ties to the land shaped their values and how they lived. Agricultural labor was seasonal, determining when peasants dedicated the majority of their labor to the land and when they participated in nonessential labor. Mining began as a secondary activity for peasants who wanted to supplement their subsistence lifestyles with extra income. The presence of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation in the central highlands and the subsequent economic changes in the region spurred the transition from part-time to full-time mine labor. While time spent working in the mines took peasants away from their land, which for many was quickly disappearing due to the machinations of large landowners, many peasants went to the mines in order to protect their land and agricultural ties.

Mining in the Cerro de Pasco region dates back to Spanish operation during the colonial period. According to a local legend, the sheep herder Huari-Capcha discovered the first mineral deposits while camping one night when silver melted out of the rocks around his campfire (DeWind 1987:14). Small-scale operation and inconsistent production characterized the mining

industry of the central highlands throughout the nineteenth century. The constant challenges of labor shortage, unreliable transportation, and primitive technology often resulted in bankruptcy for Peruvian mineowners. As trade routes developed to connect the coast with the sierra, merchants and muleteers facilitated the transport of silver from the mines and influenced its sale price. Because silver extraction and export required the participation of multiple sectors of the region's population, mining production stimulated the internal economies of the central highlands and facilitated the penetration of capitalism into the kin- and reciprocity-based exchange structures of indigenous peasants. In contrast to guano, a lucrative export commodity for Peru from the 1840s to 1870s requiring limited investment and infrastructure, silver mining consistently contributed to the national economy throughout the entire century in addition to stimulating internal market development and transportation networks.

The economic and social change Peru experienced as a result of its defeat in the War of the Pacific in the early 1880s restored silver mining as the country's highest grossing economic sector and inspired a new way of conceptualizing the indigenous populations of the central and southern sierra. The devastating loss to Chile caused Peruvian intellectuals to reconsider the utility of existing social and political structures, criticizing the treatment of rural native Andeans and raising awareness about their substandard living and educational conditions. Manuel González Prada, in particular, was responsible for propagating the idea that the indigenous peoples of Peru represented the true historical and ethnic heritage of the country. Without their assimilation, he believed, Peru was destined to remain a feudal state rather than a democracy. Prada's ideas provided the foundation for *indigenismo*, a movement of Peruvian novelists, journalists, artists, and intellectuals working to expose the blatant exploitation of indigenous peasants by large landowners. While most *indigenista* authors did not pay particular attention to

the conduct of foreign-owned mining companies toward indigenous employees, a case study of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation in the central highland provinces of Pasco and Junín reveals similar levels of exploitation and abuse.

Gaining widespread popularity by the 1920s, the *indigenismo* movement was political as well as literary and attempted to offer economic and social solutions to Peru's "Indian problem" from various perspectives.<sup>4</sup> *Indigenismo* was "an attitude, a spirit, an energized state" adopted by leading *criollo* intellectuals dedicated to the dual goals of revaluing the indigenous population and defending it against *gamonalismo*, the tyranny of large landowners over native Andeans (Montoya 1979:xi).<sup>5</sup> Adopted by political thinkers such as José Carlos Mariátegui, who believed the collective tendencies of the indigenous population of the central Andes made them an ideal base for Peruvian socialism, *indigenismo* became a method of appropriating the meanings and symbolism behind the figure of "the Indian" for political, social, or artistic purposes but did not directly improve the conditions of the people it purported to represent. By casting indigenous peasants as prepolitical and denying them historical agency, *indigenistas* capitalized on the nostalgia of Peru's Incan legacy and Andean roots to create an image of the country's modernized future—its indigenous populations. In the first decades of the twentieth century, *indigenismo* lauded the connection of indigenous peasants to the land and to traditional lifestyles and customs, even as they migrated to urban centers, went to work *en masse* in the mines, and were dispossessed of their fields and farms.

The two oppositional structures of *comunidad* and *hacienda* shaped the agricultural organization and lifestyles of indigenous peasants. The *comunidad* was an agrarian landholding

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<sup>4</sup> The Indian problem, or "el problema indígena," is a term used by both Manuel González Prada and José Carlos Mariátegui in their writings on Peru. It refers to the lack of indigenous social and economic assimilation into the national life caused by the ethnic and geographic divide between the native Andean populations of the central and southern highlands and the predominantly *criollo* and *mestizo* administrative center of Lima.

<sup>5</sup> My translation of the original text, "una actitud, un espíritu, un estado de ánimo."

system in which private property did not exist. Families cultivated the land based on reciprocal aid and collectively benefited from their labor. Based on the Inca *ayllu*, a system in which individuals bound by maternal lineage worked the same land, the *comunidad* symbolized the inherent collectivism and “authenticity” of indigenous peasants to *criollo* outsiders. In reality, the communal landholdings of native Andeans were undermined by the expanding presence of *haciendas*, large estates composed of numerous small farms and owned by a single individual. These wealthy owners were usually members of the colonial or bureaucratic elite protected by law and custom to dispossess indigenous peasants of their land and conscript their labor for the *hacienda*. Peasants lived as tenants on the *hacienda*, essentially working for free in exchange for the barest minimum of housing and supplies. Some worked as domestic servants on the estate, but many others were sharecroppers on land they used to own. For those who retained their landholdings, whether within the *comunidad* structure or outside of it, mining represented an opportunity to preserve these lands. Wages from the mines allowed some peasants to continue to pay for their plots and others to pay friends or family to harvest for them while they were at the mines. Mining indicated an unequal balance of power—in the case of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, the company had unlimited resources to exploit its workforce—but peasants used labor in the mines to their own advantage.

The presence of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation and the indigenous contribution to its workforce complicated the popular depiction of native Andeans as passive, docile peasants subsisting on agriculture and living lives removed from capitalist systems. Established in 1902 by a group of North American investors, the company grew to dominate the land and mines of the Pasco and Junín departments, control the lives of thousands of peasant laborers, and direct the Peruvian economy before it was nationalized by the Peruvian government in 1974. During

the first three decades of its existence, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation expanded mine production in the central highland region, implemented advanced technologies for mineral extraction, and recruited peasant farmers and herders from surrounding areas to work in the mines. This primarily indigenous peasant labor force was contracted by *enganche*, a labor recruitment system in which a peasant accepted an advance cash loan in exchange for his personal labor in the mines. Wages the peasant received working in the mines contributed to paying back this loan, and the contract ended when he had earned back the original amount of the loan plus interest, in addition to a small commission for the *enganchador* who recruited him. Coerced or entrapped into mine labor rather than participating voluntarily, many peasants had difficulty escaping the cycles of debt and obligatory labor created by the *enganche* system.

The structural violence inherent in the *enganche* system generated various forms of resistance from the peasants recruited to work in the mines, as well as a 1912 report compiled by the Asociación Pro-Indígena exposing the abuses the Cerro de Pasco Corporation.<sup>6</sup> Indigenous peasants working in the mines endeavored to change specific circumstances of mistreatment with short-lived, small-scale resistance methods that ended as soon as an immediate goal was achieved. Between 1902 and 1930, the most widespread method of individual peasant resistance was breaking *enganche* contracts early. Peasants also participated in collective resistance. When a strike occurred, it was in direct response to a fatal accident or an action taken by the company that negatively impacted employees. By the late 1920s, unskilled seasonal laborers were making the transition to full-time professional miners and attracting the attention of political parties as potential support bases. In 1928, after the deadly Morococha mine disaster, Mariátegui attempted to convert the miners to the Peruvian Socialist Party. While progress was made toward

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<sup>6</sup> The Cerro de Pasco Corporation is often referred to as “the company,” in keeping with the custom of peasants and miners in the central highlands and usage by secondary sources.

organizing acts of resistance against the company, the effort was unsuccessful because miners had not yet transitioned into a cohesive group united by political ideology and motivated by class-conscious goals. This took place 15 years later in 1945 when the first official union was formed in Oroya, a mining town created by the expanded production of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation (DeWind 1987:342).

Political organizers in 1930 did not realize that, almost 30 years after the Cerro de Pasco Corporation began impacting the lives and labor of thousands of native Andeans, indigenous peasants employed as miners were still tied to the land of the central highlands. While stirrings of the proletarianization of miners corresponded with the increasing displacement of indigenous peasants from their farms and fields and the loss of *comunidad* landholdings, miners maintained agricultural connections throughout the late 1920s. The expansion of mining altered the lives of many rural Andeans and distanced them from small-scale subsistence livelihoods but did not completely replace their traditional ties to farming and herding. Peasants were undoubtedly exploited by powerful economic and political interests for their land and labor, yet they fought to protect their access to land even when their labor was contracted to the mines. While *indigenistas*, politicians, and the Cerro de Pasco Corporation used indigenous peasants as literary inspiration, party bases, and workforces, peasants participated in their own methods of resistance by breaking contracts and striking. Unprotected by the law and by authorities, peasants who became seasonal or professional miners used the position as a temporary step toward the goal of economic independence.

The reconstruction of how mining, agriculture, and *indigenismo* shaped the lives of indigenous peasants is most completely achieved through the incorporation of sources and testimonials in which peasants express themselves directly. Recorded instances of peasants

speaking or writing about their own lives and experiences are limited by their subordinate economic and social position within Peru during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Instead, the historical record is dominated by landowners, judges, and journalists speaking for indigenous peasants in reports, court cases, and newspapers. This “veil of silence over peasant life” accounts for the abundance of perspectives about indigenous peasants and the absence of perspectives from them (Flores Galindo 2010:174). The *indigenismo* movement was especially responsible for popularizing information about Peru’s indigenous population, especially their substandard living conditions. While in most cases these depictions were intended to raise awareness of inequality and structural violence, they also presented a romanticized vision of “the Indian” and modified indigenous identity to conform to publicly appealing stereotypes. Given these restrictions, it is difficult to access the voices of indigenous peasants during this time period. But a comprehensive narrative requires the presence of numerous perspectives, and the history of a group of people is never told exclusively by the people themselves. Indigenous peasants actively participated in shaping their futures despite institutionalized social and economic restraints, contrary to the essentialized images of powerless *indios* presented in *indigenista* literature.

The first chapter provides the historical background of mining and the position of indigenous peasants throughout the nineteenth century. Silver mining contributed greatly to Peru’s economic growth over an extended period of time, and indigenous peasants provided the majority of seasonal labor to the mines. Peru’s defeat in the War of the Pacific resulted in the beginnings of *indigenismo*, exemplified by the writings of Manuel González Prada and Clorinda Matto de Turner. The second chapter outlines the development of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation and its impact on the indigenous population, internal economy, and environment of

the central highlands. *Indigenista* Dora Mayer provides the most detailed account of company abuses and the reactions and resistance efforts of peasant-miners. In the third chapter, literary and political *indigenismo* provide the context for the transitioning identities of peasant-miners and the 1928 Morococha mine disaster and its repercussions. Historical patterns of institutionalized inequality are evident throughout the three chapters, and mining emerges as the convergence of larger concerns about modernization, race, and imperialism.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Developing the Peruvian Economy and Social Consciousness

*The unjust law of the white race  
Snatches me from home:  
I go to work and to starvation,  
I go to the deadly mine.*<sup>7</sup>

Silver mining was the most lucrative commercial activity in Peru during the first half of the nineteenth century. Cerro de Pasco, a productive mining center long before American investors controlled its operations throughout the twentieth century, hosted the largest official smelting house in the country. The raw metal converted into silver bars accounted for nearly 60 percent of national mining production between 1820 and 1860 (Deustua 1994:3). Silver production spurred the development of a domestic transportation system linking the central highlands with coastal ports, provided Peru with a steady export commodity throughout the guano boom, and transformed patterns of rural exchange and internal development throughout the region. Nineteenth-century silver mining in the Cerro de Pasco region supplied the economic and social infrastructure necessary for the national success of the industry and the peasant-centered movements that accompanied its later expansion.

#### Independence, Economic Production, and Internal Development

Peruvian independence from Spain profoundly impacted the political, social, and economic climate of the country, including the output of silver production. By the time José de San Martín and his forces took Lima in July 1821, the conflict between royalist and patriot armies had destroyed numerous *haciendas* and mines. Eager to implement the egalitarian ideals of the French Revolution, San Martín abolished Indian tribute, the forced labor draft of the *mita*, and the *encomienda* system (Davies 1974:19-20). Colonial structures, however, were still firmly

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<sup>7</sup> My translation of the original text, “La injusta ley de los Blancos / Me arrebata del hogar: / Voy al trabajo y al hambre, Voy a la mina fatal.” From “El Mitayo” in *Baladas peruanas* by Manuel González Prada.

in place in Lima as well as in the interior, and the legislation was an unenforceable gesture of equality. The indigenous peasants of the central highlands remained at a disadvantage under the control of white and *mestizo* elites. After replacing San Martín as leader of a newly independent nation, Simón Bolívar issued multiple decrees in 1825 in an attempt to relieve Indian abuses. In particular, he declared that all work in the mines and on *haciendas* must be compensated with currency (Davies 1974:21). Subsequent presidents passed Indian legislation that often hindered the Peruvian economy more than it improved the lives of indigenous peasants. When Ramón Castilla abolished the Indian tribute for a second time in 1854, for example, it contributed nearly 10 percent to the national government's revenue and even more to the municipalities that directly received the payment (Farcau 2000:15). Passing and enforcing Indian legislation proved problematic at the time of independence and throughout the nineteenth century.

