BOLIVIA AND ITS SOCIAL LITERATURE BEFORE AND AFTER THE CHACO WAR: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL AND LITERARY REVOLUTION

By

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INTRODUCTION

Bolivia is one of the world's most extraordinary countries. It is a land of superlatives, abjectness and paradoxes. The country has some of the world's highest mountains, highest cities and highest roads and railways, while at the same time it has a vast low plain. Bolivia is chronically underpopulated yet some of the poorest areas in the state are overcrowded. The nation is descended from one of the most advanced Indian cultures which existed before the conquest, yet today most of its population is illiterate, ignorant of its past and unsure of its future. For centuries Bolivia has produced vast fortunes in silver, gold, tin, wolfram, lead and now oil, yet the average citizen is one of the poorest in the world, spends most of his waking hours growing food, and subsists near starvation.

The paradox of the best and the worst is also to be seen in the behavior of the society which the inhabitants of Bolivia constitute. The proclaimed aims of their government have been of the highest, but in practice they have been of the lowest, with brutality, disorder and chaos the main characteristics.

In a land of such violent paradoxes the historian finds himself almost inevitably using the comparative method. The urge to contrast events or institutions is given free reign for sudden changes within the
country are of such depth that they may be classified as extraordinary.

One of the greatest changes which has taken place in the whole of the history of Bolivian society, perhaps even exceeding the changes brought by the conquest, is the revolution which has swept the country since 1952. This revolution was not of course self-propelled but was because of a growing sense of rebellion and discontent. The purpose of this paper will be to compare, contrast and examine the ideas before and after the period which caused the Bolivians to become aware of the need for change in their country. That period, it will become apparent, was the time of the Chaco War.

The study then will be a history of the ideas or to be more exact a history of the written ideas of Bolivia. If the history of Latin America is in its infancy, then what of the history of ideas there? The popular conception would hold that little or no writing can have been produced in such a country as Bolivia, whereas there has been a surprising quantity, although much of it, granted, is of inferior quality. Heretofore, none of this writing has been systematically studied. Yet if one seeks to study social change in Latin America there would seem to be no other way. A change cannot be truly called revolutionary in nature unless it changes the beliefs and habits of thought of a society, and one of the major ways of finding out what people of the past thought and believed is by reading what they wrote.
The crucial event which opened the minds of Bolivian men to the need for change was the Chaco War, fought between Paraguay and Bolivia over the possession of a scrubby semi-desert which lies between their centers of population. Officially the war lasted from 1932 until 1935 although hostilities overspilled at both ends.

It is hoped to prove the decisive nature of this war by comparing the history of Bolivia before and after the war years. Since the Spanish conquest the area has lived a very disturbed existence. The Spanish colonized the country lightly, reduced the Indians to a condition of semiservitude, and after the discovery of the silver mountain or cerro Rico at Potosí drained away a fabulous wealth in ore to Spain. After the longest struggle for independence on the continent Bolivia began its republican life. The record shall show that this was even more chaotic. A long series of uneducated caudillos fought for power during the nineteenth century, so concerned with personal power that national territory was meekly surrendered to voracious neighbors. During the interlude provided by the Liberal party some attempt at civilized government returned, but the social and cultural state of the country changed little. The Liberals fell as had the caudillos by fratricidal bickering and ideological emptiness. The new so-called Republican government was little better than more of the same, and returned much of the militaristic taint to Bolivian life which the Liberals had managed to somewhat subdue.

The Chaco had long been a bone of contention between the two coun-
tries. It seemed to the increasingly militaristic Bolivians that here was the opportunity to redeem much of the lost territory against a weak enemy which did not seem capable of mobilizing.

The upheaval caused by this war and the heavy shameful defeat suffered by the German-led Bolivian armies, suddenly revealed the half-hidden poverty of Bolivian life and the complete lack of integration in the country. The young men from the towns met the despised Indians often for the first time, and saw that the majority of their countrymen spoke no Spanish, lived in hunger, misery, and feudal, rural exploitation, and had no concept of bolivianidad for which to fight. Many of them did not even know the word Bolivia. Caste divisions went even deeper. The mestizo of the altiplano was heartily disliked by the camba of the llanos. The nation meanwhile was governed by a tiny selfish clique of army officers and landowners. Their various revolutions and coups had meant changes of names not policy. Even worse they were by this time the hirelings of the tin magnates who made fortunes from Bolivian mineral deposits, and as the Spanish had done before them, re-invested little of the profits in the miserably poor nation.

The soldiers discovered that all the necessary tools for breaking down these barriers and evils were missing. The railway system was primitive and served only the mines, there were few roads and none of them linked highlands and lowlands, there was no common language, the Indians were justifiably suspicious of any new policies from the
government, the ruling castes and the military were content with the status quo, there was no system of education to combat ignorance and illiteracy, and the tin magnates known as la rosca controlled the economic structure.

This sudden revelation of the true state of the country created a new mentality in the younger generation of the Chaco War. They came back from the front frustrated, bitter, and determined that things would change. The history of the country between the end of the war and the National Revolution in 1952 was that of the struggles between these new forces and the old systems.

Of the political parties which emerged after the war the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolutionario became by far the strongest and it is the party which will most concern us here. After a short and unhappy alliance with the army which brought a brief period of power, the M. N. R. finally defeated the old order in a climatic civil war in April 1952. The history of Bolivia since then is the history of the M. N. R.'s reforms. Under the leadership of Victor Paz Estenssoro and Hernán Siles Suazo it has nationalized the tin mines, improved the roads, started a drive to the east, a diversification program in industry, and an agrarian reform. It has begun to educate the Indian and has given him the vote in a series of democratic elections. The party in spite of many mistakes still seems to command the loyalty of most of the population for at least the apathy of the past has gone and Bolivia is trying to find herself.
By a more lengthy comparison we find that the cultural past of the nation follows a similar pattern. Writing was an elite, somewhat effete product before the revolution and with a few notable exceptions which we shall discuss, bore little relation to Bolivian reality. The writers seemed to have little interest in their homeland but looked rather to Europe for inspiration.

The Chaco War caused an upheaval among Bolivian intellectuals. The facts of life which were suddenly made plain caused an explosion of writing such as the country had never seen. The intellectuals saw themselves in a dual role as the destroyers of the old decadent system and the path-finders in search of a new nation. Led by the social novelists, these newly inspired writers described the Chaco War, explored the unknown regions of their native land, attacked its problems in mining, education, and agriculture, enthusiastically redeemed the Indian, and demanded revolution. Above all they wished to be Bolivian and to create a respect for the patria among the citizenry. Since the revolution they have done much to provide the M. N. R. with an ideology and the country as a whole with hope. Although many of them are now critical of some of the aspects of the revolution, a movement which has not always served them well, nevertheless their enthusiasm for building a new country is still a leading factor in the nation's society.

This entire paper hopes to examine if only in the most tentative fashion the delicate and unexplored relationship between societies and
the literature which they produce. After all "they were there," and if we truly wish to understand the people of an age we must try to discover the emotions which moved them and what they believed they saw around them. The intellectual in a revolutionary society is a particularly interesting study, for in a time of chaos and change he is often the only voice which comes down to us in sane terms which we may understand.

After perusing the writings of Bolivia's new intellectuals their many faults are obvious, but in a tired and sophisticated world their naive enthusiasms should charm us. The subjects which they chose to discuss may not be of the healthiest but in their love for humanity and hopes of a better future for their fellow countrymen, they help us understand that they may in some ways be healthier in their attitudes than we.
CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND:
DORMANT CENTURIES AND A
DYNAMIC REVOLUTION

Bolivia has always been a land of manifold problems, yet the galvanic way in which this country is now attempting to solve them has aroused world-wide attention. Although the literature of the country had begun to reflect some of the social evils which existed, the real pivot was the disastrous Chaco War. Before that event the country was politically stagnant and intellectually hardly awake to the twentieth century; since then, for better or for worse, Bolivia has been in a constant state of political and intellectual ferment.

The South American Republic of Bolivia is situated in the heart of the continent. It has no sea coast, being bounded to the north and east by Brazil, to the south by Argentina and Paraguay, to the southwest by Chile, and to the northwest by Peru. The Republic measures 950 miles at its greatest length and about 900 miles at its greatest width. The geographical appearance of the country is compact which would, at first glance, suggest an easily integrated and unified country. The contrary is unfortunately the case.
The area of the nation has shrunk enormously since independence in 1825. It then had an estimated total of 904,952 square miles, but by cessions and wars it has since lost over half of that area.\(^1\) Nevertheless it still remains the fifth largest country in South America with an area of over 400,000 square miles, coming after Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Colombia. This size makes Bolivia roughly as big as France and Spain combined, and disproves the idea that it is a small country as is generally supposed.

Geographically Bolivia is perhaps the most remarkable country in the world. Alcides D'Orbigny, as long ago as 1845, used several short expressions which sum up very succinctly certain aspects of the Bolivian nation. He called Bolivia "the microcosm of the planet," containing as it does within its frontiers every type of scenery and climate.

The west of the country is dominated by two chains of the Andes which divide at the knot of Vilcanota or Apolobamba, in southern Peru, and run through Bolivia to the Argentine border. The Cordillera Occidental is in many respects a wall, cutting off the country from the Pacific coast. The Cordillera Real to the east encircles Lake Titicaca.

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\(^1\)To Chile 46,333 square miles, including all its seaboard, during the War of the Pacific, 1879-93. To Brazil 189,353 square miles, comprising the Matto Grosso cession of 1867, and the losses of the Acre War. Acre was ceded at the treaty of Petropolis, 1903. To Argentina 65,924 square miles, a loss confirmed by the treaty of 1925. To Peru 96,527 square miles by the cession of 1909. To Paraguay about 94,020 square miles as a result of the Chaco War, 1932-36. The area was finally ceded on October 10, 1938.
the huge mass of inland water on the northwestern frontier, and then continues southward through the length of the nation creating another huge wall dividing the Bolivian highlands from the lowlands.

Between the two ranges lies the altiplano or the high plain, which, traditionally and economically, has been the heart of the country. These two chains of mountains and the enclosed plain are of primary importance to a student of any facet of the country's life. They determine the distribution of mineral deposits, the location of arable land, the internal transportation system, and communication with the outside world.

The altiplano is a surprisingly flat tableland with an average elevation of 13,000 feet. Despite a very cold and extreme climate, and severe aridity, it has been the most densely populated part of the country since known history began. It is a vast desolate area, reminding travellers again and again of the surface of the moon.

The summer season of rains is brief and produces little moisture, so the little patches of green do not last long and are soon swallowed by the prevailing dun colors. The people are slaves to the poor soil even when not enslaved by their fellowmen. The altiplano itself is built up of deep sediment trapped between the two cordilleras and is subject to erosion, particularly in the La Paz basin and at the edges of the high valleys. Since the deep gravelly soil is so unstable, subsidence and landslides make road building extremely difficult, while the
soil is so spongy that it quickly soaks up the small quantity of moisture, and thus remains permanently parched.

More than half of Bolivia's three and one half million people live in this inhospitable region. "It is a land infinitely contemptuous of man, a land which dwarfs and elevates the spirit together, but a land which having been known cannot be forgotten."2

Titicaca, the highest steam navigated lake in the world, and one of the largest, has a mythical and religious significance to the inhabitants of its shores. It empties into the smaller, salty Lake Poopó via the river Desaguadero. None of these waters is much used for irrigation.

The climate is frigid, with great diurnal ranges of temperature, and because of the altitude human organic resistance to cold is greatly lowered. Claims are made that people born and raised in the area cannot physiologically adjust to lower elevation, but this is probably more a question of traditional attachment to the altiplano, and of course a complete lack of immunity to the lowland and tropical diseases.

The staple foods are potatoes, of which there are many varieties, and the oca, another tuber. Quinoa, a type of millet, and cañahui, another grain, also thrive, while maize grows well at the somewhat lower altitudes around Cochabamba, Sucre and Tarija.

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The llama and the alpaca are natural fauna and the main domesticated helpers to the Indians. The llama is the cheapest carrier animal known, given to the Indians, it has been said, "because they are so poor." Sheep are fairly widespread, and there is some cattle raising. Dairy cattle are almost completely absent.

The yungas, or semitropical mountain valleys, occupy about one tenth of the total area, and are inhabited by one third of the population. The Cordillera Real rises sheer from the altiplano but descends to the eastern plain in gorges, spurs and ridges. Moisture is usually much more plentiful than on the high plain, and great progress is supposedly possible in the area, especially in the lower valleys or yungas proper which lie to the northeast of La Paz. The problem again is one of communications. How and to where would the surplus produce be moved? Coffee, bananas, yams, tobacco and cacao are all produced very easily in the yungas but the only really commercial crop is coca, a mildly narcotic leaf which is chewed habitually by the Indians of the country, allegedly to deaden hunger and misery. Coca produces over 80% of the revenue of the yungas, and taxes on this product help to keep the roads to the yungas in a fairly acceptable state.

Higher but more extensive valleys lie around the towns of Cochabamba, Sucre, and Tarija. They have a climate of the semiarid Mediterranean type, and produce maize, barley, grapes and tobacco.

The eastern lowlands or llanos extend from the Cordillera Real to
the Matto Grosso and Paraguay in the south, and to the Amazonic sys-
tem to the north. This area occupies about 70% of the national terri-
tory. In the north are tropic Amazonic selvas, the center is covered
by vast natural pasture land, and the south is covered by open forest
and high savanna which gradually deteriorates into the scrub of the Cha-
co. The area is underpopulated and underdeveloped in the extreme.
Rivers are the usual means of communication, but are subject to flood-
ing, and lead "from nowhere to nowhere." On the open plains around
Santa Cruz there is an agricultural awakening, and sugar cane, rice,
oil plants and citrus fruits are all grown. North of Santa Cruz are the
plains of Mojos in the Beni. Since 1832 Bolivia has tried to link the
Beni to the alto plano, and the huge undertaking is still not complete.
The plains of Mojos occupy about half of the territory of Bolivia and it
has been estimated that over one million semiwild cattle graze on these
plains. The cattle are of little commercial value and the townspeople
of the alto plano have to eat Argentinian meat.

An overwhelming fact is that the largest section of the population
lives in a near desert, while a wide plain lies unexploited and in parts
unexplored beneath its feet. Bolivia presents the anomaly of a predom-
inantly agricultural nation which uses only 2% of its lands for agricul-
ture, and that 2% is nearly all in the region of poor soil. Forty per
cent of the national territory is covered by forest, yet there is no lum-
bering industry worth the name.
Bolivia then is dissected by its geography. There are strong contrasts in climate, the regions live completely different ways of life, and regionalism with its petty hates and suspicions is strong.

The history of the area now called Bolivia has produced almost as many problems as the geography. It is a sordid yet incredible tale of violence and instability.

Some amazing masonry to be found at the small village of Tiahuanaco near La Paz, is held by many to indicate a civilization much older and much more elevated than that of the Incas, but little is known about these early builders.

The altiplano and mountain area was part of the Inca Empire and formed the province of Kollasuyu. Two Indian races, the Quechua and the Aymará, inhabited the province.

After the Spanish conquerors took Cuzco and set up their new capital at Lima, they gradually pushed down the altiplano. Sucre was founded in 1538, and it is still the legal capital and a cultural center. In 1545 the cerro rico, a mountain of silver, caused the forming of the town of Potosí in the south. This sudden wealth brought large numbers of Spaniards to Bolivia and the region remained one of the richest parts of the Spanish empire for nearly three centuries. La Paz was founded in 1548 as a commercial link between Cuzco and Potosí, and the need for agricultural produce to feed the mines caused the settlement of the high valleys, and the setting up of the towns of Cochabamba (1570) and Tarija (1575).
From 1563 until 1776 most of the area now called Bolivia was part of the vast Audiencia of Charcas. This audiencia also embraced Tucumán, Paraguay, Buenos Aires, and southern Peru as far as Cuzco. Buenos Aires became a viceroyalty in 1776 and the rest of Charcas came under the control of Lima. The Bolivian section was now known as Alto Perú, and this name lasted until independence in 1825.

During the eighteenth century Alto Perú was legally a subsidiary of Lima, and then briefly Buenos Aires, but in many ways the region was independent. Potosí had declined, but remained a source of riches, Sucre, then called Chuquisaca, was with Bogotá the cultural leader of South America, while Cochabamba and La Paz were prosperous trading centers. On the altiplano regional unity gradually developed. The great Spanish problem was the Indian. The Spanish had destroyed the Inca Empire, but could not reincorporate its former subjects. "Puede Ud. vencer pero no convencer," the local chieftain is supposed to have said. A small white caste had already, as we see, alienated the majority of the people, and was governing the area, trying to ignore a passive, resentful, and poor Indian majority.

The University of San Xavier in Sucre (Chuquisaca) was one of the most independent and liberal-minded institutions in America. Growing resentment of Spanish rule culminated in the first act of rebellion in America on May 25, 1809. Bolivia was the first country to revolt against Spain, but was one of the last to achieve independence and this
is perhaps significant. Time and again the ruling Spanish-speaking minority has been too deeply engaged in internecine struggles to care about the politically dead Indian, or even the security of the nation itself—witness the almost casual cession of vast areas to neighboring states during power struggles at home.

The Bolivian wars of independence lasted fifteen years. Initially guerrilla activity was important and very destructive. The royalist general, Pedro Antonio de Oláñeta, remained firmly convinced that the area could be held for Spain, and persevered after other countries were independent. The Republic of Bolivia was proclaimed independent on August 6, 1825, under the leadership of Antonio José de Sucre, Simón Bolívar's greatest general. He was aided by the two outstanding Bolivians of the day—General Andrés Santa Cruz and Casimiro Olañeta.3

It is known that Bolívar was hostile to the creation of this new nation, believing that it could never survive the petty rivalries that disturbed it, and that it was in any case economically dependent on Peru or Buenos Aires. Nor did the first declaration of statehood auger well for the future. Promulgated at the same time as the declaration of independence, it was "a queer document," illustrating the low cultural level of its writers, and seeming little more than the personal selfish ambitions of its authors put to paper. Bolivia was on "the threshold of

3The role of Casimiro Olañeta has been ignored but is now recognized. cf. Charles W. Arnade, The Emergence of the Republic of Bolivia (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1957).
a terrible and frightening history. 4

It is significant to note that one of the first acts of the new assembly was the partial reimposition of the tribute paid by the Indians. The government had changed, the governors had not. Bolívar, as requested, supplied the first constitution which reflected his distrust of the ability of the Bolivians to govern themselves. The republic was given the French system of municipal government, and was divided into departments, provinces and cantons. The unitary nature of the state was affirmed and has remained. 5

Sovereignty, Bolívar's constitution stated, was in the hands of the people! A fourth branch of government, the electoral, was instituted as an attempt to protect voters' rights, but never functioned as intended. Literacy was demanded from all voters, and Bolívar, while a democrat, obviously doubted Bolivian "democracy" and instituted an executive for life.

General Sucre became the first president, but lasted less than two years, "a sad commentary on the ingratitude of peoples and the consequence of dictatorship." 6

4 Ibid., pp. 204 and 205.

5 There are now nine provinces and three delegaciones under the Minister of Agriculture. Federalism has caused unrest, one civil war, and is not yet dead.

His successor Santa Cruz, the cholo general from the altiplano, had ruled Peru on Bolívar's appointment until defeated in the election of 1827. He dreamed of a confederation of the two Perus of Spanish days and made this dream come true by a swift invasion of Peru in 1836. The confederation, suspected by both Chile and Argentina, lasted only three years, and Santa Cruz, one of Bolivia's few able and honest presidents, fell from power.

In Bolivia this brief interlude of order was now followed by thirty years of chaos--a chaos more profound than that of the wars of independence. A Peruvian invasion was defeated by José Ballivián in 1841, but even this service to his country did not assure him of the presidency for more than one year. Manuel Isidoro Belzú, who governed from 1848-55, was Bolivia's great demagogue. A venal opportunist, he ruled with the support of the town mobs and Bolivia saw a reign of terror which left it bankrupt.

Mariano Melgarejo, who misgoverned from 1864-71, was Bolivia's most notorious and colorful dictator. An illiterate bastard, he ruled through his personal army, which he controlled, incredibly, by his own brute strength. His corrupt and massive pilfering from the treasury caused international loans from which Bolivia took decades to recover. Continual efforts to unseat this horseback caudillo kept him so preoccupied at home that he gave away vast tracts of Bolivian territory to escape international entanglements. Only in the age which
produced him would such a figure as Melgarejo have been possible. Since he is such a perfect example of the nineteenth century *caudillo bárbaro*, he is awarded more space in historical writings than his sordid reign would otherwise merit. Driven out by Agustín Morales in 1871, he was murdered soon afterwards in Peru by a brother of his most permanent mistress.

Morales’ regime was similar to Melgarejo’s but was fortunately brief. Hilarión Daza’s presidency (1875-80) was the last great period of open barbarism, with official killings in the streets of La Paz an everyday occurrence.

Bolivia’s steady loss of territory caused several conflicts. Chile had long coveted the newly found wealth of Bolivia’s Atacama seacoast and she finally seized it in 1879. Bolivia and Peru fought a desultory war against Chile, but ceded the area in the treaty of 1895. The treaty of 1904 confirmed Chilean possession of the area. In spite of generally friendly Bolivian-Chilean relations today, Bolivia’s aspiration to the sea remains, and is a potential source of South American strife.

Melgarejo ceded 100,000 square miles on the Paraguay and Mamoré rivers to expansionist Brazil in 1867 in return for paltry concessions. This was not the end of Brazilian encroachment. The rubber boom at the turn of the century brought Brazilian infiltration in the Amazonic region of the Acre, and after some months of sporadic forest skirmishing, Bolivia ceded the area at the treaty of Petrópolis.
in 1903. Again Bolivia made a poor bargain for the tropical railway built by Brazil around the rapids of the Mamoré has proved to be of little use since the rubber boom collapsed.

Eighteen eighty was something of a turning point in Bolivian history. With the fall of Daza came the inevitable new constitution. This one proved to be tenacious, and lasted, unbelievably, until 1931. Bolivia continued to lose territory in the aforementioned local wars, but some degree of internal peace returned for the first time since the days of Santa Cruz. A so-called federalist revolution caused the fall of the old conservative party in 1898.

The newly ruling Liberal party was headed by a series of fairly competent presidents. The party's supremacy lasted until 1920. Finot talks of the party as being confused but well intentioned, so that, for example, the question of the economic and social position of the Indian was given public airing, practically for the first time since independence. Little was done in a fog of idealism. Although economic progress was slow and allegedly foreign-dominated, it was at least constant and stable. 7

7The well-meaning attempts, but only comparative betterment of the country under the Liberals, is summed up in Enrique Finot, Nueva Historia de Bolivia (La Paz: Gisbert y Cía. S.A., 1954), pp. 358-359. Other historians have been more enthusiastic about this period of Liberal government, e.g., José Macedonio Urquidi, Compendio de la Historia de Bolivia (Buenos Aires: E.G.L.H., 1944), pp. 276-277 and 329-342.
The fall of the Liberal party was caused by a gradual decline of enthusiasm in its leaders, and even more by internal strife within the party.

Under President Bautista Saavedra, the head of the new "republican" government, internal unrest increased, especially in the areas of Santa Cruz and Yacuiba. The government made little attempt to rule through any consistent or ideologically inspired program, but was for Bolivia conscientious and fairly honest. President Hernando Siles, another executive of the traditional mold, is also thought of as well-meaning but uncertain. He attempted to rule by a coalition of shifting parties, but gradually lost the support of all of them. His fall in 1930 led to the election of the last of Bolivia's traditional presidents, Daniel Salamanca. Salamanca was yet another of the cultured, honest, patriotic rulers who had so changed the international image of the country since 1880. It is surprising to present-day writers, but during the 1920's and early 1930's Bolivia was regarded abroad as one of the more prosperous and reliable of the Latin American states.

The traditional problems of the country had not altered however. During the 1920's the great majority of the population was Indian, poor, illiterate, and still spoke Quechua and Aymará. Overwhelmingly rural, many of the people were bound by the institution known as pongueaje.8

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8An attack on pongueaje, but a complete discussion of the institution, is contained in Rafael Reyeros, El Pongueaje: la servidumbre personal de los indios bolivianos (La Paz: Empresa Editora "Universo," 1949).
to the large latifundias owned by the ruling caste. These *pongos* or debt peons were semislaves in a feudalistic social system. Bolivia's army dominated politics, a coalition of the small wealthy class and foreign corporations exploited the mineral wealth of the country, and communications, health, and sanitation were less than rudimentary. The barriers imposed by geography and climate had hardly begun to be attacked. *Pueblo enfermo,* by Alcides Argüedas, draws a picture of a pathetically oppressed and miserable people. 9

Before examining the facts and the sequelae of the Chaco War, the event which begins the history of modern Bolivia, it would be well to glance briefly at the economic and social history of the nation.  

Alcides d'Orbigny has also summed up the Bolivian economy in an often quoted phrase. "Bolivia!" it is said, "is a beggar seated on a throne of gold." In the day of the Spaniards the silver of Potosí was drained away to Spain while the semislave Indian miners died by thousands in the cerro rico. Since modern metal industries began during the later decades of the nineteenth century Bolivia has been a leading source of tin. Other metals such as lead, zinc, and antimony are also exported. Foreign companies or local firms incorporated abroad have made some of the world's greatest fortunes, while conditions inside Bolivia have hardly changed. The creation of a Bolivian national bank in

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1908 and banking reforms in 1914, helped to regularize Bolivia's international finances until the Chaco war, but changed little inside the country. 10

Gradually three large firms assumed control of the tin mining industry, commonly 60% of Bolivia's exports. Simón Patiño in particular, since the discovery of the "mountain of tin" at Catavi, assumed a predominant position in the industry, with Mauricio Hochschild and Avelino Aramayo completing the immense triumvirate which came to be known as "la rosca."

The wealth to be achieved through export of minerals gradually changed the Bolivian economy. During the first seventy years of the nineteenth century Bolivia had been practically self-sufficient economically, and the few imports consisted of luxuries desired by the ruling city groups. With swift profits from mining at the beginning of the twentieth century the basic economy switched to a pattern of export and import instead of self-sufficiency. Agriculture tended to be neglected, while increasing numbers of men were needed in the mines. Bolivia became in fact dependent on her exports of minerals, especially tin, for the means to buy many basic commodities and eventually the country was utterly dependent on the vagaries of the world tin market, a familiar economic symptom in traditionally "one crop" Latin American

10A full but complicated history of the Bolivian economy and mining up to the 1920's is given in Luis Peñaloza, Historia económica de Bolivia (2 vols.) (La Paz: Editorial Fénix, 1954).
countries. Even more Bolivia was dependent on the "big three" who owned the great part of her mineral wealth. Inevitably, as self-protection, the three firms became heavily involved in politics, became richer than the state itself, and were accused of being "a state within a state."

There is little doubt that Patifio, Aramayo and Hochschild had long been active in politics. They had subsidized candidates for office, they had financed revolutions, they had made a regular practice of tipping the local government officials in the mining areas.¹¹

Conditions within the Bolivian mines have always been bad, not always it must be admitted because of neglect on the part of the owners. Figures vary widely and wildly but accidents, silicosis, T.B., and other diseases were often epidemic. The life expectancy of the miners could not have been much over thirty years.

The greatest accusation levelled against the big three was their fiscal policy. It has been repeatedly alleged that for over fifty years their exports gained large profits, yet the balance was sent to Geneva and Boston rather than reinvested in Bolivia. The three colossi may also be blamed to a limited extent for the lack of private enterprise in Bolivia. They have been accused of stifling all initiative and forbidding all competition to their interests. Labor unions were of course suppressed.

Other industries prior to the Chaco war were tiny. Some oil had been found in the south by Standard Oil, and a few rudimentary consumer industries functioned, nearly always in La Paz.

Agriculture has been mentioned briefly. Latifundia was the overall pattern, with many small holdings and Indian communal holdings called syllus in the more distant areas. The latifundia was of the typical Latin American variety. It was largely self-sufficient, used more as an asylum for capital than as a paying enterprise. The Indians on the latifundia lived a servile existence, completely dominated by the owners.

The system of communications within a land so divided were primitive. Three railway lines operated in the period prior to the Chaco war, but among them they had a combined total of less than 2,000 miles. The La Paz-Guaqui line links the altiplano with the Peruvian port of Mollendo after crossing Lake Titicaca by steamer. The line is operated by a British firm under a concession from the Bolivian government. The quickest way to the sea is the La Paz-Arica line, largely owned by the Bolivian government. It was built by Chile under the terms of the treaty of 1904, inaugurated in 1913, and formally given to the Bolivian government in 1928. The most important line from the point of view of internal transport is the link between La Paz and Antofagasta via Oruro and Uyuni. British and American firms operate this system under concession from the government. Part of its importance lies in the five branch lines which run to various parts of the altiplano. They run from
Uyuni to Villazón and thence to Argentina, from Oruro to Cochabamba, from Río Mulatos over the highest railway pass in the world to Potosí, from Potosí itself to Sucre, and from fifteen miles south of Oruro to Uncía.

Before 1962, then, it can be seen that the railways served only La Paz and the mining areas, while no rail link existed between highlands and lowlands: The small line on the northeastern border with Brazil is of little value. Of the 2,370 miles of roads less than 400 were of any value, and even these were liable to disintegrate completely during rains. It 1962 the situation was only slightly better.

A picture of the social structure of the Bolivian population should be gradually emerging. Caste division has been and still remains strong; but although caste and color lines often coincide, yet as in many Latin American nations the caste divisions tend to be socioecon-omic rather than racial. About 70% of the population can be classified as Indian, for this name embraces all agricultural laborers and those who work in the mines. Other features such as retention of the native dialects, the wearing of traditional Indian apparel, types of attitudes, diet, and interests are part of the classification of a person as Indian. Approximately 25% of the people are cholos or mestizos, which really means that they are urban workers or small entrepreneurs. This class is growing slowly. About 5% of the population is literate, speaks Spanish and feels itself to be westernized, and is therefore con-
sidered to be white. The problem of destroying such a deep caste division can be readily realized when we learn that over 60% of the population speaks Indian languages, with something over one third using Castillian. A nation of this size occupied by only three and one half million people is of course chronically underpopulated, and the rate of growth, although over 1% per annum, is one of the lowest in Latin America. Immigrants have always shunned Bolivia for obvious reasons, so the solution to this major problem is not in sight.

In 1932 Bolivia's situation can be summed up thus. Internationally and financially her position was fairly respectable for nineteenth century government by terror had lost most of its frightful aspects, the exports of the country were valuable abroad, and the small group in control of the country manipulated the finances in an internationally acceptable fashion. Behind this façade the century-old problems were no nearer solution, and, in fact, had never been conscientiously faced by any government, Spanish or Bolivian. The country was divided by geography with no real system of communications. A small caste controlled by a mining empire and its army, governed a subject race—a race which was illiterate, tradition-bound, poverty-stricken, hungry, and increasingly resentful.

Outwardly stable and inwardly an unintegrated nation of chronic problems, Bolivia entered into one of the most terrible of Latin American wars in 1932.
The Chaco War between Bolivia and her southern neighbor Paraguay lasted from 1932-36. This war is a crucial turning point in Bolivian history, and if it does not prove to be her salvation, it will at least be remembered as the real beginning of Bolivia's awareness of her problems. Since then the problems of the country have had full airing and her literature has been one of continual protest and analysis.

The causes of the war of the Chaco were also centuries old. The familiar Latin American problem of ill-defined frontiers was particularly apparent in this region of the Chaco, mainly because the area had never been effectively occupied by Spaniards, Bolivians, or Paraguayans, nor had it ever been of much interest to any of them prior to the twentieth century. Essentially Bolivia and Paraguay disagreed about the Spanish line of demarcation between the colonial administrative units known as the Governorship of Paraguay and the Audiencia of Charcas, later Alto Perú, and today Bolivia. As the two countries slowly expanded and grew more conscious of their nationhood, this difference of opinion became more aggravated. Both countries began to inflate their claims, so that Bolivia, for example, claimed the section lying between the Pilcomayo and Paraguay rivers as far as the very gates of the Paraguayan capital of Asunción. Gradually, with the growing nationalism among the ruling groups in both countries, the possibility of compromise receded, since any surrender of claims would have involved "loss of face."
Bolivia seemed to have the stronger legal claims but Paraguayan penetration of the Chaco, in itself slight, had been far more than that of Bolivia since colonial times. To rectify this situation Bolivia began to construct small **fortines** or forts along the Pilcomayo and then through the center of the area. Paraguay retaliated in short order by building an opposing line of **fortines**, facing those of Bolivia. The situation had now reached the stage of military activity, and both countries began a rapid expansion of their armed forces, Paraguay in secret but in a financially sound manner, and Bolivia with much "beating of drums," and importation of German military advisors. To the outside, not too cognizant world, it appeared that Bolivia could easily overwhelm her small neighbor. The Bolivian government also seems to have thought that Paraguayan determination would be quickly crushed by the army, fast becoming a leading force in Latin America. The Chaco, however, did play a role in the economy of Paraguay, and the country, it is now obvious, simply had to preserve it. For Bolivia the Chaco was a prospect for the future and played no part in the Bolivian national life of the time.

Yet another question was the nature of the two republics. Paraguay was essentially of the plains and the riversides; Bolivia was and still is an Andean republic.

Talks in Buenos Aires during 1927 and 1928 failed, while border incidents and military acquisitions continued. Other diplomatic skir-
mishes produced no results, and final efforts by the United States and others to secure a nonaggression pact collapsed only two weeks before the formal outbreak of hostilities. Months before the final collapse of negotiations on December 30, 1932 pitched battles were already being fought although war was not declared until May 10, 1933.

The war was a disaster and a disgrace for Bolivia. The Bolivian officer corps revealed themselves to be corrupt, negligent and even cowardly, while the Andean troops found the conditions beyond their understanding or powers of adaptation. The Paraguayan army advanced into the Bolivian lowlands, where the war bogged down because of the length of the Paraguayan lines of communication on the one hand, and the paralytic chaos of the Bolivian forces on the other. By mid-1935 a complete stalemate had been reached and the treaty of July 21, 1938 gave to Paraguay most of the territory which she coveted. Started in hopes of expansion and with the aim of obtaining a viable seaport, the war ended with Bolivia defending her own homeland. 12 Apart from

12Much of this account of the war has been taken from the excellent survey by David H. Zook, Jr., The Conduct of the Chaco War (New York: Bookman Associates, 1960). Captain Zook establishes the causes of the war as (1) Bolivian expansionism and militarism, (2) Bolivian aspirations to the sea, (3) Paraguayan determination to hold the Chaco as an economic necessity, and (4) growing nationalism in both countries. He damages the old school of thought which holds that the oil resources of the area and of the Camiri region were the main causes of the conflict. Many have thought of the war as Dutch Shell (Paraguay) vs. Standard Oil (Bolivia). Evidence for such beliefs was furnished by books such as Margaret A. Marsh, The Bankers in Bolivia (New York: Vanguard Press, 1928).
military factors such as overconfidence, extended lines of communication, and corruption in the administration, the defeat of Bolivia can be traced still deeper. Paraguay had as many social maladies as Bolivia, but was at least an integrated nation, occupied by one race which felt itself to be Paraguayan. Officers and soldiers shared common aims and a common patriotism. Suddenly Bolivia's basic chaos was revealed. Many of the Indians from the altiplano did not know, and cared even less, about the issues or the country for which they were supposed to risk their lives. They did not speak the same language as the officers—officers who had only the vaguest ideas of patriotism and saw the war in the old "caudillo" terms of personal power. As Zook has said, perhaps a little too strongly,

Seldom in the history of warfare have such extremes of quality faced one another as upon the obscure fields of the Chaco Boreal. . . . Palpably, the soldier of a free country, energetic and capable of individual initiative, is infinitely superior to the politically, socially, and racially submerged product of an oligarchical dictatorship.\(^\text{13}\)

The returning youngsters of the Chaco War saw their homeland in a new light. Since then their protest and attempts at reform and integration have changed the nation almost beyond recognition. The war left "a lasting sense of exhaustion, bitterness and frustration"\(^\text{14}\) which has made it the major turning point in Bolivian history.

\(^\text{13}\)Ibid., p. 24.

\(^\text{14}\)Osborne, op. cit., p. 61. A profound analysis of this postwar ferment is Augusto Céspedes, El dictador suicida; 40 años de historia de Bolivia (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, S.A., 1956), pp. 143-145.
Although the people were in deeper poverty than ever before, the nation's economy remained fairly stable because of the soaring prices of nonferrous metals after the outbreak of World War II. Political instability was a truer reflection of the real state of the country, and the unrest and disorientation of the country showed itself in a succession of violent coups. In 1936 Colonel David Toro, often considered one of the most culpable officers of the Chaco War, won power through friends among the dissatisfied military, but his stay in office lasted less than one year. Colonel Germán Busch, a proclaimed leftist, with some intense but confused ideals, came to power with the intention of trying issues with the rosca or mining empire. He was either assassinated by enemies when his attacks on the rosca became too dangerous, or committed suicide when he realized how little progress he had made in his struggle.  

In 1944 Major Gualberto Villarroel came to power with the backing of a party called the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), but before continuing with a chronicle of events it is necessary to look more closely at the political ideologies and associations which survived or emerged from the Chaco conflict. Most if not all of these forces are

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15 Busch is today considered a martyr to the cause by the ruling MNR party. Cf. Luis Azurduy, Busch, el mártir de sus ideales (La Paz: Imp. Artístico, 1939). Similar attempts to rehabilitate the 19th century dictator Belzú, picturing him as a precursor of the revolution, often appear forced; e.g. Fausto Reinaga, Belzú; precursor de la revolución nacional (La Paz: Ediciones Rumbo Sindical, 1953).
present in the Bolivia of today.

Many political parties in Bolivia tend, as in other Latin American countries, to be dominated by factional or class interests rather than by ideologies, and this is particularly true of the right wing.

The old Conservative party which governed through the 1800's disappeared before 1930 and the traditional conservative party became El Partido Liberal. This group points to the stability which it achieved in the early days of the century, and claims that, "nuestro veinte años de gobierno dieron al país la sensación de bienestar colectivo y de bonanza económica." This party is composed of the old nobility, the landowners, and the upper classes of La Paz. It continually refers to the good old days, and is rapidly falling in numbers, having no dynamism or appeal to the youth of the extreme right. In the recent elections it presented no candidates, and its votes seem to have gone to the Socialist Falange.

The leading right wing party is the Falange Socialista Boliviana, headed by Oscar Unzaga de la Vega until his mysterious death in 1960. Originally patterned after the ruling party in Franco's Spain, it now claims more democratic leanings, but has had little chance to prove this. Since the death of Unzaga the party has been somewhat confused, but new leadership should soon assert itself.

This party has attracted many of the old upper class, as well as many of the middle class elements in Sucre, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. The old army, now largely disbanded, has given this party many
supporters, since it uses the familiar fascist tactics of salutes and slogans. This party ran second in the presidential elections of 1956 and third in 1960 after a split in the M.N.R. The Falange Socialista talks of a corporate state—"cooperación de clases para combatir la lucha de clases, y consiguientemente a todas las ideologías de izquierda." It is a "hierarchial system based on the selection of the most apt."\(^{16}\)

Its slogan speaks for itself "¡Lucha y vencerás!" Unfortunately, while willing to try to win power in democratic elections, this group has not shown itself adverse to seizing power by other means, and they have tried many times since 1952. With the army in a subordinate and weak position the future for this party does not look bright, unless it wins the backing of the populace.

The third party of the right has gradually moved to the center since its inception, and gives some hope for the future. Originally named El Partido Católico Boliviano, it adopted the slogan "Dios, Patria y Hogar," and advocated extreme right-wing policies. In the last few years, however, noting the popularity of the democratic measures of the MNR, it has adopted a much more liberal position, corresponding in many ways to the general ideologies of the Christian Democratic parties of Europe, and has its policy based fundamentally on the social encyclicals of the Catholic Church. It has definitely aligned itself on the side of democracy, and it refuses to tolerate attempts to overthrow the genuinely

\(^{16}\) Alberto Cornejo S., Programas políticos de Bolivia (Cochabamba: Imprenta Universitaria, 1949), pp. 15, 131 and 133.
elected government. In the elections of August, 1953, it changed its name to El Partido Social Cristiano Boliviano, and won small but noticeable support from the richer peasants and the lower middle classes of the cities. It could be hoped that this party may gain strength and become a genuine party of the democratic opposition in a two-party system. Other small right wing parties seem unimportant at present.

While the right wing of Bolivia is easily outlined, the left wing presents an extremely confusing picture. The extreme left began in the 1930's in Bolivia with the emergence of two parties, El Partido Obrero Revolucionario and El Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionario.

The POR is a Trotskyist part and therefore often anti-Russian. This party started slower than the PIR, but has not had to face the dilemma of choosing between Moscow and Bolivia. Its problem has been the defection of its members for the resurgence of the MNR with a similar but more moderate program drew off much of its support in the early 50's. Two of the MNR's most important leaders, Juan Lechin and Ñuflo Chaves, began their political careers with the POR. Today the party, while still a long way behind the MNR, is regrouping and attempting to organize a Marxist-Socialist independent of Moscow party. Numerically it remains weak and does not seem to threaten the position of the ruling MNR. The PIR was heavily Marxist but originally had no communist ties, although it was vaguely pro-Soviet. During World War II, its right wing under leader José Antonio Arce even became pro-
American. Arce, whose life was once saved in an American hospital, admired many aspects of the United States. Between the years 1945 and 1949 this party seemed on the verge of capturing great popular support, but fortunately for the MNR a serious split developed. One wing—the left—wished complete ties with Moscow and membership in a genuine Communist party. There was at the same time the relic of an old Communist party which claimed to be the true party and which refused to recognize the new group, since they felt them to be tainted with past failures. A third clique of young students and intellectuals, most of whom had visited Russia, decided to break with these old parties of the past, and formed a third group, El Partido Comunista Genuino. However, on directions from Moscow, the three groups proclaimed their unity in 1953. This unity is often only outward, and the Bolivian Communist party has a curious lack of the solidarity usually associated with Communist parties, perhaps because it is being continually harassed by another Marxist party with a similar claim to the workers' revolution. The other wing of the PIR which did not accept Communism has practically disappeared into the POR or the MNR.

"The Communist danger has to be taken seriously," claims Arnaud. Peruvian communists claiming to be exiled Apristas are to found all over Bolivia. Luis Carlos Prestes, the Brazilian Communist

party leader, has clandestinely entered Bolivia many times, organizing and exhorting the party to greater unity. In the absence of an outstanding personality to lead the party, Prestes can be thought of as the leader of Bolivian communism.

The Communists have gained a little support among the masses in the city but none among the Indian peasantry. The Communist stronghold is the universities. "Practically all law students at every one of the seven Universities, is a Communist, as are many intellectuals; and as the latter have a monopoly of the printed page Communism seems stronger than it really is."18 The MNR has undermined these two parties by putting through many of the reforms which they proposed, so that the Communists have been forced to vote with the MNR in many cases to save face, thus, incidentally, giving the MNR, formerly called Nazis, the new name of neo-communists. Ex-President Hernán Siles Suazo, who belongs to the moderate wing of the MNR, showed himself far less moderate than Paz Estenssoro in his dealings with the Communists. He refused their support, refused their votes in elections, and by forcing them to enter their own candidates, showed their weakness to the nation.

Marxism is therefore split in two in Bolivia. There is the Trotskyist POR which seems to be gradually losing ground, and there are

18Ibid., 457, 458.
the Communists, rather divided but full of confidence, and becoming stronger organizationally if not numerically. Arnade concludes that Communism, while always a menace, is not so acute a threat in Bolivia as in many other Latin American countries.

The MNR has completely dominated the political life of the country since it came to power in 1952, and during the subsequent decade it has consistently won about three quarters of the votes, so that other parties presented no serious threat to its position. It is therefore this party and its policy which we must now examine.

The War of the Chaco, as has been said above, may yet prove to be the salvation of Bolivia. It is curious that in this century defeats in wars and the resulting national sense of humiliation, have, in many cases, produced two widely differing movements, two movements, moreover, which are essentially antagonistic. One looks for examples to Spain or Germany. In Spain after the loss of Cuba, the reaction of the generación de '98 occurred in which such thinkers as Unamuno, Azorín, and Pío Baroja tried dispassionately and intellectually to define Spain's position and problems, and to propose solutions. The other movement which started at this time was the very opposite. It was fiercely militaristic, in fact it might be deduced that the idea of revenge lurked somewhere in its make-up; it lauded nationalism to unreasonable extents and relied heavily on the army for backing. This movement was frankly fascistic, and after a period of power under Primo de Rivera, it has again triumphed over the intellectual democrats in the
person of its present ruler, Francisco Franco. In Germany, too, the
defeat in the Great War gave rise to a group of young intellectuals, and
on the other extreme the young fascist ultranationalists. Here again
the fascists won and Hitler came to power.

In Bolivia two curious things happened. For Bolivia, although de-
feated, was never occupied, nor was its government forced to submit
to the dictates of foreign powers. The result was that the old clique
initially remained in power, backed by Patiño, Hochschild, and Ara-
mayo. To combat this unbearable state of affairs the second strange
event occurred. The youthful intellectuals and the fascist army groups
joined forces, a junction which gave the coalition a swift taste of power,
but soon brought bitterness and failure.

First let us examine these two movements in Bolivia. Young men
such as Victor Paz Estenssoro, a career lawyer and economist of a
wealthy family, Hernán Siles Suazo, the son of a former president,
Fernando Díez de Medina, a writer of evocative tales of Bolivia, and
many others returned disgruntled and determined to create a new na-
tion. José Fellmann Velarde calls this period la época de la búsqueda.
The old oligarchy was under attack by young men as yet unsure of what
they wanted to see changed.

About this time Paz Estenssoro was working with the Patiño en-
terprise as an economist. He became appalled at the hold which the
tin empire had over the Bolivian economy, and claims to have seen
paysheets stating the amounts to be paid to politicians, newspapermen, and even ministers of state. The post-war inflation was accelerating, and this seems to have suited the ends of the tin barons, for while they were able to pay taxes and wages in a currency which was fast becoming worthless, at the same time they sold the tin to safe currency areas, and banked the profits abroad. By 1939 Paz Estenssoro had decided that his goal in life was destruir al monstruo—the destruction of the mining empire and oligarchy. In late 1939, when Busch held elections to legalize his coup d'etat, Paz ran as a deputy from Tarija with a very radical platform, and won a convincing majority. Paz soon headed a group in Congress which backed all of Busch's reform proposals, feeble and wavering though they were. In this group were Walter Guevara Arce and Augusto Céspedes, young intellectual politicians, and Carlos Montenegro, Armando Arce, and José Quadros, often called the old guard of the revolution.

By the time of Busch's mysterious death on August 23, 1939, Paz had emerged as the leader of the group, and their attacks on the government, which was increasingly military-controlled, became more and more violent. Many recruits, including Siles, Monroy, and Alberta now joined the group. The Paz group firmly opposed the attempts by Standard Oil to repurchase the oil fields nationalized by Toro after the Chaco

War, and this created bad feeling against these new politicians in the United States.

Having solidified and gained some popular support, the group now felt itself ready to draw up its inevitable manifesto. Unlike the PIR, the other opposition party of note, the MNR, apart from what it dubbed as the imperialists and their semifeudalism, admitted only a limited concept of class war, and wished to have no ties with international ideologies of any kind. In spite of this youthful independence and bravado, the party was not so independent as it wished to appear. By a careful scrutiny of its early writings one can distinguish traces of all the intellectual and political movements of the times. Idealism, courage, and nationalism were definitely present. The party had no alien ties. The MNR was to be a Bolivian party. Its aim was to solve the problems of Bolivia by a combination of "el proletariado, el campesinado, la clase media y aún la naciente burguesía nacional." With the popular growth of the MNR, and the drift of many of the PIR members towards communism, never at home in Bolivia, the latter ceased to be a main rival to the MNR. In 1941 the MNR adopted its present name. It adopted the term "movement" and rejected the term "party," since this word is often held to represent the views of a faction or of one social class. The movement was to be of all classes except the oppressors, united by their hatred of imperialism and feudalism. The program's introduction was clear.
Bolivia es un 'semi-colonia en la cual subsisten aún resabios feudales en el sistema de trabajo de la tierra. Para independizarla, es necesario liquidar la influencia del imperialismo y de la gran burguesía que le sirve de agente, devolviendo al país la explotación de sus minas, redistribuyendo la tierra y diversificando la economía mediante la creación de nuevas fuentes de riqueza. 20

From the above it can be seen that the MNR is indeed a strange party for South America. It does not conform to the classic South American or European idea of a political party—that is, a group which holds the same political views or aims, but resembles the parties in the United States or Mexico in that it is a union of widely different political beliefs held together solely by common interests. Since it draws support from all sections of the community, such a party can become overwhelmingly powerful and large, as has the PRI in Mexico, but on the other hand it must nurture its unity very carefully, as dissention between extreme left and extreme right will always be present in such a heterogeneous group. Such as been the fate of the MNR. During the years between 1956 and 1962 it has won support from more than 75% of Bolivian voters, but has suffered at fairly regular intervals, clashes of ideals between left and right which have threatened its solidarity, and which required constant diplomacy and vigilance to hold in check. The right wing has now broken with the main group of the MNR, and, since 1960, has called itself the MNRA (auténtico). Under its leader Walter Guevara Arce it received 14.3% of the votes in the 1960 elections. Since the

20 Ibid., pp. 90, 95.
rise of Castroism a schism to the left has also threatened.

Meanwhile the other side of the post-bellum reaction must be seen. Within the army a clique of violently nationalistic army officers had formed. This group was known variously as the Logia Mariscal Santa Cruz or Razón de Patria (Radepa). It was led by young Chaco veterans, in particular Majors Gualberto Villarroel and Celestino Pinto. They had been shamed by the Chaco defeat, and had lived through the "época de la búsqueda," so that they now felt themselves entitled to seize power. While they may not have been nazis their policies did seem fascistic, intensely nationalistic, and in the context of the times, the early forties, their insistence on a good price for Bolivian minerals smacked of treachery to the Allied Powers. Radepa had early attached itself to a mysterious, violent military clique known as La Estrella de Hierro. This again made the Allies suspicious.

How then did such different groups come together at such an inauspicious time? How also did the MNR gain the reputation of being a Latin American offshoot of the German nazi party—a label from which it has still not entirely freed itself? The story is a strange mixture of conscious decisions by both sides and chance happenings in turbulent times.

In 1943 a world war was raging. Any movement which asserted its independence of the United States and Britain, demanding direction of its own affairs and higher prices for its goods, ran the risk of almost
certainly being branded as nazi. Then again the ruling oligarchy was aware of the nervous state of the Allies over their mineral sources, and found this nervousness to be useful. The Enrique Peñaranda government realized that the mere mention of nazis was enough to gain support for itself abroad, just as the tag "communist" is used by Latin American dictators at the present time. The government therefore called its opponents nazis and the label stuck. Another factor was the Germans in Bolivia. Unlike the tin owners, the Americans, or the British, they had not become absentee owners and, at pains to avoid this, they had settled down as traders, merchants, and bankers, carrying on their own businesses and marrying into native families. Using the good will created by these people the German intelligence service was thus able to obtain wide influence in Bolivian politics, and even to some extent among the masses.

To these inflammable factors were added the events of the political sphere. Peñaranda was openly pro-American, and Paz Estenssoro opposed him constantly. He must indeed have appeared somewhat tainted to the Allies in those troubled days.

The regime decided on Gabriel González to succeed Peñaranda after what was to be a formal election in 1944, but this candidate was not acceptable to the MNR which did not believe that he held the mandate of the people; nor was he acceptable to the military in the Radepa, which distrusted the imposition of a civilian president. The strange
coalition between the MNR and the Radepa took place. It must be reiterated that at this time only literates were allowed to vote, and the MNR had not yet reached the masses and the Indians, who were politically inert. For practical purposes all that counted was the cities and the miners. Although still a small party it is possible that the MNR even at this date, would have been able to gain a majority from the electorate of 150,000, but the movement was well aware that no Bolivian president to that date had come to power by popular election. Another factor was that the young men of the MNR had fought with the young military in the Chaco, and realized that the only cohesive force in the nation was still the army. The officers of the Radepa also realized the need for a civil force if they were to stay in power. Both sides knew that if they did not act quickly Gonsalvez would become firmly established with the backing of the military, and hurriedly agreed on a minimum program.

On the dawn of December 20, 1944, the revolt took place. Villarroel and Pinto took over the key posts in the army with no fighting; Taborga, another officer, seized Peñaranda and put him on a plane for Chile; the MNR, with some opposition, took over the radio stations and the La Paz police.

When the news of the revolt spread the streets filled with people, all supposing that Paz was to be president, but Taborga and the military lodges would not accept him and the post was given to Villarroel,
a political unknown. In his first cabinet there were three army officers, including Pinto, two members of La Estrella de Hierro, and Taborga. In the group there was no real basis for agreement and this was to cause the downfall of the government. In spite of its so-called nazism the regime remained pro-ally.

President Villarroel was in favor of much of the MNR program, but the others in his military group disagreed. Only a few minor reforms were passed.

The first few months of 1946 were disturbed by a series of attempted coups, and constant allegations of brutality were made against the Villarroel government, many of which were no doubt true. In the May elections of that year the MNR had again grown in strength, but lost some support in La Paz. Senseless police brutality continued, and finally an enraged populace marched on the palace in a full-scale revolt.

What actually happened before and immediately after July 21, 1946, may never be definitely known. Most of the MNR leaders escaped to Argentina, and many of the Radepa leaders either defected to the opposition or escaped also. Villarroel was caught in the Casa Quemada by the mob, shot, and hung from a lamppost in the Plaza Murillo with two of his aides. Rumors have claimed that a quarrel between the MNR and Villarroel caused the MNR leaders to make no attempt to warn Villarroel. However, since the party's return to
power in 1952 it has made Villarroel the first in its pantheon of heroes and martyrs, even creating a national Villarroel day. The truth will probably remain a matter of conjecture. 21

Paz Estenssoro concentrated on preserving the unity and aims of the movement. From then on the movement resolved to govern alone or not at all. The MNR leaders decided that when they returned to power they would immediately nationalize the mines, put through an agrarian reform, enfranchise the whole adult population regardless of literacy, and diversify the economy. These measures would shift the nucleus of power from the middle and upper classes of La Paz, which the MNR distrusted and still does, to the peasantry, miners, and other workers in the smaller towns and countryside.

The old regime had returned to Bolivia. President Enrique Hertzog struggled for a few years, vainly trying to pacify the populace and the mine-owners. Mamerto Urriolagoitia, who took his place, was a stronger personality but was scarcely more effective.

The MNR's first serious attempt to regain power was at the beginning of September, 1949. They managed to seize Sucre, Potosí, Santa Cruz, and Cochabamba, but failed to take La Paz and Oruro. They

21 For the full story of this bloody revolt of 1946, told from the anti-Villarroel point of view, see Germán G. Villamor, Historia de la gran revolución popular del 21 de julio de 1946 (La Paz: Editorial Popular, 1946). Two of the better known eulogies of Villarroel are Gualberto Olmos, Gualberto Villarroel: su vida, su martirio (La Paz: Gisbert, 1960) and Augusto Césedes, Beatificación de Gualberto Villarroel (La Paz: Dirección de informaciones de la presidencia de la república, 1959).
lacked arms and organization and were finally put down.

Urriolagoitfa surprised everyone in 1951 by decreeing presidencies for May, 1952. Paz Estenssoro was allowed to present himself as a candidate but was not allowed to return from exile or to campaign. His party, however, organized the campaign very carefully, and, headed by Hernán Siles Suazo, began to slip back into the country. To everyone's amazement, of the 120,000 intellectuals, politicians, soldiers, and upper and middle classes who were allowed to vote, Paz won 54,000 votes, with a clear majority of 17,000 votes over the next candidate. Since most of the MNR support was illiterate and thus had no vote, it was evident that the party was now the most powerful political force in Bolivia. Because Paz did not obtain an absolute majority, the issue was referred to the Bolivian congress, which was instructed in accordance with the constitution to choose between the top three candidates. Before a decision could be reached General Urriolagoitfa suspended congress, handed over the power to a military junta headed by General Hugo Balliván, and left for Chile. Urriolagoitfa's move soon provoked a major revolution between the forces of the army, the mine-owners, the land-owners, and other vested interests, fighting the expropriation of their property, and on the other hand thousands of miners, Indians, and destitute mestizos, fighting for land, nationalization of the mines, and political representation. This was in fact no mere South American barracks rebellion with the power switching quietly from one general's
clique to another. It was climactical civil war, and a genuine revolu-
tion. The MNR was well organized. Siles Suazo had grouped the stu-
dents and assigned them tasks. He obtained the defection of General
Seleme, an old comrade in the war of the Chaco, distributed arms in
the cities, and printed pamphlets in La Paz. Juan Lechín, newly re-
turned from Chile, organized the peasantry and miners, and armed
them as heavily as possible.

Fighting broke out in La Paz on April 9, 1952, but in spite of the
arms which Seleme managed to give the rebels, the seizure of the ra-
dio station and a few initial successes, the battle seemed to be going
against the MNR. All through the 10th the battle raged. Dead littered
the streets, but the army seemed to be with the junta to a man. Sud-
denly Siles, with the command of strategy which had distinguished him
through the campaign, took a squad of militia up to the post of El Alto
which dominates the city. On the way he met a group of Lechín's miners
from Milluni. Together they seized El Alto and on the morning of the
11th destroyed the Ballivián regiment which was defending it. A huge
stock of arms was found there, and success was thereafter rapid. By
the end of the day the army was almost completely destroyed. Esti-
mates of the casualties mention 1,300 dead in La Paz alone, but figures
can be little more than guesses. The junta surrendered, Siles was
installed as Provisional President, and everyone awaited the return
of Paz Estenssoro. Siles, according to the classical South American
pattern, could have easily taken over as president at this juncture, but the movement was determined to show Bolivians what democracy really meant.

Paz Estenssoro returned from exile on April 15, and was met by delirious crowds. The leader thanked the people for their support, but stressed the enormous tasks and hardships to come. As he promised, he immediately began preparing the reforms in the MNR program.

The MNR was pledged to destroy the small clique of multimillionaire mineowners, absentee landowners, and reactionary army officers, who had dominated the country since independence, with little consideration for the welfare of the masses.

The first step was a reduction of the army. The MNR held that the army had no place in politics in a democracy, and that it should be little more than a police force in a small state like Bolivia. Paz Estenssoro, in another of the paradoxes of which he is so fond, declared that he was glad that Urriolagoitia had handed over power to the army junta, because this gave the MNR the chance to destroy it, whereas if it had been Urriolagoitia whom the MNR had fought, the army would have been able to remain on the sidelines and would have survived the revolution. "Fue mejor lo que hizo Urriolagoitia al entregar el poder al ejército porque un partido revolucionario debe llegar al poder destruyendo todo el aparato del viejo régimen." 22 In the fighting itself

the army lost much of its prestige—beaten as it was by a rabble of miners and peasants. The government closed the military academy which had been an officers' training school and a hotbed of plotters. It left arms in the hands of the workers, and encouraged the formation of vigorous, miners-peasants national guards, for which there was, incidentally, provision under the constitution. This new, pro-MNR militia has shown itself intensely loyal, if often undisciplined and violent. The new Bolivian army has so far remained subordinate to the civil government.

At once the Paz Estenssoro government took steps to nationalize the tin mines. This was inevitable for two reasons. The main one was that the populace would not have countenanced anything else. The MNR had promised nationalization in its campaign for the presidency, and to go back on its word would have meant its overthrow. As it was even a short delay proved dangerous. Paz attempted to approach the matter coolly and logically, postponing nationalization for several months, and setting up a board to consider it. Lechín's miners would have none of this, and so violent and dangerous was their attitude that the nationalization act was rushed through. The second reason which made nationalization inevitable was the attitude of the owners themselves over the years. Paz claimed that by their blindness and greed they had forced the act, and indeed, whether nationalization proved to be a success or not the position at that stage was intolerable to the new government.
Many accounts have been written of the appalling, unhealthy, and dangerous lives of the miners. Most tend to become bitter and are therefore suspect, but Alicia Ortiz, through reporting which is detached and objective, remains credible, and paints a horrible picture of degradation.  

Compensation was decided upon, but proved unsatisfactory to the companies. It appears, however, that a satisfactory final payment will soon be made.

The supreme decree of nationalization was promulgated on October 31, 1952, and the preamble to the decree cited the reasons for nationalization. The firms held an economic monopoly of the main source of wealth of the country, with the social and political repercussions which have been seen. "Anyone slightly acquainted with the recent history of Bolivia knows that the exploitation of these tin mines has been the principal motor of the revolutions and counter-revolutions in Bolivia since 1936." The Corporación Minera de Bolivia (Comibol) took charge of the nationalized mines.

After the promulgation of the decree there was great public celebration in the mining areas. On a rude table near the bleak Catavi

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mine Paz Estenssoro signed the decree with a golden pen. A crowd of 20,000 miners "went wild," bonfires burned all over the Andes as they did in the days of Garcilaso el Inca, and the streets of La Paz were full of miners firing off the rifles which they had used in the revolution. A new age seemed to have come overnight.

Unfortunately, conditions in the mines were so bad, and economic dependence on tin was so great, that it will take years for any stable mining industry to arise. To make matters worse many mistakes were made by an inexperienced corps of administrators, the world market played havoc with prices, and the satisfied miners worked less. Partly because of exhaustion of old veins, tin production fell by over one third in the decade following 1952.

Bolivian mining would still be prosperous were it not for two things. The miners themselves have been a great disappointment to the government. They were given the opportunity to form strong unions under Juan Lechin, were assured a minimum wage scale which gave them a level of living far in advance of what they had, and such was their delight at this that the average miner almost ceased to work, while his increased wages were dissipated in even wilder borracheras than before. Education and the awakening of a civic consciousness are of course the only solutions, and these difficult reforms will take many years. Even more serious has been the decline in the price of tin, culminating in 1958 with the dumping by Russia of vast quantities on the
world market. If it were not for food and dollar aid from the United States, the Bolivian economy would have collapsed. Much gloating has been done over the failure of the policy of nationalization, but political results have been generally good in that it has brought much greater unity to the people. Nor can a system be said to have failed when it has eradicated an oligarchy which dominated the nation for its own ends. The mines of Bolivia are now worked with some regard for the welfare of the miners and for the good of the nation, while the miners enjoy a level of living which is very low but which was unknown to them a few years ago. With the continued sincere efforts of the government, internal peace, and generous United Nations and American help, the outlook for the mines cannot be said to be hopeless. A new cooperation between the United States, Germany, and Bolivia, the plan triangular, may help to reorganize the mines of Bolivia.

The agrarian reform program was next on the list for the MNR, and here the government refused to be rushed, in spite of land grabs by impatient Indians, intercommunal strife over boundaries, and even the murder of a few owners. It has to be remembered also that whereas the tin barons were unanimously hated and numbered only three, yet landowners who stood to lose by the reform were numerous. Moreover, the thought that an Indian peasant would become an owner and would enjoy full and equal rights aroused extreme bitterness among the higher caste cholos, especially in La Paz. The author can vouch personally
for the continued existence of this feeling as late as 1961. The MNR believed that land distribution was not an end in itself, but rather the first stage in a program of economic development in agriculture. Two problems afflicted Bolivian agriculture—a markedly uneven distribution of agricultural income, and a defective use of land resources both from the geographical and the cultivation point of view. Land distribution can only help to solve the unequal income injustice, if even that. Immigration to unused areas and education in modern methods are needed to rectify the second problem. Redistribution, the MNR economists claimed, would begin the process, and this the executive decided to do.

The agrarian reform commission was created by a presidential decree on April 9, 1953, the first anniversary of the revolution. Present at the signing were Rómulo Betancourt, then in exile, and Siles Suazo, the future president of Bolivia.

The first decree of the series, number 03128, was a rather curious one for an agrarian bill. It was "voto universal que comprende al campesinado." This decree gave the vote to all citizens over 21 male or female, and to all over 18 if married. It was signed by Paz, Guevara, Diez de Medina, Ñuflo Chavez, Lechín, and other leaders. The preamble of the decree indicted the forces which had ruined the

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economy since Incan days leaving the Indians in a state of semifeudalism. The nation owns all waters, soil, and subsoil, stated the decree. The state allows the individual to own private property only "cuando ésta cumple una función útil para la colectividad nacional." The state does not recognize the latifundia, that is large, untaxed estates with bound labor, absentee owners, and limited exploitation. It recognizes only the following forms of agrarian ownership: the peasant homestead, which must be of reasonable size to give subsistence to one family; the small holding with no dwelling which must also be sufficient for the needs of one family; the medium-sized holding operated with the help of hired, salaried labor or with agricultural machinery, for the purpose of selling most of the produce; the Indian community, which will have assigned to it land sufficient to its needs; the agrarian cooperative, which may be the remaining lands of a latifundia after the peasantry have received their holdings, or which may be the whole latifundia if they so prefer; finally the state does admit heavily capitalized, modernized, agricultural enterprises of large size in certain areas, hoping that these and the medium holdings will feed the towns.

Chapter three of the decree, which runs from article 13 to article 20, stipulates the sizes of the holdings. These vary widely according to the area, the density of population, and the quality of the soil.

26 Ibid., p. 48.
In the yungas and the tropics, for example, the areas were made larger to encourage settlement. It is essential to understand the difference between the latifundia "que es la propiedad rural de gran extensión, que permanece inexpplotada o es explotada deficientemente" and the agricultural enterprise which is "a very extensive farm with large capital investment per unit of land, in which labor is paid cash wages and enjoys the right to organize and to participate in collective bargaining."

"The acceptance and inclusion of this concept," concludes Flores, "marks an advance over the agrarian legislation of other countries."

The main difficulty which has occurred is the distribution of the population. In Bolivia it is such that insufficiency of land is to be found on the altiplano, with often violent results. The solution is hard to find since the agrarian decree had two fixed principles—to create units close to the optimum, and at the same time to satisfy the land hunger of the peasantry. When there is overcrowding these two aims conflict.

The agrarian reform is closely linked to the so-called march to the east. Surplus population is encouraged to go to the plains where plenty of land is available but because of strong traditional ties only a limited number have been doing so.

To implement all these innovations the government has set up a

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27Ibid., p. 50.

Servicio Nacional de la Reforma Agraria, with wide duties and powers as arbitrator, planner, legislator, and land distributor. The headquarters in western La Paz is continually crowded with picturesque Indians from all over Bolivia.

Once again cries have gone up, less than ten years after the fact, that the agrarian reform has failed. It has been pointed out that the Indian produces only enough to feed himself, which is often less than he produced before. It is indicated that his mores, health and education have changed little. The present writer claims that a measure cannot be said to have failed when it feeds people who starved before. Land is the basic want of the Latin American peoples—pride in that land will come later. Whatever has been said to the contrary there is some evidence of progress on the altiplano, and the evidence is overwhelming as regards the east. By 1957 the Santa Cruz output of rice, corn, and sugar had doubled. On the altiplano, where the pessimists find their statistics, things move slowly. The hope of the government is that the altiplano peasants will feed themselves while the east feeds the cities.

The Bolivian land reform, unlike the nationalization of the mines, was carefully planned and shows more maturity. It does not commit itself finally on the question of individual or cooperative ownership. Many previous reforms, such as the one in Mexico, have been held back by philosophical dedication to one principle or the other, and have proved inflexible in the face of changing economic and cultural attitudes.
The reform has proved too slow for many Bolivians and has often been involved in protracted litigation. During 1961 a new spurt was obvious, and new titles were granted much more quickly.

The agricultural move to the east is part of a larger diversification program. Bolivia is frantically expanding her petroleum industry, which, it has been estimated, could supply the whole of South America to the south and east of her. To aid this diversification and to encourage national unity, so long lacking, the MNR governments under Paz and Siles have engaged in a roadbuilding and railway renewal program. On October 9, 1954, the new Santa Cruz-Cochabamba highway opened up a vast area of the Bolivian hinterlands. Near it have grown up a rice plant which will supply over half of the national needs when operating at capacity, and a cotton gin which constitutes an entirely new industry. Because of this highway Santa Cruz is fast becoming one of the leading cities of the nation and by road and rail one can now travel from Santos to Arica or Lima. In opening this road Paz expressed his people's gratitude to the United States for their help in building it.

Perhaps the MNR's greatest task has been the inculcation of democratic principles and the achievement of a moral regeneration of the people. The government has repeatedly proclaimed its willingness to forgive and forget past violence, although its own practice has often been crude, but many of the minority parties simply will not accept democratic decisions. The result of continuous plots and general un-
rest has been some indiscriminate arrests and other signs of repression. During Paz's first term of office the brutality of his police was infamous. At the end of this first term many of the president's followers wished him to change the constitution and run for office again but this he refused to do, determined to set a democratic example. The election was held in June, 1956. In spite of threatening moves by the opposition the election was held peacefully and democratically. The MNR obtained 786,792 votes, the Falange 130,494, the Communists 12,273, and the POR 2,329. The total number of voters rose from about 150,000 to 1,119,047. The MNR won 60 out of the 68 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and all of the Senate. Siles Suazo was elected President and Nuño Chevez Vice-President.