Across Latin America, new republics struggled to recover from the aftermath of the wars of independence and the subsequent *caudillo* conflict. In Peru, coastal agricultural estates lost labor as slaves fled amidst the disorder, and mines in the interior suffered from the disorganization of their work forces. Political uncertainty bred economic instability as both agricultural and mining sectors contracted, and the period of lowest productivity for silver mining corresponded with the apex of the war (Appendix I). By the 1840s, the mining industry throughout Peru had regained its pre-independence production level. The Cerro de Pasco region experienced the greatest recovery, surpassing its silver production at the height of the colonial period by 1842 (Deustua 1994:4). While indigenous communities contributed the majority of labor to the mining centers of the interior, the recuperation of the industry would have been impossible without healthy export markets. Peru's longstanding reputation as a mining country contributed to its economic recovery after the war and it was this "legendary image of a Peru

specialized in the production and export of precious metals” that motivated European capitalists to invest (Bonilla 1980:26).<sup>8</sup> A history of successful silver mining ensured that Peru was offered economic opportunities in the nineteenth century that would guarantee its twentieth-century success.

The importance of silver mining to the nineteenth-century Peruvian economy is often eclipsed by the guano boom. Harvested from the Pacific Chincha Islands, the home of massive seabird colonies, guano was used as an organic fertilizer or as the source of nitrates and gunpowder. Between 1841 and 1878, the guano trade dominated Peru’s export sector and produced more revenue than any other commodity. Instead of offering economic opportunity to Peruvian entrepreneurs, the government contracted foreign firms to extract, treat, and transport the guano in exchange for a steady income of large cash advances (Farcau 2000:14). Great Britain, the primary buyer of guano exports, monopolized Peruvian markets during this period. Rather than putting the revenue from guano exportation toward reversing the national debt remaining from the War of Independence, the Peruvian government used the money to take out more loans and support the spending of an increasingly corrupt bureaucracy. Peru delayed instituting an internal tax structure and became completely dependent on the regular flow of revenue from the guano fields, despite receiving only one-third of the sale price of guano pursuant to its agreement with the British companies managing its extraction (Farcau 2000:14-16). By the time the War of the Pacific broke out, Peru was on the verge of bankruptcy.

The guano trade and silver production, while both responsible for stabilizing the Peruvian economy after independence and throughout the political disorder that characterized most of the nineteenth century, had very different effects on the internal economy. The production costs of

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<sup>8</sup> My translation of the original text, “imagen legendaria de un Perú especializado en la producción y en la exportación de los metales preciosos.”

harvesting guano were low, as work was limited geographically to the Chincha Islands and performed mostly by imported Chinese coolies. Guano exportation did not require a domestic transportation system because the product was shipped out to foreign buyers from where it was gathered. Silver production, on the other hand, relied on the formation of a complex internal transportation system that developed from the long-standing muleteering tradition of the central highlands to transport the metal from the interior Andes to the coastal ports. Based on his estimate that guano generated 700 million *soles* of revenue over a period of 37 years while silver produced 384 million *soles* over the course of the entire century, Peruvian historian José Deustua nevertheless argues that silver was the more reliable and significant export commodity (1994:5). This fiscal disparity stems from the intensive extraction of guano over a concentrated period of time in contrast to profits generated by long-term small-scale silver production. Silver trade connected the productive zones and mining centers of the Andes and fostered networks of exchange and transportation before the introduction of railroads. The internal markets that developed based on silver were more valuable than the revenue of guano exports because they primed small-scale economies for the expansion of the industry and provided the infrastructure to facilitate its success.

Merchants and muleteers, not mineowners, controlled the internal systems that facilitated transportation and made silver production possible in the central highlands. Merchants provided mineowners with the tools needed for mining, consumer goods, and the credit necessary to maintain their operations. In contrast to the power and capital mineowners accumulated in the twentieth century, mining in the nineteenth century did not result in a significant accumulation of capital for owners and operators. Merchants fixed the selling price of silver artificially low, buying it cheaply at mining centers and selling it for a hefty profit in Lima (Deustua 1994:7).

Because merchants and muleteers moved silver from the interior to the coast where it was sold and exported, mineowners could not earn a profit without these middlemen and their transportation networks. Mineowners agreed to the merchants' prices at a loss rather than risk no profit at all. The official route of silver was the axis traveled by mule trains connecting the administrative and commercial hub of Lima with Cerro de Pasco, the largest mining center of the central highlands. The internal circulation process that brought silver to the coast and consumer goods to the interior permitted the exportation of silver and its development into an international market as well as the development of local economies and entrepreneurial opportunities. By the late nineteenth century, silver mining fueled external markets while being completely assimilated into the domestic economy.

### **Silver Mining, Peasant Communities, and Labor Recruitment**

Until the emergence of conglomerates like the Cerro de Pasco Corporation at the turn of the twentieth century, mining was largely a risky business undertaken on a small scale by entrepreneurs without elite connections. Most mines operated on a limited basis with primitive technology and an inadequate labor supply. In the central sierra in the late nineteenth century, peasants and investors alike found steady economic prospects in agriculture and livestock rather than mining. "There were enough success stories to prop up the hopes of most," writes historian Florencia Mallon, "but abandoned mines and rapid turnover of ownership were silent testimonies" to the frequency of failed investment (1983:19). The most successful mineowners were entrepreneurs who owned multiple enterprises and maintained good relationships with the merchants who extended them credit. To ensure consistent access to labor for their mines, mineowners cultivated patronage networks with nearby *haciendas* and peasant villages. *Hacendados*, in contrast to mineowners, were often aristocrats with elite colonial roots or

bureaucratic connections who enjoyed the overall stability of the *hacienda* system as well as the authority and prestige that accompanied the ownership of a large estate. While mineowners often directly benefited from the labor systems that supplied *haciendas* with a peasant workforce, the economic position of most mineowners was much more unstable than that of *hacendados*.

The individuals who comprised the peasant workforce of the mines and *haciendas* came from small-scale rural economies where families valued self-sufficiency and relied on kin networks to maintain resources they did not produce themselves. Through reciprocal exchange and cooperative agreements, a household with many children and limited land could partner with a household owning numerous productive plots but lacking the hands to cultivate them. These systems extended beyond the village to neighboring communities through intermarriage and inheritance. As Mallon notes, peasants exchanged labor and goods within their communities verbally and without the use of currency. “Few households,” she writes, “no matter how much they treasured the ideal of self-sufficiency, could regularly make ends meet without the aid of neighbors” (1983:28). Ritual customs often accompanied these exchanges and instances of neighborly assistance. Through a practice called *ishapa*, landowning and sheep-owning households united. Rather than entering a labor contract, relatives and neighbors would assist a family at the height of the harvest in return for food, coca and alcohol, and a future labor contribution (Mallon 1983:30). In this way, family economies attempted to diversify in order to operate outside of the commercial market and protect themselves against the variable nature of agricultural production.

The agricultural cycle of the central highlands connected the *hacienda* and the mine, two structures present in the lives of indigenous Peruvians since the Spanish conquest, to labor access from peasant communities and small villages. A balanced household economy revolved around

periods of land activity and inactivity. Planting and harvesting required all available hands for only part of the year, while the dry season allowed for secondary activities. During this break in agricultural work, female household members crafted artisanal products for barter or sale and men, especially those who were young and single, worked on commercial routes as *arrieros* and in the mines to generate supplemental income (Mallon 1983:27). This seasonal migration was enough to sustain silver production during periods of economic depression when mines were not operating year-round, but increased mine activity and export demand created a need for a substantial labor force that could only be retained through coercion. The involvement of peasants in capitalist cycles began in the colonial period and a familiar pattern emerged: through discriminatory laws and economic practices, land privatization schemes indebted indigenous peasants and conscripted their labor for *haciendas* and mines. Mallon argues that until the decades after independence “commercial capital did not destroy the basic core of peasant self-sufficiency” (1983:33). The labor provided by the peasants of the central highlands permitted the expansion of mine operation and production in the Cerro de Pasco region. Migration to the mines also gradually disrupted the household- and community-based systems of subsistence even as it supplemented them.

The labor scarcity caused by the War of Independence put greater pressure on mineowners to recruit workers with increasingly coercive techniques. Many peasants did not need to participate in the commercial market permanently because of the self-sustaining nature of their kin groups and community organization. Immediately after the war, when mines were damaged and production depressed, peasants returned to subsistence and agricultural systems. As Peru rebuilt and resumed economic production, a new miner-*hacendado* class emerged that controlled diversified holdings and exercised power over the labor force in the interior. Through

a labor coercion method called *contrata*, mineowners paid merchants and political officeholders throughout the towns and villages of the central highlands to contract workers. Peasants received a cash advance that they paid off by working in the mines at a fixed daily wage. Due to the dangerous nature of mine work and the strong agricultural connections of local peasants, coercion was the only effective way to recruit laborers. As *haciendas* expanded and divested Indian *comunidades* of their land, *hacendados* would also contract their workers for seasonal mine labor. Since indigenous peasants were often the poorest and most disenfranchised of Peru's peasants, these debt labor schemes directly targeted them and took advantage of their limited opportunities.

All productive sectors of the Peruvian economy consistently faced the dual problem of lack of capital and scarcity of labor, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century. Peasants living in *comunidades* and working on *haciendas* had access to land, animals, and informal markets and used the capitalist system only when necessary. The rising elites of the republican period took advantage of occasional peasant indebtedness and life cycle events, like the extra resources needed to perform a marriage or burial, to funnel labor into *haciendas* and mines. Rather than change the social relationships that produced peasant communities, miner-*hacendados* “attempted to intensify the extraction of surplus from peasants with access to the small means of productions” through coercion (Mallon 1983:56). The cycle of indebtedness that began when a peasant accepted cash in exchange for labor was solidified upon his arrival at the mine, when he accepted food, clothing, and coca from the mineowner or merchant running the store that serviced the workers and furthered his debt. The use of entrapment to furnish labor for mines in the Cerro de Pasco region helped solve the problem of scarcity at the expense of the autonomy, health, and lives of indigenous peasants.

Once indigenous peasants were contracted or coerced into mine labor, they encountered an environment drastically different from their daily lives as herders or farmers. Entering the mines was an assault on the senses, especially for peasants who had never been in the presence of industrialized production. The shafts were poorly constructed, badly lit, damp from inadequate ventilation, and plagued with frequent cave-ins. Because silver mines still employed a technologically primitive process to extract silver, labor was divided into two groups: *barreteros* used basic tools to remove ore from the walls of the mine by candlelight, and *apiris* were the “human beasts of burden” that brought the ore out of the mine to the surface (Mallon 1983:73). Workers chewed coca to get through both regular 10-hour shifts and *guaraches*, cycles of 36-hour shifts with 12 hours for rest. Many peasants chose to work longer shifts in quick succession despite the grueling physical toll in order to pay off their debt sooner and return to their families. The rhythm of the work, conditions of the mines, and hierarchy of labor presented radical changes to the peasant lifestyle. As historian Heraclio Bonilla writes, “The peasant who enters the mines, in effect, confronts a radical change in his life and existence” (1974:28).<sup>9</sup> Cyclical migration to the mines during the nineteenth century began to modify the mindset of indigenous peasants who sold their labor, a transformation that solidified during the first decades of the twentieth century and altered the consciousness of Peru as a nation.

While the coercion labor system forced indigenous peasants into debt and bound them to mine labor in a cycle of exhausting work shifts and accumulating debt, many peasants initially entered into it voluntarily in order to take advantage of an economic opportunity. Peasants from both the upper and lower strata of rural life were compelled by the opportunity for extra income offered by the mines (Bonilla 1974, Mallon 1983). Because they could bring more resources with

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<sup>9</sup> My translation of the original text, “El campesino que ingresa a las minas, en efecto, está enfrentado a una modificación radical de sus condiciones de vida y de existencia.”

them to the mines instead of borrowing from the mine or merchant store, wealthier peasants were more often successful in laboring for a limited period and removing themselves from the system, having earned money rather than incurring debt. Bonilla describes their motivations: “The poorest, driven by the loss or reduction of their resources. The richest, because they perceived that the mines offered a new and untapped opportunity for monetary accumulation” (1974:38).<sup>10</sup> Foreign investment and capitalist systems increasingly penetrated the rural communities and economic systems of the central highlands as the nineteenth century progressed, but peasants resisted such influence by maintaining small-scale agricultural production and kinship ties during their time working in the mines. For most of the nineteenth century, mines represented a seasonal opportunity to supplement income rather than a permanent way of life. In the first decades of the twentieth century, however, North American investment expanded production and gradually changed part-time indigenous peasants into professional miners.

### **Indigenous Participation in the War Effort**

The War of the Pacific (1879-1883) pitted Peru and Bolivia against Chile in a territorial dispute over the nitrate deposits of the Atacama Desert. Chilean forces occupied Lima for two years and ultimately defeated both countries, divesting Peru of its southern provinces and Bolivia of its seacoast. The consequences of the war severely altered Peru’s conception of its indigenous population. Since the colonial period and throughout the nineteenth century, the *hacendados* of the central highlands and the political elite of Lima considered the indigenous population a workforce to be exploited rather than citizens deserving legal protection and state-sponsored education. The nonexistent role of indigenous peasants in the political life of the nation and their limited access to basic rights inadequately reflected their majority position in the population of

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<sup>10</sup> My translation of the original text, “Los más pobres, impulsados por la pérdida o por la disminución de sus recursos. Los más ricos, porque percibieron que las minas les ofrecían una nueva inédita oportunidad de acumulación monetaria.”

Peru. While calculating the exact indigenous population of Peru during this time is impossible, it is estimated between 40 and 80 percent of the total population of Peru identified as indigenous around the time of the war and into the following decades (Coronado 2009:9). In some departments, the indigenous population was increasing at a higher rate than other groups (Kapsoli 1982:25). As *hacendados* despoiled *comunidad* landholdings and mineowners coerced peasants into labor, the indigenous population concentrated in the central and southern highlands was also expected to build Peru's armies and fight for a country whose laws did not protect their rights. The War of the Pacific briefly organized disparate and competitive *comunidades* and villages into a force of indigenous resistance that inspired the birth of *indigenismo* and foreshadowed the peasant and social movements of the early twentieth century.

Indigenous peasants bore the brunt of the fighting during the War of the Pacific due to government conscription efforts as well as the responsibility to defend their homes and villages. The La Breña campaign, led by army colonel and future Peruvian president Andrés Cáceres, exemplified peasant mobilization. The Pasco and Junín regions of Peru endured two invasions of Chilean armies between 1881 and 1882. Indigenous peasants who were not forced into the Peruvian army supported both enemy and national occupying armies with livestock and grain and organized their own guerilla bands. These *montoneras*, or groups of armed men, had formed in the central highlands during the Wars of Independence decades earlier. The fervor of the peasant guerillas impressed Cáceres, and in an 1882 dispatch to Lima he noted it was this indigenous participation that would determine the outcome of the war (Mallon 1983:92). Indigenous soldiers were supported by *rabonas*, peasant women who followed the men to camps and "improvised or substituted for the supply system" by preparing food and washing clothes (Sater 2007:77). Both indigenous men and women contributed to the war effort and gained

valuable combat and organizing experience in the face of the country's disastrous loss and humiliation.

The contributions peasants made toward the national cause of fighting Chile did not earn them any rights or privileges and did not improve their daily lives. Rather than fighting for patriotism and love of country, they fought to protect their homes and lands from foreign invaders. Their commitment to a singular purpose fostered a budding recognition of a shared nationalism based on territorialism and common values. This potential for some form of nationalist solidarity was undermined by a regional elite of merchants, bureaucrats, and mineowners whose precarious local control in times of peace made "the threat of an armed peasantry in time of war...more dangerous than the presence of a foreign army" (Mallon 1983:92). The very nature of peasant society also prevented the unity necessary for a regional movement to form amongst guerillas and outlast the war. The social and economic structures that permitted peasants to leave agricultural labor for seasonal work in the mines also preserved goals of self-sufficiency for individual households and encouraged village and community autonomy rather than horizontal alliances based on a common peasant or Indian identity. While the war served as a training ground for peasant mobilization and resistance, the organization and agency it fostered could not overcome the long-standing framework of peasant life.

### **Literary Efforts and Ideological Effects of War**

The defeat of Peru in the War of the Pacific was a blow to the pride of a nation whose identity was based on the long-standing dichotomy between the European and *mestizo* coastal elite of the administrative center of Lima and the isolated, disenfranchised indigenous populations of the central and southern sierra. Betrayed and disillusioned, intellectuals and politicians alike searched for alternatives to the colonial system they blamed for Peru's defeat.

Positivism and social Darwinism informed popular views of the indigenous population of Peru in the decades before the war, blaming native inferiority for the country's problems. "The War of the Pacific undermined this philosophy," writes historian Thomas Davies, "because it was difficult for a defeated, prostrate people to hold the tenets of survival of the fittest" (1974:36). The results of the war reversed this view of Peru's indigenous population and marked the beginning of *indigenismo*, a literary and social movement that raised awareness about the substandard living conditions of indigenous peasants while championing them as the only "true" Peruvians and the key to the future of the country. Before intellectuals and artists like José Carlos Mariátegui and Martín Chambi popularized *indigenismo* in the 1920s, Peruvian writer and political organizer Manuel González Prada was the most influential *indigenista* of the late nineteenth century.

Born in Lima to a conservative aristocratic family, Manuel González Prada (1844-1918) fought at the battles of San Juan and Miraflores when Chilean forces entered Lima in 1881. Secluding himself at home for the remainder of the war, Prada focused on his writing and emerged "a transformed man...determined to denounce the misgovernment and immorality" he believed had contributed to the country's defeat (Chang-Rodriguez 1989:282). Prada strongly believed that Peru had "suffered no calamity more disastrous than the war with Chile" and blamed the inherent inequality and corruption of the landholding and administrative system (2003:52). In his seminal essay *Nuestros Indios*, Prada described the abuses of these systems, writing that the indigenous peasants of the interior experienced "the most blatant and palpable violation of every human right under a true feudal regime" (2003:189). This feudal regime, continued by the complicity between *hacienda* owners and the local and federal governments, ensured that laws did not protect indigenous peasants against violations of their rights and kept

them in “a state of ignorance and servitude” even while sending them out “to die in civil wars” (Prada 2003:188). Prada was one of the first Peruvian intellectuals to explicitly articulate that the problem of indigenous assimilation was economic and social rather than pedagogical. Mariátegui would reiterate this idea in his own essays about the Peruvian reality more than two decades later.

While Prada strongly impacted the *indigenismo* movement that developed after his death, he also made important contributions to Peru’s immediate political landscape. As an anarchist, Prada advocated teaching the indigenous population “pride and rebellion” rather than “humility and resignation” (2003:193). In 1891, he converted the *Círculo Literario*, a group of young like-minded writers and intellectuals, into the National Union Party. Prada was responsible for writing the political doctrine of the National Union, and it was from this party that APRA founder Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre adopted the idea that intellectuals as well as laborers contributed to the common good (Fornoff 2003:xli). Prada expressed the sentiments for which he is most well-known in a speech in 1888. “The real Peru,” he said, “does not consist of the *criollos* and foreigners who live in the strip of land between the Pacific and the Andes; the nation is formed by the multitudes of Indians scattered along the eastern stretch of the cordillera” (Prada in Mariátegui 1971:204-205). This realization—that the indigenous population was vital to the identity of Peru and their treatment indicative of the trajectory of the country—became the foundation of *indigenismo*. Many authors and politicians found in Prada “the first fluid instant...in the consciousness of Peru,” wrote Mariátegui years later, and in his writings “the seed of the new national spirit” (1971:204).

The early *indigenismo* movement was not limited to the perspectives of men. Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909), notable for her literary contributions as well as her gender, was

another *indigenista* writer who lived through the War of the Pacific and lobbied for an improvement in the quality of life and treatment for the indigenous population of Peru. Raised on an estate near Cuzco, Matto de Turner learned the Quechua language and culture playing with local indigenous children. Living in a small village outside of Cuzco with her husband, a British businessman, she turned her home into a field hospital during the war and spoke Quechua to indigenous soldiers in the Peruvian army (Berg 1995:81). After the war, Matto de Turner moved to Arequipa and became editor of the influential journal *El Perú Ilustrado*. In 1889 she published her most well-known work, *Aves sin nido* [*Birds without a Nest*], a novel set in a small Andean village exposing the brutal degradation and exploitation of indigenous peasants and the sexual abuse of indigenous women by Catholic priests. Dramatizing the opportunity gaps between social classes and revealing the corruption of the Church, the state, and the army in their conduct toward native Andeans, *Aves sin nido* earned Matto de Turner the title of “the most controversial woman writer of nineteenth-century Latin America” (Berg 1995:80). Earning the support of President Augusto Leguía during his first term, Matto de Turner crusaded for ethical public institutions and promoted the independence of Peruvian women through her journalism and writing.

Dedicated to her mentor Manuel González Prada, Matto de Turner’s *Aves sin nido* was one of the initial works of literary *indigenismo* and the first feminist *indigenista* novel. But Matto de Turner and her writing were not always in political or literary favor. Excommunicated by the Catholic Church a few years before the military coup of Nicolás de Piérola replaced the Leguía government, Matto de Turner relocated to Argentina where she was warmly received and continued to live and work until her death. She was politically vindicated in 1924 when Leguía requested the repatriation of her body during his second presidency, but the *indigenista* writers of

the 1920s did not recognize her contribution to the defense of Peru's indigenous peoples. Mariátegui's omission of Matto de Turner in his reviews and discussions of *indigenista* writers, for example, reflected the "contempt for women's contributions to Peruvian culture by the turn-of-the-century intellectuals" (Kristal 1989:307). Although contemporaries did not acknowledge Matto de Turner's contributions to *indigenismo* as widely as they recognized Prada's, both writers provided the foundation for the movement to evolve and become a force in the social policies and national politics of Peru throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.

The War of the Pacific altered both the economy and self-conception of Peru, framed by *indigenista* writers as dependent upon the indigenous population. The loss of the Tarapacá region, rich in saltpeter deposits, contributed to Peru's economic decline immediately after the war and ended its lucrative exportation of nitrates. The war symbolized the "nearly complete destruction of the country's productive power" and unleashed guerilla bands in the countryside that destroyed the property of exploitative *hacendados* (Bonilla 1980:79).<sup>11</sup> The decline of silver mining around the same time created space for copper to enter the market, expand mining production, and replace a luxury export with a utilitarian metal. Changing the nature of foreign investment in raw materials made postwar reconstruction and economic rehabilitation possible. "It is this context," writes Bonilla, "that prepares the ascent of the North American hegemony in the control of the Peruvian economy," replacing Great Britain's historical ties with the Peruvian market and monopolizing internal productive resources (1980:79).<sup>12</sup> The two most significant results of the war, the intellectual shift in conceptualizing "the Indian" and the economic opportunity and desire for North American investment, became oppositional interests at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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<sup>11</sup> My translation of the original text, "casi total destrucción del potencial productivo del país."

<sup>12</sup> My translation of the original text, "Es este contexto, que prepara el ascenso de la hegemonía norteamericana en el control de la economía peruana."

## CHAPTER TWO

### **The Rise of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation**

*All the secrets hidden in the Smelter and the mines of Cerro de Pasco and Gollarisquisga will never be known. The engines will not tell of the human bodies they have triturated, nor the glowing furnaces of the bodies they have consumed.*<sup>13</sup>

After the War of the Pacific ended, Peru was left to recover its pride and economy after the demoralizing loss to Chile. Reconsidering the political and ideological structures that had fostered a strict dichotomy of coast and sierra, Peru was primed to reenter the international economy and revive its national image. The opportunity arrived when the European arms race revitalized the international market for metals, especially copper, in the 1890s. Copper, used for wires, cables, circuits, and motors, contributed greatly to the continued development of industrializing countries and began increasing in value as demand grew. In the 1890s, relatively small-scale mine-*haciendas* produced copper just as they had produced silver before its decline. The Peruvian government lacked the capital needed to restore languishing mining centers, implement new technology, or build the infrastructure necessary to transform the central Andes into a successful region of large-scale copper production. Recognizing the potential for high returns on their investments, a group of North American businessmen formed the Cerro de Pasco Mining Corporation in 1902. The company shaped the trajectory of Peruvian history over the course of the next seven decades, permanently altering the social, political, and environmental characteristics of the central highlands in the process.

#### **Peruvian Encouragement of North American Investors**

The Cerro de Pasco Corporation was created at a New York City dinner party. James Haggin, American capitalist and host of the gathering, had invited giants of finance and industry

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<sup>13</sup> From Dora Mayer's "The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company" (1913:45).

to solicit their investment in a new venture—mining the copper deposits of the Cerro de Pasco region of Peru. Already a prominent owner of mines in Montana and Utah, the Kentucky-born lawyer-turned-rancher learned about the potential of Cerro de Pasco from a mining engineer who shared his New York office building. After sending an engineer employed by his Montana mining company to investigate the lead, Haggin approved the purchase of mining concessions throughout the region by his business partner Alfred McCune. Haggin raised \$10 million of capital from his wealthy guests that night: industrialist Henry Clay Frick, banker Darius Ogden Mills, Hamilton McKown Twombly representing the Vanderbilts, Edward Clark managing the estate of George Hearst, and James Pierpont Morgan (DeWind 1987:18). The investment from these capitalists was fundamental to the development of what would become the most productive and lucrative sector of the Peruvian economy.