The MNR viewed the election as one of its greatest accomplishments. Though far from perfect, it was a new departure for the nation. Never before had there been a peaceful transfer of power and universal adult suffrage. The new president, the son of a former executive, a Chaco veteran, and the leader of the street fighters against the regime in 1952, may be described as belonging to the right wing of the MNR. Another genuine election was held in 1960, which brought Paz back to power.

Authoritarian tactics decreased during Siles' government. He staked his whole reputation on a stabilization program to consolidate Paz' reforms. This made him freeze wage claims, rely heavily on
American aid, and made him unpopular in some quarters. He showed
great will power and tenacity. Education, long neglected because of
the other vital reforms, was emphasized. In 1956 for the first time
the largest single appropriation in the budget was for education. The
Bolivian government is placing an unprecedented emphasis on health,
sanitation, applied technology, and agriculture in its educational pro-
gram. A distinctly Bolivian pedagogy is being built up around the edu-
cational writings of Franz Tamayo. Universities are still far too much
political institutions and too little educational establishments. The stu-
dents are today bitterly divided between the extreme right and the far
left. Few have any sympathies with the government and strikes are
frequent, harming, of course, mainly the students themselves.

Internationally Bolivia seems to have progressed and so far the
government has managed to play off the two giants on her borders
against one another, so that neither Argentina nor Brazil has managed
to exert much influence so far on Bolivia's eastern regions. In spite
of the question of an outlet to the sea Bolivia's relations with Chile
have been generally friendly, but courtesies between the country and
Paraguay have been almost nonexistent since the Chaco War. Peru
has been governed by a series of regimes which have viewed the land
reforms and nationalization across the border with great misgivings.
Only heavy American aid has allowed the government to stave off col-
lapse, and relations between the countries have been generally friendly.
Bolivia's is the only genuine revolution to take place so far in South America. One fact is certainly true. In a few years the country has wakened from centuries old lethargy, has broken violently with its past, and destroyed many of the abuses of centuries. The contrast between pre-Chaco War Bolivia and the nation of today is startling. The country's literature reflects the same sudden change in attitude. Before the war a few voices were raised in protest against the terrible conditions. Today, in the 1960's, the analysis of Bolivian society is the major concern of its many writers.
CHAPTER II

BOLIVIA'S LITERATURE BEFORE THE CHACO WAR

AN ALOOF ELITE AND A FEW EXCEPTIONS

The history of Bolivia's cultural life and creativity from the Spanish conquest until the 1930's follows a general pattern to be found in all the secondary areas of the Spanish Empire.

Many have claimed, rather rashly perhaps, that Mexico City, Lima, and even Buenos Aires have been cultural generators in their own right for some time. With regard to the rest of Spanish America, however, it can fairly be said that at least from the cultural point of view, they have been first Spanish, and then, more generally, European, intellectual satellites or colonies up until very recent times.

While admitting the truth of the above generalization, certain qualifications are in order which help to soothe Latin American feelings of independence. Attachment to Europe did not disappear overnight, but was gradually weakened from the time of the conquest onwards. This of course is obvious, and especially in the colonial seventeenth century, when an American baroque is clearly discernible, going to elaborate extremes far beyond those of Europe, it can be said that something truly indigenous had at last crept into Latin American colonial culture, although in outward forms at least, the slavish imitation
continued as before.

Another result of this state of cultural colonialism is that, with some notable exceptions, regional differences were slow to show themselves. When a poet from Peru and a poet from Mexico both strove to imitate a Spanish poet such as Luis de Góngora y Argote, it is logical that the reader is hard put to tell them apart, and is equally hard put to identify the specific regions of Spanish America from which they came. Certainly there is little in their works in many cases to indicate the homeland.

So much for the colonial period. Leaving aside Mexico City and Lima, we can see that such areas as Guatemala, Cuba, or Bolivia were, generally speaking, cultural colonies of Spain, produced works of great stylistic similarity as a consequence, and cannot be described as showing many regional or indigenous characteristics except in the background material and content from time to time. With very few exceptions colonial Spanish America can be thought of as a cultural unit with the bonds of unity growing imperceptibly weaker as the colonial centuries rolled past.

In describing colonial literature in Charcas or Alto Perú, as Bolivia was called before its independence from Spain, it will therefore be necessary in many cases to describe Spanish American colonial culture in general terms. In other words since the part is so similar to the whole, the ampler evidence supplied by the whole subcontinent
may with some justice be used to describe the literary product of the area which is of immediate interest to us.

The wars of independence, it is often claimed, freed the new nations politically, but changed them hardly at all internally and very little economically. They remained feudal, largely agrarian states, and transferred their total economic dependence from Spain to Great Britain and, increasingly, the United States.

Culturally too the new states remained dependent colonies. The new Creole rulers, of Spanish upbringing, tradition and stock, could not be expected to look towards indigenous America for their cultural inspiration except in an artificial fashion, when politically, socially and economically they had perpetuated the old systems used by the Spaniards whom they had expelled. So in spite of the gradually increasing independence of Latin American culture, we find that independence from Spain did little to hasten the process. Some change in emphasis is of course noticeable, even if it can only be called a change of dependence. The Latin American cultural elite no longer saw Spain as the center of the European civilization which they so eagerly and minutely imitated. France had now become the intellectual capital of Europe for them, and this change is particularly obvious to the student of literary movements. New vogues in France were followed, usually after a decent and provincial pause naturally, for provincials these early Creoles really were, by the rise of similar movements in the salons of Lima and Bogotá.
Again there were exceptions. The Latin American innate love of elaboration, opulence and intricacy which showed itself so strongly in the colonial seventeenth century, caused a new vogue at the end of the nineteenth century, and during the first decade of the twentieth. The modernista movement, especially strong in poetry, which gives more scope to intricacy and ornateness of language, reached heights in Latin America under the leadership of Rubén Darío that were not attained by similar movements in Europe. This literary movement, nevertheless, cannot be called a truly Latin American movement. For verse forms, although highly inventive at times, it often looked to traditional Latin or Spanish poetry and French experiments. The modernista movement itself, in fact, was simply part of the great renovation in Spanish and even Western letters at the turn of the century, and was often consciously international, even in the theoretical writing which it produced. Much of the modernista ideological inspiration also came from France where the Parnassian school led by Leconte de Lisle favored a similar "ivory tower" poetry. Symbolism added human warmth. Even in the modernista movement, therefore, so often thought of as purely Latin American because of its opulence, we find some dependence on Europe, and an ideology of "art for art's sake" which makes modernista poetry an international product, a poetry for intellectual elites and sophisticates of all countries.

It can be seen, then, that until very recent times the literature of Latin America, and specifically of Bolivia, has been a cultural
offshoot of Europe, especially Spain and France. This limiting qualification should be kept in mind throughout this examination of Bolivian letters before the Chaco War.

The tiny group of intellectuals in Bolivia who engaged in the pleasant pastime of composing letters, seem to have felt quite strongly, albeit probably subsconsciously, that they were exiles from the European mother, for not only did they slavishly adopt transatlantic forms and ideas, but they also appear to have been completely blind to the reality around them. One can expect an escapist, unreal movement to occur from time to time in the literature of any country, especially during times of stress or national decline, but that the real situation in a nation should be ignored by its writers for centuries at a time is extraordinary.

Bolivia's problems are centuries old, yet with the exception of a few outstanding precursors whom we shall examine in detail, the Bolivia which most of the pre-Chaco War writers describe simply was not the country which we know existed. This state of what might well be termed cultural and national schizophrenia was probably not a conscious process with most of the writers of the period. For them the Indian, the miner, or indeed the entire rural section of the country, simply did not exist. The only reality to the Bolivian elite was the city life of Europe, and, to a lesser extent, the pale reflection of European life which was constituted by the politics and society of the Latin American capitals.

Little work has been done on pre-Spanish literature in Bolivia.
Such investigators as Jesús Lara, with his love of Quechua poetry, were largely ignored until the last decade, and are seldom appreciated even today. Ollantay is the greatest Incaic legend which remains to us, and surprisingly, it is a romantic love story which displays sentimental passion of a very European, emotional, tragic kind. Significantly perhaps, the tragedy occurs when authority smashes the feeble individual—an individual who has broken stern laws and national traditions. The collective good rather than the immediate happiness of the individual was a central belief of the Inca system and has continued to be a tenet in Quechua and Aymará society in modern times. Ollantay and similar writings were unjustly ignored in the past. With the new surge of interest in all things Indian there may be a danger of overrating these writings.

After the coming of Pizarro and Almagro Bolivia's colonial period was one of very slow, thin settlement, with a few, roaring frontier, mining towns led in size by Potosí. Regions such as Santa Cruz de la Sierra, founded from Asunción, or Moxos and Chiquitos, were so distant and cut off by natural barriers that they played no real part in the life of Charcas.

Yet the picture of isolation and distance must not be overdrawn. Although the majority of the population consisted of exploited Indians, and although Bolivia or Charcas was by no means the most brilliant of Spain's American colonies, nevertheless the mines of Potosí and the audiencia's convenient position straddling the Lima, Santiago, Buenos
Aires trade routes, did provide the surplus goods and leisure time which allowed a small elite of Spaniards to lead a pleasant life, a life which seems to us today to have been like Spain, and especially Madrid, in miniature. Otero has well described the convent squabbles, the highly ornate clothing and buildings, and the petty struggles for power between colonial official and minor churchman who occupied so much of the colonial elite's time.¹

Nor were the more sophisticated arts ignored by this tiny group of sophisticated rulers. Their literary products were in perfect accord with the life which they led, and had very little to do with the reality around them. Only a few churchmen cared to describe the country and its inhabitants, and even then the description was usually in terms of whether the Indian would or would not make a good Catholic, with docility, of course, being a much desired trait.²

Bolivia did not have a printing press of its own until very late in the colonial period, and this fact, while not, to be sure, inhibiting writing, has hidden a great part of the literary production from us. What we do have, however, cannot be said to equal the colonial literary achievements of such regions as Mexico and Peru. There are, of course, a few exceptions, but they are very few.

¹Gustavo Adolfo Otero, La vida social del coloniaje (La Paz: Editorial "La Paz," 1942).

²Enrique Finot, La cultura colonial española en el Alto Perú (New York: Instituto de las Españolas en los Estados Unidos, 1935), pp. 21-23.
During the colonial period, then, religious preoccupations and legal speculation were the main cultural exercises around such towns as Potosí where rich mines had attracted a Spanish population. These two forms of writing seem perfectly natural because religious and legal niceties were the main topics of interest in everyday colonial life. As always, a few paternalistic, devoted friars were to be found, so that the crónica, or historical narrative, was cultivated to some extent, although again it seldom equaled the ones written in Mexico or Peru. A scattering of gongoristic poems and primitive scientific works on mining complete Bolivia's colonial literature. 3

Some of the more outstanding work is worthy of mention. Juan de Matienzo was a famous administrator and oidor of the real audiencia of Charcas after 1560. His best known work is Gobierno del Perú, a dull work, but held to be extremely reliable factually, and widely quoted by historians. Fr. Bernardino de Cárdenas was the first of many church polemicists, or should one say squabblers? He was a Franciscan and his particular windmill was the Jesuit order in Paraguay. When sent from Sucre to assume the bishopric of Tucumán, the Jesuits who controlled the area refused to recognize him, and had the worthy would-be bishop thrown unceremoniously into prison. On his return to Sucre (then La Plata) with his cassock between his legs, as it were, he took

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revenge on every available Jesuit in the altiplano region.⁴ The story is typical, and gives wonderful insight to the lives of the elite of the times. Petty quarrels filled their days, while the plight of nine-tenths of the inhabitants of the area hardly ruffled a single conscience.

Fray Diego de Mendoza is worthy of more serious consideration. Although he has nothing but praise for his own Franciscan order, he gives a very factual account of the founding of Potosí, La Paz and La Plata (Sucre)⁵ in his Crónica de la provincia de San Antonio de las Charcas (1656). Many other friars wrote on subjects such as miracles, saints, their own order, or the shrine at Copacabana.

The only literary figure of the colonial period who is so eminent that another nation, Peru, has bothered to claim him, a recurrent literary trait in Latin America, is Fray Antonio de la Calancha. His work, Cronica moralizadora del orden de San Agustín en el Perú was published in Barcelona in 1638. Born in La Plata, he lived most of his life in that area. His style is very culto, with gongorisms liberally sprinkled throughout, but the cronica makes for more stimulating reading than all the other attempts in the region. It is not a strictly factual history, but also a commentary on everything that caught the interest of

⁴Ibid., p. 33

⁵Present day Sucre has also been known as La Plata, Charcas, and Chuquisaca, and is today often called "la ciudad de los cuatro nombres."
the good friar. Climate, fauna, cost of living and local mores are all discussed so that the document is invaluable to the social historian. Some resentment of Spain and Spaniards is also shown, and is of significance considering the early date. What makes this writer particularly likable to the modern social historian is that he is not completely indifferent to the plight of the Indians. To call him a Bolivian Las Casas, as has been done, is to exaggerate, but at least his instincts are humanitarian. For this and other reasons he is generally considered as the literary figure "quien debe considerarse como la figura más sobresaliente de la literatura del periodo colonial." To the modern historian his great value is the intimate picture of things in Bolivia and the insight which he gives of the colonial period and the colonial mind, full of questions of inflated honor and medieval superstition.

By the end of the colonial period Chuquisaca had become known throughout the Americas as a center of learning. General Miller refers to it as "the Oxford of Peru," and many of the leaders of the Argentine independence movements, such as Mariano Moreno, Bernardo Monteagudo and Cornelio de Saavedra were educated there. The outstanding Bolivian writer of the period is Vicente Pazos Kanki. His Memorias históricopolíticas give a good account of the times, and have a few illuminating comments on Spanish treatment of the Indians. "Sólo el

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6 Finot, Historia de la literatura boliviana, p. 43.
trabajo libre es el que rinde utilidad." He took part in all the great struggles for independence, as did all the young intellectuals from the old University of Chuquisaca. Unfortunately, as is now obvious, the revolt against Spain was a political rather than a social upheaval. The disgust shown by Pazos Kanki at the Spanish treatment of the Indians was not shared by many of his fellow revolutionaries, who saw the wars as a struggle for economic and political independence on the part of the Creole. The attitude during the colonial period of taking the Indian for granted and ignoring his state, was not one of the major irritants which provoked Bolivia's upper classes to open defiance.

It is interesting to note that any dismay manifested at the plight of the Indians, and there was never a great volume, seemed to come from the peninsulares. Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, who acted as secret spies for the king in the Andean region, had no ties with Creole society, and were shocked at the abuses which the indigenous peoples suffered. All through the colonial period such men as Las Casas, Motolinía or Sahagún had come straight from Spain to do their good works. The literate Creoles of the time were producing practically no protest at all, in fact were impeding the efforts of the few peninsular reformers as best they could. If the only individuals interested in the plight of the Indians were a few peninsulares then little could be expected by the Indians if the Spanish administration was expelled from the country. When

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7 Ibid., p. 91.
Spain was driven out, the Creoles whose insouciance on the Indian question we have noticed in their literature, became the effective governors. Supporters of the status quo had superseded mild reformers. The early history of Bolivia substantiates this allegation. Bolívar was asked to supply the first Constitution for the new Republic, and one of his provisions in this document was the abolition of the tribute, declaring in his most idealistic fashion, that it was unjust since it fell on the most miserable class of society. Bolivia, however, soon tired of its idealistic liberators, just as quickly as did that other predominantly Indian country, Peru; and no sooner had General Sucre been forced out of office than the tribute was reimposed. In Bolivia, unlike Peru, it did not even masquerade under another name, for the Creoles of Bolivia seemingly did not care who knew that government was to go on exactly as before the wars. Of even greater significance was the abolition of the alcabala or sales tax at the same time as the reimposition of the tribute. Apparently the theory was that the Indian should bear all the tax burden in the state while the Creole traders should bear none, and this theory was put into practice with great effect. The tax income of the state in 1825, before the reestablishment of the tribute, was 1,500,000 pesos, while that of the following year was up to over 2,000,000 pesos, mainly because of the Indian tribute. Nor was the tribute the only colonial feature

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8 Cleven, op. cit., p. 80.
to be retained. Bolivian statistics show that in 1858, some thirty years after the declaration of independence, 3,790 Indians were still in the mita labor system, which was still fully recognized by law. Indian lands, which had been at least somewhat protected by Spanish law, were also taken over by private owners during this period before 1850, although the real assault on the Indian communal farms did not begin until the time of Melgarejo.

We have seen the indifference of the colonial writers to the state of the Indian majority under Spanish rule. We must ask ourselves what the Creole writers were thinking during the period immediately after independence, when, it would seem, the plight of the Indian may even have worsened? Once again the answer is that either they were not aware of the situation, which is very possible as more and more of them were educated abroad, especially in Paris, or, being aware of the situation, it did not trouble them and they found it to their satisfaction, which is more probable. The main preoccupation of these writers was petty politics and constitutions. The call of liberty was surely a rather feeble one when nobody seemed to think that the sacred word should be applied to the Indians. Liberty, it would appear, was to be only for the very few in the new republic, and was only respectable so long as it did not get unmanageable or provoke enthusiasms among the

9Ibid., p. 133.
Indians of the Tupac Amaru variety.

After independence Bolivian letters entered a short, sterile period. Neoclassicism, never truly at home in Spain, was duly copied in Latin America, with sparse results. The new Bolivian homeland did not generate enough patriotic pride to supply inspiration to its new citizen-poets.

The internal politics of small elite groups which was typical of Bolivia during the nineteenth century, did, however, find its reflection in the writings of the times. Civil strife between Creole factions and wars with neighboring states succeeded the struggles for independence as the main topic of interest. The folleto, or pamphlet, was the popular literary vehicle, and ismos, such as crucismo, balliviánismo, belcismo, limarismo, melgarejismo and dacismo, show the lack of ideology or theory to be found in these numerous diatribes. The aim of the "outs" was merely a return to power, usually disguised feebly under the slogans restauración or regeneración, while the "ins" took the month of their arrival in power to cover their lack of a program, calling their policies septembrismo or decembrismo. Poets sang the glories of the latest barbaric caudillo.

Towards the end of the century the modernistas turned to their "ivory tower" and universal outlook, looking for much of their inspiration towards Europe. Ricardo Jaimes Freyre, for example, became greatly attached to Scandinavian and Norse mythology. 10 Theatre pre-

10 It has been suggested that Jaimes Freyre's interest in Scandinavia is really a disguise for descriptions of his native Bolivia, and
occupied itself with the same polemics as the pamphleteers, and was consequently only as current as the reign of the caudillo which it lauded.

During the turbulent, caudillo-ridden nineteenth century in Bolivia the novel made its first slow beginnings. All during the century it was fully romantic in its tendencies, for such was the vogue in Europe. The human being in his individual life was all that mattered. There was once again a complete lack of "ambiente social o geográfico."\textsuperscript{11} Romanticism began during the demagogic upheavals of Belzú, when it seemed briefly as if the Indians were to play a role at last in national life, and it continued to be the literary tendency through the turbulent reigns of fifteen presidents and caudillos while the Indian was reduced to baser servitude than ever before. Two international wars were fought and both were clumsily lost, and yet, in spite of all this upheaval and misery, "el convulsionado proceso histórico, no se refleja en la novela. Dos guerras--Pacífico y Acre--nada echan en el género. La novela romántica ignora la vida y la realidad nacional."\textsuperscript{12} Another critic notices two features in most of the early Bolivian novels—the extreme inequality thus shows an interest in his own country’s telluric environment. For this rather doubtful theory see Alfred Coester, The Literary History of Spanish America (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 468. Jaime Mendoza has also suggested this on several occasions. Jaime Mendoza, El maácizo boliviano (La Paz: Ministerio de Educación y Bellas Artes, 1957).


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 19.
of each writer's work, and a tendency to deal exclusively with foreign subjects. This extranjerismo, of course, did little to develop Bolivian letters; far less showing any social purpose, and often seems to come from a slavish imitation of foreign models, and a snobbish and somewhat infantile desire to be cosmopolitan.  

The first novel written in Bolivia was by the Argentinian Bartolome Mitre, who composed the brief romantic work Soledad in 1845. Eugene Sue, a strange choice from among the many French romantic writers, was the inspiration for many of the early novelists, but a novel written by a Bolivian did not appear until 1867 when Sebastián Delance wrote Los misterios de Sucre. Although in no way connected with Bolivian reality, Manuel María Caballero's romantic legend about Lake Poopó, La isla, is generally considered a superior novel within the romantic vein.  Other imitations of European works continued. Santiago Vaca Guzmán startles us. A Bolivian, faced with some rather basic situations in the everyday life around him, such as hunger, disease and slavery, he wrote Dias amargos in 1867, which he claimed to be "an analysis of the neurosis of suicide." Realism, certainly, was seldom present, and sentimentalism reigned supreme. Other romantic authors who are somewhat above the generally low standard are Felix Reyes  


15 Finot, Historia de la literatura boliviana, p. 184.
Ortiz, Mariano Ricardo Terrazas, the historical novelist Santiago Vaca Guzmán, and Bolivia's first woman writer, Lindaura Anzoátegui de Campero. Mariano Ricardo Terrazas is typical of the Bolivian writer of his time. He was educated in Paris and lived for a good part of his life in Lima. His first novel, *Misterios del corazón*, is about colonial society in Lima, and while the plot is held to be adequate, verisimilitude is wholly absent and the society depicted is the French one of *Le Tour de Nesle*.

The romantic movement, for all its faults, did produce one masterpiece in Bolivia. Nataniel Aguirre (1843-1888) wrote "la única novela romántica que se ha salvado del naufragio total en las aguas del olvido, que es Juan de la Rosa" (Cochabamba, 1885). It has become a classic, praised both at home and abroad. Aguirre was a true patriot within his own lights, fought in the War of the Pacific, opposed Melgarejo's brutal regime, and subsequently took an active and seemingly honest part in the politics of his day. His novel is a fictional history of the Bolivian struggle for independence in the Cochabamba region. It is full of action, patriotism, glory and war, and independence from Spain is seen as the only ultimate good. Although the author has no understanding of the common people, the novel is an amazing study of the mentality of the Creoles who fought for independence, and, in its way, is a fervent expression of deep patriotism, a sentiment too often missing and too

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often proclaimed in early Bolivia. 17 The book was intended to be the first in a saga or series similar to that of Galdós in Spain, but Aguirre died young and it remains unfinished. The influence of Victor Hugo is obvious.

One of the strangest literary aberrations ever to reach Latin America, and especially the Indian countries, was a short-lived, imported, Indianist vogue in the novel. Bolivia was not heavily affected by this absurdity. Alegría has called this novel "idealización del indio." 18 This romantic novel about the Indian drew its inspirational roots from France. Montaigne in his essay Des Cannibals pictured the Indian as a splendid type in perfect communion with nature before western civilization destroyed this American golden age. Voltaire also made several references to the corruption of the innocent Indians on the arrival of his base fellow Europeans, and Rousseau of course elevated the romance of the noble savage to a theory.

Chateaubriand was the romantic who most developed this French idea of the noble savage, and, like Montaigne, his handling of the idea had special reference to the inhabitant of the New World. His Atala represented the apex of French interest in exotic Indian Americana, was translated into Spanish in 1801, and immediately won overwhelm-


ing popularity among the writers of Latin America. Alberdi, who certainly should have known better, called Chateaubriand "el Homero de este siglo," Montalvo and Rodó both mentioned him with admiration. Fenimore Cooper, with his noble Mohicans was also much admired and was hailed as "el Walter Scott de América." \(^{19}\)

This school's most admired product in America is Juan León Mera's *Cumundá, o un drama entre salvajes* (1821), \(^{20}\) and this author and his work may be used to illustrate the basic paradox in this type of writing. Mera was a conservative, ultra-Catholic, a great admirer of Gabriel García Moreno and an equally fervent hater of Juan Montalvo the liberal reformer. Mera lived in the highland region of Ecuador where he was an upper class latifundista. Nowhere better could be found, one would assume, to examine the servile and brutalized Indians at first hand. Mera, ignoring the world about him, drew his inspiration from Chateaubriand, who had never been to Ecuador, considered *Atala* one of the world's great books, and wrote a novel about the Indians of the Amazon lowlands where they had almost died out, depicting in his book an Indian which his eyes must have told him daily did not exist!


terrible selva oriental del Ecuador, es más bien el gran jardín para
disiáico que Chateaubriand pretendía haber visto en el Nuevo Mun
do ... fundamentalmente un género falso.

That is a recent critic's opinion of the best of this genre. 21

Although few Bolivian writers, even during the romantic period,
treated this sanctified indigene as the principal subject of their writings,
the noble savage did permeate their novels for over half a century. Lin
daure Anzoátegui de Campero's Huallparrimachi (1894) was the only
readable attempt in this vein in Bolivia, a vein which did not end until
Clorinda Matto de Turner and Alcides Argüledas turned to a more realis
tistic approach.

The modernista movement has already been mentioned briefly,
and is one of the great modern movements in poetry. Bolivia can take
credit for having contributed three of the major poets of the movement,
Ricardo Jaimes Freyre, Gregorio Reynolds and Franz Tamayo. The
movement, however, draws little from America except in the psycholog-
ical and intuitive sense. The peoples and societies of the New World
find no reflection or interpretation of their way of life in the works of
the school, and many of the poets preferred to live and write in Europe,
which remained their true spiritual home. In Bolivia the movement con
fined itself almost completely to poetry and produced no major novelists

21 Arturo Uslar-Pietri, Breve historia de la novela hispanoameri-
cana (Caracas: Ediciones "Edime," 1954), p. 64. See also, Gerald
E. Wade and William H. Archer, "The Indianist Novel since 1889,"
Hispania, XXXVIII, 3 (1950), 211.
or essayists.

One nonfiction writer is remembered today as the outstanding Bolivian of the nineteenth century. Gabriel René-Moreno (1836-1908), a crucero from the Bolivian lowlands, was in many ways a typical man of his times. He was a historian, sociologist, journalist, teacher and librarian, and the influence of his works and ideas continued until the Chaco War, and even sometimes beyond. It is as a historian that he is chiefly remembered, for modern investigators regard him as the first "research" historian which the country produced, and many, mistakenly perhaps, regard him as unsurpassed in the field to this day. His history is painstaking, very factual, and beautifully written.

The major criticism leveled at René-Moreno is his deep and instinctive racial prejudice—a prejudice, moreover, which with characteristic honesty, he does not attempt to cloak with scientific theory, but which he is given to declaring in the most blatant and polemical fashion, as if to encourage argument and abusive answer. The great tragedy of his writing is that his interpretation and analysis of the events of Bolivian history are linked to his biases. René-Moreno roundly condemned the Indian and the mestizo, and lamented their allegedly pernicious effect on Bolivian development and social life. He was not scientific or positivistic about this attitude, but claimed to have some kind of intuitive understanding of collective character. The Indian, he says, "no sirve para nada," and the Bolivian cholo or mestizo is "alimaffa dainina" to
society. To condemn Indian blood, no matter how diluted, was to condemn the vast majority of the country's inhabitants, and René-Moreno was well aware of the only logical conclusion to be drawn from his theories—pessimism as to the future of the country. To avoid this in his writings he largely ignores the masses, confining himself to the power struggles and literary products of the Creole elite, referring to the lower segments of the population in sarcastic and bitter asides, and avoiding any attempts at relating the events which he assembled to the future state of the country, knowing that according to his views, the nation could not be properly said to have a future. 22

During the first three decades of the twentieth century many of the same trends which have been discussed continued. Romanticism did not die overnight and proved to be a particularly tenacious school. Most Bolivian writers continued to regard Europe as the center of the literary world, while many continued to prefer dealing with foreign subjects to writing about their homeland. Ostensibly most Bolivian intellectuals were still satisfied with the nation as it was, still had the mentality of a Ginés de Sepúlveda rather than that of a Bartolomé de las Casas, and still, subconsciously, were avoiding the issue of the life and society around them. As far as these writers were concerned Bolivia could remain feudal, caste-ridden, backward and torn by factional strifes. That

22. Gabriel René-Moreno was a prolific writer. Two of the more representative of his works are Estudios de literatura boliviana (Potosí: Editorial "Potosí," 1955), and, Narraciones históricas (Washington: Unión Panamericana, 1952).
the Indian had little or no place in national life while he constituted the
majority of the population did not seem to disturb them.

Several new factors, however, did emerge, and these innovations
gave Bolivian literature a small handful of exceptions, who, before the
Chaco War, showed concern over the state of their homeland. Their
very uniqueness and their influence on subsequent writers makes them
worthy of discussion at some length.

An important factor in the thinking of these few writers who were
to some extent engaged was, as elsewhere in Latin America, the Spanish
American War. Coming at the dawn of a new century (1898), this
war gave a jolt to the Latin American intelligentsia, and shocked them
to varying degrees from their torre de marfil or ivory tower. A few
brave and ignored writers began to talk of growing economic intrusion
from abroad, impending social revolutions, and the blatant inequalities
in Latin America's farcical democracies.

To this important influence on Latin American thinking must be
added, in Bolivia, the coming to power of the Liberal party in 1899.
However much the Liberals may appear in retrospect to be merely a
new version of the same old cliques of Creoles, yet at the time they
seemed to be something new, based on principles and a program. That
these principles and that program were concerned with such trivialities
as civil marriage, divorce, more prestige for the Creoles in the outlying
provinces, and the question of lay schools, rather than the misery
of the Indian, the problem of latifundia, the disenfranchisement of nine-
tenths of the population, and corruption in government is not of first
importance in this context. To a few troubled, inquiring intellectuals
it did seem that alast a party had arrived in power which was prepared
to do something to bring improvements. The Liberal era was also the
first time of real peace of any length since colonial days, with the con-
sequence that intellectual life was able to develop in an atmosphere
which Bolivia had not previously known.

The third and most important factor which gave rise to a relative
interest in Bolivia itself on the part of its writers was the change in
literature which was taking place in France, and indeed all over Europe
during the first two decades of the century. The new schools of positiv-
ism and realism now predominated, and with them scientific, or should
one say pseudoscientific examination of human society and its individ-
ual components. When this new positivism reached Latin America it
caused a few of the writers there to look at the state of their own sub-
continent—a fertile ground indeed for analysis of malfunctioning society!
In Spain itself costumbrismo still lingered as the most popular form of
literature. This was a detached, often amused and sardonic, examina-
tion of regional customs and characters, not much given to open moraliz-
ing, but often pointing an accusatory finger by implication. It was in
many ways a transition from romanticism to realism and proved to be
long-lived.
We have, then, a small group of men who begin to examine the Bolivian society around them. It was, of course, impossible for them to throw off their old intellectual habits overnight, so consequently it often seems as if the country which they were discussing was not Bolivia at all, so strange were the distortions which it underwent as these writers strove to fit it into their preconceived ideas of what their homeland was. One thing is, nevertheless, in their favor. If their criticisms of the predominant state of affairs in politics, philosophy and letters are more theoretical than practical, at least they are based to some extent on a Bolivian reality.

These early writers were also all extremists, every one. One may compare their situation with the first time that an individual looks upon a terrible and nauseating sight. The reaction is violent. On subsequent occasions the individual will be more rational and more composed. Similarly these early writers, opening their eyes to what Bolivia was really like, reacted wildly and produced some spontaneous, irrational solutions to their country's problems, all supposedly scientifically arrived at, of course, which later, calmer thinkers have modified. It has been said of these early social writers that "they did not bother to seek out basic routes, rather they grasped threads at random." 23

Today this small group of forerunners is admired in Bolivia, although their panicly solutions are sometimes attacked without sufficient

allowance being made for the handicaps under which their outlook was formed and their work written. They are called variously "the precursors" or "the searchers," and are considered as John the Baptist figures by modern Bolivian social writers and thinkers.

Alcides Argüedas (1879-1946) is the most famous of these precursors. The son of upper class latifundistas, he was a diplomat, journalist and politician, and lived abroad for over twenty-five years with only brief visits to his homeland. Out of sympathy with the new forces after the Chaco War, he alienated himself completely from President Germán Busch, but returned to play a part in Peñaranda's unpopular government. He died in Bolivia which always drew him back, even after long periods abroad.

His work may be divided into novels, sociology and history, and he is acclaimed as a master of all three kinds of writing. His major works are: *Pisagua, ensayo de novela* (1903), *Wata-Wara* (1904), *Vida criolla* (la novela de la ciudad) (1905), *Pueblo enfermo: contribución a la psicología de los pueblos hispanoamericanos* (1909), and *Raza de bronce*, a new version of *Wata-Wara* (1919). After *Raza de bronce*, he turned almost completely to writing the history of the Bolivian republican period and wrote many volumes on the subject. Argüedas has always

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been a much debated writer. Many of his books were met with storms of criticism—even abuse—when they were first published; then the author enjoyed a period of great popularity in the 1930's with the writers and intellectuals of the Latin American countries, being heralded as a leader of the new urge for self-discovery. Recently, especially since World War II, his writings have been criticized again, especially in Argüedas' own homeland, for their allegedly racist, negative and pessimistic outlook. Whatever the final decision on his writings may be, it seems certain that he will always occupy a significant place in Bolivian letters.

_Pisagua_, Argüedas' first novel, is a historical romance about the days of Melgarejo, who is roundly condemned.

_Hijo del montón_, al verse ascendido hasta lo más alto, los sedimentos de hostilidad contra todo lo que fuera superior y que llevaba adormecidos en su alma, despertaron avasalladores. De ahí su desprecio por todo, que se traducía en sus actos, de una crueldad salvaje.

His second novel, _Wata-Wara_, was later developed into _Raza de bronce_. _Vida criolla_ is his costumbriista novel of the town, and the society depicted is a provincial and hypocritical one in a small city. It is essentially a series of scenes describing the lives of the young intellectuals and social lions of _La Paz_ at the end of the nineteenth century.


Carlos Ramírez, the protagonist, is an honest, moralizing, somewhat neurotic journalist; he fails in everything because of the corruption of society, until at last he is driven out of his homeland on muleback by the police, like Queen Victoria's ambassador in the old legend. We are treated to farcical elections, corrupt journalism, a society of dilettantes, and the whole gamut of public vices.  