The Peruvian national government had a vested interest in this North American capital from the beginning and was committed to establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the Cerro de Pasco Corporation in law and in practice. The *Código Minera*, passed in 1901 to update mining legislation for the first time since the colonial period, allowed the acquisition of an unlimited number of long-term mine claims in order to attract foreign capital to out-of-production or poorly operated mines. Changes and additions made to the *Código*, however, resulted in a confusing and ineffective document. The result was a “labyrinth of laws, legal regulations and precedents that made effective State control over the mining sector impossible and gave the large foreign companies, each being served by a staff of excellent lawyers, unlimited maneuvering room” (Kruijt and Vellinga 1979:39). The presence of these foreign-owned companies, especially the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, is noticeable in the strengthened trade relationship between Peru and the United States. When copper production

peaked in 1916 due to consumption generated by World War I, exports from Peru to the United States had been steadily increasing for two decades (Appendix II). American trade even surpassed historically strong economic relations with Great Britain. In 1906, the first year of Cerro de Pasco copper production, Great Britain received 67.9 percent of Peruvian mining exports. In 1909, the United States received 64.7 percent, and 92 percent in 1916 at the height of the copper boom (Kruijt and Vellinga 1979:25). The existence of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation in Peru, facilitated by mining laws and welcomed by the national government, strengthened the economic bond between Peru and the United States in a manner advantageous to American interests.

### **Land Acquisition and Environmental Consequences of Mining**

In order to begin large-scale extraction and copper production, the company first had to gain control of the Cerro de Pasco region by acquiring mine concessions from smaller holders. While the Peruvian government lacked the funds to improve infrastructure and implement modernized technological processes, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation had enough capital to properly exploit the region, one of the world's largest mineral deposits, for a consistent profit. A friendly relationship between the company and the Peruvian government was beneficial to both parties. The company received unimpeded access to ore deposits and the ability to easily transfer profits back to the United States. In exchange, the Peruvian government welcomed an endless flow of foreign capital and a steady income from taxing exports. Over time, this process accelerated the penetration of capitalism into self-sufficient highland communities by fostering an economic structure that encouraged and even depended on external financing (Kruijt and Vellinga 1979:23). Around 140 mine-*haciendas* were functioning in the Cerro de Pasco region when Haggin raised \$10 million at his dinner party to launch the Cerro de Pasco Corporation. In

the first 10 years of company operation, \$25 million was directly invested and the company became the largest concession holder in the region.

The consolidation of control over the Cerro de Pasco mining district was more complicated than simply purchasing mining concessions. The Cerro de Pasco Corporation also had to build a railroad to the smelter at La Oroya, purchase claims in the northern coal mines of Gollarisquisga, and acquire rights to the Morococha mining district to the south. The Empresa Socavonera, a Peruvian company that had rights to the district prior to its discovery by North American investors, resisted the incursion of competition into the region more than any other entity. Contracted by the government to drain the area and granted a percentage of the ores made accessible by the lowering of the water table, the Empresa Socavonera began competing with the Cerro de Pasco Corporation for profits from the drained mines. Each side filed lawsuits and the rivalry for full control resulted in the Peruvian government sending in soldiers to maintain peace in the district when the company dynamited a water tank used by the Empresa, while the State Department of the United States intervened on behalf of the American investors (DeWind 1987:21). The company finally settled with the Empresa Socavonera in 1908 and agreed to pay \$60 million in exchange for undisputed rights to any ores extracted from mines in the area. Any formalized resistance encountered by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation from smaller organizations was consistently dismantled by the superior financial resources of the company along with the cooperation of local governments throughout the region.

The Cerro de Pasco Corporation acquired complete control over the Morococha mining district using similar strategies of consolidating and buying out smaller companies. Copper production began in Morococha with the 1890s boom and was operated initially by Peruvian capitalists. The success of these mines attracted North American investors like James Haggin,

founder of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, who formed the Morococha Mining Company with claims purchased from Peruvian-owned mines in the area. The Backus and Johnston Company was the Cerro de Pasco Corporation's primary competitor in the region until its purchase in 1918 (DeWind 1987:28). During this initial phase of deruralizing the indigenous peasantry of the central highlands, the company relied primarily on the *enganche* system to supply a workforce to the mines. Similar to the *contrata* method used in the nineteenth century to contract peasants for seasonal work in small-scale mines, the *enganche* system forcefully imposed labor contracts on peasants in exchange for a cash advance. According to a 1905 mining bulletin, Morococha did not even have its own population at this time. Instead, the company employed workers from neighboring areas who migrated to the mines for the duration of their contracts (Bonilla 1974:34). Through the successful combination of mine acquisition and coerced peasant labor, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation established its hegemony in the Central Andes one district at a time.

The importation of advanced technological knowledge maximized the complete control enjoyed by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation over the mining areas of Cerro de Pasco, Morococha, and La Oroya. La Oroya, at the hub of the railroad connecting the interior with Lima and the port of Callao, presented the ideal location for a new smelter that could accommodate the expanding production at neighboring sites. With development by the company, La Oroya grew from a small village into a large town of 25,000. Since all aspects of production operated on electric power, the company installed a hydroelectric plant at La Oroya in 1913. The environmental effects of the smelter and electric plant had disastrous consequences for the town and its surrounding area. Changes in water level caused by the electric plant and waste spillage from mining polluted the three central rivers of the area, the Mantaro, the Rimac, and the San Juan, and contaminated nearby land. The water and land pollution devastated the *comunidades* of Huayanacanchas, Huay

Huay, and Huari and made subsistence impossible by 1924 (Kruijt and Vellinga 1979:47). On *haciendas* extending north to Cerro de Pasco, the cattle and grass died. While the environmental effects of technologically advanced production were severe, especially at La Oroya, the company manipulated these negative developments to its advantage using its pervasive influence.

### ***Enganche Contracts and Coerced Indigenous Labor***

The Cerro de Pasco Corporation proved unstoppable in its quest to buy out the competition, implement advanced technological processes, and resist opposition from local forces. In cases of river and land pollution, the effected property owners could present their cases in court. Rather than stand trial for wrongdoing, the company was able to undermine the judicial process by negotiating the sale of the contaminated lands. Individual owners almost always accepted the deal because the damage and depreciated value of their land made it impossible to utilize or sell another way. The weakening community landholdings or privately-held small plots, whether through direct purchase or the eventual effects of pollution, benefited the interests of the company. “By forcing the local population off the land,” Kruijt and Vellinga write in their study of the development of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, “[the company] had created a reservoir of unskilled labor for the mines” (1979:47). This unskilled labor, coupled with foreign capital and industrial technology, allowed the Cerro de Pasco Corporation to integrate mine production into “one centralized system on a scale hitherto unknown in Peru” (DeWind 1987:40). Indigenous peasants, who frequently used the money they earned working seasonally in the mines for the purchase or repurchase of their own land, were caught in a cycle in which the mining industry destroyed the land they valued while simultaneously generating their hopes of protecting it.

The *enganche* was the primary system by which the Cerro de Pasco Corporation supplied labor to its copper and coal mines and smelter. An effective method of entrapping peasants and coercing them into work practiced on a smaller scale by the Peruvian mineowners of the previous century, the *enganche* was intensified and expanded in the first decades of the twentieth century to meet the production potential of the Cerro de Pasco mines as they transitioned to year-round operation. It was “a contract between four parties: the company, the *enganchador*, the contracted peasant, and the guarantor” of the advanced loan (Bonilla 1974:40).<sup>14</sup> *Enganchadores* were landowners, merchants, or successful miners who had the trust of the company as well as sufficient influence in the community to persuade peasants to sign labor contracts. They searched countryside villages for recruits, most commonly the poorest peasants and relatively young men, who were often coerced into signing *enganche* contracts with the compliance of municipal authorities or local judges (Kruijt and Vellinga 1979:61). The contract provided the peasant with an advance loan that he could use to purchase market goods, pay for a personal expense, or put toward buying a plot of land. With their service in the mines, the peasants repaid the *enganchador* the advance loans in full as well as the *enganchador*'s commission, which the company withheld from the miner's wages. A peasant working for a few months in the mines for the first time usually could not cover his basic living expenses at the mine camp with what money he had left after these payments. Because it was easier to save money once *enganche* debts were paid, many peasants remained in the mines after their contract ended to accumulate money they could keep for themselves. The *enganche* system provided a cheap labor force with few risks as the Cerro de Pasco Corporation established itself and began production.

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<sup>14</sup> My translation of the original text, “un contrato entre cuatro actores: la empresa, el enganchador, el campesino enganchado y el fiador.”

The *enganche* system, and the overall success of foreign capital in the central highland region, rested on structures of labor exchange and reciprocity present in peasant communities long before the arrival of North American investors. Despite its expanded size and increased efficiency, *enganche* in the first decade of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation's operation was still "based on relationships and networks of dependency that had not changed, in any fundamental way, since the nineteenth century" (Mallon 1983:188). These relationships had always existed between neighboring households, families, and wealthier and poorer peasants. The presence of the company, and the economic and population growth it prompted, expanded entrepreneurial opportunity for wealthy peasant families by creating a larger market for agricultural goods, livestock, and commercial services. Families or individuals with preexisting networks of control increased their wealth, commercial interests, and landholdings by participating either directly or indirectly in trade or contract agreements with the company. As Mallon writes, "It was precisely the creation of a broad spectrum of economic alternatives for local elites that helped smooth the way for foreign capital's dominance of the regional economy" (1983:181). Oppressive structures in the lives of peasants were present before the creation of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, and the Central Andes had a long tradition of personal labor exchange. The entrance of the company into the social and economic life of the region did not cause systems of exploitation to appear. Rather, it took control of these systems and permitted greater social and economic differentiation among peasant groups.

The nature of peasant life in the central highlands contributed to the success of the *enganche* system. Since wealthier peasants served as *enganchadores*, this system was not one in which North American investors, representing the company, directly exploited the poor, mostly Indian peasants of the countryside. The *enganche* system involved numerous parties with a

variety of economic and personal motivations. Instead of one homogenous mass, the peasants of the central highlands were socially stratified and had access to different levels of resources. The presence of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation exacerbated rather than created three general levels of differentiation. The wealthiest peasants were in the best position to expand their patronage networks by accumulating land and engaging in commerce. At the other extreme was “a growing stratum of poor peasants being pushed slowly and inexorably to the brink of landlessness” (Mallon 1983:205). The majority of peasants existed between these two groups and migrated to the mines with increasing frequency as they fought to support their families and maintain what land they had left. The company was not the only entity consolidating landholdings and buying out smaller farmers and herders. Wealthy peasants, wanting to supply the expanded markets created by the arrival of the company, engaged in their own land acquisition techniques and contributed to the increasing land shortage experienced by poorer peasants.

Events in the agricultural cycle or major life transitions created a need for capital outside of the peasants’ immediate resources and made them vulnerable to *enganche* contracts. Indigenous peasants frequently needed resources beyond the scope of their subsistence lifestyles during the times before a harvest, after fiesta, or upon a death in the family. In the nineteenth century, when the majority of peasants composed self-sufficient households and communities organized around adequate subsistence bases, reciprocal exchanges occurred at these times in which personal labor or another desired resource was traded for something of comparable value from a neighbor or kin member. As indigenous peasants were forced or chose to move away from subsistence agriculture and herding in the first decades of the twentieth century, personal labor was increasingly exchanged for loans from *enganchadores*. Many peasants, whether they owned land or not during this period of industrializing mining, found themselves working in the

mines for wages when they could no longer subsist on their lands or a natural event damaged their crops. The fiesta system was another element of peasant life driving them to the mines. When villages celebrated their patron saints every year, *mayordomos* were expected to sponsor three-day celebrations and assume food and drink expenses. If the aid *mayordomos* received from family and friends was not enough to finance these obligations, *enganche* loans could cover the difference (DeWind 1987:270). The fiesta system itself, however, was not responsible for driving a contracted workforce to the mines. It remained the same amidst the changing context of landholding and agriculture spurred by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation while peasants perpetuated it with funds from new sources.

### **Exposing Abuses**

The Cerro de Pasco Corporation experienced three stages during the first three decades of its existence. From 1902 to 1908, the company expanded investment, property ownership, and infrastructure in the Cerro de Pasco region. From 1908 to 1915, the company consolidated their investments and expanded production. From 1915 to 1922, it continued to expand into new districts and invested more capital in new ventures. In Mallon's words, "Such a broad perspective in time tends to obscure the drama and magnitude of the day-to-day transformations the corporation set in motion" (1983:170-171). The drama of the everyday, evident in peasants' contact with *enganchadores*, the danger of work in the mines, and the growing instability of peasant landholdings, was most prevalent in the various resistance techniques peasants engaged in as miners to fight the oppressive structures governing their lives at mining camps. While indigenous peasants received some external aid and publicity from organizations beyond the Cerro de Pasco region, the most effective efforts at opposition during the first three decades of the twentieth century were small-scale unorganized events directed by the miners themselves.

The first and most prominent organization that campaigned for the rights of miners against the injustices of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation was the Asociación Pro-Indígena. Founded in 1909 by Pedro Zulen and Dora Mayer, the association was one of the first academic and social movements dedicated to defending the indigenous population of Peru. As stated in the manifesto of the association, “the Indian is the primary Peruvian worker” and “the first victim of the abuse and negligence of the industrialists” (1912:8).<sup>15</sup> Zulen, a philosopher trained at the University of San Marcos, served as the organization’s secretary general until 1915, one year before it disbanded. Mayer, born in Germany and raised in Peru, was an outspoken activist and wrote many of the organization’s pamphlets. Zulen recruited another major supporter of the organization, the well-respected professor and senator Joaquín Capelo, after they met at San Marcos. Members of the association visited the Cerro de Pasco region to study the conditions, wrote reports describing the plight of the indigenous peasants working in the mines, and campaigned for favorable legislative changes in congress. The documentation of abuses and resistance compiled by the association gave voice to the disenfranchised peasants of indigenous descent laboring in the mines operated by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, seeking but not finding a redress for their grievances.