*Raza de bronce* is generally considered as Argüedas' greatest novel. It is about the Aymarás who live by the side of Lake Titicaca, a story of serfdom, murder and revenge in the feudal countryside of Creole latifundistas and brutalized Indians. In the early part of the novel the realistic descriptions are superb. Customs, descriptions of dress and ceremonies, and the vast scenery, give the novel a truly authentic flavor. The climax of the novel is the attempted rape and callous murder of an Indian girl by the young men of the hacienda, followed by an uprising of the previously cowed Indians, who burn down the hacienda with all its occupants. The evils of the land tenure system and caste barriers are clearly shown, but no solution is offered and no prophecies are made. Yet by implication the book and its theme are urges to reform.

Somos para ellos menos que bestias. El más humilde de los mestizos, o el más canalla, se cree infinitamente superior a los mejores de nuestra casta. Todo nos quitan ellos, hasta nuestras mujeres, y nosotros apenas nos vengamos haciéndoles pequeños males o dañando sus cosechas, como una débil reparación de lo mucho que nos

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30 Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 192-199. There are many other examples.
hacen penar. Y así, maltratados y sentidos, nos hacemos viejos y nos morimos llevando una herida viva en el corazón. ¿Cuándo ha de acabar esta desgracia? ¿Cómo hemos de liberarnos de nuestros verdugos?  

Argüedas' most famous book is his sociological treatise, Pueblo enfermo. In this book he attempts to treat the social body as a living organism, and to analyze in a quasi-medical fashion, its pathological weaknesses and illnesses. He attacks the evils of Bolivian society which have already been mentioned. Latifundista, church and government are seen as an interlocking, pernicious triumvirate which lives by exploitation. He was not alone in this new field. Bunge in Argentina and Zumeta in Colombia also studied the pathology of their respective countries.

After the completion of his novels and Pueblo enfermo, Argüedas turned to the writing of his monumental history of the republican period. All his historical writing is highly interpretative, and is really an historical explanation of the pathetic state of the Bolivian nation.  

Argüedas' writing, for all its apparent diversity, is somewhat obsessive. His various works and fields of study are actually the same theme seen from different viewpoints. There are three fundamental aspects to his thought in all his books.

His first, and probably most important theme is the psychology

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32 Argüedas, Obras . . . , Vol. II.
of the Bolivian races. When nobody seemed to have even noticed the real Indians, Argüedas affirmed that they constituted the great majority of the inhabitants of the country. But he was unhappy about it. If only Europeans could be encouraged to come in great numbers to that the indigenous peoples would be submerged, then, he believed, many of the nation's problems would be nearer solution. The Aymará of the altiplano was savage and taciturn, tied to a sterile soil, and lived in a quietist, withdrawn animalism.

Su carácter tiene la dureza y la aridez del yermo. También sus contrastes, porque es duro, renaceroso, egoísta, cruel, vengativo y desconfiado cuando odia. Sumiso y afectuoso cuando ama. Le falta voluntad, persistencia de ánimo, y siente profundo aborrecimiento por todo lo que se le diferencia. 33

The mestizo seems even worse to Argüedas. The Indian at least plays no part in national life, but the cholo or mestizo is perniciously active, and it is Argüedas's opinion that he inherits the worst traits of both races!

Del abrazo fecundante de la raza blanca, dominadora, y de los indios, raza dominada, nace la mestiza; trayendo por herencia los rasgos característicos de ambas, pero mezclados en una amalgama estupenda en veces, porque determina contradicciones en ese carácter que de pronto se hace difícil explicar, pues trae del ibero su belicosidad, su ensimismamiento, su orgullo y vanidad, su acen- tuado individualismo, su rimombancía oratoria, su invencible nepotismo, su fulanismo furioso, y del indio, su sumisión a los poderosos y fuertes, su falta de iniciativa, su pasividad ante los males, su inclinación indomable a la mentira, el engaño y la hipocresía, su vanidad exasperada por motivos de pura apariencia y sin base de...

33Argüedas; Pueblo enfermo, p. 36.
ningún gran ideal, su gregarismo, por último, y como remate de todo, su tremenda deslealtad. 34

The whites of Bolivia Argüedas considers to be a tiny minority, as indeed they are, with their way of life "mestizado," corrupted by the overwhelming pressure from the rest of the population. What is left of the once-proud white race is weak and demoralized. 35 Unfortunately, the author says, the mestizo class predominates, and consequently we have regional hates, megalomania, legislative farce and corruption, a rotten press, vain and stupid women, alcoholism, lack of personal hygiene, a history of unlettered tyranny and frequent chaos, intellectual sterility, and a host of other detailed faults—all because of the predominance of the cholo. 36 Here and there Argüedas seems to see glimmerings of hope, but his overall conclusion is pessimistic. He concludes by agreeing with Simón Bolívar, whom he quotes. He of course is referring only to Bolivia.

La América es ingobernable; los que han servido a la revolución han arado en el mar. La única cosa que se puede hacer en América es emigrar. 37

In the republican era which he studied he found only blood and mud.

This leads to Argüedas' second great preoccupation—politics—the one activity all Bolivians love. But, Argüedas claims, in Bolivia it is not a debate over how best to lead the nation towards its true interests, but rather politics are concerned with power and peculation.

34Ibid., p. 57.  
35Ibid., pp. 61-63.  
36Ibid., p. 61.  
37Ibid., p. 179.
Personal ambition is all-important. The electoral and power struggle is not a comparison of merit and capability but of ability to seize power and deceive the masses. 38

Argüedas' third obsession, to use perhaps an overstatement, was Bolivian history. Although his History of Bolivia was his longest book by far, it was really only an amplification of Pueblo enfermo and a collection of massive evidence to back his theories.

What then does one say about such massive and prolonged denunciation of Bolivia by a Bolivian? Argüedas was a man of positivist formation. He wished to study society and history scientifically like his masters Comte, Le Bon and Taine, whom he cited frequently. But at heart he was completely unscientific because he was first and foremost a moralist. Basically he did not wish to investigate, for it was not new knowledge that he sought but rather an opportunity to use what he already knew to give an anguished protest against the shame that to him was his native land. He was a biblical prophet, chastizing his people and cursing his times, damning them and threatening them with catastrophies if they did not change. Yet he never really told them how to change, and the two great faults of Bolivia as he saw them, the race and the impossible geography, surely cannot be changed. Bolivia, he insisted, was backward because of its own faults and not because of outside influences, yet its

38 Argüedas, Obras ..., Vol. II, p. 1090.
faults, he claims, are beyond remedy.

Argüedas' writings have been heavily criticized by modern Bolivians and Latin Americans. Calcagno blames his "posición antiautóctona," and his belief that Bolivia will become increasingly more mestizo and therefore inevitably more chaotic, as responsible for the idea that Bolivia is an impossibility as a nation. 39 Many critics do not attack Argüedas' denunciations per se; they simply wish to explain these evils in another way. These failings are, to a greater or lesser degree, man's failings all over the world, so that Argüedas has blamed Bolivians for universal faults. Other opponents of Argüedas claim that Bolivia is still in its formative stage and has not yet reached maturity, which will bring a knowledge of its political and social responsibilities. José Enrique Rodó wrote to Argüedas telling him that Bolivia's failings were Latin American failings, and that "Pueblo niño" would have been a better title than "Pueblo enfermo" for his book. Gustavo A. Navarro, a Marxist, thinks "Pueblo explotado" would be even better. 40 Essentially Argüedas is attacked for being too pessimistic and negative, a fate which often befalls the overcultivated man in Latin America and other backward countries. Faced with shocking historical reality on the one hand,


and the declamatory, loud optimism of the unwise on the other, he often becomes defeatist.

One of this writer's great failings, surely, was his utter disregard of some basic cause and effect relationships. If one grants for the moment that the cholo is evil, then is he evil because he is a cholo or because of the way Bolivia forces cholos to act? Has the cholo corrupted the country or the opposite? Argüedas so often forgets that the misery and abjectness of the indigenous peoples in Bolivia is the result of poor physical and economic treatment. To condemn these masses is to condemn the nation since all of the economy of Bolivia depends on the Indian. Even a tutelary dictatorship of the white race, which he suggests, is useless without the raw material provided by Indian industry and commerce. Argüedas' racist ideas eventually became so extreme that he became a fervent admirer of Hitler, yet with it all we see a tormented writer, who would like to think well of his country, if he only could, who has a deep love for his patria, yet cannot find anything lovable about it. 41

The first of the precursors or seachers was certainly extreme in his views. Tamayo, the thinker whom we must next consider, was equally extreme in the opposite direction. Franz Tamayo (1879-1956) was a journalist and politician; like Argüedas he was educated principally in

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Europe. Originally Tamayo became known as one of Bolivia's better modernista poets. Solitary, taciturn, and epicurean, this "ivory tower" school seemed to suit his personality and literary inclinations.

His deep social convictions and disgust with the handling of the daily affairs of the nation finally provoked him into writing a series of essays wherein he propounded his social philosophy. La creación de la pedagogía nacional is not primarily concerned with education, but is an excuse for an explanation of his views on Bolivia and its inhabitants.  

Tamayo is an indigenista, to such an extent, in fact, that his book seems to be a direct refutation of Pueblo enfermo, published the year before. Argüedas, a sociologist and positivist, concentrated on two things, race and geography, as the determining factors in the formation of the social and individual characteristics of his country, and, denouncing the predominant cholo, sought the Europeanization of Bolivia either by immigration or education. Tamayo's theories are completely opposed and his book contains veiled attacks on Argüedas. He also admits race and geography as the determining factors but draws different conclusions. The pernicious racial factor, to him, was the white, the conquistador and his descendants, that "invasión de mendigos hambrientos, descastados y feroces," people of "sangre advenediza y aventurera."  

42 Franz Tamayo, Creación de la pedagogía nacional (La Paz: Editoriales de "El Diario," 1944).

43 Ibid., p. 70.

44 Ibid., p. 194.
is the Indian, he declares, the ancestral product of the geographic environment, and then, going down the scale, the cholo, in so far as he is Indian. The salvation of Bolivia, then, lies in the repudiation of the colonial heritage and its alien European traits. Tamayo's extremism becomes clear in his rejection of all European philosophical and political idealism as a false and artificial product of French romanticism. The theories behind western education—humanism, liberalism, the scientific approach and intellectual objectivity—are all attacked.

¡Ideal de la humanidad! Esa es una irrealidad que no ha existido nunca sino como un producto artificial y falso de romanticismo francés, y que las naciones no han practicado jamás, ni hoy ni antes. 45

He mocked Comte, Taine, Tarde and Guyau, praising Goethe, Fichte and Nietzsche, the German advocates of the theories of collective will-power. Tamayo's essential thesis has two main aspects. The progress of peoples is not based on intelligence, but on effort, will and sacrifice, so that the new oracle for Bolivian schools "no será el de 'haceos sabios' sino el de 'haceos fuertes.' Esta es la solución del problema total de la vida." 46 For Tamayo, therefore, energy and the will to power are everything, are the elements which move people, which make them capable of action, which enable them to resist enemies, struggle and win, thus giving them an historical mission. "Lo que hay que profesar en las escuelas bolivianas es la energía nacional." 47 One of the great irrational

forces which he admires is nationalism. He wants to form Bolivians, not pale reflections of Germany or France.

The second aspect of his thought is his application of his theories to the race and geography of Bolivia. Looking around him in Bolivia, Tamayo finds that the Indian is not dominated by intelligence and subtlety, is not tormented by doubts or even by thought, but is rather an organizer and doer; he is the great depository of national energy and force.48 He is will, not reason. "La verdad es que el indio ha querido siempre, y ha pensado poco."49

Tamayo reinforces his espousal of the Indian by geographical determinism. Before men can be great, he believes, they have to be products of their ambiente, completely integrated with their telluric environments. "La tierra hace el hombre, y es en la tierra que hay que buscar la última razón de su pensamiento, de su obra, de su moralidad."50 The Indian is the natural product of the Andean environment, and is therefore the only true Bolivian to Tamayo, who proposed for the Indian race in Bolivia the role which the Aryan race was supposed to play in Nazi Germany.51 The Indian alone was in harmony with the world around him, full of will and action, not intellectual confusion.

48Ibid., p. 133. 49Ibid., p. 151. 50Ibid., p. 172.

51Francovich, op. cit., p. 55. The MNR's addiction to many of Tamayo's pro-Indian and nationalistic ideas later helped to earn them the name of a crypto-Nazi party in America.
Tamayo goes even further. Since the Andean area is a magnificent and exceptional area, then, ipso facto, the race which it has produced will be exceptional too. In this respect he has complete optimism. His whole instinctive, irrational, violent philosophy may be summed up in one declamatory quotation.

La base de toda moralidad superior está en una real superioridad física; y en este sentido, lo que hay más moral, es decir más fuerte en Bolivia, es el indio: después el mestizo, por su sangre india, y en último término el blanco, que en el instante histórico que vivimos es diputado, ministro, juez, poeta, profesor, cura, intelectual ... y para decirlo todo de una vez, ¡parásito!52

Many of the basic weaknesses in Tamayo's philosophy are obvious. It is impossible, for example, to completely eradicate the Spanish colonial heritage at this late stage, certainly at least in so far as language and religion are concerned. Tamayo himself wrote his book in Spanish, not Quechua. It is equally unfeasible to reject western technology and science--adapt it to the national scene, yes--to exclude it, impossible, for after all many of Tamayo's own ideas are German. It is even more contradictory to hope to instill "the will to power" (haceos fuertes) in a people whose geographical location and past history have given them a name for passive quietism and withdrawal. Tamayo also perverts the facts when he claims that all the energetic figures of the South American continent, whether good or bad, have had Indian blood. One need only mention San Martín, O'Higgins, Rivadavia, Artigas, Sarmiento and

52 Tamayo, op. cit., p. 138.
Martí. Unfortunately Tamayo has too many despots on his list to make for comfort or enthusiasm!

One may, however, claim that Tamayo seems nearer to reality than Argüedas, although both must be classified as impractical theorists. Tamayo's indigenismo is based on the vast majority of the population of Bolivia; and his idea is correct, surely, in that it is in the Indian, and on his rehabilitation and reincorporation into national life, that any new social and cultural advance has to be built.  

Tamayo was the first of a series of Bolivian thinkers whose ideas have been classified by Francovich and others as "una mística de la tierra," an attempt to find what exactly Bolivia is and what is wrong with it through mystical geographical determinism.  

Jaime Mendoza (1874-1939), the third outstanding precursor, was a physician, poet, publicist and novelist. He was born in Sucre and always considered it as his native city. Animated by an active social conscience he worked as a doctor in the mines ofUncia and Llallagua, where, in direct contact with reality, he began to scribble his ideas. He became well known as a social worker, and began the first schools, hospitals and recreation centers in the mining areas, fighting continually

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53 For a more complete discussion of Tamayo, Zum Felde is again an excellent source. See, Zum Felde, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 497.

against the widespread alcoholism. The murder of his mother at her finca by bandits, and his experiences as a medical officer at the front during the Acre War, sobered his outlook, and he began to write intensively. In Chile he met Gabriel René-Moreno who encouraged his developing vocation. He then spent some time in Europe where he associated with Rubén Darío, Rufino Blanco Fombona, and other Latin American intellectuals. On his return to Bolivia he entered politics and was one of the strongest voices for negotiation and compromise in the Chaco dispute.

Mendoza's writings are extremely uneven. It was as a novelist that he first gained prominence, especially with his first publications En las tierras del Potosí (1911), and Páginas bárbaras (1917), novels devoted to exposing the terrible misery of the social outcasts, the miners of the altiplano and the rubber gatherers of the Beni, respectively. The first novel in particular earned him great acclaim both at home and abroad, and is the first novel to be written on the Bolivian miner's appallingly dangerous and downtrodden life. En las tierras del Potosí earned him the name of "el Gorki boliviano" from Rubén Darío. Blanco Fombona was particularly impressed by the evocation of the altiplano, and said that he felt the main character in the book was the howling, icy

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wind. The protagonist, Martín Martínez, leaves his law studies because he hears that there are fortunes to be made in the mines. He works in Llallagua, Catavi, Cancañiri and Uncía, becoming increasingly overwhelmed by the misery and brutality around him. Instead of obtaining promotion Martínez is pushed aside because of his contacts with, and known sympathy for, the lowly miner. He returns to gentle, peaceful Sucre disillusioned, poor, aged and shamed, but having learned. Mendoza protests but proposes no solutions. His is the attitude of the costumbrista realist--picturesque, socially involved, but rather detached.

From his stark picture of the altiplano mines he went to an altogether different atmosphere in Páginas bárbaras, a novel about the selvas in the northwest of Bolivia at the time of the rubber boom, when the "árbol de oro" was king. Again his personal experiences form the background of his book. He depicts semicolonial life in the tropics, with no escape possible from the oppressors except into the murderous jungle.

Mendoza's other novels are less important. They deal with local

56 Guzmán, op. cit., p. 70, and Francovich, op. cit., p. 72.

57 Jaime Mendoza, En las tierras del Potosí (Barcelona: Imprenta Viuda de Luis Tasso, 1911).

customs, the life of the small, provincial towns, and old Indian legends.

Latterly it is as a sociologist and philosopher that Mendoza has become better known. With his own variations on the theme, he belonged to the school of the "mística de la tierra" started by Tamayo. After several pamphlets and books discussing various aspects of his belief in mystical geographic determinism, Mendoza was stimulated into summing up his arguments in one volume, *El macizo boliviano*, by attacks on Bolivia by critics who saw the country as a geographical impossibility. His basic idea is that the Bolivian telluric environment and geographical characteristics are the main influence in the formation of the people and the nation, and that this geography logically consists of one unit. His basic idea is that "el medio hace el hombre." In all his major books we can see, paraphrasing Blanco Fombona, that the principal character is the Bolivian geographical environment, for which Mendoza seems to have an especially well-developed affection and sensibility. This intuitive understanding of the vast, arid plateau is perhaps why his writings on the rural areas of the country are so superior to his attempts at urban description.

The Andean mass, enfolding the altiplano, is one indivisible unit, and the lowlands around it compliment it, making the whole a natural and geographical single nation. The *macizo* moulds the men who live

on it, giving them characteristics peculiar to them alone, and forming a distinctive culture. This geographical imperative was the basis for the civilization of Tiahuanacu, forced the Spaniards to make a separate audiencia of Charcas, and the liberators, against their wishes, to set up a separate republic. From these observations the author draws an optimistic outlook for Bolivia. Argüedas saw the immensity and diversity of the geography, believed that it dwarfed man, and predicted disaster, whereas Mendoza saw the stupendous geography as an elevating factor and predicted greatness. Present faults, Mendoza claims, are because the inhabitants have not yet had the time to grow into harmony with their telluric environment, another version of Roó's Pueblo niño theory, but that the Indian, the most adapted race, will lead the way to a new nation. If the rulers of the nation become adjusted to the land in which they live the country's problems will solve themselves. "El Alto Perú, pues sin darse cuenta tendería a verificar una obra de reconstrucción, o mejor de renacimiento nacional sobre el mismo bloque montañoso que antaño sirviera de plataforma a otras razas que llenaron aquí grandes misiones."61

Mendoza's optimism leads him even further. Bolivia is destined, because of its geography and position, to be the heartland of the new and glorious Latin America, and will be its crossroads and nerve center.62

60Ibid., pp. 219-220. 61Ibid., p. 220. 62Ibid., pp. 181-193.
Mendoza's thesis is gentle and reasonably written compared to the other precursors whom we have discussed, and it is fairly convincing, being one of the best attempts at the historico-sociological essay in Latin America. To say, nevertheless, that the geographical conformation of the political unit has ultimately determined the national psychology and collective conscience, appears on its face to be yet another exaggeration. The close link with the earth or telluric environment can be upheld, perhaps, in the case of the Indian, but would be difficult in the case of the white or the mestizo, who belong usually to the Europeanized city and have very few ties with the countryside, and it is precisely the white and mestizo who have played all the important roles in the country's history since the conquest. An environment can help to form a literature or a school of art, and its influence on a people should not be underestimated, but to claim absolute pre-eminence for it is not now generally thought to be realistic.

Apart from the three famous precursors a few lesser writers turned more to their own country for their inspiration. Armando Chirveches (1881-1926), was a poet and novelist who lived much of his romantic life in Paris and died there by his own hand. He is best remembered as a novelist of magnificent, rich style and costumbrista inclinations. All his novels but one are set in Bolivia, and all are short. His best novels are considered to be La candidatura de Rojas and Casa solarieg. In both, in a gently ironic and often jocular manner, he paints
a colorful picture of the provincial politics, romance, religion and morality of Bolivia's small cities. *La candidatura de Rojas* (1909) is a tale of the mockery which is made of democracy in Bolivia's petty politics at that time.63 Elections and caciquismo are both described, with the inevitable romantic "hangover," an unhappy love affair. *Casa solariega* (1916) is very anticlerical, and concerns the struggles of a youth to reach the top in his native town. The book is about Sucre which Chirveches hardly knew. Questions of clerical influence, civil marriage and divorce are debated furiously, and it all seems rather inconsequential to the modern reader.64 In his later books Chirveches returned to full romanticism. His work cannot be called true social protest or analysis, but rather a sophisticated examination of local foibles and vices among the members of the upper classes. At least it can be said in Chirveches favor that these upper classes were Bolivian.

Gustavo A. Navarro, born in 1898, always writes under the pseudonym of Tristan Morof, and is often considered a precursor in the political rather than the sociological sense. He spent a period in jail when very young, and then later served as Bolivian consul in various parts of Europe for several years. He was a professor in the University of Mexico from 1928 until 1930, travelling subsequently in the

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64 Ibid., pp. 181, 253 and 289.
United States, Cuba, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, being expelled from country after country, and spending another period in jail in Bolivia after Argentina had extradited him. Busch's government allowed him to return in 1937, and he has stayed in the country since then, where he has been in turn leader of a socialist party, deputy, secretary general under Urriolagoitia, and a university teacher. He has now retired from politics and turned to costumbrismo and social satire in his writings.

His career is political rather than literary, he was a pamphleteer rather than a writer, and calls himself a precursor of the National Revolution. It was he, certainly, who coined the phrase "tierras al indio y minas al estado." He preached the coming of the world socialist revolution to Bolivia, and was the country's only Marxist of note until the 1930's. After leaning towards Communism, he became slowly disillusioned with what was taking place in Russia, and now is an advocate of social justice in a pragmatic way. He seems to have realized that none of the inflexible, external political philosophies of the moment can fit into the unique Bolivian situation. Another thinker of less inflammatory socialist views was Ignacio Prudencio Bustillos. Both men gave the impression that they were discussing Europe in their writings, so political and international was their outlook. Many of the actual social conditions in Bolivia itself seemed secondary or nonexistent to them.

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Apart from the handful of precursors whom we have examined, many other writers continued to follow traditional patterns in Bolivia during the first three decades of the century. Poetry continued to be essentially romantic and frivolous, and the novel continued to grow more popular, at least in quantity if not in quality. Victor M. Ibañez wrote about Aymará legends and folklore. Walter Carvajal discussed the gradual decay of some of the old colonial families. Alfredo Guillén Pinto, Roberto Leiton, and Luis Toro Ramallo, later to become important, had not yet found their true directions. One very entertaining novel is José Aguirre Achá's Platonia,\textsuperscript{66} scenes, he tells us, in Latin American "democracy." The lives are traced of three families in Olympia, the capital of the imaginary republic of Platonia. It is delightful, yet biting farce.

A history of Bolivian writing before the Chaco War is somewhat depressing. Basically literature had been frivolous, imitative, provincial, and the occupation of Europeanized dilettantes. Between 1909 and 1930 some change is noticeable. A small group of precursors, despised by their contemporaries, criticized the predominant ideas in politics, philosophy and letters. If their criticisms were more theoretical than practical, yet at least they were based to some extent on a Bolivian rather than a European reality. Their's is a criticism which, "va des-

\textsuperscript{66}José Aguirre Achá, Platonia (La Paz: Imprenta eléctrica, 1923).
mantelando posiciones y abriendo camino a las ideas que en la segunda mitad del siglo adquieren un indiscutible predominio. It was, then, a glimmer of hope. Customs and social habits became a great preoccupation, and picturesque costumbrismo exposed a few social evils; yet, as Guzmán points out, the literature had not really changed. It still had no drive or direction, still aped the realism and positivism of Europe rather than creating one of its own, and still proposed very few solutions.

Essentially writing in Bolivia until 1930 was a fair reflection of the state of the country. A small intelligentsia ignored the problems and peoples of their own land. During the Liberal interlude a small frown of worry appeared both in politics and in philosophy, but, despite the attractiveness of much of the writing of the Bolivian elite, it was no more a product of Bolivia than was the small, Europeanized group which governed the country. In 1930 Bolivia was as economically, politically, socially and intellectually miserable as during colonial days, and few of its intellectuals had begun to be aware of it.

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67 Francovich, op. cit., p. 41.
CHAPTER III

BOLIVIA'S LITERATURE SINCE THE CHACO WAR:

A WAVE OF SOCIAL PROTEST

At the close of the third decade of this century Bolivia’s cultural past was little better than a wavering thread composed of a few brave but isolated strands. These occasional intellectuals, understandably unimpressed by their homeland, had, for the most part, ignored it, seeking their inspiration and cultural affiliations on the European continent. Bolivia’s poor cultural record was a fair reflection of the state of the country. It had lain dormant for centuries, gradually losing territory to its voracious neighbors north, south, east, and west, and was misgoverned since independence by a long series of brutal, often unlettered caudillos. In 1930 Bolivia was as economically, politically, socially, and intellectually miserable as during colonial days, and few of her intellectuals had become aware of it.

Much study is needed of the national neuroses caused by defeat in war. We have as examples the response of the "generación de 98" in Spain, and the much more frightful German response to the defeat inflicted at Versailles after World War I. All evidence would seem to indicate that defeat in war is a trauma which, if the war was on a large
enough scale, causes a nation-wide desire for change, a national urge to prove that the country is not so lowly as its defeat would seem to indicate.

From 1932 until 1936 Bolivia fought the disastrous Chaco War, losing yet another slice of her territory as the consequence of defeat in one of the most savage conflicts of the bloody twentieth century. The Chaco War has often been called the Latin American overture to World War II, playing a role similar to that of the Spanish Civil War as a testing ground for modern armaments and tactics.

The nation had never experienced national involvement on such a scale, and the generations which participated in the struggle are, psychologically speaking, completely cut off from those that went before. The war acted as a national psychiatrist suddenly revealing to Bolivians the sickness and poverty of their country. During the terrible Chaco summers evils were discovered which the city intellectuals had not even imagined, far less seen, and a spirit of revenge, resentment, suspicion and agitation was born among these young thinkers which released a social ferment that is still continuing, and which in 1952, eventually caused a sweeping social revolution comparable to that of Mexico.

The difference between the Bolivian mentality before and after this war, then, is so vast that it can hardly be overstated. During the discussion to follow this change in mentality should become manifest. All Bolivians today are aware of it, but perhaps Fernando Diez de
Medina has summed it up best.

El conflicto del Chaco que estalla en 1932 y se prolonga hasta 1935, es el sismo más fuerte que soporta la nación. El drama del Chaco abre ancho surco en las conciencias. Las generaciones anteriores a 1932 hablan un lenguaje; las que vienen después otro muy distinto. ... La campaña en el sudeste es un hito decisivo en la formación de la nacionalidad.¹

Let us then look for the written evidence of this sweeping revolutionary change in the nation.

When the modern Latin American intellectual feels a prick of annoyance he is wont to write a pamphlet or political article. When he has thought about a social and political problem for some time, and has experienced some of the consequences, he withdraws from his everyday life for a month or a year, and writes, more often than not, a novel of social protest.² While this is at best a sweeping generalization, yet the fact is that the novel of social protest is the predominant form of writing in Latin America today. Some, especially the searchers after esthetic delight, deprecate the Latin American preoccupation with the social novel, but even they admit that this novel dominates Latin American literature and is likely to do so for some time to come.³

¹Fernando Diez de Medina, Literatura boliviana (La Paz: Alfonso Tejerina, 1953), pp. 325-326.


³Much Spanish American literature—and, in my opinion much of the best of it—has been written and is being written by authors not directly preoccupied with nationalism or with social discontent. "Luis Monguíó, "Nationalism and Social Discontent as Reflected in Spanish
As in Latin America, so, in this case, in Bolivia: since the Chaco War there has been a flood of novels, novels which have lashed out in all directions in their haste to come to grips with a newly-discovered reality. Much of this is only part of the continent-wide wave of social protest since the 1930's, but that cannot possibly explain the nature or volume of the change. A few of these novels may be great, the vast majority are unbelievably bad; but in them their writers try to give form to the passions of their time, the emotions and ideas which are shaking Bolivia. Not for them the careful research of the historian nor the accurate data of the sociologist, but a vivid, personal "J'accuse" which they hope will move people, convert them, and bring action. Revolutionary change is primarily a psychological and emotional development as far as people are concerned, and for this reason the Bolivian novel of social protest is a mirror of emotions in the country today. The social scientists may tell us how things truly are, but in a revolutionary setting what matters is not how things are, but how the changing, emotionally charged society believes things are. Monguíó, in spite of his reservations about much of this writing, has again grasped this point. "This nationalistic and revolutionary prose and poetry is, on the one hand, a

American literature," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CCCXXIV, (March, 1961), 64. Yet though Monguíó laments the inferior quality of many Latin American novels of social protest he is able to see that they have a role as mirrors of social discontent. Luis Monguíó, *Estudios sobre literatura hispanoamericana y española* (México: Studium, 1958),
prime mover of a state of mind, or, perhaps, more accurately of a
state of feeling in Spanish America."4

Instinctively, then, the Bolivian intellectuals, as elsewhere in
Latin America, have turned more to the novel than to the other forms
of writing to express their revolutionary attack on injustice and their
desire for rapid change. Since the novel is so predominant, it is this
form of writing which must be considered first when examining Bolivian
literature since the Chaco War.

The war itself produced a rash of novels. In this burning steppe-
land the young Bolivian intellectuals experienced something so beyond
their understanding, so shocking to their sensibilities and confidence,
that they have continued to write about it ever since. Even today one
can find hardly a novel or a short story which does not contain a refer-
ence to the war, or which does not have the ghosts and tragedies of the
war as minor characters lurking in the background. The novels where-
in the Chaco is the principal character are numerous, and, it must be
admitted, the vast majority are poorly written, feebly constructed, and
well deserve the oblivion to which they have long since been consigned.
All of them, nevertheless, do tell the reader about the Chaco, and more
important, all of them tell the reader how the Bolivian soldiers felt
about the Chaco War and the effect it had upon them. A handful, perhaps

4Monguíé, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and
Social Sciences, CCCXXXIV, 71.
two or three, do so brilliantly.⁵

Many authors begin with the romantic image of war, the false patriotism, and the gradual, artificially induced, heady growth of a spurious war fever on the altiplano before the actual fighting starts. These young intellectuals and workers, one gathers, like so many lambs to the slaughter, lived in a world of romance and glory, little dreaming of the true nature of modern battle.⁶ Even more tragic was the pre-war position of the Indian vis-à-vis the incipient conflict. He was completely confused about the reasons for the war, where it was to be waged, and even what the name of his own side was. In novel after novel he flees from the recruiters for he has no reason to dislike the distant Paraguayans or pilas, but every reason to dread the approach of the white and mestizo recruiters from the city. Those who flee slink back to find their houses burned and their women abused. The fleeing, hiding, "draft dodging" Indians, known as emboscados, are characters in almost every novel. Occasionally the Indians' terror at the thought of having to serve under their white masters was so great that they rose

⁵The following works contain most of the novels written about the Chaco War: W. Knapp Jones, "The Literature of the Chaco War," Hispania, XXI, 1 (1958), 33-46, and F. Diez de Medina, Literatura boliviana, p. 341.

in organized revolts on the altiplano. These revolts were put down with
great brutality, the government arguing, logically enough it would seem,
from their point of view, that armed revolt when the country was at war
was treason of the worst sort. But what of the Indians' point of view,
when many of them did not even realize that they were Bolivians?

The idealistic city youths and the sullen Indians made the long
journey together down to the Chaco, where the small town of Villa Mon-
tes was used as the Bolivian staging area. Many of the youths stared long
and hard at the masses of sullen Aymarás and gentle Quechuas, never
previously having realized that their native land was so overwhelm-
ingly Indian. The Chaco itself, however, proved to be the biggest shock
of all to their romantic dreams of war. Some had imagined the Chaco
to be a green selva of parrots and monkeys. A few, proud of themselves
for being so much more knowledgeable and realistic, had thought of the
region as a desert like the Atacama, where many Bolivians had worked
in the nitrate industry. To their dismay the Chaco was neither, and yet
had the worst aspects of both types of geography.

El Chaco es una isla en medio del continente. No se parece a
nada de lo que habíamos visto antes ahora. No es el trópico suntuo-
so, ni el desierto árido. Es un engendro de ambos. Es algo en que

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7 Oscar Cerruto, Aluvión de fuego (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones
Ercilla, 1935). This book, written in 1932, describes at length the ac-
tivities of a regiment which devoted its time to hunting Indian embosca-
dos, and crushing Indian uprisings. See especially pp. 72-115.
The effect of this geographical environment on the men is the strongest single topic in the novels about the war. Again and again the writers talk of the loneliness, heat, drought, tension, and fevers which they had to undergo. When it did rain, it rained in torrents which quickly disappeared in the loose, gravelly soil. On the few occasions when it did turn cold, the violent surazos from the Antarctic froze the men through their tropical clothes. When the retreats to the north began mud was a constant menace.