The most detailed account of the offenses against miners is “The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company,” written by Dora Mayer and published in English in 1913. In it she describes the operations of the company, the living and working conditions of miners, accidents and deaths that occurred in the mines, and attempts to strike and receive compensation for injury. According to Mayer, “the first proceedings of the Company were legitimate” but quickly corrupted as the company began to “take advantage of the frailties which unfortunately are to be

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<sup>15</sup> My translation of the original text, “el indio es el primer obrero peruano” and “la primera víctima del abuso y de la negligencia de los industriales.”

found in our social system and entered fully into the ways of fraud, bribery and violence” (Mayer 1913:5). The worst offense the company committed was its inhumane treatment of the miners, “a class furnished almost exclusively by the aboriginal race” (Mayer 1913:5). The company did not answer to a higher authority in the central highlands, Capelo said in an address to the senate in 1911, because the area in which it operated functioned like an independent nation. “It forms a state,” Capelo contended, because “it is not North America that rules there” and neither the laws of the United States nor the Peruvian state have any effect (Mayer 1913:9). Through public reports and presentations, members of the Asociación Pro-Indígena called the shortcomings and abuses of the company to the attention of the Peruvian people and government.

Mayer’s report cites the payment and mercantile systems as among the most oppressive structures present in Cerro de Pasco mining camps. As in the nineteenth century, currency was not a commodity commonly found in the hands of peasants working at mine sites and provisional money often substituted real wages. At the Cerro de Pasco smelter, an “ingenious system of exploitation existed” in which miners received a metal coin at the end of each workday which they exchanged the next morning for a piece of cardboard (Mayer 1913:8). These pieces of cardboard were then exchanged for a bond that could buy goods at the mercantile store, an establishment completely dependent on the company. Because bonds were only valid during the week of their issue, “oftentimes the Indians fail to understand this arrangement at the beginning and keep the metal coins without exchanging them for the pieces of cardboard, thus losing their pay” (Mayer 1913:8). This system of payment in provisional money and forced exchange with the company store, where almost all goods were imported from the United States and sold at prices roughly 30 percent higher than their value outside of the mine camp, severely restricted the ability to accumulate savings and often extended the time necessary for repaying loans and

*enganche* contracts. A resolution passed in December 1911, which Capelo had been pushing since 1909, explicitly prohibiting payment in provisional money to employees of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company.

In the case of the provisional money resolution, “a law given by the State and shamelessly infringed by the autocratic willfulness of a private company,” in the words of Mayer, was finally converted into a “practical reality” (Mayer 1913:10). With no entity commissioned to enforce the company’s obedience of the law, the resolution was a victory in name only. As the report demonstrates, countless other rights abuses and illegal practices flourished in company mines and camps, further supporting Capelo’s statement that the company existed outside the bounds of the law. The association wrote in its manifesto that “the shift to democracy means that the many should not suffer from the selfishness and misplaced intentions of the few” (1912:5).<sup>16</sup> The labor practices of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation exemplify the reality of another situation, whereby a small group of North American managers and engineers exercised complete control over the lives of indigenous peasant miners as they served out their *enganche* contracts. The national and local governments were not interested in protecting the rights and well-being of miners employed by the company. When peasants wanted to change their living and working conditions at the mines, they turned to each other and outside political organizations.

### **Elements of Resistance**

The seasonal nature of mine employment contracts discouraged the formation of peasant miners into organized groups capable of coordinating planned resistance efforts. In the first decades of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation’s operations, the primary form of resistance was

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<sup>16</sup> My translation of the original text, “el movimiento democrático significa que los muchos, no deben sufrir por el capricho y la voluntad extraviada de los pocos.”

evading *enganche* contracts by escaping the mines. In these cases, the goal of individual peasants was to return home to their villages as soon as possible rather than change their working conditions (DeWind 1987:316). In other instances peasants stopped work collectively in response to a specific event, like an accident or salary reduction. In her report exposing the abuses of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, Mayer provides examples of individual and cooperative action taken by miners to protest maltreatment. After an explosion at the Peña Blanca mine of Cerro de Pasco in 1908, workers from a district of Huancayo abandoned work and went home when the company attempted to make them return to work in the same mine while it was still in danger of another collapse (Mayer 1913:41). This collective action may have saved their lives but cost them two weeks pay. A more successful effort was made in 1909 when Cerro de Pasco workers declared a strike because the company reduced the salary of “the most ancient servants of the enterprise” without motive or notice (Mayer 1913:41). The company eventually agreed to a daily and overtime wage acceptable to the striking miners, but this change affected only the workers involved and did not improve salaries across the company.

While both minor and serious accidents occurred frequently, the peasants were not at the mines for long enough periods of times to effectively organize resistance. Injuries and health concerns were ubiquitous among miners due to the dangerous and difficult nature of their labor. The advancing effects of silicosis, a lung disease prevalent among miners caused by the inhalation of dust particles, prevented peasants from working in the mines longer than a period of a few years. Extreme temperature changes also wore on peasants’ bodies as they moved from the intense heat of the mine shafts to the cold winds of the high altitude camps. Explosions, floods, and cave-ins were a constant threat to miners in addition to health problems. One of the worst accidents occurred at the Gollarisquisga coal mines in 1910 when dynamite exploded while 310

workers were in the Pique Chico mine. The company officially announced the deaths of 67 workers and the injury of 40, leaving more than 140 workers unaccounted for after the rescued workers were tallied (Mayer 1913:25). Mayer included an excerpt from the account of a reporter who covered the Gollarisquisga accident in her exposé of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation. He writes that after the explosion and the official announcement of casualties, he “came to know that other victims were buried clandestinely and that some human remnants were covered with earth when the arrival of the Prefect and the rest of [the] authorities was announced” (Mayer 1913:25). The company paid funeral expenses for the victims but did not provide any other form of compensation to their families, violating an agreement made with the local government (Mayer 1913:28).

The Gollarisquisga explosion did not result in a strike because the company increased the wages of peasants who returned to the mines immediately, ensuring that a work stoppage did not affect production. This accident exemplifies the difficulty of calculating the number of casualties suffered by the peasant miners of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation when official reports did not represent the actual number of deaths. When miners participated in strikes during the early years of the company’s operations, they were small in scale and the direct result of an accident or injustice. Resistance to dangerous working conditions or a reduction in wages was disorganized and spontaneous, seeking the immediate resolution of specific problems rather than reflecting the collective support of a political ideology. Peasants at this time migrated to the mines seasonally and their primary focus was sustaining their agricultural holdings with the additional income generated from their mine labor. Their relationship with the land motivated both their migration to the mines and return to their villages. During the first two decades of its existence, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation utilized the *enganche* system to form a labor force of unskilled migratory

workers. Over time, these peasants received training and took higher-paying positions as skilled miners. The unskilled peasants working the mines of Cerro de Pasco, Gollarisquisga, and Morococha gradually transformed into a cohesive labor force on the brink of union organization and political alliance by the late 1920s.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Indigenismo* and the Transformation of Peasant-Miners

*Sorrows and sighs  
are my nourishment  
you go on consuming me  
frozen Morococha.*<sup>17</sup>

As copper production recovered in the years after World War I and mining regained its customary position at the forefront of the Peruvian economy, the political atmosphere in the country was markedly different than what it had been at the turn of the century. Augusto Leguía, former minister of finance and ex-president, replaced the *civilismo* party dominant in Peru since the nineteenth century with a government dedicated to industrializing and modernizing the country. In contrast to *civilismo* presidents who maintained the privilege of the *criollo* class, Leguía's government employed a rising middle class in its growing bureaucracy and funded expanded public spending through loans financed by the United States (Archibald 2011:26). The “anti-oligarchic” nature of Leguía's *oncenio* (1919-1930) provided a political space conducive to the ideas of the *indigenismo* movement, which was committed to publicizing and improving the plight of the *indio*. Throughout the 1920s, writers and political thinkers alike evoked the image of the *indio*—a poor, disenfranchised indigenous peasant living at the margins of society in a rural village lacking sufficient educational or health infrastructure—to symbolize both the past and future of the Peruvian nation. An intellectual, social, political, and even economic undertaking, *indigenismo* marked the 1920s as a time of awareness, challenge, and transition.

Emerging in other Latin American countries, particularly Mexico and Guatemala, as well as Peru around the same time, *indigenismo* raised critical questions about the power structures of dominant groups. Through historical and ethnographic examination, *indigenista* authors

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<sup>17</sup> My translation of the original text, “Penas y suspiros / son mis alimentos / me vas consumiendo / Morococha helada.” From “Tristezas,” transcribed by Heraclio Bonilla (1974:29-30).

concluded that the exploitation and degradation of indigenous peoples had reduced them to their debased and defenseless positions. The *indigenismo* of the 1920s developed from ideas laid out decades earlier by Manuel González Prada and Clorinda Matto de Turner as well as the contributions of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and Bartolomé de las Casas in the conquest period. “The vindication of the *indio* through the indictment of social and political institutions,” in the words of Latin American scholar Jorge Coronado, was in place long before twentieth century writers discovered the cause of the indigenous peasant (2009:6). In general, literary *indigenismo* consisted of *mestizo* and *criollo* writers committed to improving the living conditions of rural indigenous populations and casting them as the “key to the Peruvian future” and their culture as “the authentic Peru” (Archibald 2011:25). As demonstrated by the writings of José Carlos Mariátegui, *indigenismo* functioned beyond literary circles as a sociopolitical movement by bringing national attention to “el problema indígena,” the popular term for Peru’s failure to assimilate its indigenous population into the economic and social life of the nation. Working toward resolving this problem would involve political, labor, and land reform not possible through strictly literary *indigenismo*.

*Indigenistas* combined cultural criticism and political commentary into a multidimensional movement whose ideas loomed large in the Peruvian consciousness as the decade progressed. According to these ideas, definitions of and aspirations to modernity were integrally linked to conceptions of the *indio*, indigenesness, and the backwardness of rural populations. Writing about *indigenismo* in the larger context of social anxieties and representational issues, Coronado dispels the assumption that “*indigenismo* is actually about the *indio*.” It is instead “a way of thinking about modernity” that reveals a paradox in which novels, essays, and photography transform the inherently un-modern *indio* into a symbol of the modern

(Coronado 2009:165). Coronado describes a duality present in the 1920s in which revolutionary groups and government officials alike attempted to improve the existence of indigenous populations while the actual impact of *indigenismo*, both social and political, on the daily lives of *indigenas* was minimal. *Indigenismo* frequently essentialized indigenous peasants and reduced them into homogenized masses of passive tenants or farmers needing the guidance of the cosmopolitan coast to move forward (1971:16). While the *indigenismo* movement itself did not significantly impact the lived reality of indigenous populations, it strongly influenced political movements that directly impacted the lives, labor, and organization of indigenous peasants and miners in the central highlands. As a literary movement, *indigenismo* attempted to liberate Peru's indigenous people. Politically, the ideas and goals of *indigenismo* were used to advance the principles of specific parties.

### **Literary *Indigenismo* Becomes Political**

Numerous novelists, poets, journalists, and intellectuals contributed to the body of work identified as *indigenista* literature in the 1920s. Among the most influential was Hildebrando Castro Pozo (1891-1945), author of *Nuestra comunidad indigena* [*Our Indian Community*]. The oldest son of a landowning family, Castro Pozo renounced *hacienda* life for studies in Lima and Panama. Working over the course of his life as a laborer, baker, professor, and politician, he was both an *indigenista* and a socialist. Mariátegui, a contemporary and fellow socialist, admired Castro Pozo's work and incorporated it into his own *Siete Ensayos*. Published in 1923 after five years of research, *Nuestra comunidad* describes the daily lives and social structures of indigenous peasants living in *comunidades*. The ethnography seeks to present a vision of the "Indian of the present" rather than the "historic Indian" frequently romanticized in *indigenista* writing by depicting in detail the family composition, customs, songs, legends, and agricultural

techniques of *comunidades* in the Mantaro Valley (Montoya 1979:xiii).<sup>18</sup> Castro Pozo's work revealed that the *comunidad* "is still a living organism," in Mariátegui's words, that "spontaneously shows unmistakable potentialities for evolution and development" despite a hostile environment (1971:56). With its foundation in the Inca *ayllu*, the indigenous *comunidad* and its communal landholding and labor systems represented to both Castro Pozo and Mariátegui the significance of the historical past as well as the possibility of a socialist future.