Lodo, lodo, lodo. ... Hay que estar aquí para saber lo que es el lodo. Es peor que el arenal. El lodo es la negación, es enemigo de todo, es el pus de la tierra. Hasta nos ha enseñado a caminar de otra manera.\textsuperscript{9}

The conditions begin to affect the men strongly and strangely. Some have hallucinations, all become superstitious and quarrelsome. The veneer of civilization, we gather, that has protected the city dwellers from seeing the stark realities of their country, has begun to crack, and the young idealists are now, at last, open to the truth as it comes to them, ugly though that truth may be. Among the young white or mestizo officers many crack altogether or are killed by the Chaco. The innocent, guileless youths are not only mentally unprepared, but their

\textsuperscript{8}Luis Toro Ramallo, \textit{Chaco (del cuaderno de un sargento) (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Nacimiento, 1936)}, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p. 130.
bodies cannot withstand the tropical conditions. Thirst and sunstroke seem to be the greatest dangers, and tales of small groups of men lost in the vastness of the Chaco, struggling towards distant water holes, are repeated so often that they become monotonous. The most famous of these tales of thirst is "El pozo" by Augusto Céspedes. An advanced post of Bolivian soldiers has been told to dig a well to relieve the water shortage. For weeks on end they dig through the dry gravel, asking permission periodically to halt the useless search. The dry hole begins to appear to their fevered and exhausted minds as a personal enemy. Some days they seem to see water everywhere, seeping into the deep hole, and then they dig with superhuman efforts. On other occasions the air is so stifling that the men cannot stay for more than minutes in the pit without choking and losing consciousness. Eventually the men are no longer digging to look for water, but simply because they seem to have been digging all their lives and it is their fate. After seven months of toil they are told to stop— that there is obviously no water there. But by now strange things have happened to the well in the minds of the soldiers. Many behind the lines have heard of it and have spread strange rumors that it is a bubbling spring. Even the Paraguayans believe this. They attack, hoping to win this fabled well, but an even stranger hallucination obsesses the men who dug this pit. It is their well, part of them and part of their lives, so they defend it desperately as if it had water in it. Casualties are enormous on both
sides, and the dead are thrown into the gaping hole with a light covering of earth. There it remains, says the author, the deepest hole in the Chaco. The symbolism in this powerful short story is evident. We see the futility of the whole war, the puniness of the men in the vastness of the region, like a group of ants scurrying round a hole, and above all the insatiable appetite of the Chaco for human lives, as it swallows men up both literally and figuratively. In the entire story there is not one elevating factor. Every aspect of the whole task was futile.  

Another factor which should have been obvious to the Bolivians comes out repeatedly. The pilas or Paraguayans know the monte, or wild terrain, far better than the Bolivians. The mountain people are lost, but the Paraguayans often find water in territory where their opponents died of thirst. To combat this ignorance the Bolivians try to use their own lowlanders, the cruceños and benianos, as guides and trackers. Some of them are miraculously good at this, and appear to have some kind of sixth sense about the region, but they are too few and often too unwilling. Here again the lack of integration in Bolivia’s caste-ridden and regionalistic society is made plain. The lowlanders and the soldiers from the altiplano instinctively distrust and dislike one

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10 Augusto Céspedes, Sangre de mestizos; relatos de la guerra del Chaco (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Nacimiento, 1936), pp. 26-49.
another, and the lowland cambas sometimes feel more racial and cultural affinity with their enemies of the moment, the Guaranís.\textsuperscript{11}

If the lowland Bolivians do not understand their role in the war, and the townspeople of the mountains are completely disoriented and shaken by it, one can imagine the situation of the Aymara and Quechua Indian peasants. Unable to understand their officers, terrorized by modern warfare, dazed by the lowland terrain, they are reduced to the state of pathetic animals. The Indian, we are told, is a simple man of vast horizons and mountains. Suddenly he is plunged into sand, scrub, and woods. Many, having proved absolutely useless at the front, were moved back to load ammunition and perform the menial tasks of the army. Hundreds deserted, or allowed themselves to be taken prisoners. A few resorted to the device of shooting themselves in the left hand or arm, but this trick soon became known to the officers, and all izquierdistas, as they were dubbed, were shot for the deed. Such was the suffering of many of the repetes, as the Indian common soldiers were called, that they actually welcomed the quick escape from the Chaco which could be obtained by legal execution. The sight of one of these miserable strangers amongst his own people, waiting eagerly for his own execution, enrages Leytón.

¿No, no era el indio a quien, en estos casos, se debe procesar! A quienes hablaba que someter primero a las sanciones de la justicia era a los que llevaban sobre sí el peso de la responsabilidad, ... ¿Qué obligación podía tener el indio, esclavo abyecto, con una Nación que en más de un siglo de vida independiente nada hizo por la regeneración de su raza? ¿No es el indio en Bolivia un proscripto en el seno mismo de su patria?  

Again the hidden absurdities of Bolivian society have been revealed.  

How can a subject race be forced to fight for a country which it does not know? In spite of the Indians' lack of patriotism or enthusiasm the young intellectuals are forced to admire these primitive men whom they have so recently met and understood. The stoicism and indifference to death of the Indian fill the white Bolivians with amazement, and, barely discernible, there begins to grow within them a pride and hope for the future based on the Indian. For the Indian, even if he plans desertion and cowardice, never cracks or collapses.  

Muchos culpan al indio de los fracasos de la campaña. En realidad, el indio carece de muchas condiciones esenciales de la guerra. Es sobrio, es fuerte, es sufrido, se hace matar casi con indiferencia, pero le faltan altivez, amor propio, iniciativa.  

And once again the novelist does not hesitate to place the blame squarely where he thinks it belongs.  

Y sin embargo, no se puede culpar al indio de esos defectos. Somos los blancos y los mestizos los culpables. Cuatro siglos de opresión, cuatro siglos de pongo, han tenido que despojar al indio de muchas de sus virtudes. ... Hemos exigido al indio en un momento de 

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12 Leytón, op. cit., p. 101. See also Céspedes, Sangre de mestizos..., pp. 151-152.  

apuro, precisamente, las virtudes de las que, sistemáticamente, le hemos despojado.  

Some of the worst scenes, and again they occur with distressing frequency, are the ones in the field hospitals. Some of the scenes are so crude as to be nauseating, but there is nothing to suggest that they are not true. Because of the almost complete breakdown in the transport and field services, the wounded were often left for hours where they fell before receiving attention. As a result the reader is treated to horrifying scenes of gangrene, maggot infested wounds, defecations, and putrefaction. The field hospitals were, in fact, little better than charnel houses and unhygienic morgues.

The novels of the Chaco War do not, of course, deal solely with the fighting and the soldiers; to do so would be to lose the interest of the reader. One of the favorite devices is the introduction of campfire conversations and arguments during the oppressive tropical nights. Much of the talk is about the attitudes of noncombatant nations towards the struggle. Argentina especially receives frequent mention and is almost invariably condemned for the economic assistance which she gave to Paraguay. "Los argentinos son los yanquis de este continente. Quieren chuparnos a todos.  

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14Ibid., p. 182.


16Ibid., p. 169.
in its pocket, the soldiers believed, was using the war to weaken Bolivia, so that with both nations prostrate she would be able to seize the oil fields of the Camiri and Santa Cruz regions. And even the Argentinians, we are told, are only part of a larger conspiracy. The war is really a battle between Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Oil, with the two small republics merely pawns in the grand maneuvers of the United States, Great Britain, and Argentina.¹⁷ Rancor against the government which forced the soldiers into the war grows, especially when the soldiers see that the graft and venality of those in La Paz is affecting the food, fuel and ammunition supplies. The governments of the past have been selfish little men, the soldiers agree; Bolivia has never been governed by men of ample vision.

Lo cierto es que nuestros hombres de gobierno ... no han sido hombres de ideas, ni su gobierno ha obedecido a un sistema doctrinario, nacido de la tierra que pisaban. Ellos vivían con los ojos puestos en Europa, y con el alma en las cloacas de sus fricciones caseras.

And, the critics ramble on, it is not even for its ideas that these false leaders look to Europe, but only to find out what kind of champagne they drinking this season in Paris!¹⁸

Old themes come up; Chile makes progress because she has a seacoast, so Bolivia should have a seacoast. What is to be done about the Indian? Is he capable of progress? Why are the mines producing

¹⁷Céspedes, Sangre de mestizos . . ., pp. 208 and 206-265.
¹⁸Cerruto, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
riches daily while the country remains so backward? So, as defeat follows defeat, and the Bolivian armies retreat further and further northward, the rancor and reeducation of the men sinks deeper and deeper.

Strange as it may seem, there is little bitterness against the Paraguayans. Some veterans of the war never saw a Paraguayan soldier for the enemy's tactics were quick ambushes which made use of their greater knowledge of the terrain. Tales of Paraguayan atrocities were frequent, but when the enemy became a prisoner the stolid Bolivians were amazed and charmed at his vivacity and friendliness. All felt that both armies were victims of something bigger and more sinister than themselves. All felt that their governments, which a few months ago had stirred them to bellicose enthusiasms, were either dupes, or, even more probably, petty criminals in the pay of foreign masterminds. Even those who fell prisoner to the Paraguayans did not bear a grudge. Some were treated so surprisingly well that they returned home with considerable reluctance. One prisoner found that caste divisions did not exist in Paraguay as in Bolivia, and that he was able to associate with a woman with whom he would not have dared to talk in his homeland. "La guerra le había servido para saltar, espiritualmente, la oscura línea divisoria que media entre el indio y el mestizo." 19 Why, he asked himself on his return, could his homeland not also become like this with all its many riches?

19José Fellmann Velarde, La montaña de los ángeles (La Paz: Librería Editorial Tejerina, 1958), pp. 139-140, and 161-162.
He was an Indian and thought on a simple level, but these and similar experiences were causing the young, educated Creole intellectuals to think furiously.

Two novels seem to have lasted the short test of time since the Chaco War and have acquired some fame both in their own country and abroad. Augusto Céspedes' *Sangre de mestizos* is a series of evocative short stories or themes which attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the Chaco and the emotions of the warriors. It reproduces faithfully "la incoherencia psíquica y étnica del boliviano" of that time, and has been classified as "uno de los pocos libros nacionales que se puede leer dos veces." 20 "El pozo" is the most famous episode, and is included in many anthologies. "La coronela" is a tale of heroism and loneliness, which points out the disgraceful mismanagement and lack of transport which caused such chaos among the Bolivian soldiers. Other stories concern the wanderings of a lost detachment in its search for water, the heroics of a *cholo* truckdriver, and the bitter thoughts of a young Bolivian who is slowly dying in a Paraguayan hospital. He is completely disillusioned and hopes only that the war will end soon, no matter which side wins. "Dice que todo el ejército boliviano ha sido destruido en Cañada Cármen. Gracias a Dios." Significantly he still feels

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20Diez de Medina, *Literatura boliviana*, p. 344. Céspedes considers this as his best book, although it is not his best known—interview between Augusto Céspedes and the author in La Paz, Bolivia, June 27, 1961.
insulted when a Paraguayan guard calls him an Indian. The young intellectuals, one is given to understand, cannot throw off the past overnight.\textsuperscript{21} The last two stories are weaker. "Las ratas," as the name would suggest, discusses the profiteers who made fortunes out of the war aided by officials of the government. Céspedes refers to the oligarchy which governs the nation as "la cleptarquía de Bolivia," and this corrupt government ends the story by decorating the leading profiteer and smuggler for his "war efforts." The last vignette is pure propaganda, and makes a formal declaration of war on those responsible for the debacle. "Opiniones de los descabezados. (Las responsabilidades de la guerra.)" tells of a sleepless soldier who sees the ghost of a dead Paraguayan. The spectre swears to haunt his Bolivian killers. That is short-sighted, argues the Bolivian soldier. The two tiny states are only pawns, run by petty criminals, and deaths inflicted by the common soldiers are impersonal. If the ghost wants to know those who deserve to be haunted he should consider the true causes of the war. Standard Oil is behind the pompous President Daniel Salamanca, and Paraguay's President Guggiari is being goaded on by Royal Dutch Shell. What is worse, continues the Bolivian soldier, Royal Dutch Shell is the favorite of the international oligopolies, who are little better than foreign, bourgeois gangsters. So, concluded the sleepless Bolivian, there is nobody tangible for the vengeful Paraguayan ghost to haunt.

\textsuperscript{21}Céspedes, \textit{Sangre de mestizos} . . ., pp. 143 and 156.
Oscar Cerruto's *Aluvión de fuego* is completely atypical when compared to the other Bolivian war novels. It has been described as "una hermosa descripción poética, una novela viviente, en que se analiza con agudeza el estado de alma de Bolivia, a través de un intelectual hecho soldado." Cerruto does not attack Argentina openly, does not demand a Bolivian port on the Pacific, or even refer directly to international conspiracies. He allows his narrative to speak for itself, and the blame all comes home to Bolivia to roost. "Creemos ver enemigos por todas partes y no alcanzamos a darnos cuenta dónde está el verdadero enemigo." Mauricio, his hero, is a young idealist from the upper classes. Caught up in the spurious patriotism engendered by Salamanca's government he enlists in the army to go to fight in the Chaco. Instead he finds himself in a brigade which never leaves the altiplano, spending its time chasing Indian emboscados and suppressing uprisings among the bewildered and resentful peasantry. Sickened by the continuous brutality he deserts, cutting himself off forever from his family, his novia, and his old way of life. Meanwhile his rascally brother-in-law climbs to the rank of minister of the interior, profits from the war, and lives a life of narrow comfort. Why, asks Cerruto in a burst of unusual naïveté, are all capitalists and políticos so fat and stupid?

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23 Cerruto, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
Mauricio next appears at a mining camp, where, now a dedicated Marxist, he and his friend "El Coto" are leaders in the fight for better conditions. Strikes, plots and riots fill the rest of the book. Mauricio criticizes the war which is, of course, regarded as treason. Down below in the Chaco thousands of kollas are surrendering gladly to the Paraguayans, and yet the old, artificial patriotism is maintained in the cities. The hero leads the great strike which he and his comrade have planned, and Rudecindo, the minister of the interior, sends in the army to crush it. After great carnage the miners are defeated and Mauricio is killed. "El Coto," his friend, closes the book on a prophetic note. Looking eastward from the mountain to which he has fled he does not lose hope.

Allí está el Chaco - pensó el Coto - donde se abaten para nacer de nuevo, nuestros hermanos. Creyó ver rayos de luz en el corazón de la tormenta. Arriba, el sol flameaba ya como una bandera.24

The novel has been criticized for being too poetic, subjective and culto. Where many Bolivians have asked, is the realism of Emile Zola, for they maintain that it is impossible to discuss the human misery of war in ethereal language? Yet the novel loses little of its realism because of the poetry of its descriptions, and its emotive and inspirational quality is increased by the quality of the language, something of a relief to the reader of many of Bolivia's stark, turgid novels of social protest.

24Ibid., p. 212.
In every novel written about the Chaco the problem of the future hangs over all: if the protagonist survives he will presumably have to return to his old life on the altiplano, resume old habits, and recommence whatever tasks or career the war had interrupted. The problem for these young Chaco veterans is that they have learned too much, and, what is more important, have discovered too much about the real nature of their society and its government, to be able mentally, or even physically, to resume what they had left a few years before with satisfaction or self-respect. Although they are not yet sure how or what, they have all decided that things must change—and change quickly—if they are to regain pride in themselves or their country. "¡No son los hombres sino el sistema lo que está podrido! ¡Nueva política no nuevos políticos es lo reclama Bolivia!" 25 Toro Ramallo is even more bitter and talks of punishment accompanying the change.

Los mismos que sufrimos en la guerra o por la guerra, seremos después, sus propagandistas ... un grupo de políticos improvisados y criminales, se aprovecharon de la confusión. ... El ejército ha arrastrado un calvario inútil a través del Chaco. ¿Sonará la hora de las responsabilidades? Por los que quedaron en la arena y en el matorral, es posible que se castigue un día, el crimen mayor que ha contemplado Bolivia. 26

Politically the Chaco War started a process which caused the National Revolution and which has not yet terminated. The conflict engendered a revolutionary outlook with Marxist and nationalistic overtones, 25

25 Ibid., p. 70.

and the young Chaco veterans took the lead in these revolutionary activities. A new spirit was manifest in every aspect of the society's life. While most of this revolutionary effort was directed towards politics, many of the young intellectuals saw it as their task to analyze the new convictions, to convert their fellow countrymen, and to carry their ideas into the cultural as well as the political field. By protest they hoped to publicize the faults of their homeland and to use literature as a propaganda weapon.

¡El arte también puede ser un arma! ¡Y lo es! Con él se llega a la sensibilidad; y revolucionar la sensibilidad para disponerla a favor de una nueva emoción social; ya es una bella misión.²⁷

A truly Bolivian literature had to be created at the same time, for nationalism was one of their banners, and there was no real national literature. Promptly dubbed the "vernacular school" by one of their foremost writers, these young men insisted above all that the nation examine its conscience, indulge in some healthy introspection, and cleanse itself through the knowledge thus strenuously attained. The vernacular school, Diez de Medina says,

busca la exaltación de lo propio, la temática social. Sincera rebeldía. Estos jóvenes quieren que una literatura intrínsecamente boliviana sea el primer paso para avanzar a la nación orgánica, consciente de sí misma.²⁸

Again, as so often happens in Latin America, the novel was their

²⁷Cerruto, op. cit., p. 159.
²⁸Diez de Medina, Literatura boliviana, p. 330.
most frequently-used literary vehicle. Since the Chaco War hundreds of these Bolivian novels of social protest have been written, and, as was the case with the novels about the war itself, one must admit that the literary quality of much of the work is very low. Nevertheless they represent the aspirations, emotions, and propaganda of the young revolutionaries, and are essential for a true understanding of their motives and of the changes which are taking place in the nation. A classification of these novels is difficult and must at best be arbitrary, but because of their number some attempt at separation is necessary. Although none of these novels deals with one topic alone, therefore, it is necessary to consider them here from the point of view of the emphasis to be found in each one.

One of the first tasks which the vernacular school undertook was the exploration and discovery of the country. Bolivians were to be told about their compatriots from other parts of whom they had only vaguely heard, if at all. The war began the process, as one of the veterans admits. "La guerra ha servido para conocernos entre nosotros, gente de todo el país, de la montaña, de los valles, de las yungas." But even here the author is only speaking of the heart of the country. What of the great half-empty Bolivian lowlands, now thought of as the area of the future? Cerruto claims that,

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29 Fellmann Velarde, _La montaña_ . . . , p. 173.
Entre nosotros es raro él que conoce más allá de Potosí o Sucre. Ignoramos al crucifijo o al beniano, y el beniano o el crucifijo, a su vez, nos ignora. ¡El Beni es para nosotros un país perdido en la leyenda!\(^{30}\)

The result has been a spate of novels about the tropical areas, an attempt through literature to open up this vast unknown to the people of the altiplano.

One of the most famous novels about the tropical departments of Beni and Pando is *Borrachera verde*, by the young writer Raúl Botelho Gosálvez. It has been compared to José Eustacio Rivera's famous work *La Vorágine*, and there are many similarities in theme and language.

The first part of the story is set in the cattle-raising territory of Moxos. An awful sense of the emptiness of the area is conveyed, and it is a wonder that there are any inhabitants at all, for travel is hazardous, uncomfortable, and time-consuming. Formerly, the reader is told, this tropical savannah swarmed with cattle, a relic of the old Jesuit colonies, but gradually they have diminished as the tropics take their toll. Nowadays the local cambas will slaughter a cow at random just for one steak.\(^{31}\) Very early in the novel the theme of waste and futility has been set.

Gradually the tropical environment begins to affect the protagonist. His treatment of his wife becomes extremely cruel, and he is

\(^{30}\)Cerrutu, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

brutal with the peones who help him with the cattle. Eventually, completely besotted by drink, loneliness, and the tropics, he drives his wife away to her death. In self-pity he curses the tropics. "Estas lejanías y el alcohol son los culpables." His degeneration continues and he flees northward to the dense tropical forests of the Beni. There, amongst the unfriendly, wild tribes, he tries to hide his shame, but the selva is a brutal teacher—"decir selva, es decir angustia"—and man is merely a puny interloper. He may kill, cut down trees, burn vast tracts of forest, but the selva will regenerate, teeming with life and death, and will eventually swallow the interloper too.

The novel now becomes one of more open social protest. After wandering for days in the jungle the dishevelled protagonist meets two other victims of the tropics like himself. They are two escaped rubber gatherers from the vast feudal estates of Suárez Hermanos, "dеспotas traficantes en oro, caucho y sangre humana, señores omnipotentes, dueños de inmensa fortuna, amasada con la sangre de veinte mil seringue-ros."32

32 Ibid., p. 55. See also pp. 56-57. The feudal tropical kingdom of the Suárez family, often called the biggest private estate in the world, is attacked in many Bolivian novels. This estate was one of the first to be confiscated after the Bolivian land reform. See also Arthur Karasz, "Experiment in Development: Bolivia since 1952," Frederick B. Pike (ed.) Freedom and Reform in Latin America (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), p. 269.
weak to react to the challenge posed by their tropical surroundings.

"La selva - la borrachera verde" has them in its clutches, and the author becomes lyrical once again about the impersonal, overwhelming nature of the Beni region. The men dream occasionally of the old and better days. Sometimes they are anticlerical, but more often they converse about their native land and feel deeply for its suffering, seeing in their own brutalization the fate of the nation.

Hablábamos de Bolivia, de nuestra pobre patria, trastajo de las conquistas del imperialism intelectual y económico; hablábamos del absorciónismo colla, de esa imprevisión que caracteriza sus gobiernos de terratenientes y militares; de la Historia de Bolivia, que es la historia ridícula de unos desorientados, con su tatuaje de revoluciones y cuartelazos sin cabeza; de los Presidentes, logreros y vulgares demagogos, que soliviantan las calles y con su verba manida, para conducirlas a la desgracia de una guerra o la imbecilidad de una revolución, o al golpe de Estado que cambia las mismas tristes figuras en el proscenio lamentable.

Nosotros, que no supimos llorar por nosotros mismos, aquella vez, en estas fragosas lejanías, lloramos por nuestra patria.33

Thus the author manages to combine two purposes at once. In this well-written novel he manages to introduce to his readers a vast and unfamiliar region of Bolivia, and at the same time he introduces his attack on the country's miserable political institutions.

Diomedes de Pereyra, who lived and taught for many years in the United States, writing much of his work in English, is rather unique among post-Chaco Bolivian novelists. He is first and foremost an adventure-lover and teller of tales. His novels have hidden treasures,

33Ibid., p. 59.
fantastic exploits and lost tribes sprinkled liberally throughout. Yet Pereyra knew the far north of Bolivia well, and his descriptions of Pando and Acre, which is now Brazilian, are highly realistic. His passages on the treatment meted out to the rubber gatherers are even more harrowing than those of Botelho. When an Indian falls ill he is killed, we are told, by a blow on the head like an animal so as not to waste bullets. Indians caught fleeing have their hands cut off and are tied up in front of the company stores like monkeys, as an example to the others. Naturally the Indian hate all whites. "Execro a los de tu raza."34 Where Diomedes de Pereyra really excels, however, is in his descriptions of the selva, the life there, and the difficulties of travel down the tropical rivers. This is yet another explorer and pioneer for his fellow-countrymen—albeit by means of the written page.

Some of the writers who come from the tropics feel that it is their duty to record the traditional life of the Beni and Santa Cruz areas. With the new Cochabamba highway now bringing immigrants and technology to the Oriente, it is inevitable that the old ways will vanish. The writers certainly do not regret this, but feel a certain nostalgia for the old ways. So we find in their vivid descriptions of the plains that they insert much of the quaint and traditional ways of the cambas. Calladí Barbery calls the lowlands the Bolivian land of promise, yet feels a sneaking regret

34Diomedes de Pereyra, La trama de oro (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1938), pp. 57-65.
for the uncomplicated past. "Las narraciones que integran el libro están escritas más con el alma y el fervoroso deseo de conservar las tradiciones y la vitalidad del vivir beniano de hoy y de ayer, antes que el progreso - necesario e inevitable - acabe con ellas."\(^{35}\)

The M. N. R. revolutionary government openly backs this exploratory novel of the Beni region. Praising the recent work Guaporé, hombre y río, President Victor Paz Estenssoro wrote, "La publicación contribuirá a formar una conciencia en el país acerca de las grandes posibilidades de desarrollo que ofrece el Beni para el futuro."\(^{36}\)

The other huge area in the east of Bolivia, lying between the lost territory of the Chaco and the forests of the north, is the department of Santa Cruz, no longer terra incognita to Bolivians, but before 1952 a remote region. Now the only asphalt highway in the country connects the rapidly growing town of Santa Cruz with Cochabamba in the highlands. Here, too, the fear that the old days will disappear without leaving a record has inspired a writer. The cambas of the area, Enrique Kempff Mercado points out, are morbidly conscious that they are different from the kollas of the altiplano, as indeed racially and culturally they are, and this causes an enthusiasm for traditional ways, coupled with a hatred for the government on the altiplano which can only be overcome patiently.


\(^{36}\)Sócrates Chávez Suárez, Guaporé, hombre y río (La Paz: Ministerio de educación y bellas artes, 1960), foreword.
and slowly. To be heavy-handed would be to exacerbate the strong cru-
ceño regionalism into open separatism. One story in particular concerns
the rejection by the local farmers of a Quechua who settles in the low-
lands. Although this stranger is finally driven out the novelist stresses
that such intermingling, which will come anyway since the area is so
underpopulated, must come on an ever larger scale, for this is the only
way to put an end to regional hatreds.\textsuperscript{37} But not all the plainsmen are
tradition-bound. There are many cruceños, the novelists tell us, who
wish to participate in any of the advances which the nation will make in
the future, but who feel that they and the region from which they come
are ignored by the national government, or, at best, that altiplano solu-
tions, probably most suitable for situations "allí arriba," are imposed
on the lowlands where the problems which confront the inhabitants are
entirely different.\textsuperscript{38}

The romance of their east is drawing more and more Bolivian
writers. Many see it as a sunny land of fertile soil, of handsome horse-
men, beautiful women, and flowing water.\textsuperscript{39} Disillusion is bound to come
when reality is faced, but at least the people of the mountains are now
trying to incorporate this vast "tierra de promisión" into their lives

\textsuperscript{37}Enrique Kempff Mercado, Gente de Santa Cruz (La Paz: Cáma-

\textsuperscript{38}Germíana, Jazmín del Oriente: lágrimas y vientos (La Paz:

\textsuperscript{39}Alfredo Vaca Medrano, Chendo Pedraza (La Paz: Editorial
del Estado, 1959).
and culture.

The area to the north and east of La Paz known as the yungas, although not so distant as the plains, was also practically unknown to many Bolivians, and here once again Botelho Gosálvez has led the way for the novelist-explorers. His novel Coca, written three years after the more famous Borrachera verde, tells a similar story—man trying to come to grips with himself and his life in a strange and difficult environment. It has been estimated that this relatively small area of fertile, semitropical valleys could easily feed the entire population of Bolivia, yet little is grown there besides coca, a narcotic leaf chewed by the Indians. Álvaro Díaz, Botelho's struggling hero, is of course a Chaco veteran, but he finds that the loneliness and impossibility of one man defying nature in the yungas are too much for the single individual, and he dies a miserable death. Many of the other novels about this area are more hopeful, such as Nazario Pardo Valle's Trópico del norte, which is staged in the forested province of Caupolicán at the foot of the valleys. Optimistically, many see a great future for the area—once the roads are built and the people can be induced to move to these fertile valleys from the barren altiplano.

The altiplano Indian is, as one would suppose, one of the major preoccupations of the Bolivian post-war novelists of social protest.

40Raúl Botelho Gosálvez, Coca (motivos del yunga paceña) (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1941).
The Indian, be he Quechua or Aymara, is to some extent the major character in all the novels about the altiplano, for the novelists generally recognize that without a radical change in the Indians' status and levels of living the country as a whole can never advance since the Indians are the great majority. One group of novelists has seen it as its duty to examine the daily life of the peon-farmer. He is a creature tied to his land, and, until recently, to his feudal lord, the hacienda owner. Two superior novels immediately come to mind, although there is a plethora of mediocre ones from which to chose.

Again the young novelist Botelho Gosalvez, one of Bolivia's few professional writers, has provided one of the leading works. His altiplano has been praised by many critics, and is his best novel to date. Although a fictional work it has often been claimed by the sociologists, so well documented and observant is the novel. It is about the Aymaras on the shores of Lake Titicaca, and there the reader is introduced to an Indian ayllu or communal settlement, where life is full of work and poverty, with the line between sufficiency and starvation so precarious that the least upset can disrupt the whole society. Eventually a drought is enough to drive the Indians off the land, and circumstances disperse them to other parts of the country. Some go to the high puna as shepherds, where the extreme cold makes their lives even more miserable; some go down to the yungas to work on the coca plantations, where, unused to the tropical diseases, many soon succumb; a few go
to find work in the tin mines where they are forced to toil under appallingly dangerous conditions for a daily pittance. The whole book is a plea for those lost children, the Bolivian Indians. It is not strident or revolutionary, but gently and pathetically accusing. The novel has been called the Bolivian Huasipungo. 41

In a different style—a style which reminds one of the poetic Cerruto—José Felipe Costas Argüedas has attempted to do for the Quechuas what Botelho Gosálvez has done for the Aymarás. He is a lyrical writer, and in his thinking is much of the mysticism of the soil so often found in Bolivian intellectuals. His story tells of the area around Sucre, one of the high valleys on the eastern edge of the altiplano. In El sol se iba there is an attempt at a Quechua novel, or rather a novel as a Quechua would write it, with all the actions, thought and emotions linked to the soil and the seasons. The year for these people is a cycle of work and ritual dominated by the soil, la Pachamama, the rain, and the sun. Men and the land which they work are so closely interwoven that the whole land and life of the region achieves a magnificent unity in the novel, and are studied by its author as one. There is a sweetness and reasonableness in this book which is refreshing. None of the clergy is a thief, and none of the Indians is whipped to death by evil latifundistas. The criminal, if indeed there has to be one, is the hard, sterile,

41 Raúl Botelho Gosálvez, Altiplano, novela indígena (Buenos Aires: Editorial Ayacucho, 1945). The reference is to one of Ecuador's famous Indianist novels, by Jorge Icaza.
eroded soil of the high valleys.\textsuperscript{42}

It is in another of the high valleys of the \textit{altiplano} that the agrarian Indian novel has made its home. The Cochabamba valley has long been one of Bolivia's cultural centers, is agriculturally the richest part of the high plain, and was the scene of some of the worst feudal oppression before 1952. It was and is the great center for the Bolivian land reform which has gone on ever since that date. It has, then, a history of independence, oppression and violence far greater than the other areas mentioned, and this is reflected in the novels which often lack the repose found in Costas Argüedas! The most famous writer on the Quechua Indians of the Cochabamba valley is without a doubt Jesús Lara. Of Indian extraction himself, with a childhood spent in rural poverty, he is the greatest propagandist of the Quechua race and culture. Lara has done much to bring this culture before the eyes of his fellow-countrymen by translating poetry, legends, and even theatre. He has attempted to present Quechua literature and art as something of which his country should be proud, prouder indeed than of its synthetic Castilian heritage, or so it seems to Jesús Lara.

It is in Lara's novels that his social ideas are displayed, and, again unlike Costas Argüedas, he certainly believes that he knows where to place the blame for the pathetic, miserable state of the Quechua Indians.

\footnote{José Felipe Costas Argüedas, \textit{El sol se iba} (o "La siembra") novela quechua (2nd ed.; Sucre: Editorial "Charcas," 1944).}
who live in the Cochabamba valley. In a trilogy of violent, revolu-
tionary novels about the valley and its people, he accuses the white Creoles
and town mestizos or cholos of the most depraved, systematic, and var-
ied exploitation of their fellowmen. Infused with harsh, ugly realism,
his three novels Surumi (1943), Yanakuna (1952), and Yawarninchij
(1959), are an open call to revolt, and all claim to herald the coming
of the Marxist-socialist state to Bolivia. Lara's admiration for the
U.S.S.R. has grown rapidly of recent years and he is now a member of
the Bolivian Communist party. A very strong anticlerical strain, which
at times reminds one of much earlier Latin American literature and
seems vaguely old-fashioned, runs through all his novels. Many Com-
munist authors have changed to more "up-to-date" enemies.

Surumi is a novel which relates the events of the early 1930's as
seen from an Indian hut in the Cochabamba valley. An Indian boy who
tries to get an education, and is to a certain extent successful, finds
that both he and his parents are subjected to the most vicious abuses
and beatings, partly because of the boy's presumptuousness in trying
to go to school. The institution of pongueaje is especially attacked, and
heavy, morbid emphasis is placed on the reduction of the young Indian
girls, or imillas, to the status of concubines in the big house. The
youth laments.

Yo no había cometido ningún pecado, y era la víctima. Mi culpa
estaba en mi nacimiento era culpa heredada, culpa de raza, una
culpa que llevaba el indio desde que una cruz de falsa piedra exten-
dió sus brazos ávidos sobre las entrañas de oro de los Andes. Y
era víctima de la civilización, de esta civilización que clasifica los colores de las caras y el contenido de las bolsas, de esta civilización que arranca las entrañas del indio para convertirlas en billetes de banco en las arcas de los verdugos. Y habfa nacido indio y no tenía derecho a buscar mi bienestar fuera del pegujal.43

The Chaco War changes the outlook of Lara's hero completely, as it did to so many Indian youths. He meets Bolivians of all kinds and from all regions, and hears strange but interesting ideas which accord well with his concealed resentment. He comes back from the war with a revolutionary mission—the salvation of his enslaved race and the overthrow of the old ways.

Anchorena habla de la situación de los ex combatientes frente a la política. Cree que ellos, organizándose, serían capaces de encabezar un movimiento popular que daría fin con las oligarquías tradicionales.44

Imprisonment and brutality cannot change his purpose. In an exalted finish to the book Lara foresees the coming of the soviet state as absolutely inevitable.

Yanakuna is a novel in a quieter tone. The anticlericalism and emphasis on the sexual vices of the local clergy is perhaps more pronounced, but the post-Chaco urge to violence has died down somewhat. The novel describes the period between 1936 and 1952, the period of slow ferment before the National Revolution. Militant indigenismo has


44Ibid., p. 246. See also p. 252.
taken the place of world revolution. Throughout the book a serious
study is made of the relationships between the Indians and the mestizos
of the towns. The Indian girl, Wayra, is forced into service in a mes-
tizo household where the family has upper class pretensions. We gath-
er that Lara has a low opinion of the desire of the Bolivian cholo to be-
come westernized and obtain wealth. He is betraying the Indian part
of his background, which is, of course, to Lara, the only worth-while
part of his make-up. Once again in this book the Indians are exploited
at every step. This time the emphasis is on lawyers and the unfair ad-
ministration of justice. But the author still has not lost his confidence.
The revolution, he believes, still smoulders and will come eventually.45

Yanakuna was the last great cry against oppression of the Indians
in the Cochabamba valley before the peasants began to organize them-
selves into the leagues and unions which hastened and gave foundation
to the land reform program of the first M.N.R. government.