The ideological space occupied by the *comunidad* within the *indigenismo* movement disproportionately reflected its prevalence throughout the Peruvian highlands. By 1927, land acquisition schemes had reduced the number of indigenous *comunidades* throughout Peru to less than one-fifth of their original existence (Flores Galindo 2010:187). This decrease reflects the general trend, present in the first three decades of the twentieth century, of land privatization and consolidation that divested indigenous peasants of their holdings, made agricultural self-sufficiency impossible, and coerced them into contracted mine labor. As Peruvian historian Alberto Flores Galindo writes, "*Indigenistas* assumed that indigenous social relations were collectivist and were convinced of their pre-Hispanic origins" (2010:187). Pre-conquest roots, epitomized by the *comunidad*, enabled *mestizo* and *criollo* Peruvians to vicariously connect with their Inca heritage through indigenous peasants. The desire for and creation of a homogenous indigenous body by *indigenistas* merged the identities of indigenous and peasant, leaving little room in the symbolic conception of a modern Peru for individuals who deviated from *indio* stereotypes. The second assumption made by *indigenistas*, that all indigenous people share a fundamental collective nature, overlooks the historical reality that intensely competitive structures existed within the organization of the *comunidad*, a cooperative body that also valued self-sufficiency and independence.

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<sup>18</sup> My translation of the original text, "indio del presente" and "indio histórico."

José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930) was the principal *indigenista* thinker promoting the indigenous populations of the central highlands as the potential base for and future of socialism in Peru. Born in southern Peru and raised in and around Lima, Mariátegui began his first newspaper job as a linotypist as a young teenager. Over the course of his short life he wrote for numerous publications, including the limeño *La Prensa*, the leftist *La Razón*, and his own socialist journal *Amauta*. Founded in 1926 at “a crucial moment in Peruvian intellectual history,” *Amauta* actively challenged the hierarchical organization of society and brought indigenous culture “into contact with and indeed into the center of modernity’s ubiquitous presence in 1920s Lima” (Coronado 2009:28). The very name of the journal, a Quechua term for a wise man or teacher, symbolized Mariátegui’s convictions and goals. Through his writing and ideological dedication, he transformed *indigenismo* from a literary trend into a sociopolitical phenomenon. Mariátegui “linked history to the drama of the present and the imponderables of the future,” in the words of Peruvian historian Jorge Basadre, and “drew attention to lacerating and pathetic realities that many did not or would not see” (Mariátegui 1971:xxx). While his conviction that indigenous peasants would carry the torch of Peruvian socialism was not realized until decades after his death, Mariátegui played an important role in developing the social and political consciousness of a nation and recognized the proletariat potential of an as-yet unorganized laboring group.

Mariátegui published his most influential and well-known work in 1928, the same year as the Morococha mine disaster and only two years before his death. *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* [*Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*] analyzed issues of economic disparity, social inequality, and structural inadequacy from a Marxist perspective, paying particular attention to questions of education, regionalism, and *indigenista*

discourse. According to Mariátegui, three separate economies existed in Peru: the feudal economy operating since the colonial period, the indigenous communal economy present in the sierra, and the bourgeois economy of the coast. In agreement with countless contemporary as well as colonial writers and intellectuals, Mariátegui believed that the majority of Peru's economic and social problems stemmed from the subordination of the rural and indigenous majority of the population to the coastal and commercial elite of European descent. The *hacienda* typifies this unbalanced relationship, and Mariátegui's description of it parallels the similarly unequal relationships that governed the lives of peasants at mining camps. Workers received supplies from the company store at the *hacienda*, which dominated the trade, transport, land, and dependent industries of the surrounding area. On the *hacienda*, Mariátegui writes, "the peasant is treated as a thing and not as a person" (1971:19). This statement can easily be applied to the peasant experience in the mines under the domination of a large, foreign-owned company.

"El problema indígena" is one of the most notable concepts discussed in *Siete ensayos*. Dismissing the "outmoded" and "imperialist" idea that the problem stemmed from ethnic difference, Mariátegui instead rooted it in the land tenure system of the Peruvian economy (1971:25). Because "*gamonalismo* is fundamentally opposed to the education of the Indian," administrative or policy initiatives offered ineffectual solutions without land ownership and agricultural reforms (Mariátegui 1971:27). Nonetheless, attempting to resolve this problem was considered fundamental to the future of the nation because, as Mariátegui stated in his prologue to Luis Valcárcel's *Tempestad de los Andes* [*Tempest in the Andes*], "The hope of the Indian is absolutely revolutionary." This hope, in Mariátegui's opinion, was also inherently tied to socialism because together they could resist Leguía's regime, which had become "an instrument for colonizing the country on behalf of foreign imperialist capitalism," exemplified by the Cerro

de Pasco Corporation (1971:30). In the face of encroaching foreign and specifically North American capital, explicitly encouraged by the Leguía government, Mariátegui concludes that “it is impossible to be really nationalist and revolutionary without being Socialist” (1971:30). While Mariátegui offered socialism as a solution to the ills plaguing the Peruvian state, contemporaries like Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre proposed alternative answers in the form of an opposing political party.

Mariátegui’s description of landholding systems and the inequality inherent in their structures compares easily to the abuses of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation documented by Dora Mayer and other *indigenistas*. Disregard for the law and the complicity of local authorities were common themes in the continued hegemony of large landowners and mining companies. Mirroring Joaquin Capelo’s description of the conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation discussed in Chapter Two, Mariátegui wrote in *Siete ensayos* that “the laws of the state are not applied in the latifundium without the tacit or formal consent of the large landowners,” who consider their latifundiums “outside the jurisdiction of the state” and “[disregard] completely the civil rights of the people who live within [their] property” (1971:63). Correcting these abuses would involve changing “the very structure of the Peruvian economy,” which Mariátegui charged “only move[d] or develop[ed] in response to the interest and need of markets in London and New York.” Addressing the problem of large landowners, then, was prohibited by Peru’s insidious relation with foreign capital, which regarded Peru as “a storehouse of raw materials and a customer for [its] manufactured goods” (Mariátegui 1971:70). As long as the Peruvian economy functioned in this manner, welcoming British and American capitalists at the expense of the peasant and indigenous populations coerced to work for them, a solution to Peru’s economic and social inequities could not exist.

## Cuzco, Reflexive *Indigenismo*, and the Photographic Record

While Lima-based writers and intellectuals composed a major contingent of the *indigenismo* movement in the 1920s, Cuzco produced its own group of authors and artists who promoted social justice for the indigenous populations based on their human dignity but also on the ancient claim of the city itself as the true capital of Peru (Starn, Degregori and Kirk 2005:231). Luis Valcárcel (1891-1987), considered the father of Peruvian ethnography, was the premier cuzqueño *indigenista* of this period. Believing that the Andes were the “inexhaustible fountain of vitality for Peruvian culture,” Valcárcel wrote about the powerful connection of the indigenous population with nature in his popular 1928 text *Tempestad en los Andes*, published the same year as Mariátegui’s *Siete ensayos*. Referring to repression under colonial and republican governments, Valcárcel explained that “the tremendous tragic silence of which Peru has been the theater for four hundred years is the denial of a cardinal truth: this is a nation of Indians” (2005:233). This silence, encountered by historians and anthropologists alike as they search for evidence of indigenous voices amidst the vast body of *indigenista* literature that attempts to speak for them, complicates the process of differentiating ideas about indigenous people from the ideas of the people themselves.

When Valcárcel discussed the “rehabilitation of the majority of Indians” and “real liberty from their extended slavery,” he was not expecting indigenous populations to rehabilitate or liberate themselves (2005:234). The few examples of contributors to the *indigenista* movement who were of indigenous descent themselves provide some guidance through this complex dilemma of representation, perception, and agency. In addition to the majority of *indigenista* intellectuals, novelists, and journalists who assumed the task of telling the story of indigenous peoples, writers and artists with direct links to Quechua and Aymara communities emerged who

contributed to the *indigenista* movement from their own experiences and indigenous identities. In a criticism of the *indigenista* movement Coronado writes, “*indigenismo* may create novel cultural forms, but it does so always at a distance that reflects the gap between Hispanic society and indigenous cultures” (2009:17). Rather than bridge this gap, writers and artists with indigenous connections recast it in a way that questioned the value of outside perception over inside experience. Figures like Martín Chambi and José María Arguedas were integral to the *indigenismo* of the 1920s and beyond because the social and political observations presented in their work were both reflexive and critical of *mestizo* perspectives.

Martín Chambi (1891-1973), the first person to compile a comprehensive photographic record of the indigenous populations of southern Peru, was born in a small village near Puno to an agricultural Aymara peasant family and encountered the presence of foreign capital at an early age. Living near and eventually displaced by the Santo Domingo Mining Corporation, Chambi first learned the basics of his future profession from the company photographer at the mines (Coronado 2009:141). At age 14 he moved to Arequipa to apprentice at a photography studio and in 1919 at age 29 brought his young family to Cuzco, where he built a successful photography business and lived and worked for the rest of his life. In Cuzco, Chambi documented the lives and customs of the inhabitants of the city and its surrounding areas: high society gatherings, *chicherría* meals, bourgeois weddings, indigenous migrants, countryside peasants, and the natural landscapes of the southern Andes. He moved within a circle of middle class intellectuals who identified with the *indigenista* cause and supported “the *indio*” theoretically but who lacked a direct connection to indigenous life. For many within Cuzco and the country as a whole, Chambi provided that connection. By attaching individual faces to the ideological concept of the “Indian masses” and reinforcing the interconnectedness of people and nature through his

photography, Chambi reminded Peruvians of the “very basis of [their] national identity.” In the words of historian José Luis Renique, “Chambi has helped us to see our country, to see ourselves” (Harries and Yule 1986).



“Tristeza andina,” Martín Chambi (1933)

While Chambi is considered a major artist of the *indigenista* movement of the 1920s, the contribution of his photography was more nuanced than the romanticized *mestizo*-led call for indigenous social justice. Through strategic composition and the inclusion of indigenous subjects in portraits commissioned by the upper class, Chambi subtly depicted class differences and the subordinate role of the indigenous person in most aspects of Peruvian life, including the *indigenista* movement. Through “images that adhered to *indigenista* representational strategies,” Chambi’s photographs presented the dynamics of inequality while questioning the portrayal of the indigenous person by *mestizo* intellectuals and artists (Coronado 2009:138). “Tristeza andina” [Andean Melancholy] from 1933 is a particularly striking example. In this photograph, a

llama stands next to a barefoot man playing a flute against the majestic backdrop of the Andean mountains. The man is easily identified as indigenous by what he wears, his physical appearance, and the staged details of the picture and setting. The image enforces the stereotypical characteristics of indigenous life while romanticizing that life and fluidly connecting it to the eternal power of the land. Cuzco and the southern Andes served as a particularly strong inspirational base for *indigenista* art and writing because of this unquestioned tie to the land. While *indigenistas* lauded indigenous agricultural roots, however, large landowners and mining companies were divesting native Andeans of their land and direct agricultural connections.

“Tristeza andina” conforms to the essentializing tendency of the *indigenismo* movement and enforces the erroneous assumption that indigenous people throughout Peru lived idyllic rural lifestyles untouched by capitalist incursion. The poverty of these populations, while lamentable and an obvious target for social and educational reform, also lent indigenous people a certain nobility and strength in the eyes of *mestizo indigenistas*. Simultaneously viewed as resilient to modernization and as the future of a modernizing country because of their ancient roots, indigenous people humbly subsisted on traditional agricultural methods while preserving supposedly unchanged pre-Columbian customs. The portrayal of indigenous people in Chambi’s photography—living in small rural villages but also migrating to cities—appears to reinforce this image while criticizing and resisting it. Chambi did not see “the *indio*” as an essentialized being because he himself was an Aymara-speaking migrant of poor background and cosmopolitan renown. Chambi’s work can be interpreted as reflecting the view of Mariátegui and other *indigenistas* that “the indigenous spirit is essentially emotive and profoundly detached from historical change” only if it is divorced from Chambi’s personal identity as an artist, cuzqueño, *indigena*, and as a man (Coronado 2009:138). In his critique of the literary *indigenista*

movement, Coronado writes that “indigenous people became further isolated from any agency in the real processes of modernization, all the while still made to play a key role in conceptualizations of that modernization’s impact” (2009:168). Through his photographs, Chambi resisted this isolation of indigenous people and instead captured their agency, mobility, and complexity.

Another significant *indigenismo* contributor with direct indigenous connections was José María Arguedas (1911-1969), a novelist and poet deeply interested in the intersection and effects of indigenous, *mestizo*, and European histories and experiences of the world. Born into a wealthy *mestizo* family but growing up and learning Quechua among the family’s indigenous servants, Arguedas studied literature and ethnography at San Marcos. His first novel, *Yawar Fiesta*, was an experiment in a unique style of Spanish writing strongly influenced by Quechua vocabulary and syntax. Published in 1941, *Yawar Fiesta* is set in the highland town of Puquio during the 1920s and 1930s. In a testament of the tension between Andean and coastal social and cultural relations, the novel describes the conflict between indigenous peasants, *mestizos*, and white elites as the government attempts to suppress the indigenous local custom of the bull-fight. While it is a work of fiction, *Yawar Fiesta* functions as an informal ethnography of rural Andean peasant life and the role of indigenous identity in class and race conflict. Through the novel, Arguedas attempts to answer the questions facing bilingual authors, including how best to translate cultures and write between two worlds. As Latin American scholar Priscilla Archibald writes, “The issues, style, and experimentation that inform all of Arguedas’ work are the consequence of this bicultural sensibility” (2011:70). Arguedas did not find a satisfactory method of bridging the distance between Andean and *mestizo* within his lifetime, but he did significantly impact the *indigenista* movement with his literary portrayals of the Peruvian duality.

Adopted into the fold of the *indigenista* literary tradition, *Yawar Fiesta* also illustrates the consequences of nineteenth century mining history. Integral to this history and to the novel itself is the figure of the *misti*, landowners or merchants of European descent or acculturation who controlled indigenous workers and servants through “relationships of personal dependency,” “asymmetrical reciprocity,” and “the winking consent of central power” (Flores Galindo 2010:154). Recounting the heritage of the main setting in *Yawar Fiesta*, Arguedas writes,

Puquio is a new town for the *mistis*. About 300 years ago, give or take a little, the *mistis* came to Puquio from other towns where they had mining businesses. Before that all of Puquio was an Indian town. In the four *ayllus* nobody but Indians lived. From time to time, the *mistis* would come in search of peons for the mines, seeking provisions and women. [1985:5]

By the 1920s, when the novel takes place, Puquio had transformed into a mixed town of indigenous peasants and *mestizo* overseers. The mine recruitment described in this passage contributed to the loss of Puquio’s homogenous identity as an *ayllu* by bringing non-indigenous outsiders into the community, who developed a social hierarchy based on racial identity and assumed positions of political and economic power. This process, occurring throughout Peru during the colonial and republican periods as foreign capital penetrated the mineral-rich highlands with the compliance of local elites, caused Arguedas to question the future of the country in light of the existence of such inequalities and cultural barriers. “Some day the two worlds into which these countries...are divided—the Quechua and the Spanish,” wrote Arguedas, “will be merged or separated indefinitely” (1985:xxi).

### **Political Implications of *Indigenismo***

The 1920s was a decade of change in the urban centers as well as rural communities of Peru. As Leguía’s government eased the way of American capital into the Peruvian economy and the divide between the landed middle class and laboring classes grew, indigenous peasants left behind their diminishing lands and migrated from the highlands to major cities. While the

*indigenismo* of the early twentieth century “essentialized Indians as prepolitical, indeed pre-historical,” in the words of anthropologist Mark Thurner, indigenous populations were steadily disproving this claim and asserting agency in their own lives (1997:152). Concentrated in the southern highlands of Cuzco and Puno, indigenous peasants led and participated in roughly 50 rebellions between 1919 and 1923. In *haciendas* across the south, workers organized unions and occupied land. Coronado contends that the rebellions, stemming from land conflicts but extending beyond agricultural concerns, “called peasant servitude—the very foundation of *gamonalismo*—into question” (2009:169). The structures of economic inequality and unbalanced power maintained by labor systems based on coercion began to chafe under the pressures of peasant uprisings. Due to common conceptions of the submissiveness and resignation of indigenous populations, the active role of Quechua and Aymara peasants in the rebellions went largely unnoticed. Even Arguedas, possessing a personal and realistic understanding of indigenous peasant life, overlooked their participation (Coronado 2009:167). The mining camps of the central highlands were also experiencing the gradual shift toward peasant organization and politicization, although this was not fully realized until decades later.

In the 1920s, two major political parties offered support to peasants looking for party affiliation and provided a theoretical framework to explain the surge in strikes and rebellions. Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (1895-1979), a Peruvian intellectual and one of the most influential political thinkers of the twentieth century, founded the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA). Influenced by the ideas of the Mexican Revolution, APRA began as a multi-class social and political party advocating Latin American solidarity and anti-imperialism. Mariátegui’s socialism, based on a united working class and demanding the abolition of forced labor, also offered a solution to Peru’s national challenges. Both parties struggled against

imperialism, blatantly apparent in the activities of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, but had different visions for moving the country forward. Haya de la Torre believed politics should be supported by action, while Mariátegui valued intellectual exchange and discussion. Aprismo planned to modernize Peru through radical change and reforming capitalist systems. As Flores Galindo writes, “The two were debating the future of Andean culture: Aprista messianism would drag the country toward modernity; Mariátegui’s utopianism believed a different future could exist” (2010:194). Both parties actively sought the support of the urban working class as well as the indigenous masses, with more initial success among the former group than the latter.

Founded in 1924 by Haya de la Torre during his exile in Mexico by Leguía’s government, APRA was more inclusive than the single class alternatives of socialism and communism. The main force behind the formation of aprismo, Haya de la Torre developed his ideas over the next four decades. Believing that Latin American should seek its own answers to its unique problems, Haya de la Torre based aprismo on his philosophical concept of historical space-time, the idea that each country develops a particular view of the world because of its specific geographic, spatial, and historic orientation and experiences. Acknowledging the weakness of the Peruvian proletariat, especially in the decade of APRA’s founding, he believed that an alliance between rural laborers, urban workers, and the middle class was the only way to confront imperialism and end the semi-feudal nature of Peru’s agricultural organization. Haya de la Torre based aprismo on the following basic principles: Latin American action against American imperialism, Latin American political unity, the nationalization of land and industry, and the “solidarity of all the oppressed people and classes in the world” (1974:97).

According to Haya de la Torre, an alliance between the governing classes of Latin American countries and North American imperialism and investors had produced a situation in

which land and mine concessions were exchanged for capital, and the natural resources of each country were “mortgaged and sold” at the expense of the working and agricultural classes, “subjected to the most brutal servitude” (1974:98). Imperialism had stolen the national sovereignty of other nations, most notably the United States protectorates of Cuba and Panama, and only aprismo would protect Peru from a similar fate. “When imperialist capital comes to our countries,” Haya de la Torre wrote, “it comes like the catechists of savages showing spangles and mirrors which attract the oppressed with transitory fascination” (1974:115). A proletariat eventually emerged from the economic effects and labor changes of the imperialist penetration. In Peru, a proletariat was just beginning to form by the 1920s. In the mining camps of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, permanent work in the mines was replacing seasonal labor and peasants began identifying themselves as miners by profession. Union organization became possible as peasants continued to lose their land and turn to mining as a primary rather than secondary occupation. While unions and political affiliation among Cerro de Pasco miners did not solidify until the 1940s, the end of the 1920s marked the important transition of indigenous workers from peasants to miners.

### **The Morococha Mine Disaster**

Since its founding in 1902 and throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation steadily transformed the rural indigenous community of Peru’s central highlands into an industrial, class-conscious labor force. This occurred in three stages. First, the company recruited temporary workers from the local peasantry. The practice relied primarily on *enganche* contracts and emulated the labor recruitment techniques of the small-scale silver miners who operated in the region throughout the nineteenth century. The second stage involved establishing a “transitional proletariat” composed of both peasants and miners at various stages of agricultural

and industrial dependence. In the third stage, the company achieved the formation of a permanent workforce of miners who were completely reliant on the company (Kruijt and Vellinga 1979:58). The Morococha mine disaster of 1928 occurred between the second and third stages of this process and led to the first sustained attempt by an outside entity to unionize the miners.

A result of hazardous working conditions as well as managerial negligence, the catastrophe at the Morococha mine in 1928 attracted the attention of the press as well as Peruvian intellectuals. After numerous warning signs were ignored by the superintendent, the roof of the mine caved in and flooded the galleries with water and mud. At least 28 men drowned (DeWind 1987:174). The accident attracted the interest of Mariátegui, who contacted some of the miners and began circulating socialist literature around the Cerro de Pasco mine camps. Two intellectuals working with Mariátegui, Adrian Sovero and Gamaniel Blanco, organized the Sociedad Pro-Cultura at Morococha later that year to promote the political education of mine workers. By 1929, the beginning of an economic depression was exacerbating tensions between miners and the company as it laid off workers in response to falling copper prices. By this time the Cerro de Pasco Company, which had employed only 4,600 workers in 1908, was responsible for the livelihoods of 12,858 workers. Two-thirds were fired over the next three years (Mayer 1913:6; DeWind 1987:323). Encouraged by influencers from Lima with political agendas, mine leaders emerged and conducted the first organized strike in Morococha 10 months after the founding of the Sociedad Pro-Cultura. While they accepted the direction and assistance of Lima intellectuals and political organizers, the mine leaders at Morococha “had not adopted a Marxist philosophy” themselves (DeWind 1987:324).

Mariátegui and another Marxist contemporary Ricardo Martínez de la Torre continued to correspond with Morococha mine leaders and encouraged their “political development and the growth of their organization” (DeWind 1987:325). Failing in health, Mariátegui formed the Peruvian Socialist Party with members involved in encouraging mine politicization and unionization a few months after the first strike. After his death, party leadership changed the name to the Peruvian Communist Party and adopted policies which “led them to impose direct control over the organization of the miners unions” (DeWind 1987:326). By forming libraries and discussion groups intended to mobilize mine workers into supporting unions and creating confrontation with company representatives, Lima Marxists attempted to inspire class struggle in the mines. But the majority of the peasant labor force of the Cerro de Pasco mines was not an organized or self-aware proletariat in 1930 and still maintained strong bonds to the agricultural sector rather than relying solely on wage labor (DeWind 1987:340). Despite the organizational and political efforts of Lima *indigenistas*, socialists, and communists, the indigenous peasant labor force of the central highlands was not stable enough or willing to sustain permanent unions.

Throughout the 1920s, *indigenistas* and political interest groups imposed their ideas of what being Indian meant on indigenous peasants and miners. Due to their proximity to the largest industrial employer in the central region, miners employed by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation and peasants who had direct or indirect contact with the company had developed differently than native Andeans in other areas. Rather than fit the nostalgic image of the agrarian Indian whose lifestyle represented both Peru’s historical past and potential for a modernized future, the peasant-miners of Junín and Pasco had been providing the labor behind the country’s economic modernization for decades before attracting the attention of social and political movements. At the peak of production in 1929, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation employed nearly 13,000 workers

across its various mine and smelter sites (Appendix III). The industrial experience of these men precluded them from conforming to romanticized *indigenista* stereotypes while their continued agricultural ties also made them unfit for the politicized expectations of socialist and communist leaders. The peasant-miners of Morococha and other Cerro de Pasco production locations had not yet completed the gradual transition from relying fully on the land for subsistence to depending on an industrial salary and identifying as professional miners. By 1930, they remained somewhere in the middle—negotiating industrial jobs and participating in collective actions for their rights as workers while using mine work as a method of maintaining landholdings and agricultural connections.

## CONCLUSION

*The land, abundant and maternal, more than meets our present and future needs.*<sup>19</sup>

After failed attempts to unionize miners in Morococha in 1928 and 1929, the communist and socialist parties organized a congress in Oroya in 1930 with the goal of establishing a national federation of mine workers. More than 60 mining delegates attended, representing thousands of Cerro de Pasco miners and workers from other mining companies, and they founded the Sindicato de Trabajadores Metalúrgicos de La Oroya [Metal Workers Syndicate of Oroya] (Laité 1980:327), or the STMO. The STMO was not officially recognized by the Peruvian government until President Manuel Prado granted them recognition in 1945 in order to garner political support. Permanent unions remained active and expanded over the next three decades, by which time agricultural ties no longer inhibited miners from being interested or participating in unions (DeWind 1987:342). After 1945, the labor force of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation worked in the mines much longer than the peasant-miners of the previous decades. While miners were employed permanently for a period of three to seven years, their time in the mines comprised only a portion of their active economic lives. Just as peasant-miners at the beginning of the century earned money in the mines to protect their lands, miners at mid-century used wages to maintain their current economic positions or advance to higher ones by becoming independent farmers or merchants after retiring from the mines. While this pattern created union support for economic purposes, it also reduced miners' interest in the radical ideas of left wing political parties (DeWind 1987:343-344).

The 1920s, and the first three decades of the twentieth century in general, were a time of transition for Peru. The Andean world was changing, including the lives of residents of Junín, Pasco, and the Mantaro Valley. In the south and central highlands, urban migration contributed

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<sup>19</sup> From *Tempest in the Andes* by Luis Valcárcel (2005:232).

to the instability of normalized divisions of race and class and many native Andeans experienced the “rushed, chaotic” transition to city and industrial life (Coronado 2009:26). In the Mantaro Valley, proximity to Cerro de Pasco production sites urbanized existing towns. The presence of the company had converted Oroya, for example, from a small rural community into a large industrial town with more than 2,000 contracted workers (Laité 1980:325). As the cities closest to operating mines and smelters grew, peasants from outlying rural areas migrated to these industrial centers for work or traveled to Lima for better educational opportunities. After this urban migration and the damaging effects of city life on their native customs, according to anthropologist Bernard Mishkin, “a number return to their villages...[having] saved a little salary to buy a piece of land and cultivate it in Mestizo fashion. Very few, indeed, take up the life they left in their home communities” (1946:438). The migration of indigenous Peruvians to urban and industrial centers altered the socioeconomic composition of the central highland region, particularly the departments of Pasco and Junín, and fueled the modernization of a country that relied on its indigenous population for both its ethnic heritage and industrializing labor.