The third work in Lara's trilogy is concerned with the peasants'
part in the revolution which swept the country during the years imme-
diately after 1952. Unsure of the M.N.R. government, whom Lara con-
siders "bourgeois" revolutionaries, some of the peasants seized the
land and defended it, encouraged by their "true friends," the Commu-
nists of the city. This is a bitter novel. The Indians' great hope has

45 Jesús Lara, Yanakuna (La Paz: Librería y Editorial "Juventud," 1958). The publication of this novel was delayed for several years.
always been to own his private little plot. "Entonces al indio le queda un refugio: el sueño, la esperanza de poseer algún día un pedazo de tierra." Now Lara sees this great aim for which he has fought so long taken over by a party which he despises. Lara is reduced to applauding the land reform but attacking those who carried it out and the slow speed at which it is going. Again the cholo is presented as a tool of the white exploiters. Once again the church is an evil, scheming force of reaction. And again the law is persistently unjust and on the side of the powerful. Black and white, good and bad, are so clearly different, and the characters such as the latifundista, the lawyer, and the local Communist party worker, are so overdrawn, that the characterizations deteriorate at times to mere caricature. In spite of the bitter, frustrated note in the book—the work of an idealist whose cause has been adopted by his enemies—Lara remains one of the acutest observers of the of the Indians' problems in Bolivia. The following analysis of the reasons for Indian misery makes up for much of Lara's crude and obsessive writing.

La ignorancia es un instrumento cómodo y tenebroso de opresión. El hombre ignorante no tiene idea de la dignidad humana, no sabe si tiene algún derecho, ignora si merece vivir mejor de lo que le permiten. Es fácil convencerle que ha nacido con el sino de labrar la felicidad de los poderosos, que él debe contentarse con las migajas que le arrojan, que la docilidad, el renunciamiento y la resignación deben ser sus virtudes cardinales. Es fácil persuadirle que no debe

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exigir mejores condiciones de vida, que le está vedado rebelarse contra su suerte y más aún contra sus amos.

Otro instrumento terrible de opresión es la miseria. Cuando no hay para dar de comer a la esposa y a los hijos, cuando no hay para cubrir su desnudez, el hombre puede deponer su orgullo, su honestidad, el respeto de sí mismo, en fin, sus más caros atributos humano si es que con eso ha de evitar que los suyos perezcan. Entonces la obediencia, la humillación, la indignidad llegan a convertirse para él en normas de vida. El mendigo llega a cifrar su felicidad en la limosna. Para él que tiene los hijos sin comer cualquier salario de hambre es la salvación. A un menestros se le puede mantener indefinidamente sometido. Lo que pasa con uno pasa con muchos, incluso con un pueblo entero.\textsuperscript{47}

Lara then proceeds to examine the plight of the Indians on a still higher and more intangible level. A Communist agitator explains to the Indians why they are as they are.

También existen - decía el Minero - otras formas de ignorancia que los poderosos mantienen a porfia entre los oprimidos, haciendo que estos no conozcan su pasado, sus tradiciones, las glorias de sus mayores. Un pueblo que conoce su pasado, máxime si él encierra ejemplos y enseñanzas, es alto, sabe defenderse y no se somete fácilmente, y si la fuerza le avasalla no cesa de perseguir su liberación porque hay lecciones e ideales que le alientan y tiene un patrimonio que reivindicar. En cambio a un pueblo que ignora su propia historia siempre es posible tenerlo ilimitadamente subyugado.\textsuperscript{48}

Not all the Cochabamba novelists have concentrated to such an extent on partisan politics. Many have been more objective than Lara in their examination of the land problems of the valley, where pressure on the land is heavier and has caused more strife than anywhere else in Bolivia.

Humberto Guzmán Arce is obviously favorably disposed towards

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 92-93. \textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 93
the land reform program, and despises many of the harmful characteristics of the old ruling class, but he also attempts to see the owners' point of view, and, although it is admittedly rare, he praises the occasional latifundista who stays on his land, loves it and the local people, and wishes to improve the lot of both.

Writers such as Guzmán and Mario Unzueta generally occupy the M.N.R. or government position on land reform in the area. They insist that it should be sweeping and thorough, but hope that it will be just before any other consideration.49

A new group of writers has taken another tack, however, and while they may all be thought of as pro-M.N.R., unlike Jesús Lara, they tend, nevertheless, to be critical of the party's land reform program for doing too much too soon in the valley, the opposite point of view from that held by Lara. They may be thought of as a kind of "loyal opposition."

Augusto Guzmán is one of the leading writers of this more cautious school. His thesis is that land reform was certainly necessary, but that the latifundista was, for all his many undeniable faults, the only cultured element in a totally uneducated rural population. If the latifundista must be driven out at once, then Guzmán suggests that the government's first priority should be the rural school, which is not the case. If the

49Humberto Guzmán Arce, Borrascap en el valle (Cochabamba: Editorial Mercurio, 1960). For a somewhat similar, but earlier point of view, see Mario Unzueta, Valle (Cochabamba: Editorial "La Epoca," 1945).
could be more gradually displaced, then the Indian could be gradually built up through a more long-term educational program such as the government now envisages. What the government has in fact done, by giving in to the impatience of the peasants, is to drive out the latifundistas quickly, much to the regret of the moderates, and subsequently to begin a gradual, slower education of the rural masses. Meanwhile there is a power and cultural vacuum in the Cochabamba valley with two dangerous consequences. At the present time there is often a complete breakdown of authority and law as the formerly repressed Indians, totally lacking in education, go to the other extreme of violent anarchy. The second danger is that in this cultural vacuum demagogues can profit handsomely. Guzmán is obviously thinking of Communism, for now that the owner of the big house is gone, there is no cultural bulwark against it.50

Typical of Guzmán's attitude is his otherwise minor work Pequeño mundo, published in 1960. In this short novel the author illustrates all the points mentioned above. His latifundistas, knowing that their days of power in the countryside are numbered, hastily sell all their livestock, including the precious dairy cattle, to profiteering butchers from the

50Guzmán is no supporter of the status quo, and is fervently pro-M. N. R., but deplores the expulsion of the latifundista before a substitute for him could be found. He calls the latifundista "el único núcleo cultural en la campaña," and further points out that he was the only link between town and country, which are now hostile and cut off one from the other. Interview between Augusto Guzmán and the author--Cochabamba, Bolivia, June 12, 1961.
towns, for even the low prices which they are forced to accept are better than nothing. Thus the livestock population in the rural areas goes down catastrophically. The landlords who are eventually driven off flee to the towns where they are protected by law and order. Thus hostility towards the inhabitants of the towns is built up in the countryside. In the rural areas the peasants not only take over the land but also the roads and villages too, interfering with traffic and acting in an irresponsible, often violent manner. All their uneducated prejudices are fostered by local demagogues and the situation inevitably deteriorates still further.

Gradually, as time passes and the first euphoria of land ownership wears off, the Indians begin to have doubts about their actions. Some even wish to reimburse their former landlords for their losses, hoping thus to give their land titles some kind of legality; others wish at least to regain some kind of understanding with the town and with the regional representatives of the national government who live there. Some manage to do this, but in many cases Communists have assumed control of the rural leagues and unions (sindicatos campesinos) and will not hear of such actions, although such conciliatory actions have the hearty approval of the government. Thus many of the Indians feel more insecure than before. Then at least they understood the chain of authority. Now they do not know whom to believe, and their allegiance is demanded from all sides. Guzmán obviously feels that it will take many
years before stability returns after such a revolutionary land reform, and while he applauds the reform itself, he fears for it because of the mistakes which have already been made.\textsuperscript{51}

Guzmán and the other young writers of more moderate social protest obviously have a deep love for the men and land of the valley which is their home. A series of idyllic works have been written which try to capture some of the spirit and tradition of the area, another part of the attempt to show the whole nation to the Bolivians from the various widely separated regions.\textsuperscript{52}

These Indian novels of social protest all aim at destroying the racial and cultural prejudice so common in Bolivian middle and upper class thinking. After all, as Carlos Alberto Monjón exclaims, "¿No somos indios todos? ¿Dónde comienza el indio y dónde acaba?"\textsuperscript{53}

While almost all of the novelists of social protest since the Chaco War have agreed that the Indian must be rehabilitated before the nation can progress, many believe that the future of the country lies in the hands of the mestizo or cholo, as he is known in Bolivia. It is true, these novelists point out, that Indian agriculture is the foundation of


\textsuperscript{52}Luis Taborga, \textit{Tierra morena} (Cochabamba: Imprenta Universitaria, 1960). See also Augusto Guzmán's historical work, \textit{Gesta valluna} (Cochabamba: Imprenta Tunari, 1953).

the country's life, but Indian methods and traditions in agriculture are also one of the fundamental and enduring problems of the nation. The authors who have studied the cholo in their novels reject the contention advanced by Lara and other indigenista extremists that all western, or Spanish, culture and influence is, sui generis, pernicious. Nor do they accept the anti-Indian arguments advanced by Gabriel René-Moreno and his followers of an earlier generation, for they have great sympathy for the Indian and believe genuinely that he has much to offer to the nation of the future. Surely, they argue, if the nation is ever to become unified and culturally integrated, as all presumably hope that it will, then a new culture will have to be formed from the best elements of both the Indian and the Spanish heritages. Inevitably this would make the cholo the new Bolivian man, since physiologically and culturally he is already the result of the fusion of the two races, and is of his very nature adaptable and rootless, logically unable to have any prejudice against either side of his mixed parentage. One fault in this argument is the cholo's traditional scorn for the Indian.

Since the Indian is a rural agriculturalist most of the novels about him have been centered in the countryside, while the cholo novels generally have urban settings for similar reasons.

Many of these works stress the superiority of the mixed blood. He has, they claim, more energy than either the white or the Indian, he is more adaptable and open to western technology than the Indian, although retaining at the same time the Indian's sense of unity with the
environment, and he is more at home in Bolivia than the white while losing none of the financial astuteness or technical capabilities of the western side of his dual character. For the present, also, he is the only link between the two alien cultures, for in Bolivia the cholos are usually the only group who speak both Castilian, of a very popular and idiomatic kind naturally, and, on the other hand, Quechua or Aymará.

La chaskaswi, "the girl with the dark, sparkling eyes," by Carlos Medinaceli, is the best-known novel about the cholo. This is a costumbrista story about a little, isolated, provincial town in the department of Sucre or Potosí. The hero, Adolfo Reyes, is betrothed to Julia, a girl of his own class, but becomes infatuated by Claudina, la chaskaswi, a lower class chola, the daughter of a shopkeeper. The reader is shown the idle life of the upper class in the provinces, shiftless because physical labor is beneath them, bored for the same reason, and vicious because of their cultural isolation and torpid provincialism. His upper class family and friends are shocked when they learn of Adolfo's attachment to the chola and his cousin speaks to him for his own good.

Al fin y al cabo, todos los de la familia tenemos que velar por el buen nombre de ella y, ya ves, tú, descendiente de la mejor familia de San Javier, de la más antigua, desde la época de la Colonia, desde que se fundó el pueblo, ¡no!: cómo vamos a permitir que te enfoles, pues, hijo; ¡eso nunca!54

Many proofs are given of the vitality of the mixed bloods, who form a

strange type of middle class in the town. Urged on by the local priest, also a half-caste, the cholos show themselves to be far more effective, energetic, and powerful than the scions of the old families when the upheaval of a national election starts. Once the cholo becomes active in politics, the author insinuates, let the old dominant groups beware, for nothing will stop him!

Adolfo Reyes gives in to social pressure and marries the well-born Julia of his own class, but the vitality of la chaskañawi still pulls him.

Ella no era una alma occidental trasplantada de la alta cultura espiritual de la España teológica y desasosegada de Medioevo a la agresividad telúrica del paisaje americano: era un fruto espontáneo de ese paisaje que da libre cauce a la corriente bulliadora y gozosa, llena de alegría de la potencia creadora y se sentía rica, hechica de savia; su alma era maternal, no ascética. 55

Again the strange geographic determinism in Bolivian intellectual life is displayed. The chola, the author believes, is more at home in the American environment than the Castillian who is still, after centuries, a stranger in the land. After much soul-searching Adolfo deserts his pretty wife and elopes with his chola. They settle down to rural farming and she becomes at once the dominant partner in the household. Adolfo realizes what is happening to him but attempts to understand the process.

55Ibid., p. 199.
Soy, pues, y no hay remedio para ello, un "fin de siglo," un alma crepuscular de Occidente extraviado en lo más agreste de estas breñas de América. Por eso hay un cósmico divorcio entre mi alma - que es de otra parte - y el paisaje que me rodea, que yo no puedo sentir, y, menos, vivir de acuerdo con él. 56

Once again the necessity for a complete understanding between man and nature is stressed. Adolfo accepts his secondary role in the hacienda, leaving Claudina to manage everything. His only hope is in future generations, and when Claudina becomes pregnant his spirits rise.

Dios quiera que sea más hijo del creador sentido de la Naturaleza de ella, antes que del atormentado espíritu mío; entonces será el fruto genuino y sano de estas fuertes sierras andinas, lejos de toda la cólera intelectual de Europa. 57

A far cry indeed from the adulation of European culture which the pre-war novelists so often manifested.

Medinaceli is essentially an European intellectual himself, and when all is said and done he finds himself regretting the inevitable eclipse of his kind. In some ways the rise to power of the cholo will destroy the subtler, dilettante pleasures of the upper class which are, it is true, unnecessary and even wasteful, but which add such delicacy to life. But Medinaceli does not betray his convictions. Vitality and energy are bound to prevail, and for better or for worse the rise of the mestizo in Bolivia will, he is firmly convinced, show the absurdity of the anti-mestizo thesis of René-Moreno, Argüedas, and Finot.

Turning to the novel of the cholo in the larger towns, La niña de

56Ibid., p. 236.  
57Ibid., pp. 237-238.
sus ojos comes to mind at once as the best of this genre. It is immediately apparent that the cholo of La Paz is not so independent as his brother of the provinces, but is far more eager to lose the Indian part of his heritage in his struggle to assume upper class status. Domitila (Domy) Perales, the heroine of the story, is sent to an upper class school by her shopkeeper parents although to do so costs far more than they can afford. Her mother, a fruit seller in the market place, is particularly determined that Domy will have all the social opportunities which she was denied in her youth. Domy's secret is well kept throughout her school years, but shortly after graduation the secret of her origins is discovered, and, to the young girl's dismay she is abandoned by nearly all her friends and by her young novio. At a party she is cut by one of her former friends. "Por ejemplo, las que son, o han sido cholas deben permanecer entre polleras." ⁵⁸

For some time her reaction to all this is despair which she hides as best she can by living the frivolous life of the upper class girls whom she is gradually coming to despise. To her novio she remains ashamed of her background. "Yo no soy la muchacha que tú crees, digna de merecerse por su calidad social. Soy nada más que una chola cualquiera. " ⁵⁹


⁵⁹Ibid., p. 67.
Her salvation is not far off, however. Shamed by the continual rebuffs which she has to suffer, and disgusted by the futile life which she is leading, she begins to look for more worth-while goals. To the dismay of her pretentious mother the girl decides to take the education which she has acquired where it is most needed, to the Indians of the altiplano. At first the new rural schoolteacher is rejected suspiciously, for the Indians have every reason to fear any kind of outside intrusion, but finally she wins over the inhabitants of the village to become the local idol, the "núcleo de cultura" so dear to Guzmán.

Here, the author insinuates, is the role of the cholo in Bolivia: he is the bridge, the catalyst, between the two mutually suspicious races, and eventually he will serve to bring unity to the country. It is the cholo's task to bring civilization and education to the Indian. It is also his task to show the real Bolivia to the Creoles of the towns. Domly is not a destructive or even drastic force in the countryside, for by example, the author obviously believes, change can be made in an evolutionary and orderly way.

Por eso, conservando lo típico en cuando no perjudicara a la higiene, a la comodidad y a la dignidad humana, habfa ido introduciendo tan sólo lo que faltaba para elevar, complementar y mejorar la vida civilizada, sin producir dislocamientos ni violencias. 60

Often, however, the town chulos cannot or will not wait for the slow evolution which Díaz Villamil advocates. Victor Hugo Villegas 1

60 Ibid., p. 60
Chuño palma is a revolutionary novel with a loud call to action. Written before the rise to power of the M.N.R. with the accompanying 1952 National Revolution, it also tells the story of a young cholo who has contrived to obtain an education. Her son's education is a source of pride to the mother, but unlike Domy's mother she is also proud of her son's heritage and blood, and teaches him to uphold his rights at all times.

The youth has to fight in the Chaco with other Bolivians from all walks of life, but on his return he is denied opportunities because of discrimination against his racial background. He becomes a political agitator in the unions, and is finally killed in a frustrated revolution. But his death is not in vain, says Villegas, who forecasts that the coming revolution will be for and by the cholo. It will not be a traditional change of power but a sweeping new beginning.

Esta no sera una revolución politiquera de los "partidos" u hombres de partido. Ni un cuartelazo que trueca unos gobernantes por otros reasaltados en la metrala y las bayonetas. Ni un golpe de estado que simula cambios de personajes en un mismo escenario de antipatriotismo y corrupción cívica. Sera la sacudita violenta, la connoción inevitable de un pueblo cholo que tiene derecho a vivir mejor.61

The revolutionary novel in Bolivia since the Chaco War has made

61Víctor Hugo Villegas, Chuño palma; novela de cholos (La Paz: Empresa Editora "Universo," 1948), p. 152. Villegas' forecast about those who shall profit from the revolution appears to be accurate. Although much of the revolution was for the Indian, very few of them have reached power except locally, as is to be expected because of their lack of education. The mestizos from the small trading classes of La Paz, however, occupy increasing numbers of important posts in the central government at La Paz.
education one of its major preoccupations, as well it should. Since the wish of all these writers is that Bolivia catch up to the twentieth century as soon as possible, this preoccupation is to be expected, for without education, it is generally agreed, the common people cannot play their proper role in helping to govern the country, and the lack of skilled manpower will continue to hold back the industrialization which nearly all the writers look to as some form of universal panacea for the ills of Latin America.

Much of the discussion of Bolivian education which has taken place has been limited to attacks on the old system without too much indication as to what should take its place. In Surumi Lara shows how difficult it is for a Quechua boy to obtain even a rudimentary education, and the terrible indignities which the boy is forced to suffer when he persists. Villegas too, in Chuño palma, has painted a similar picture. His young cholo hero is educated with the help of a proud mother, but can find no way of using his knowledge, and finally dies fighting for his rights in a bloody revolution. In Díaz Villamil's La niña de sus ojos we at last saw some attempt at finding a solution. Domitila Perales, an idealist chola girl, uses the education which she has acquired at a white school to educate and awaken that portion of the population which lives in the rural areas and which most needs it, the Indian majority of the Bolivian population. Gradually, as we have seen, she won the confidence of the justifiably suspicious Indians and made lasting changes in the village.
Undoubtedly the great novel of Indian education is *Utama; novela vivida en cuatro años*, by Alfredo Guillén Pinto and his wife. Operating as a husband and wife team, this couple did more work on publicizing the need for Indian education than any other agency before the Revolution. Nor were they merely propagandists. For many years they worked with the Aymarás in the rural areas around Lake Titicaca, setting up schools and teaching in them. Alfredo Guillén Pinto is one of the noblest figures produced by the nation. From an upper class family, he broke with his social group and dedicated his life to education. After many years in the field he turned to the new life of education and improvement of social conditions in the mines, hoping throughout that his humanitarian message would be heard. Suffering from cancer, this novelist tragically committed suicide in 1952, and thus did not live to see the beginning of the fulfillment of his hopes which came with the Revolution of 1952.

*Utama* is full of moral energy. The hostile task of bringing education to the suspicious Aymarás is approached patiently and tactfully, for the author has a profound knowledge and understanding of the Indians, and conveys his deep sympathy and affection for these people through his writing. The book breaks the old pattern of the wicked *patrón* and the lascivious priest. Although the *corregidor*, who is often the only local representative of the central government, is pictured as just as much of a criminal as he was during the colonial period-- the main
character is a new hero—the rural schoolteacher, carrying out his tiny, unnoticed part of the regenerative task in Bolivia. In spite of the fact that the novel is dedicated "al indio revolucionario de América," the Guillén Pintos do not hope for violent, chaotic change, but rather for the change caused gradually and peacefully by the impact of education and better understanding between the divided races. The whole aim of the educators who are the heroes of the book is to convince the Indians that this education and school are for them, and that they will eventually run all the rural schools by themselves. The very name of the whole program—Utama—means "your house" in Aymará. At first the downtrodden Indians see the whole thing as yet another diabolic scheme by their perpetual exploiters. To the schoolmaster an Indian replies: "¡No te metes! Con escuela o sin escuela, hemos de ser, no más, indios despreciados por todos. ¿Para qué yaparnos una carga más?"62

Progress is very slowly being made when the beginning of the Chaco War disrupts the countryside, so that the Indian men have to go away to fight a senseless war. As the men trickle back, however, the teachers in the Utama program realize that they do not have to start all over again, and that the war, paradoxically, has served their purpose. Many of the Indian men have stopped wearing the poncho, have switched to some extent to western clothes, have even picked up a

62 Alfredo Guillén Pinto and Natty Peñaranda de Guillén Pinto, Utama; novela vivida en cuatro años (La Paz: Gisbert y Casanovas, 1945), p. 15.
smattering of Spanish, and are now, in fact, mestizos. "He ahí por qué afirmamos que la guerra tuvo la virtud de acercarnos al indio." Soon the rural team has decided that the future of the country lies in the hands of this new mestizo, and it is to become a mestizo that the Indian must be educated.

The local corrupt government officials are a constant threat, for even they are poor and their meager livelihood depends on the maintenance of the status quo with regard to the Indian; but the war has also taught many of the Indians some discipline and solidarity so that they are now ready to support their teachers and fight for their education if it is necessary. The authors have two conclusions to make as they finish their novel. To begin with, even in the areas where the rural schools have taken root education has made only a beginning. "En total, nuestras largas vigilias no nos han servido sino para llegar al Indio. Meros exploradores." But, the authors warn their fellow-countrymen, education must not become an end in itself, but should be only an integral part of a larger process which will abolish Indian poverty and misery. Land and liberty are just as important as education, and

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63Ibid., p. 125.  
64Ibid., p. 84.
education itself is impossible where there is hunger. All are tied together as part of a vast reform which must be carried out.

En la tierra está el pan del indio. Y su destino en el agro. ... La escuela podrá hacer de él un hombre leído y hablado, "personalizado," y "colectivizado," si se pide. Pero eso no basta. El problema está en hacerle escupir la coca, reemplazándola con pan. Hay que preparar generaciones libres, pero no hambrientas.65

No other novel on Indian education has achieved the moral or intellectual stature of Utama, but the subject has been boldly tackled in several short stories. One tells of the determination of some Indians to build a school for their children. To do so they pull down the old, decrepit church in the village, meaning to build a new one at once in a different spot. At once the local cura and corregidor, who are suspicious of educated Indians anyway, use this pretext to descent on the village and arrest the old mayor Tomás Puma. The school is destroyed and the ramshackle chapel re-erected on the same spot. Old Tomás is incarcerated and falls into the hands of the avaricious Bolivian legal system. It takes him three years and the sale of much of his precious land to obtain his release from the local prison. But times are changing, the reader is told, and progress will not be denied. One day a young man rides up to the village to inform them that it is time for the village to build a school. After much debate they are persuaded to forget past wrongs, and the school goes up. "Nuestro gran aliado es también el tiempo," says old Tomás Puma as he ceremonially opens the

new building.\textsuperscript{66}

Indian education crops up many times in short stories where it is not the main subject. It is obvious that the required period in the army is one of the factors which is helping to break down caste divisions. One story tells of a father who no longer likes to send his sons even to the city, for there they learn other ways, abandon the farm, and become soldiers. "Los hijos regresan respondones y abandonan la tierra 'porque ya no quieren ser indios' para hacerse soldados."\textsuperscript{67}

The universities are often attacked, especially for the fact that a technically backward country such as Bolivia should waste more university man-hours training lawyers than training agriculturalists or engineers. Yet another short story tells of a boy who is sent to law school in La Paz although he would have preferred agriculture.

Conocía entonces, muchos hijos de hacendados y latifundistas que seguían cursos de derecho, mientras la tierra permanecía erial o rendía frutos mezquinos en manos de administradores, mientras los propietarios cumplían funciones burocráticas con soldados miserables.\textsuperscript{68}

All the social and political novelists, of course, see themselves as educators of one kind or another. Their pedagogic inclinations are


\textsuperscript{67}Abdón Ugarte Palacios, \textit{¡Tinku!} (La Paz: Talleres Gráficos "gutenberg," 1961), p. 50.

\textsuperscript{68}Rodrigo (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, p. 139.
so strong that educational or propaganda material of a hopefully uplifting nature is introduced at the strangest moments. In his Borrachera verde Botelho Gosálvez tells us that his hero, rounding up cattle in the Beni, passes his spare time perusing social novels!

Para distraer mis forzosos ocios leía en mi pequeña biblioteca, en donde estaban reunidos Rómulo Gallegos, Ciro Alegria, Augusto Guzmán y Augusto Céspedes, Mariano Azuela, Alcides Argüedas, José de la Cuadra, Aguilera Malta, Humberto Salvador, José Eustacio Rivera, Pareja y Diezcanseco, Güiraldes, realistas y vigorosos escritores de nuestra América indígena.  

From the novels which deal with education it is plain that Bolivian education has been almost nonexistent in the past and is only in its infancy today. Despite the claims made by the national government that illiteracy has been cut by 15% in the last ten years, it is obvious that the great effort remains to be made. Another point that is repeatedly brought up is that it is futile for Bolivia to carry out a pretentious western educational program when at least 65% of the population is unable to read or write. Bolivia should build an educational program suited to her needs, and to the limits imposed by her lack of capital and trained teachers. Agriculturalists, engineers, and builders are far more necessary than lawyers and civil servants.

The social writer, as is the case with the majority of all writers, is a product of the town, and is therefore naturally more familiar with an urban or industrial environment than with the rural areas. For this

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69 Botelho Gosálvez, Borrachera verde, p. 30.
reason the reader is occasionally conscious of a strain of artificiality in many of the rural _indianista_ novels. After all the writers of the novels of social protest are often town intellectuals, and often also they are products of the upper classes, and, in spite of their social consciences, have many of the attributes of the classes from whence they came, including the esoteric, humanistic cum legal education provided by the Bolivian universities. Thus these writers feel ill at ease with the rural Indians, so different from the writers in background and culture.

Bolivia's second great revolutionary problem—that of the mining industry—does not present the same problem to the town intellectuals and for this reason the mining novel is one of the most popular means of social protest. The mine presents somewhat of an urban setting, the squalor and related problems are of an urban type, and, although the majority of the miners are Indians, the mine has a westernizing influence, with most of the managers and higher officials coming from Spanish urban rather than Indian rural backgrounds. It is an often-mentioned phenomenon that the mine is one of the fastest methods of turning the Indian into a _cholo_. He finds himself wearing western clothes, eating western food from the mining commissary, since this is the only available source, learning a smattering of Castilian for his day-to-day social and working dealings with his superiors, and acquiring at least a rudimentary technical proficiency in his handling of a miner's equipment. For all of these reasons it is obvious that Bolivian novelists have felt
more "at home" when writing about the tin mines than when writing about agriculture. Certainly the number of novels written about the mines is far greater.

In spite of the quantity of Bolivian mining novels, these works are almost invariably extremely bad. They are repetitive to the point of monotony, present squalor of a most unedifying kind, have little in their content of an elevating or inspirational nature, although one presumes that to elevate and inspire is their goal, and they draw their characters so simply and crudely in terms of "good" and "evil" that the protagonists become caricatures with whom the sophisticated reader cannot possibly identify himself.

It should be repeated, however, that good or bad these novels are being written because there is a compulsion to write them, and, in spite of their inferior quality, they are a reflection of what the problems of the mines actually are, as seen by Bolivians.

In describing one of these novels written about the tin mines one is hardly exaggerating to say that a description is being provided of them all. There is perpetually an evil gringo engineer or manager. Utterly insensitive, treating the Indian as some form of lower animal, and completely devoted to a cold technology rather than the spiritual humanism which the Latin American intellectuals are wont to claim for themselves, but which they seem to practice no more than elsewhere, these gringos are simply not characters in which the reader can believe. 70

70 For example see Roberto Leitón's much overrated novel, Los
Roberto Leitón's greatest attack is on the mining superstate. In his book the management forbids the sale of books and magazines, considering as dangerous to the peace of the mine. When the Indian miners ask for the rest periods to which they are entitled by law, they are quickly silenced.

¡Cállese bruto! La Compañía es república independiente. La culpa no es nuestra. La imbécilidad de ustedes y la ignorancia de los gobernantes todo esto hace. Ustedes han nacido para esclavos.71

The threat of T. B. and silicosis hangs over the miners continually while the company provides inadequate medical treatment or refuses it outright. The Indians are "parias explotados. Presos en medio de su país," yet, Leitón argues, they must do their own fighting for freedom, for few other Bolivians will help them. The cholo, who is their natural ally, is hopelessly turned against them in his desire to become white.

One of the most deliberately ugly Bolivian novels is Canchamina. The description of disasters, cold, wind, hunger, depravity, and general gloom is relentless, and the reader is left at the end under a pall of depression, which surely defeats the very object of the book. The natural reaction of the reader to a novel such as this is defeatist pessimism. It is hard to believe that anyone could draw emotional or intell-

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eternos vagabundos (Potosí: Editorial'Potosí, " 1939), pp. 11, 25, 35, 39 and 76. Nearly every mining novel which will be mentioned in this paper has a disagreeable gringo somewhere in it.

71 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
lectual fuel from such a work to inspire him to seek improvement in the lot of the miners. The book of cuentos, Grito de piedra is almost as depressing, but does leave some hope for the future. The short stories, when taken together, constitute a kind of history of mining injustice in the Potosi region of Bolivia. The author is obviously familiar with his subject, and was himself a miners' union leader and left-wing journalist. His characters are nevertheless overdrawn, and the conquistadores presented in the story entitled "Wiracoches" are pure barbarians. Coming down to recent times we are given new illustrations of the human phenomena of the mines. The cholificación of the Indians, the many superstitions connected with mining, which the Indians consider in itself a violation of the Pachamama or mother earth, and the many mining disasters in Potosi's ancient cerro rico are well described.

Coming to the post-Chaco War revolutionary struggles Heredia is obviously more in his element. He describes the rising of the miners in the abortive pro-M.N.R. revolution of September 4, 1949. The army marched on Potosi and the revolt was soon put down. Everywhere the picture is distorted by the caricatures of the evil yanquis. In one final episode American planes even bomb a mine to put down a revolt and protect American property and lives. Such almost juvenile hatred ruins

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this book.\textsuperscript{73}

A much better novel is Fernando Ram\textsuperscript{irez} Velarde's Socavones de angustia. This is a beautifully documented novel, often seeming, in fact, more of an economic and sociological report. Ram\textsuperscript{irez} Velarde brings out what he has to say by a comparative method. For some time his hero works in a small, private mine. Conditions, as was always the case, are appalling. In 1929, in the Buena Estrella mine, there was a total of over 2,000 workers with their families, all crowded into 250 shacks jammed together in narrow streets of from twenty to thirty houses. The shacks themselves were twelve to fifteen meters square with zinc roofs and walls, two meters high at the back and one meter seventy centimeters at the front door. Inside there was one fairly large room, and one small, originally planned no doubt as the kitchen-living room and as the bedroom respectively. In 1929 both rooms were packed in every house, and both were used for all purposes. Between eight and thirteen people lived in each shanty, and the novelist gives us an instance where four new workers arrive at the mine, a house is found with only seven in it, and all four new men are packed in there. The hero, in this case a simple schoolteacher once again, moves on to a bigger mine. There conditions are even worse, for the treatment of the miners is far more cold and impersonal. The miners' reactions to these conditions are

drinking bouts, and occasional poorly-organized strikes. Over it all hangs the sinister influence of the mining superstate. "¡Ímbéciles!" says the gringo manager Johnson, "¿No saben ustedes que son las Empresas Mineras las que manejan el Gobierno de este país infeliz?"74

One of the gravest problems in the mining industry of Bolivia, indeed in all the Latin American countries where one product dominates the economy, is that vagaries in world prices or economic depression in other countries can cause slack periods in the home industry, thus causing widespread unemployment. Many of Ramírez Velarde's characters are thrown out of work and drift towards the city of Oruro, originally planned as a modern workers' city but now degenerated into a slum. The author cannot fathom the paradox of unemployment in a country such as Bolivia. "¡Un país de cerca de dos millones de kilómetros cuadrados y de sólo tres y medio millones de habitantes, lleno de hombres sin trabajo!"75 The book ends with a plea from the hero for more education rather than political agitation from those who genuinely want to help the Indian miner.

74Fernando Ramírez Velarde, Socavones de angustia (La Paz: Editorial "Artística," 1953), p. 161. Another novel which compares the large and small mining enterprises is Hugo Blym, Títeres de la meseta (La Paz: Empresa Editora "Universo," 1953). On page 128 he explains why, in his opinion the small mines are even more soul-destroying than the large. After one has done the day’s work there is absolutely nothing to do in the small mining communities. One can almost feel the lethargy and mental stupefaction in the air.

75Ibid., p. 167.
Alfredo Guillén Pinto, the author of Utama, also made a plea for education in the mines. His novel Mina, while far inferior to his other book, shows the same compassion and moral indignation. The author shows unusual vehemence at the shabby treatment accorded to dedicated intellectuals in his native land, particularly, of course, to the simple teacher in the mining town. His hero knows this. "Sabía que en su país decir maestro es nombrar el último entre los últimos." For, as one of the managers of the mine is at pains to point out, "El maestro no produce estaño."76 Guillén Pinto is somewhat of an example to his fellow workers on the mining novel. He is able to describe terrible scenes while still arousing our compassion and desire for reform. The following passage describing the end of a day's work is worth quoting in its entirety.

En la vida del minero nada hay tan conmovedor como el cuadro de una "punta" que egresa. Cuadro patético que, a un mismo tiempo, contrista, atormenta, irrita y acusa. Los hombres salen laxos, con el lomo arqueado, el gesto sin expresión y el andar macilento de los borrachos. Su rostro es el de un cadáver arrancado de la sepultura. Lúvido y terroso. La boca, torcida; los labios, amoratados; el bello colgante, mostrando una dentadura sucia de boca y tierra. Pero hay algo más lamentable que eso. Es el resuello de los mineros cuando sales de estas galerías. Un aliento casi a la temperatura de la escorcha. Signo indudable de que los pulmones se han enfriado hasta igualar la suya a la del ambiente y aviso cierto de una combustión orgánica incompleta. Deficiencia de calorías en la alimentación.77

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76 Alfredo Guillén Pinto and Natty Peñaranda de Guillén Pinto, Mina; novela postuma (La Paz: Talleres gráficos bolivianos, 1953), pp. 97, 105, and 116.
77 Ibid, pp. 163-164.
Then the miners are searched to make sure that they do not steal any of the ore, and some are so exhausted that they lie down there and then at the mouth of the mine to rest. The visitor feels guilt and shame, says Guillén, when watching the change of shift—"contrista, atormenta, irrita y acusa"—the author's knowledge of human emotions, and his attempt at catharsis through artistic presentation should serve as an example to many of his Bolivian colleagues.