Opposing trends impacted the lives of central Andean peasant-miners in the first three decades of the twentieth century as foreign capital determined the economic development of the Cerro de Pasco region and peasants were pushed away from their lands toward the mines even as agricultural connections remained priorities. As historian Alberto Flores Galindo writes, “Capitalism tends to homogenize, the development of an internal market eliminates localisms and traditions, and particular habits are sacrificed to a greater common language” (2010:189). While this model describes the long-term effect of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation on the central highland region during the first half of the twentieth century, peasants throughout the 1920s had not been homogenized into a class-conscious proletariat despite the desires of socialist and

communist leaders. Instead, they participated in strikes only when their own wages or quality of life were in danger and unionized for personal rather than ideological reasons. Among these personal reasons were the “persistence of the established bonds between the miner and his town of origin” and the “maintenance of control over his plot of land,” evidence that the controlling presence of a North American mining company could not dissolve the “structure of the precapitalist relations of production in rural areas” before 1930 (Bonilla 1974:32).<sup>20</sup> Despite the destruction of *comunidades*, the loss of agricultural labor to *enganche* in the mines, and the domination of foreign capital, indigenous peasants maintained characteristics of their previous lifestyles even as they became miners.

The miners of Cerro de Pasco gradually became part of an industrial working class and moved away from the romanticized image of agrarian indigenes depicted by 1920s *indigenismo*, which portrayed the Indian experience from the outside looking in. This depiction prioritized the importance of agriculture in the lives of indigenous peasants but ignored the presence and impact of mining and foreign capital in the lives of the peasant-miners of Pasco and Junín. This relatively small group of indigenous peasants who worked in the mines, totaling between 7,000 and 13,000 for any given year between 1920 and 1930, did not represent the majority of indigenous peasants in the central highlands (Appendix III). It did, however, present a model of indigenous and peasant life contrary to that popularized by *indigenista* writing and photography. While “the *indio* became a sort of sacrificial offering that afforded safe passage into the prosperity and true independence of a realized modernity,” the peasant-miners of Cerro de Pasco allowed Peru to achieve this modernity through their labor and the economic production and mineral export their labor enabled (Coronado 2009:168). The peasant-miners of

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<sup>20</sup> My translation of the original text, “persistencia de los lazos establecidos entre el minero y su pueblo de origen,” “mantenimiento del control sobre su parcela de cultivo,” and “estructura de las relaciones precapitalistas de producción de las áreas rurales.”

Pasco and Junín experienced intense contact with foreign capital and industry instead of the rural isolation prevalent in the lives of other native Andeans and propagated by *indigenismo*. If the indigenous population was the hope of a modernizing Peru, the peasant-miners of indigenous descent in Cerro de Pasco had been modernizing the country for decades before *indigenismo* discovered their cause.

Peru's efforts to industrialize throughout the twentieth century transformed the social and economic structure of the working class, the beginning of which was evident in the early attempt at unionization among Morococha miners in the late 1920s. As this working class developed and solidified its group interests, the government "faced recurrent dilemmas over matching the aspirations of the labour movement and the interests of foreign investment" (Laité 1980:340). These foreign interests were strong enough throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and even much later, to constitute the imperialistic presence of the United States in Peru. Imperialism is an underlying theme in the discussion of foreign investment in Peru, both historical and contemporary. By the late 1920s, the Cerro de Pasco Corporation had invested \$30 million of North American capital into the mines, smelters, and railroads of the central highlands (Jones 1927:32). It enjoyed the strong support of Leguía's government throughout the decade as well as the considerable economic and diplomatic clout of the United States, to which Peru exported a significant proportion of its raw materials at prices favorable to the United States. This relationship exemplifies what Haya de la Torre called "the greatest danger for our peoples"—imperialism, which "menaces not only as an exploiting force, but also as a conquering force" (1973:151). In many instances of strikes and conflicts between miners and the management of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, the local and national Peruvian government resolved the situation according to the interests of foreign capital (Laité 1980). Investment from the United

States was pivotal in Peru's modernization and industrialization throughout the twentieth century, but it came at the cost of governmental autonomy and the rights of workers.

The Peruvian government nationalized the Cerro de Pasco Corporation in 1974 after the company began suffering from diminishing profits and rising labor costs caused by the increasing inefficiency of underground mining and growing union activity. Morococha, one of the company's most productive mines and the site of the 1928 accident, is currently operated by the Chinese mining company Chinalco. Echoing the effort of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation to relocate the town of Cerro de Pasco to allow for more profitable mining in 1911, Chinalco has proposed a plan to the Peruvian government that would move the entire town of Morococha six miles away in order to clear space for the expansion of an open pit mine. With over \$2 billion already invested in the mine and the potential for profits as high as \$50 billion, Chinalco is undeterred by residents who do not want to be relocated (Collyns 2012). Mining continues to drive the Peruvian economy and follow historical precedent. With seemingly unlimited capital, foreign-owned companies can control mineral resources, land, and people. Mining in the central highlands of Peru represents the confluence of tensions concerning economic inequality and structural violence, modernization and transition, and perception and identity. While the resolution of these tensions is shaped by patterns established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and repeated over time, it is not determined by them. Through small acts of resistance, collective efforts, and political participation, Peruvians can welcome the foreign capital that stimulates the national economy or resist the "conquering force" of imperialism that persists in the central highlands (Haya de la Torre 1973:151).

## GLOSSARY

- apiri*. Mine worker in late nineteenth century who carried bags of ore out of the mine on his back.
- arriero*. Muleteer, person who drives mule trains.
- ayllu*. Group of individuals united by maternal lineage and agrarian ties, of Inca origin.
- barretero*. Mine worker in late nineteenth century who dug ore out of mine wall.
- caudillo*. Regional boss, chieftain, or patron.
- chichería*. Tavern where chicha, a beverage made from fermented purple corn, is sold.
- civilismo*. Period in Peruvian history in which civilians rather than military generals occupied positions of power.
- comunidad*. System of land organization in Peru in which individuals use reciprocal labor to work collectively owned land. Evolved from the Inca *ayllu*.
- contrata*. Nineteenth-century form of *enganche*.
- criollo*. Person of European descent born in Latin America.
- cuzqueño*. Inhabitant or native of the city of Cuzco.
- encomienda*. Grant of labor and tribute rights to an individual during early colonial period.
- enganche*. Process through which merchant or mineowner contracts a peasant for work in the mines, advancing him money or goods in exchange for a quantity of labor to pay off the debt.
- enganchador*. Labor sub-contractor who directly supplied workers to the mines.
- gamonalismo*. Exploitation of indigenous peoples by large landowners.
- guarache*. Work shift lasting 36 hours in the mines followed by 12 hours of rest.
- hacendado*. Owner of a *hacienda*.
- hacienda*. Large agricultural or livestock estate combining subsistence and market production, usually tended by indigenous peasants.
- indigenismo*. Social and political movement of novelists, journalists, artists, and intellectuals working to expose the economic exploitation of indigenous peasants. Occurred throughout Latin America, beginning in Peru at the end of the War of the Pacific and gaining popularity in the 1920s.
- indigenista*. Supporter of indigenous peoples and cultures through the *indigenismo* movement.
- indio*. Person of indigenous descent, sometimes used in a derogatory manner.
- ishapa*. Reciprocal exchange between a family that herds sheep and a family that owns an agricultural plot.
- mayordomo*. Elected officer of a social group responsible for organizing the annual celebration of the group's patron saint and financing expenses.
- mestizo*. Person with mixed European and Indian heritage, racially or culturally.
- misti*. Landowner or merchant of European descent who controlled a network of indigenous peasants or servants through relationships of personal dependency and unequal reciprocity.
- mita*. State-sponsored forced labor draft.
- montonera*. Armed band or guerrilla force informally organized in the countryside to support a particular political cause or protect a certain region. Used in the Wars of Independence and the War of the Pacific.
- oncenio*. Eleven-year dictatorship of Augusto B. Leguía.
- sol*. Peruvian currency since the nineteenth century.

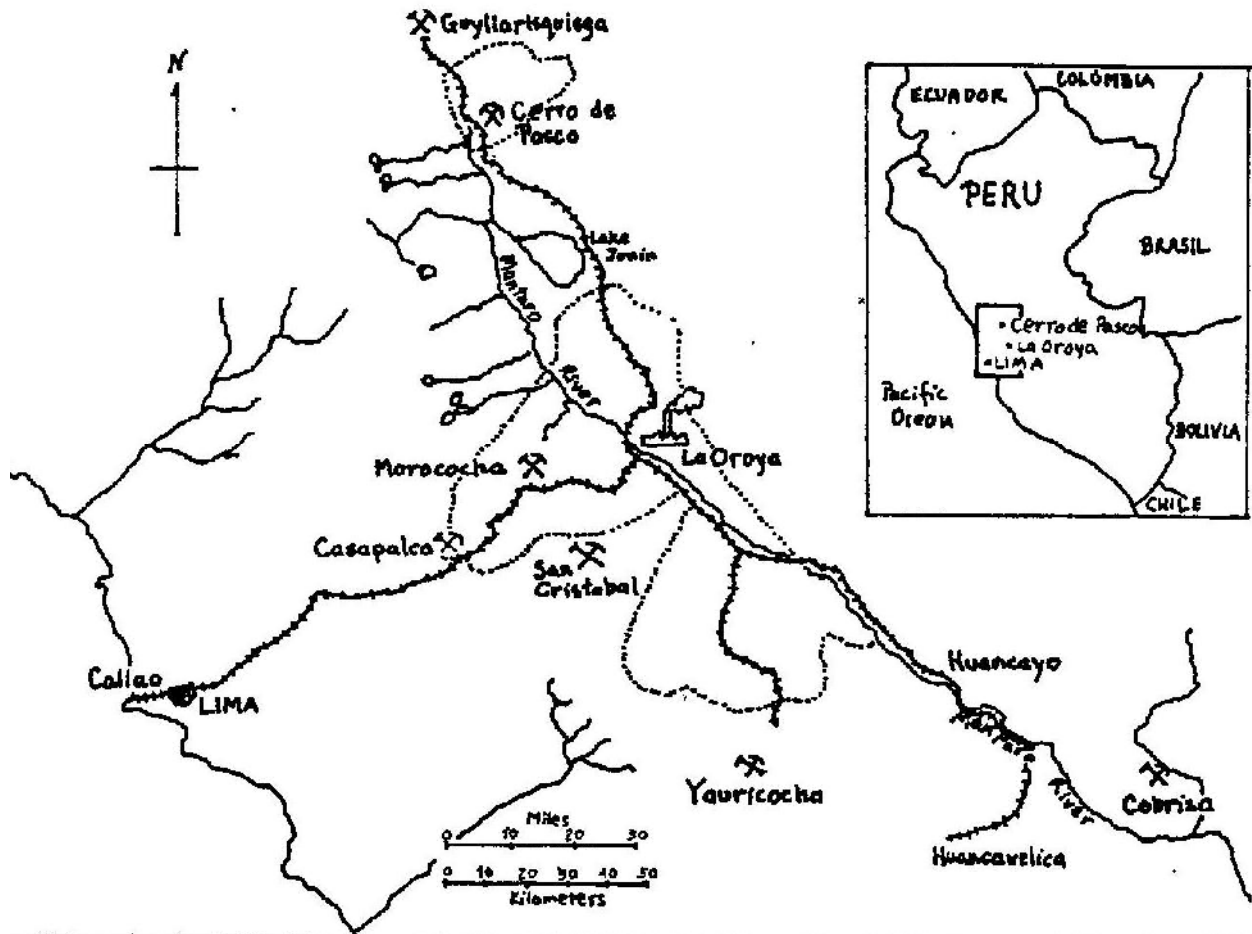
MAPS

I. The Central Region of Peru, Pasco and Junín Departments



Source: Mallon 1983:1.

## II. Operation Sites of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation



Source: DeWind 1987:13.

## APPENDIX

### I. Effect of War of Independence (1821-1824) on Silver Production



Silver reported in 8-ounce increments. Based on Bonilla 1980:27.

### II. Peruvian Exports to the United States, 1896-1916

Year	US\$	% of Total Exports
1896	768,778	7
1897	636,428	4
1898	1,212,400	8
1899	2,418,869	16
1900	4,640,796	21
1901	4,393,905	20
1902	3,383,193	18
1903	2,395,592	12
1904	1,900,003	9
1905	2,636,713	9
1906	3,203,480	11
1907	7,848,152	28
1908	7,858,936	30
1909	7,278,445	23
1910	9,878,327	28
1911	10,187,998	28
1912	14,473,293	31
1913	14,761,355	33
1914	14,827,700	34
1915	25,054,360	45
1916	50,024,370	62

Based on Bonilla 1980:82.

### III. Number of Workers Employed by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation

Year	Total	Oroya	Cerro de Pasco	Morococha
1920	7,840	1,494	2,333	1,224
1921	7,208	1,508	1,770	1,104
1922	7,602	1,228	1,759	2,376
1923	8,180	1,745	1,876	2,504
1924	6,935	1,471	1,466	2,280
1925	7,927	1,936	1,620	2,346
1926	10,232	2,200	2,679	3,146
1927	9,134	2,235	2,671	2,427
1928	10,181	2,947	3,030	2,055
1929	12,858	3,172	3,609	2,396
1930	5,457	1,357	1,669	765

Based on Appendix III, DeWind 1987:406a.

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