The biggest single event in Bolivian mining history before the nationalization of the tin mines, was the massacre of miners by the military at Catavi on December 21, 1942. The events leading up to this terrible event, and the actual massacre itself, have been presented in a fine novel by Nestor Taboada Terán called El precio del estano. Again this is a well-documented book with a ring of authenticity. The author used all the reports which were available to him, including the report submitted by Martin C. Kyne, Vice-President of the Union of Department Store Employees, who led the mixed investigatory commission sent to Catavi by the International Labor Organization (I.L.O.). In this report the Hon. Calvert Magruder, federal judge of the Boston district, concurred. The novel switches back and forth from the Siglo XX mine near Catavi to the government offices in La Paz. The author goes to great lengths to show that the owners of the mine completely dictated government policy at that time, thus leaving the underprivileged miners with no representation in the law-making structure. The
miners get little help from the political parties. The P. I. R., advised
by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who visited Bolivia at this time, tells
the miners that the destruction of European Nazi-Fascism comes first,
and that their demands, although legitimate enough, must wait until af-
ter the war. The leader of the M. N. R. from Tarija, obviously Victor
Paz Estenssoro, reproaches the union leaders for not submitting their
grievances in the regular fashion to the Chamber of Deputies, where
they could have been properly aired and discussed at length. An attack
is also made on the Apristas through the person of Luis Alberto Sánchez,
who was also in Bolivia at this time. Although claiming to be a friend
of the masses, says the author, this political figure spent his time with
the members of a reactionary, military government at a gay round of
literary and intellectual dinners and parties.

The whole Catavi disaster was precipitated by the world price of
tin. This went up rapidly because of World War II, yet all the miners'
pleas were rejected absolutely, and time after time they were told that
they must wait until the end of the war. The miners in the novel real-
ize that the tin which they are producing is only essential during a war,
and will certainly drop in price afterwards just as it did after World
War I, so they demand an increase in their miserable wages at once,
finally going on strike after repeated demands are ignored. The govern-
ment threatens, and the miners begin to dread a massacre similar to
that of 1923. The mining authorities then shut the commissaries, or
pulperías, hoping to starve the workers into submission, but this device fails because of the solidarity of the miners with the local townspeople. As the strike goes into its second week the government becomes seriously worried, and urged on by the owners, sends the army. The situation grows increasingly tense with the army becoming ashamed of being so ineffectual in dealing with a rabble of miners.

Finally a bread march by some women from the mining camp sparks off the explosion and the troops open fire on the marchers. The men gather and attempt to retaliate, but by this time the army officers are fully aroused and open fire on the crowds of miners with mortars and machine guns.

This massacre at Catavi, says the author, must never be forgotten by the Bolivian masses, and must be their example and inspiration in the struggle for justice and freedom. Otherwise the Catavi miners will have died in vain.76

So much for the novel of social protest on the mines: one of the richest fields of protest and reform in Bolivia, it has also become one of the most stereotyped and depressing genres to date. A few of the mining novels are exceptions, but none equal Utama, Altiplano, or the greatest products of the Chaco War.

Bolivia's socially conscious novelists not only wish to educate and

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76Nestor Taboada Terán, El precio del estafio (La Paz: Ediciones Librería Juventud, 1960).
persuade public opinion; they also wish to influence government and promote legislation to their liking. This propaganda motive can be seen in all the novels so far examined, but has usually been subservient to some other emphasis.

Augusto Céspedes' first novel, *Sangre de mestizos*, has been generally acclaimed as the finest fiction product of the Chaco War. His second, and so far his last, novel, *Metal del diablo*, albeit inferior to the other in many respects, has received even more attention. Although often called a novel of the mines, it is really far more a work of political propaganda. First published in 1946 its clear aim was to press for the nationalization of the tin mines belonging to the Bolivian rosca, the huge triumvirate of Patiño, Hochschild, and Aramayo. The book is militantly pro-M. N. R., and is full of the evils and machinations of international capitalism, national governments which are mere puppets for the tin magnates, and distressing scenes of human misery in the mines themselves. The protagonist, Zenón Omonte, one would not dare to call him the hero, is obviously Simón Patiño, but, strangely, this character is in many ways the weakest part of the book. In his eagerness to attack the evils which he claims were caused by Patiño, Céspedes makes his Omonte materially huge but spiritually puny. Even some of Patiño’s most bitter critics have considered him as a man of intelligence bordering on genius, but Céspedes presents us with the paradox of an

79 For one example see ibid., pp. 185-195.
ignorant, petty thief building up a vast empire by astute manipulations and keen intelligence. The author unfortunately leaves the reader asking if such a weak, vicious creature could have built up such a vast empire, and if such a pathetic figure is worth such hatred and urge for revenge. Apart from this one flaw, nevertheless, this is an extremely powerful, emotional novel.

Some of the scenes in the mines, the description of Omonte's youth in the Cochabamba valley, and the narration of the social and political ferment among the masses, are extremely telling. If the sarcasm may seem to be overdone to the uninvolved reader, yet one must remember the violent hatreds and continuous change of that time. In terms of political action this has been one of the most potent of Bolivian novels. In 1946 it was a distinct part of the fever for nationalization which impelled the M.N.R. to do so in 1952. It remains, with Raza de bronce, the best-known novel in Bolivia.

80Augusto Céspedes, Metal del diablo (Buenos Aires; Editorial Palestra, 1960). Although Céspedes modestly tends to deprecate the influence of his book, saying that the times influenced the novel rather than vice versa, yet this may be thought as part of Céspedes' mild disillusionment with the present conservative phase of the M.N.R. led National Revolution. Of course Céspedes is still loyal to the party, has served since 1952 as the ambassador to Rome, and is at present the leader of the party group in the lower house. As he says in his usual biting fashion, "The party has slipped badly, but for what other party in Bolivia could one possibly vote?" Interview between Augusto Céspedes and the author--La Paz, Bolivia, June 27, 1961. Others estimate the role played by Metal del diablo as pronationalization propaganda far higher than does its own author.
The novel of the town is usually indistinguishable from the novel of political action. Medinaceli's description of provincial San Javier in La chaskaswai is one of the most effective urban creations. Other novelists, mostly in asides, have thrown out mordant comments on provincial town life from time to time.

Vivía en Bolivia, en uno de esos villorios que allá, enfáticamente llaman Capital de Provincias, donde apenas si existía por aquel entonces un 5 por ciento de población blanca, con 5 por ciento de mestiza y una mayorfa aplastante constituída por analfabetos.  

Most of the waking hours of the upper classes are spent in petty land litigation, usually scarcely-concealed attempts to despoil the Indian.

The only truly urban novel is the work of the former Marxist revolutionary Gustavo A. Navarro, who has continued to write under the pseudonym of Tristán Marof. Gone now are his days as a strident, exiled revolutionary. Marof now prefers to be considered as apolitical, but his social vision has not been dimmed. His mordant social satire on the venerable, staid, traditional town of Sucre is a leisurely examination of the mores, foibles, and minor sins of its bourgeoisie and upper classes. Bolivians say that it is impossible to buy the book in Sucre, and certainly its author would not chose to live there.  

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81 Blym, op. cit., p. 10.

82 Tristán Marof (pseud.) La ilustre ciudad (La Paz: Ediotiral A. Gamarra, 1950). Marof seems to be one of these benighted individuals who must always tell the right thing at the wrong time and place. Currently he is persona non grata in Santa Cruz because of an article attacking the life and opinions of Gabriel René-Moreno, after whom the university in Santa Cruz is named!
Another well-known novel which indirectly concerns the city is *Vocero*, by Porfirio Díaz Machicao, which describes the troubles and efforts of journalists and newspapers in a troubled country such as Bolivia. Politics in La Paz, corruption in high places, censorship of the press, and editorial irresponsibility during the brief periods of complete press freedom, are all thoroughly, if somewhat hectically, discussed.\(^{83}\)

Even more emotional is the fictional writing about the revolution of April, 1952, itself. Much of it is declamatory, some of it approaches the mystical, and all of it burns with fanatical conviction about the righteousness of the cause for which they fought. One of the best books on the actual revolution is the collection of most of the short *cuentos* which have been written on the April struggle, often referred to as "la guerra civil" by the authors. Two factors emerge particularly clearly in these short stories. One is the bitter fighting which took place in La Paz during the gory few days before the miners and students stormed the heights of Al Alto which command the city. The great battle cry of the miners, students, and peasants as they swarmed through the streets was "¡Abajo la rosca y el imperialismo! ¡Viva la clase obrera! ¡Viva Bolivia libre!"

The other aspect of the revolution which is clearly brought out is the emotional impact which the M.N.R. had made on the people by this time. Many of the Indians and poorer *cholos* did not know exactly why

they were fighting. They simply were convinced that after the revolu-
tion, a magic word, everything in their lives would be better. One old
Indian woman in one of the stories, who hardly speaks Spanish, goes
up to the airport at El Alto to be part of the huge crowd which welcomed
back Victor Paz Estenssoro from his Argentinian exile after the fight-
ing was over.

Y doña Miquita reza: "Mamitay... Quiero rogarirte /note the
form of address to the Virgen Mary, and the defective Spanish/
pues por el alma de mi hijo. ... Y por mi guagita. ... Y por la
Na... Na-cio-na-li-za-ción."84

The best full length novel on the tragic days of 1946, when Gual-
berto Villarroel fell, is by one of the M. N. R. 's leading propagandists,
intellectuals, and politicians, José Fellmann Velarde. In Una bala en
el viento he gives the reader of the novel deep insight to the passions
and emotions which moved the young revolutionaries of the 1940's and
early 1950's. The fighting and the turbulent atmosphere of these days,
when the counterrevolutionaries were apparently winning, also rings
authentic. His next novel, La montaña de los ángeles, is more pano-
ramic, and attempts to present a fictional history of the twentieth cen-
tury in the country, concentrating, as one would expect, on the post
Chaco War social and political struggles which culminated in the Revolu-
tion of 1952. The novel is divided into four parts which, by their

84Subsecretaría de Prensa, Informaciones y Cultura, Antología de cuentos de la Revolución (La Paz: Publicaciones SPIC, 1954), p. 64.
titles, tell its story.  

Several other Bolivian authors have tried this method of historical fiction to describe recent politics in their country, but the result has often been poor.  

The Revolution and the M. N. R. have not escaped from their fair share of criticism, although most of the critics in the novel may be described as friendly. Already mentioned is Jesús Lara's hostile criticism of the land reform for being "bourgeois" and doing too little, and Augusto Guzmán's friendlier objections that the M. N. R. drove out the old owners before replacing them by education and schools. Most of the M. N. R.'s novelist critics, being idealistic, would tend to agree with Lara rather than Guzmán although their criticisms are less bitter and more friendly than those of Lara. One of the most penetrating criticisms made of the revolution as such is that of Mariano Morales D'Avila. A revolution may be a progressive phenomenon, he agrees, but one must be wary of the emotionalism and irrationality which are two of the seemingly inevitable complements of profound revolutions. Most dangerous

85 José Fellmann Velarde, Una bala en el viento (La Paz: Editorial Fenix, 1952). Also Fellmann Velarde, La montaña. . . . The four parts of this novel are called, "El Libro de la Amargura," "El Libro de la Guerra," "El Libro de la Esperanza," and "El Libro de la Rebelión."

86 Some other novels of the panoramic variety are Blym, op. cit., Manjón, op. cit., and the book of short stories by Jorge E. Meza, Cuentos de media noche (Cochabamba: Editorial Mercurio, 1960), which has some horrifying stories about the drowning and maltreatment of political prisoners near the notorious prison island of Coati in Lake Titicaca.
of all from the point of view of the individual is when the administration
of justice becomes part of the revolution and gets caught up in its enthu-
siasms, loves, and hates. Morales D'Avila puts the following words in
the mouth of a judge who is addressing a guilty prisoner.

Eres vergüenza para la sociedad; mal para tus convecindanos. Esto, según las nuevas leyes de nuestro Estado nuevo, es grave, im-
perdonable delito. El hombre negativo como vos, no se hace mal sólo
a sí mismo, como bien podemos ver ... en tu indigencia sino perju-
dica a todos, atrasa la patria.87

In other words, the judge says, one will not be judged as to whether
one has infringed a legal code or not, but as to whether one's actions have
affected the progress of the revolution and the country as interpreted by
the new supernaturalism. To which the poor, bewildered prisoner re-
plies—what about his individual rights against those of the state? Does
freedom no longer mean the right to live as one pleases, or does it merely
mean that freedom nowadays is a question of one state freeing itself
from the dominance and "imperialism" of another?

The novel of social protest has completely dominated Bolivian
fiction since the Chaco War, but one cannot pass without nothing that
other kinds of novels have not been neglected. Claudio Córtez A., who

87 Mariano Morales D'Avila, Ven, Sígueme (Cochabamba: Editorial Canelas, 1961), p. 51. In this whole problem of the individual's
right to justice one cannot help thinking of the trials in Castro's Cuba,
and indeed of all the ideas advocated by the present regime in Cuba.
Also alarming is the recent statement attributed to General De Gaulle
concerning the question of the possible reprieve of Jouhaud, to the ef-
fect that all justice must serve the interests of the state. All of this
smacks more than faintly of Leninism.
wrote two blessedly short and happily forgotten novels on the Chaco War, has also revived the historical novel in Bolivia. His Sobre la cruz de la espada has been widely acclaimed. Marcos Beltrán Avila's El 10 de febrero is also well known and has run into several editions. Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz in Los deshabitados and Rodolfo Salinas Pérez in Tu luz y su sombra have cultivated the love story, while Marfa Virginia Estenssoro is generally recognized as an extremely sophisticated writer of sentimental short stories.

One of the most original departures for Bolivia is Armando Montenegro's Víctima de los siglos. The hero is a young disillusioned youth with the unusual name of Franz MacDonald del Castillo. Much influenced by the social theories of Edward Bellamy, especially his utopian works, the becomes disheartened at the many idealistic revolutions in his native land which seem to bring so little progress. Dreaming one night, he is thrown forward into the year 6943. Everything has changed. La Paz is a beautiful city of 25 million inhabitants. False nationalism has disappeared and education now aims at producing healthy citizens. Almost everything that is ugly in present-day Bolivia has been eliminated, and what is left has been perfected. When Franz wakes up from this brave new world and finds himself back in 20th century Bolivia, he is unable to forget the beautiful land of his dream, especially when compared to the sordid reality around him. Finally he commits suicide. This is the first Bolivian attempt at science fiction, and even here social protest
is the real aim of the novel.\footnote{Armando Montenegro, \textit{Víctima de los siglos} (Cochabamba: Imprenta Universitaria, 1955).}

During the preceding discussion of the Bolivian novel of social protest since the Chaco War it should have become apparent that from the point of view of artistic merit the advance over the preceding period has perhaps not been very great. Many of the novels considered here have been very bad, yet for the scholar who wishes to understand the changes in Bolivian psychology since the war they are invaluable if not essential. Two startling changes are apparent when the post-war novels are compared with those that went before. The most obvious change is that the volume of novels produced each year in the country has more than doubled. Part of this increase is the result of the technical advances which have gradually reached Bolivia since the beginning of the century. Partly too it can be attributed to a slow but gradual decline in illiteracy, but apparent also is an overwhelming desire among the intellectuals of the country to write fictional social protest, and that on a scale never seen before. The second major change apparent since the Chaco War is the degree of involvement in the fiction. Before the war few of the writers discussed their country, and those who did were inclined to do so in a detached, aloof, even patronizing way. Since the war the novels have been full of vehemence, protest, and passionate commitment. The novelists feel themselves to be an integral part of the Bolivian scene, feel
that their work is a spontaneous expression of the state of Bolivian so-
ciety, and fervently believe that they have a pedagogic, or at least a
propagandist role to play. The limits formerly imposed on Bolivian nov-
elists by themselves as to subject have all been discarded. These new
writers feel free to write on any topic which they may decide is in need
of discussion.

The novel of social protest, then, has led the way in what must be
described as an artistic explosion in Bolivia. As in politics, Bolivia's
artists have, in the space of a few years, decided that they must try to
solve all their problems as soon as possible if not at once.

Where the novel has led the other forms of writing have followed
to varying degrees. Although the volume and variety of other types of
writing is in every case less, yet it must be admitted that the average
quality of some of the other fields, if such an average could possibly be
determined, would perhaps be higher.

Poetry, being a more introspective and personal form of literary
expression, has, on the whole, remained concerned mainly with the
individual's place in the world and his relations with others. Even here,
however, some strident appeals have gone forth, for many poems were
written about the revolution of April 1952. They deal with the bleakness
of the life of the miners, the miners' urge to revolt, the harsh life on
the altiplano, and are all exhortations to the heroes of the struggle not
to relax or weaken. A poetess has written recently on similar subjects, as the title of her collection, _Pampa, Metal y Sangre_, would suggest. The Catavi massacre, especially, is one of her major inspirations, and, like Taboada Terán, she does not wish this terrible event to be quickly forgotten but rather to be used as a constant example of sacrifice to the young revolutionary generations.

Since the Chaco War most of the country's literary criticism has been written by the young *engagé* novelists of the vernacular school, and tends, as a consequence, to be a reflection of their views which have already been discussed. While Guzmán and Finot tend to be bibliographers and annotators, Botelho Gosálvez and Diez de Medina have preferred to examine trends and relate literary products since the 1930's with the times which produced them. Their books, frequently cited in this paper, have been widely used here for bibliographical, biographical, and interpretive information. Often they express the naive, somewhat emotional, enthusiasms to be found in their novels, and the reader could certainly accuse all of them of heavy bias. They believe themselves to be revolutionaries, it must be remembered, parts of a radically changing society, and as such an overly-clinical examination of their works would tend to hide the subjective value of much of their work. Some kindness has returned to the Bolivian intellectual scene as passions

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89 Subsecretaría de Prensa, Informaciones y Cultura, Antología de poesías de la Revolución (La Paz: Publicaciones SPIC, 1954).

cool. Although Alcides Argüedas is still attacked far too severely, considering his pioneer role, he and other earlier writers now draw occasional words of praise from the calmer critics. 91

The broader field of the social sciences has attracted a considerable number of writers, some of whom have contributed extremely interesting works. The influence of party politics and the world's many "isms" has been negative or even pernicious, and it is not the intention in this paper to list the various essays in economics, history, sociology or political science which relate the events and circumstances of their country according to any strict, predetermined, ideological pattern. The many Communist and Falangist works on the crisis in the mining industry, to give one example, are so similar, so predictable if one knows Communist or Falangist ideology, and so theoretically dogmatic, that to read one is to read hundreds, all to no profit. The present paper, therefore, will limit its discussion of writings in the social sciences to those works which have, as in the novel, represented a new departure, or which have produced either new information or a new viewpoint on things Bolivian.

Santiago Schulze was perhaps the first in economics to show the new desire for rapid change caused by the Chaco War. His main thesis

is that Bolivian governments have done so little to make the country self-sufficient in many products, and have done nothing at all to stimulate national processing or "transformación" of the many raw materials mined or gathered within the nation. He pleads for some systematic, planned approach to Bolivia's problems instead of the improvisation which has been the rule. The state should be the supreme planner, but should leave vigorous economic forces with ample freedom to utilize their resources as they feel best suits their desire for expansion. What he asks for, in fact, is a realistic mixed economy. His annoyance with the mining barons does not drive him to the other extreme of total state control but rather makes him search for some system of checks and balances which will allow freedom without the development of crushing and arrogant power. Diversification and a safe atmosphere for the much needed foreign capital should take precedence over daring new plans concludes this very restrained revolutionary.  

Luis Peñaloza is the nation's best known economist and economic historian. In his long, thorough, but extremely dull Historia económica de Bolivia he follows a chronological, painstaking pattern which misses few if any economic factors in the past. His views are obviously nationalistic, but again it is the restrained nationalism, proper, one would assume, to the factual science of economics.

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93 Peñaloza, op. cit.
Sociology in Bolivia has developed greatly since the Chaco War, although it is still only in its infancy. As one would expect the intellectuals have almost all turned to problem sociology, caring little for mere factual study of stable situations. As is again to be expected the social group which has been most studied is the Indian. He is after all essential to the country, forms the vast majority of its population, yet does not speak the official language, is usually outside the economy, and feels little or no national or patriotic sentiments. A few sociologists have felt, like their novelist fellow intellectuals just after the Chaco War, that their first task was to discover the Indian and explain how he lived to their fellow Bolivians of the towns. Protest, they believed, should come later, for there was little point in protesting if the townspeople remained totally ignorant about the Indian who was causing the social protest.

One of the most famous of these books of education and discovery, perhaps undeservedly famous, is Indianismo by Mercedes Anaya de Urquidi. This is an informal, sentimental account of Indian beliefs, music, folklore, customs and work habits. Its main fault is an excessive romanticism. The authoress may give the reader two or three effective, factual and orderly pages, only to depart suddenly on a flight of sentiment and fancy which breaks the whole rhythm and continuity of the work. What social protest that there is can be found in these "purple" passages, which often appear a little ludicrous coming from the mouths of uneducated Indian peasants.
Que el Ynti de los incas nos proteja por siempre; que la Killa, melancólica hechicera, teja sueños de plata, sobre nuestras cabezas pensativas, en el telar nocturno de la bóveda azul.
Y que todos los astros alumbrén silenciosos nuestro camino incierto. . .
¡Señor! El indio sufre; confóralo, ¡Señor! 94

The Indian does not suffer alone!

Three other works of importance are much more worthy of serious consideration than this interesting but erratic account. All of the three have become classics in Bolivia and are quoted as authorities in the novels, sociological papers, and intellectual discussions in the country.

The oldest and most famous of these postwar sociological works is Figura y carácter del indio, (los ando-bolivianos) by Gustavo Adolfo Otero, also known as a literary critic, writer of short stories, and historian of colonial society and culture.

Otero begins by clearing away many old shibboleths. This book, he claims, is to be a new approach to the sociology of the Indian. He dismisses scathingly the theories of racial inferiority advanced by René Moreno and Argüedas, although he does not name them. Nor does the author intend to be defensive when examining Indian life and problems.

"No queremos hacer en las presentes páginas la apología de la inferioridad. . ." 95 Nor, claims Otero, has the Indian been brutalized and


overwhelmed by the telluric environment of the area where he lives. Personality is formed by innumerable different influences, many of them still not understood or even discovered, and it is the personality of the Indian which the author seeks to examine. He begins by a very dull perusal of morphology. Height, weight, cranial size, facial planes, and so on are studied and measured, all to little apparent purpose. Finally Otero begins the third part of his study devoted to the character of the Indian. He again descends too often to the finest and most irrelevant details. Vanity, fear, hope, rage, sadness, ambition and many other human traits are all examined minutely as separate entities. After a thorough study or psychoanalysis of the Indian's character, his archetypes, beliefs and superstitions, he discovers that the Indian is more dominated by his soul than by this will or his spirit. While his attempt to measure the amount of soul as against the amount of will and spirit, in terms of percentages, may appear to be scientism carried to absurdity, nevertheless his reassertion of the Indian's qualities, and his vast display of previously uncatalogued and disordered facts makes the book one of the pioneering works in Bolivia.

Another extremely serious sociological work is El pongusaje, by Rafael Reyeros. It is well documented, dispassionate and thorough. The old institution whereby unpaid personal service was expected from the Indians as part of their duties in return for their right to cultivate a small plot of land, is examined from every aspect. The reader is
left to conclude for himself that not only was pongueaje lacking in humanity, but also that its very nature was retrogressive, both socially and economically. The author ends by appealing to common sense. The Indians have the same resentments, hates, and longings for freedom from abuse as other humans. Because of this their reaction to pongueaje is expressed in revolts, small insubordinations, deliberately lowered working efficiency, lengthy law suits, and deep sectional divisions in the population, all leading to loss of time and produce, and even to bloodshed. Leaving aside humanitarian qualms, argues Reyeros, would it not be more expedient economically and politically to abolish such a decadent institution? As Reyeros says, "Nada más lógico, ni sensato, ni más simple. Y finalmente, reiterando la concesión de la libertad y la abolición de la servidumbre personal, piden el alimento espiritual de la instrucción!"  

The institution of pongueaje was in fact outlawed shortly after the National Revolution, and the government is said to have relied heavily on the information supplied by this work for its documentation and argument. It is one of the most influential books ever written in Bolivia.

96Reyeros, op. cit., p. 282. Of special interest to the social historian is the long and careful outline given on the history of this institution since colonial days. This is one of those rare Latin American works with a bibliography and some attempt at extra-national comparison has been made. The Grapes of Wrath is even listed!
Closely related to Reyeros' work is *El problema agrario-indígena en Bolivia* by Miguel Bonifaz. This is a history of agricultural exploitation from pre-colonial days until 1948, and is heavily charged with emotional and revolutionary fervor. Its main theme is that a middle class democratic revolution accompanied by a drastic land reform, such as was to occur only four years later, is absolutely essential before Bolivia can progress in any way. With land reform must come indigenous education, liquidation of unproductive holdings, and the mechanization of agriculture. Although the author's bias is obvious and no attempt is made to hide it, yet his evidence is overwhelming.97

Sociology in Bolivia, then, is in its infancy, but, because of the great urge for self-discovery which has characterized Bolivian intellectual life since the Chaco War, it has at least made a start. Two tendencies are noticeable. Some of the sociologists, usually trained in other fields, show a great awe for technology and the scientific age, and carry this respect for the up-to-date to absurdity in a ludicrous type of superscientism which wishes to measure everything, including human emotions, in graphs and percentages. The other tendency has been the intrusion of political, reformist convictions into sociology, giving it a messianic tinge which often seems strange and out-of-place, but must be considered as one of the consequences, fortunate or unfortunate, of a

revolutionary atmosphere.

The writing of Bolivian history also is completely different from the prewar days, and like sociology, shows both a childlike urge to be ultramodern, and a political commitment and involvement, both of which many purists would attack. It must be admitted, however, that there is a far more professional air to the history being produced than formerly. Some of the literary flair of the old occasional intellectuals may have gone, but it has been replaced by the beginnings of a desire to at least appear exact, well documented and thorough. More detail has led in many cases to less panoramic views of Bolivia, less lists of dates and events, a much greater concentration on specific periods, and examination of the personalities and forces at play within these periods. 98

The best known recent history of the country is by Enrique Finot entitled Nueva historia de Bolivia. The book is a sociological interpretation according to Finot. It stops short at the Chaco War, and is not highly popular with the revolutionary generation, treating the ills of Bolivia not as phenomena which can be blamed on groups, imperialisms, or the selfishness of ligarchies, but rather as inevitable growing pains in the early years of a new society. "No se trata, seguramente, de un

98 See for example the series of works by Porfirio Díaz Machicaco, also a novelist of social protest, of which the following is representative and perhaps the best, Historia de Bolivia, 1931-1936 (La Paz: Gisbert y Cía., S.A., 1955).
mal incurable, sino de una crisis del crecimiento, que tendrá que pasar."

Certainly it is pleasant to hear Finot's reasonable, humanistic voice in the midst of such stridency, but one can fairly say that he has somewhat glossed over past faults and responsibilities almost as much as the young revolutionaries have emphasized them. If the evidence is there surely there is nothing objectionable in placing responsibility firmly where it belongs.

Some of the revolutionary writing has already been mentioned.

There has been an attempt, even among the historians, to provide the Revolution with a philosophy and antecedents, both of which it possessed in only a rudimentary fashion before it came to power. This ex post facto search for a philosophical basis has produced some strange results, especially in the figure of Manuel Isidoro Belzú, one of the bloodiest of Bolivia's nineteenth century caudillos, but one who sought the support of the town mobs, now referred to as "the oppressed masses," to maintain his demagogic but shaky presidency. To call this tyrant the "precursor de la Revolución Nacional," "el Apóstol de los indios," is certainly to ignore many unpleasant facts about the newly rehabilitated hero.

El país vivía suspenso de terror, en medio de incesantes delaciones y de castigos sangrientos. Las ejecuciones se sucedían periódicamente, así como las prisiones y los destierros y confinamientos.

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99 Finot, Nueva historia de Bolivia, p. 376.
mientos a lugares aislados e insalubres. ¹⁰⁰

So democratic was Belzú that when the chaos in the country and the opposition which he had aroused became too great, he installed a member of his family, General Jorge Córdoba, as President before leaving the bedevilled nation.

The most controversial history of the twentieth century has been yet another work by Augusto Céspedes, *El dictador suicida; 40 años de historia de Bolivia*, which attempts to give a justifiable past to the National Revolution. So outspoken is this book that it has aroused controversy even within the party—Bernando Diez de Medina leading much of the opposition to its interpretations. Céspedes sees the whole of the twentieth century in his country as a pendulum between tyranny and new revolutionary forces, that is to say, bad and good respectively, with the tempo of the pendulum gradually increasing as the years go by while its swings to the right become bigger, therefore worse, and its swings to the left become more emphatic, therefore more praiseworthy. Rather unfortunate is some blatant self-justification, for Augusto Céspedes was a political figure of some importance during the latter half of this period.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 237. Fausto Reinaga's biography which idealizes Belzú has already been mentioned. The right wing members of the revolution have made perhaps more lasting contributions to recent historical biography. See, for example, Augusto Guzmán's two works, *El kolla mitrado* (La Paz: Librería Editorial "Juventud," 1954), a humanistic biography of the Indian born colonial bishop Bernardino de Cárdenas of Asunción and *Tupaj Catari* (México: Fondo de cultura económica, 1944), the biography of an Indian hero and leader.
The book ends with the formation of the M.N.R., a truly Bolivian party of the left which "se forma como el fruto de la historia de Bolivia."\textsuperscript{101} A full explanation is given of its policies and a defense is made against several more commonly heard accusations. The book is the leading example of revolutionary history, full of optimism and tangible enemies. The last words in the book are, significantly, "la resurrección."\textsuperscript{102}

History in many cases has, therefore, joined literature and sociology as an educator for change, as a propaganda weapon, and as an arm of the National Revolution.

What theoretical basis that exists in the M.N.R. 's program was provided by Carlos Montenegro, one of the founders of the party, in \textit{Nacionalismo y coloniaje}. This book sees the history of Bolivia in neo-Marxist terms, but adds to this ingredient a healthy dose of indigenous nationalism of the same type as the Apra doctrines in neighboring Peru. The author sees the country as historically having suffered under one type of exploitation after the other, leading to a perpetual economic and cultural colonialism. A true patriotic nationalism, he believes, could have thrown off this heritage long ago, but the passivity of the masses was the biggest obstacle. The problem which posed itself to the true

\textsuperscript{101}Céspedes, \textit{El dictador} . . ., pp. 179-180.

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 244. A much simpler factual account of the M.N.R. 's formation and rise to power is Nazario Pardo Valle, \textit{Calendario histórico de la revolución nacional} (La Paz: Empresa Editora "Universo," 1957).
Bolivian patriot was then, how to arouse patriotic feeling and a desire for freedom from outside domination in the indifferent lower classes. The Chaco War, Montenegro believes, was the weapon that did so, and was thus a boon rather than a bane to Bolivia. It formed a revolutionary generation which would never willingly allow Bolivia to become a servant country again.

Cada soldado vuelto del frente, trajo en sí una partícula del ansia afirmativa de Bolivia, un soplo del anhelo de sobrevivir, una chispa de la revolución autonomista. Allí donde tenía que perecer, se rehizo el espíritu de Bolivia. 103

By a natural counteraction to the national humiliation of the Chaco, Bolivians became nationalistic and determined to set the country free. Looking for the truth these younger found it to be in the land, the Indians and the mines—a "return to reality"—according to the author. The amazing thing to Montenegro is that high finance and the oligarchy seem so powerless to stop this new force. Its strength is such that it is bound to win.

Since the events of 1952 there have been four main political reactions to the revolution. Many writers give it whole-hearted approval, a great many others may be considered as friendly critics, a few attack it antagonistically as too "bourgeois" and slow-moving, and a considerable body of exiles denounce it as alternately fascist and communistic. These attacks follow party lines fairly closely and the various political programs

are outlined well by Cornejo. The M.N.R. continues to hold agrarian reform, the vote for the Indian, state owned mines, integration through new roads, the march to the east, and education, as its main planks. Few of the parties dare to quarrel with these aims any more, and politics tend to be minor squabbles as to when and how things are to be done, with fixed imported ideologies often more important than practical or realistic suggestions.

Since the Chaco conflict certain original strains which were noted in a previous chapter have become even more pronounced in Bolivian thought. Geographical determinism of a strange and rather ill-defined type has been a constant in Bolivian writings all through this century.

Franz Tamayo formalized this ambiente worship in his writings, and

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A eulogistic biography of Paz is Fellmann, Victor Paz Estenssoro... a best seller in Bolivia. Left wing support comes from books such as Agustín Barcelli S., Medio siglo de luchas sindicales revolucionarias en Bolivia (La Paz: Editorial del Estado, Dirección de Informaciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1956). Left wing opposition, often from the universities, which claims that the Revolution is too slow and has made its reforms reluctantly, is typified by Raúl Ruiz González, Bolivia, el prometeo de los Andes (Buenos Aires: Editorial Platina, 1961). One of the more recent Falange diatribes is Enrique Achá Alvarez and Mario H. Ramos y Ramos, Unzaga: mártir de América (Buenos Aires: "Artes Gráficas Modernas," 1960), while the best known attack on the Revolution is the more responsible Alberto Ostría Gutiérrez, The Tragedy of Bolivia (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1956).
glorified the people who were the products of the Bolivian geographical environment. Jaime Mendoza carried the process even further in his *El macizo boliviano*, claiming a definite, obvious cohesion and innate force in the shape and geographical position of Bolivia's land mass. If he argues, the Bolivian land mass is gigantic, beautiful and vital, then so too are the people whom it produces and who live in harmony with it.

These theories, whether over-optimistic or not, were an inspiration to the young men of the Revolution. Mystical and evocative, these ideas allowed a free reign to the optimism and imagination which is so much part of the revolutionary mentality everywhere, giving at the same time a scientific, methodological appearance which satisfied the under-developed nation's demand for modernity.

This mystical return to the soil has been classified by many experts. Zum Felde calls it *indigenismo y geo-cultura*. Francovich invented the name which has remained, however, by calling the movement *el misticismo de la tierra*.

Francovich is the best-known Bolivian philosopher outside his native land. He is not one of the geographical determinists nor can he be truly called a philosopher or writer of the revolution. In many ways, in fact, he resembles the older Bolivian tradition, with his French outlook, a gently satirical style, sometimes over-academic in his opinions, and firmly part of the great humanistic tradition. Where he is modern and not of the past is in his deep and inquisitive interest in Bolivian
thought, although his approach to it is cool and detached, in no way engage, and certainly not revolutionary.\textsuperscript{105} It is this very European, very unrevolutionary figure who recognized and classified the new philosophical trends in his country. The misticismo de la tierra or worship of the Pachamama, the Andean mother earth, has been recognized by Francovich as part of Bolivia's esthetic reawakening, and proves to have the same tendencies as seen in the novel and the social sciences. The new Bolivian thinkers wish to assert their independence from foreign thought, and at the same time discover Bolivia for themselves.\textsuperscript{106} Francovich seems doubtful of their success, but would appear to be reserving judgment, in his usual fair fashion, until later.

The two most recent writers in this school started by Tamayo and Mendoza are most prolific. Federico Avila is really a historian, but is so preoccupied with the shape of his country and the influence of its landmass on the government and society there, that he becomes a visionary. He sees the Bolivian altiplano as Mendoza saw it—a rallying point and nexus for all of South America.\textsuperscript{107} Fernando Diez de Medina is a writer and man of many parts. He is a leading member of the M.N.R.,

\textsuperscript{105} For a discussion of Francovich and his writings see Waldo Ross, Los hijos de la roca (México: Ediciones Orion, 1954), and Gaos, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{106} Francovich, op. cit., pp. 87-102.

\textsuperscript{107} Federico Avila, El problema de la unidad nacional (La Paz: Editorial Universo, 1938).
and has been minister of education. His writings include history, political science, literary criticism and sociology, but his great interest is the Bolivian landmass—the Pachamama. Leader of a group which proclaimed its ideas as Pachakutismo, Diez de Medina is at once the most lyrical and the most abstract of the místicos de la tierra. He is so enthused by the majesty of nature in Bolivia that he believes its influence on the people who live there is all pervasive; and in addition this influence is a benevolent one which once realized will make the country great. Nayjama, the new leader of the Indians, goes up to the mountain, as in the Bible, to find new ideas and draw inspiration—all very vague, it is true, but full of inspiration and pride in one's country—both qualities which had been sadly lacking. The mountain counsels Nayjama as follows.

¿Por qué la penosa servidumbre a Europa? Buscamos los pálidos reflejos del astro que declina, sin reparar que el sol ancino irradia verdad, fuerza, belleza. 108

Nayjama concludes that if for the Christian the beginning was the word, for the andino the beginning was Pacha, the earth.

Diez de Medina's followers have been numerous. Enrique Soruco Rodríguez' novel Jillimani Achachilasa, which concerns the love of a village for a nearby mountain during colonial days, is indeed heavy.

108Fernando Diez de Medina, Nayjama, p. 187. For Diez de Medina's ideas on politics see Pachakuti, y otras páginas polémicas (La Paz: Año Augural, 1948), and Siripaka, la batalla de Bolivia; Ainoka, ideario del Pachakutismo (La Paz: Ediciones Artísticas, 1950).
reading. The pull of the countryside and of Mount Illimani on the decadent town-dwellers is mentioned again and again. The Indian, we are told, is drawn to the land and understands it. The white man is a man of action and appreciates deeds. The mestizo, when he comes to grips with his environment, will, therefore, be a well nigh perfect man—shades of Vasconcelos.

A young group of intellectuals from Potosí, calling themselves Gesta Bárbara, also followed this religion of the earth, and have written long, worshiping essays on its products. Tin, wheat, and mountains are all given qualities, mystical powers, and voices which speak to the people.}

None of this philosophical, mystical earth worship is bringing forward any real solutions to Bolivia's many problems, but it is providing a spiritual, and to some extent a theoretical background for the young "true believers" of the M.N.R. It is part of the process of restoring pride in the country and exploring its possibilities and promise. As such, this vague, declamatory, lyrical philosophy might be said to be performing a worthy task.

Led by their novelists, Bolivia's writers have transformed the literary produce of the nation in the period since the Chaco War. Where

109Enrique Soruco Rodríguez, Jillimani Achachilasa (Cochabamba: Imprenta universitaria, 1951).

110Gesta Bárbara, Trigo, estaño y mar (La Paz: Ediciones Populares, 1950).
previously the reader found foreign-inspired, occasional writers who usually cared little for their homeland, nowadays one finds an explosion of writing and a new interest in _lo propio_.

Shamed and shocked by the defeat suffered in the war and by the awful circumstances surrounding it, Bolivia's young intellectuals came home determined to be part of the great revolutionary changes which they hoped were to come, with their part to be particularly the task of changing the intellectual climate.

Discovery of their own country was the first task posed by novelists, sociologists, historians, and philosophers alike. Having looked long and hard at their native land they became dedicated revolutionaries, and their writing became a propaganda weapon. A new Indian policy, the problem of the mines, and the filling of the empty lowlands were explained and hopefully resolved again and again where previously these questions had been all but ignored. When the revolution did at last come in 1952 the novelists and other intellectuals took on new roles. They channeled hatred of the old ruling groups, exhorted and encouraged by visionary, martial writing, and attempted, with some success, to give an ideological, or even philosophical background to the spontaneous, confused M. N. R. -led Revolution.

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111 A comparison of the volume of novel writing, for example, before and after the Chaco War can be found in Guzmán, _La novela en Bolivia_, pp. 106 and 179.
Above all these writings, and again especially the novel, are a mirror of national character for the student. We see the irrational nationalism, the new urge for self-knowledge, the emotionalism and mysticism, the hatreds and fanatical attachments, all of which are the driving forces in the country today. Bolivia's new literature provides a splendid mirror to Bolivian man and society in a revolutionary setting.
CHAPTER IV

LITERATURE IN A REVOLUTIONARY SETTING:
SOME CAUSES AND EFFECTS

"We still know very little about the obscure and enormously com-
plicated relation between a society and its literature."¹ Most scholars
will admit the truth of this statement, and will express hopes that the
situation can be remedied soon. Yet this relationship between a given
age and the literature which it produces is consistently and carefully
avoided by historians and students of literature alike because of the very
amorphous, even subjective, nature of the subject. Findings cannot be
documented or tabulated, the author may leave himself open to attack
at every step, and the research material available is often endless.
But the fact that a precise science can probably never be made of the
relationship between society and art should not inhibit the study of the
subject. Often a careful examination of the writings of an age is the
best or even the only way of immersing oneself in a bygone society, the
only way of obtaining "the feeling of the times."

Literature as a reflection of life and times has, therefore, been

¹Walter B. Rideout, The Radical Novel in the United States (Cam-
neglected. Within this vast field past political and social writing has fared only slightly better. In an age when one of the main preoccupations of all segments of the population is politics to an ever-increasing degree, it is surprising that these research tools have been neglected. One of the greatest phenomena of the last 200 years has been revolutions, and these chaotic upheavals are still with us, threatening our way of life here, bolstering our confidence in democracy there. So important is the understanding of revolutions to us today that attempts are being made to establish their nature, origins, and effects on society. Yet once again the literary product of these upheavals have been all but ignored. It would appear that the outpourings and observations of intellectuals who lived through these revolutions have been considered of secondary importance, while, one has to admit, they alone recapture the atmosphere, hopes, and fears of the people then living.

This neglect of social and political revolutionary literature has been profound in Europe, but has been almost total in Latin America. With the exception of a few preliminary studies on the novels of the Mexican Revolution nothing has yet been attempted. The observations to follow, therefore, will be purely introductory as far as the Bolivian National Revolution and its literature are concerned.

For convenience the relationship between a society in revolution and its writings can be considered from two viewpoints. We shall begin by examining the effect of the Bolivian National Revolution on its litera-
ture, and then pass to a study of the effect of the literature and its writers on the revolution.

The whole paper, of course, has been a study of the effect of the revolution on writing. It was the Chaco War which awakened the nation and its intellectuals to their own shortcomings, which gave birth to the National Revolution of 1952, and which, combined with its offspring, caused the literary change of style and subject, and the quantitative outburst which we have already seen.

Revolutions, however, have many influences on literature of a more subtle kind. It is generally agreed that they are destroyers of established ways, abusers of tradition, and inventors of new rules for society. As a consequence revolutionary literature is essentially anticlassical, for classical literature considers that writing is an artistic problem above all, that literature must be more of an art than a vehicle, and that there are artistic precedents, authorities, or examples which, if not perfect, at least come so near to perfection as to be worth deference or even imitation. Revolutionary literature, or indeed any literature of social protest, has a definite goal. It is anticlassical, anticonservative, and aims at changing situations while converting people to new beliefs. For the revolutionary writer literature is above all else a weapon, and the artistic or esthetic presentation is definitely secondary--the sugar on the pill so to speak.

On a more general scale one can say that the classicist, consid-
ing literature as an artistic problem as he does, is consequently supra-
national, even imperialistic, to use a much abused word, in his concept
of literature. His models and traditions may come from any time or
culture in the past, and he will attempt to impose their cultural hegem-
ony on his native land. As we have seen, therefore, classical literature
in Latin America, such as existed in Bolivia before the Chaco War, al-
ways bore the stamp of cultural colonialism, faint at times to be sure,
but always present. The great masters were European, Europeans had
done most to develop literature as an artistic rather than a didactic in-
strument, and Europe displayed a fairly stable culture based on tradition
and custom.

The moment that literature in Spanish America began to concentrate
most of its efforts on problems of existence in America, developing ties
with its own earth, it began to show its cultural independence. Just as
classical literature is sui generis international, so, usually, social pro-
test literature is local and nationalistic, Communist literature being one
great exception. Because social protest writing wishes to probe and em-
phasize lo propio it stresses differences rather than similarities. All
Bolivia's recent novelists look for ways in which Bolivia is different,
which to them is often the same as superior, and they are proud of these
differences.

If such an anticlassical, propagandist, and nationalistic strain may
be discerned in modern Latin American social or political literature,
then it is easy to see that in revolutionary literature, which involves even more violent rejection of the past, such trends will be exaggerated. Where social critics may wish to change traditional systems, revolutionaries wish to destroy the old ways. Similarly where social writers neglect classical subjects and experiment with new ones, revolutionary writers reject the old masters with hatred, and proclaim, at least at the beginning of the revolution, a complete liberty in the subjects and contents of literature. Classicism represents order and authority. Revolutions mean rebellion and novelty. Bolivia has been a good example. The post Chaco and post revolutionary writers scorn and despise those who went before, often unjustly, and rush off in all directions in their efforts to discover and emphasize the patria as against Europe or the United States.² Stylistically their innovation has not been too great, but in subject matter and in content they have been as revolutionary as the society in which they live.

Continuing to examine the characteristics of revolutions, one finds that they are always accompanied by a collection of artificial stimuli. These may take the form of slogans, uniforms, mass oaths, sacred shrines, or glorious martyrs, but all are intended to replace the old values and traditions which have just been destroyed, for the human

²For further discussion of the anticlassical, didactic and nationalistic strains in modern Latin American social literature see Gilberto González y Contreras, "La novela social americana," América (Havana), XXXIX, no. 3 (June, 1953), pp. 50-55, and, Aclaraciones a la novela social americana (Havana: Revista Iberoamericana, 1943).
being, no matter how revolutionary or visionary he may be, needs some fixed intangibles on which to depend, even if one of these intangibles is dialectical materialism. Looking to the novel in Bolivia we find a collection of shibboleths and sacred cows corresponding to those of the revolution. The rosca and imperialism, particularly of the yanqui variety, are the bogeymen, reforma agraria, indianismo, nacionalización are the ladders to paradise, Villarroel and Busch are the martyrs, Catavi, the site of the mining massacre, and Ucareña, the site of the first agrarian reform decrees, are the hallowed shrines, and key evocative words such as gloria, venganza, and above all revolución are sprinkled liberally throughout without too much attention being paid to their actual meaning. All are part of the hectic atmosphere and the childlike self-indoctrination which are so characteristic of revolutions and revolutionaries respectively.

Of these slogans and symbols in Latin American revolutions, the most often displayed is nationalism. In Bolivia the party is the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, its coming to power is called the Revolución Nacional, and the main preoccupation of the new writers, as a result, has been the search for nacionalidad, bolivianidad, or nuestro modo de ser, which if discovered will help Bolivia to assert herself against foreigners, especially the large and economically strong foreign nations, which all are likely to be lumped together as imperialistas.
This is part of the world-wide tide of nationalism which is sweeping all the underdeveloped countries.

The fact that both the French and the Russian revolutions turned into nationalist movements seems to indicate that in modern times nationalism is the most copious and durable source of mass enthusiasm, and that nationalist fervor must be tapped if the drastic changes projected and initiated by revolutionary enthusiasm are to be

The nationalism of Latin America's writers has been especially noted by many scholars. Menton says, "The anxious search for a nation is a prime motivating force behind the twentieth century novel."\(^4\) The nationalism of the prorevolutionary intellectuals in the three revolutionary nations, Mexico, Bolivia, and now Cuba, seems even more extreme than that of the countries.

In every revolution there comes a stage when slogans, martyrs, and uniforms are not enough to fill the void left by the downfall of the old loyalties. So long as a hectic rush is maintained, so long as all efforts are bent on the destruction of all vestiges of the former regime, then not enough time is left unused for troublesome thought to plague the revolutionaries either individually or as a group. Once in power, however, and fairly embarked on the changes which its slogans and pronunciamientos have so long demanded, the revolution must set about


\(^4\) Seymour Menton, "In Search of a Nation; the Twentieth Century Spanish American Novel," Hispania, XXXVIII, no. 4 (October, 1955), 432.
providing itself with an ideology, or even better a mystique, which will continue to inspire its followers and insure their steady loyalty. One of the ways of fulfilling this need for a new ideal is the creation of a charismatic leadership; the other is the creation of a national mysticism or religion (one thinks of Nazi Germany), which will contain a blend of all the beliefs of the revolution. Thus it must inspire, it must be nationalistic and proper to the country alone, and it must ignore or scorn the miseries of the past. Since this mystique must inspire in a quasi-religious manner it must not be too factual, too practical, or too mundane, but rather easily seized by the imagination and made up of convincing material to suit the desires of most segments of the literate population.

In Bolivia this need for a mystical, entirely new, nonintellectual faith was even more urgent. Not only had the nation gone through a revolution which had obliterared the old beliefs, but, like Spain after the Spanish American War, it had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of a state which it had supposed much weaker. National pride had been destroyed along with the old way of life. (Again post Versailles and Nazi Germany comes to mind.) We have already noticed the change in mentality caused by the Chaco War, and how the generations before and after the struggle were completely different. The shame of the Chaco haunts the men of the revolution so that the two events can hardly be thought of as separate.
Ambos /the Chaco War and the National Revolution/ son manifies

tación de nuestra época. Y nuestra época es la del hombre del pue
lo. De la masa. Y todo lo que se escribe del pueblo y para el pue

blo, debe ser documento de su existencia y de su realidad. 5

The Bolivian Revolution, then, needed a mystique not only to jus
tify itself, but also to quench the shame of defeat in war. Gaos finds
the mística de la tierra of Bolivia to be similar to the Generación de
1928 in Spain. 6 In both movements one sees intellectuals with a three
fold purpose. They ask, what went wrong, what is the true nature of
our country, and how are we to use our new understanding to build a
better future for it? The Spanish movement was far more cerebral than
the Bolivian one because it did not get caught up in the violence and emo
tions of a revolution. Revolutions look to a distant, necessarily vague
future. They do not wish their aims to be examined coldly, scientifical
ly and practically. Instead the ideas of the revolutionaries must become
an article of faith, and to provide this faith Bolivian earth mysticism has
given them a national, vague, optimistic ideology.

The impatience of enthusiastic, earth-shaking revolutions with
practical, careful intellectuals is well known. If everyone is convinced
of the inherent truths of the glorious revolution, they argue, then to sit
down and spend time on carping criticism and intellectual analysis is
decadent and even harmful. While Bolivia's revolution has provided

5Publicaciones SPIC, Antología de cuentos . . . , p. 114.

many thinkers of a mystical, revolutionary, or rousing kind, it has, nevertheless, a persistent anti-intellectual strain.

Los escritores demasiado intelectuales, demasiado inteligentes, son hermosos y agradables; pero no son más que la manifestación de un juego del espíritu, de un juego vacío donde falta el corazón. Un arte de escribir bonito, que no justifica de ninguna manera tanto alarde de talento tan vano como inútil. Por culpa de estos grandes manufactureros de obras deliciosas, bien escritas, bien pulidas y presentadas en lujosas ediciones; la "inteligencia," que con vacua frecuencia es un modo de ser imbéciles, reemplaza el sentimiento, lo que es decir, a la vida misma. 7

Note the language used here. Writing must be useful, to the revolution of course, cold intelligence or reason hinders sentiments or faith, and causes the men of the heart to be unnecessarily obstructed by men of the head. In Bolivian earth mysticism this attack on cold intellectual precision is often evident, although usually it is disguised as an attack on the cultural "decadence" of Europe, for which one may substitute those who ruled Bolivia before the Chaco War. 8 This anti-intellectual strain can be found as far back as Tamayo, who in his glorification of the will and power of the Indian, attacked the cerebral man of thought in a truly Nietzschean manner.

It is unfortunately true that charisma has often been more important as a driving force in revolutions than the ideas behind it. The capture of the French Revolution by Napoleon Bonaparte is an outstanding

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7Publicaciones SPIC, Antología de cuentos . . ., p. 114.
8See especially Diez de Medina, Nayjama.
example, and one wonders how different would have been the direction of the Cuban upheaval, or if it would have existed at all, if it were not for the present leader, Fidel Castro. Pessimists such as Nomad, therefore, seem to be uncomfortably near the truth when they claim that the masses are invariably more loyal to leaders than to ideas. While not denying that a charismatic leader is essential for the success of a revolution, one can plead for them by claiming that the leader must profess the same opinions as the masses. Several right wing leaders in Bolivia have been able to inspire fanatical devotion among their disciples, but, because they are not in accord with the present currents in Bolivia, they have never won popular support. Whether the masses produce the leaders which they need collectively, or whether charismatic leaders raise from nowhere the support which they desire, is open to argument, but the student of the Bolivian scene has to admit that the revolution in that country has depended heavily on the popularity of its leaders, especially that of Victor Paz Estenssoro. It is surely significant that Fellmann Velarde's favorable biography of Paz has been a "best seller" in the country since it was written, and has run through far more editions than any novel of social protest or theoretical work explaining the revolution. This affection for leadership which is one of the main features of the revolution has deeply influenced Bolivian writing. Paz' enemies, such as

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Jesús Lara, spend page after page wondering how such a man is able to attract such loyalty. The pro-M.N.R. novels and other works are full of dynamic men, individual saviors, and inspired supermen—a true example of heroes and hero worship as a theory. This attention to men rather than to the ideas which motivate them is another facet of the mild anti-intellectual tendency which runs through the revolution in Bolivia.

When considering the question of the effect which a revolution has on its intellectuals, one must inevitably ask why these intellectuals turn to one form of literature rather than others. In Bolivia the great intellectual vehicle since the Chaco War has been the novel of social and political protest. Although other forms have been by no means neglected, it is this genre which seems to best suit the needs of the intellectuals when they express the dissatisfactions and hopes which are the moods of their time and which impel them to write.

Propaganda is one of the major aims of all revolutionary writers. It is manifestly true that careful analysis of facts and figures has never aroused mass solidarity or enthusiasm anywhere.

Those who would transform a nation or the world cannot do so by breeding and capturing discontent or by demonstrating the reasonableness and desirability of the intended changes or by coercing people into a new way of life. They must know how to kindle and fan an extravagant hope. 10

The novel, which is a work of the imagination, which is a product

10 Hoffer, _op. cit._, p. 9.
of the heart rather than the head, is an admirable weapon for stirring mass emotions and hopes, second only to the short, declamatory political tract. People can identify themselves with the heroes, the tragedies, and the wild hopes which they find in a novel better than with the situations which they meet in any other kind of prose writing. On this score, therefore, it is clearly obvious to the intellectual that he should turn to the novel to express himself in a revolutionary setting.

The novel is not a form of literature which demands precision and yet it does not preclude it. We have noted the dislike of the Bolivian revolutionary for cold facts and reason, for the logic and detachment which may, he fears, whittle away revolutionary drive, enthusiasm and fever. Sociology and economics, to name only two types of writing, usually demand precision while the novel does not. Again it seemed clear to the Bolivian revolutionary intellectual that the novel should be the form used.

"Poetry is pan Latin American, the novel is national or regional." 11 While this is a sweeping generalization, it is true that the novel in Latin America, more than any other form of literature, has been Argentinian, Colombian, Brazilian or Bolivian rather than Latin American. It was logical that a nationalistic revolution should, therefore, turn to the novel before poetry.

11Dillwyn F. Ratcliff, Venezuelan Prose Fiction (New York: Instituto de las Españas de los Estados Unidos, 1933), p. 15
Even if the revolutionary writer is of a more practical bent he quickly realizes that the novel is the best way of disseminating his message. In today's world, especially among the semieducated, the novel is the only literary form to compete for popularity with the film and the radio. While the Bolivian writer knows in advance that he is certainly not going to reach a wide audience, clearly the novel is his only hope of even making a beginning.12

Again, when discussing revolutions, one must repeat that the emotional climate is of first importance. It is not the truth which seems to matter, but rather what people believe to be the truth. Here the novel, as a mirror of the climate of opinion of the times, is the best possible literary vehicle in spite of its many inaccuracies and limitations.

For many reasons the novel would seem to be the intellectual revolutionary's best weapon for spreading his views. Yet, considering the novel per se, its use as a didactic social weapon presents something of a paradox, and this paradox may help to explain the poor artistic quality of much of the output of novels of social protest in Bolivia and indeed all over Latin America. We have already mentioned Monguíó's complaints about Latin American social novels in general; he and many other critics believe, and not without reason, that these works are sadly lacking in merit and do little to help create an outstanding Latin

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12 Edwin Berry Burgum, The Novel and the World's Dilemma (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947). This work is an examination of the relationships between the novel and social problems.
American literature. What are, then, some of the contradictions arising from the use of the novel as a political and social instrument? Gustave Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant's great teacher in the art of fiction, is alleged to have brought his equally famous pupil back to reality with this widely quoted lesson.

The public is composed of numerous groups who cry to us: "Console me, Amuse me, Make me sad, Make me sympathetic, Make me dream, Make me laugh, Make me shudder, Make me weep, Make me think."

Only one of those groups Flaubert considers to be asking for instruction. The others are all asking to escape from reality. A revolution is to some extent an escape from the old, ugly realities of the past, yet the revolutionary novelists hope to spread their message by pointing out the ugliness, the sordid reality of that very past which the readers probably wish to avoid. T.S. Elliot tells us that "human beings cannot take too much reality," and this the revolutionary novelists of Bolivia have not grasped, so that their repetitious wallowing in the seamier side of life ends by driving away the frightened and nauseated reader whom the writer wished to convince. Flaubert would surely have agreed that the first aim of the novelist is to hold the interest of his reader, and the second to entertain. The social novel is no different. It also must interest and entertain, but in Bolivia the revolutionary novelists have made their only aim to disturb. There is a contradiction here, therefore, which few of the Bolivian writers have sought to resolve, although the solution seems plain. Before any truly great novels of social
protest can be written in Bolivia her novelists will have to learn that their first duty is to interest and entertain the reader. Once these tasks are accomplished, then, and only then, can the writer insinuate his disturbing social message.\textsuperscript{13} One has only to compare the effect on a reader of the work of Charles Dickens or John Steinbeck with that of the work of the Bolivian novelists of the mines, to be aware that a novel must be readable before it can teach. The reader is too often a spectator in the Bolivian novel. He must surely "suffer with" and experience catharsis of a lasting kind before the book will move him to change his convictions and act on the new beliefs.\textsuperscript{14}

This paradox is only one of the many which can be found in any study of social revolutions. Revolutions stress group solidarity, yet destroy the old systems and break down the rules by which the society formerly held together. Nearly all revolutions have emphasized equality and brotherhood--witness the "compañero" of the Bolivian National Revolution, the "comrade" of the Russian Communist Revolution, or even

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14}This argument does not detract in the least from the value of Bolivian novels, good or bad, as mirrors or indicators of the times in which they were written. Their effectiveness as works is an entirely different question from that of the insight which they unconsciously provide. See especially Gregorio Scheines, \textit{Novelas rebeldes de América, y otros ensayos} (Buenos Aires: Editorial Americalee, Biblioteca de cultura social, 1960), p. 9, where the author claims, "Es justamente la novela, la novela como sociología, la que nos va acercando a los americanos a un conocimiento de nosotros mismos, inicial de todo camino de integración y superación."
the "brother" used in the British Socialist and trade union movements—yet all revolutions have ended up with new hierarchies, and often with an emphasis on leadership, or on one leader, greater in many cases than that of the old system. Party solidarity is hailed as an absolute necessity in all revolutions, yet factionalism has plagued the M. N. R. since it took power. Revolutions claim to free the state from the bondage of cliques and foreign powers, and at the same time vow to free the individual for a new and fuller life, yet often the state comes even more strongly under the influence of one group or foreign power, and the individual tends to find himself in a greater anonymity, even more submerged in the mass than he was before. All these paradoxes seem to condemn revolutions, yet that is certainly not the intention of this paper. Generally considered, revolutions have brought much healthy change, especially in Latin America, so that their occasional unhealthy incongruities should be thought of as the failings inevitable in any human enterprise.

Turning from the influence of a revolution on its intellectuals to the role and influence of intellectuals on a revolution, the student soon discovers that much more thought has been given to this aspect, but that it has only produced as many more widely differing viewpoints.

Who reads revolutionary literature? The Bolivian writers of social protest obviously like to think that they are aiming their books at all segments of the population, yet there is a great amount of evidence that very few are actually affected. No studies have been made of the
problem in Bolivia. In the United States, however, there is considerable proof that even in times of acute depression the radical novel, for example, reaches very few readers. Rideout claims that less than 0.5% of working class people read works of such a serious nature. The research of Louis Adamic and Robert Cantwell during the thirties tends to confirm this depressing conclusion.\(^\text{15}\) If literature of social protest is so little read in the United States where workers have been organized for some time and where most of them are literate, what then of Bolivia? There unionism is in its infancy, and a sense of working class solidarity is comparatively new. Above all the vast majority of the population is illiterate, and the lower the social stratum, the higher the rate of illiteracy. Few books in Bolivia are printed in editions of more than five or six thousand, and fewer still can claim second and subsequent editions.

Yet the picture is not so negative as would at first appear. Appalling as it may sound all statistics indicate that few people anywhere read anything beyond the occasional newspaper, yet, in spite of it all, books have a proven influence. Positive evidence was found in the United States of the depression era that workers read proportionately more "proletarian" novels than "best sellers" compared to other segments

of the community.\textsuperscript{16} Turning to Bolivia several additional factors must be considered. Bolivian writers serve a population of under four millions. One could not expect that any book would sell hundreds of thousands of copies. Then also there is evidence that those in Bolivia who can read are much more politically involved and active than their counterparts in the United States. In the United States politics are very often taken for granted, and even in times of depression there is far more political consensus than in Bolivia. At least North Americans agree on the basic form of government and the Constitution, whereas in Latin America we are well aware that large segments of the population, in many cases, actively seek violent overthrow of both the government and the constitution under which it is supposed to operate. Libraries also alter the picture somewhat. The author of this paper was assured several times that the Bolivian novels of social protest on the university libraries' shelves are all well thumbed and full of scribbled comments, showing an interest in them by students who may not feel that they wish to use their meager financial resources to buy the books.\textsuperscript{17}

Above all the most important aspect of this question is not how many people read these works of protest, but which people in what posi-

\textsuperscript{16}Rideout, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 237.

\textsuperscript{17}The author was unable to personally verify these assurances because the universities were on strike during the writer's stay in Bolivia—a political involvement, incidentally, not found in the United States.
tions. It is often claimed that Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a major influence on the American Civil War, if indeed it was not one of the major causes, yet it is extremely doubtful if many of those who knew the sentiments therein expressed, and were either inspired or repulsed by them, had actually seen the book. Talking of the protest novels of the thirties, Rideout admits, "From the very beginning, the novels of social protest received a critical attention that was out of all proportion to their popularity, considering that very few had a sale of more than 2,500 copies." 18

In a similar manner many students and intellectuals in Bolivia can identify Jesús Lara, for example, and are aware of his views, although they cannot name any of his works with precision. Moreover many know his name who are unable to recall that of major Communist leaders in Bolivia, although Lara is by no means a major functionary or activist in the party. Augusto Céspedes also is known far better for his often unread novels than as the political figure of some significance in the early M.N.R. that he has been. In any society discussions of an unread author's works are, one greatly suspects, very frequent! Returning to the Bolivian scene it is also important to remember that those who are literate often occupy decision making positions, and, in such a small country, often know the authors of social protest personally. In such cases the influence of protest writers, either positively or negatively,

18 Ibid., pp. 235-236.
on government action or legislation must be quite large.

Also to be considered is the politically active life of many Latin American writers when compared to their counterparts in the United States: Augusto Céspedes, José Fellmann Velarde, and Fernando Diez de Medina, to name only three Bolivian social novelists, have all been members of the M.N.R. governments during their careers. The place of the intellectual in educated Latin American circles must also be remembered. He enjoys far more prestige and social status than the intellectual in the United States. Whether he deserves it or not is another question.

One must conclude therefore, that although the influence of the writers of social protest in Bolivia is not nearly as large as they themselves would wish, it is, nevertheless, more than the few statistics would indicate, and in a few cases may be considerable.

Certainly Marxists are well aware of the value of art as a political weapon even in the so-called "underdeveloped" countries. Ralph Fox presents a typical Communist viewpoint. To him the novel, and especially the social novel, is a bourgeois product and is a definite symptom of social malaise in a capitalist society. If the novel can be captured by the movement and injected with a strong dose of "socialist realism," then the party should be careful to cultivate it as a valuable weapon of propaganda and conversion.\(^{19}\) Although the Bolivian

\(^{19}\)Ralph Fox, *The Novel and the People* (New York: International
National Revolution claims to be indigenous and national rather than international, many of its ideas, especially in the economic field, are Marxist in origin. Thus it is at pains to win the support of the intellectuals, and, while not as rigid as the present Russian regime, the Bolivian government shows an inordinate concern with unfavorable published criticism, even in the novel.

The writers themselves are, of course, even more aware of the value of their works to the revolution. To the proletarian novelists of the United States their work was highly important in the struggle. "Art is a class weapon. . . . Art is a form of politics: it is a weapon in the class war." Latin American intellectuals have gone even further. Ezequiel Martínez Estrada claims that literature plays the decisive role in the formation of a national consciousness. He quotes the Argentinian Alberdi to that effect. "La literatura es la hermana de la espada; un elemento auxiliar de la guerra. Canta sus héroes, consagra y eterniza sus glorias: es la cultura intelectual, de las edades heroicas."21

We have already discussed at length the self-imposed role of the

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21Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, "La literatura y la formación de la conciencia nacional," Política (Caracas), 6 (February, 1960), 74-102.
Bolivian generation of writers which came after the Chaco War. They saw and see themselves as educators, propagandists, explorers of the regions of the nation, "muckrakers," saviors of the Indian and the miner, and watchdogs of the revolution. One cannot help understanding the point of view of the M. N. R. government which occasionally grows tired of wooing these presumptuous writers, and wonders, no doubt, if it is all worth it, for enthusiastic watchdogs the Bolivian intellectuals certainly are.

More must be said here on the possible uses of the writings of social protest to students of revolutionary nations, and particularly of Bolivia and its revolution. Joseph Blotner, in his brief but excellent monograph on the political novel, sees it as a valuable tool for research. He finds in these novels evidence as to the way that a given society reacts to its own political institutions and practices.

To the extent that such novels partially but accurately reflect social reality, the student of politics can draw valid inferences concerning political beliefs--including beliefs about the very nature of politics itself--held by a sizeable portion of the society's membership at any one time. One can detect at least the broad outlines of periodic shifts in the political concerns of a people, or any segment thereof, in their literature.22

Blotner sees the political novel as performing many other roles. It is a political instrument, a form of political history, a mirror of national character, an analyst of group political behavior, and an analyst of

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individual behavior. Yet this research tool, he claims, has been almost totally ignored. Giuseppe Bellini has superficially examined a few Latin American social protest novels from the same point of view. Their great value to him is their inherent humanity, but also they show the vast nature of the continent, the complexity of character of its inhabitants, its tragic present circumstances, and its everyday life. The novel of social protest is an expression of the intense fellow feeling between the intellectuals and the suffering masses, who are the best part of the nation according to the writers. These novels are a link between Latin American man and his understanding, or lack of it, of his environment.23 The novel in Latin America, while lacking the grace of other parts, has often seized and typified a region better than any other means.24 One has only to think of Doña Bárbara, Don Segundo Sombra, or El mundo es ancho y ajeno to realize this.25


24 Mario Llerena, "El espíritu de denuncia en la novela hispano-americana," América (Havana), XXXVII, núm. extraordinario (noviembre de 1952), 83-84.

25 There are a few signs that literature is gaining recognition as research material for historians.

Such literature has qualities that textbooks, monographs, and general histories rarely achieve. It can make the past vivid and real by distilling in words the flavor of the times when it was written. It can humanize the great historical figures and show as well that millions of ordinary persons also made history. It can lead the reader into fascinating byways of our nation's heritage, while deepening and broadening his knowledge of the better-known events.

Hoffer has argued that the intellectual is only the John the Baptist of the revolution wherever he or it may occur.

The preliminary work of undermining existing institutions, of familiarizing the masses with the ideas of change, and of creating a receptivity to a new faith can be done only by men who are, first and foremost, talkers or writers and are recognized as such by all.\textsuperscript{25} Hoffer goes on to add, however, that once this favorable climate has been created the revolution is taken over by men of action, often fanatics, and in its third stage becomes the property of these men of action and the planners rather than the intellectuals. "A movement is pioneered by men of words, materialized by fanatics, and consolidated by men of action."\textsuperscript{26} In other words the men of thought are useful to a revolution in its original stages, but are soon displaced by politicians when the upheaval and subsequent period in power arrive. Bolivia's writers obviously believe that they were the great precursors of the revolution there. "Los intelectuales abrieron surco a la Revolución Nacional. . . ."\textsuperscript{27} Cometta Manzoni would agree, and points out, "En Bolivia los escritores han sido los primeros en señalar la ruta hacia el conocimiento integral del indio."\textsuperscript{28} Yet one cannot help noticing that Hoffer's prediction seems to be coming true. Fewer and fewer of these writers appear in the M.N.R. governments as the years go by since 1952, while the technicians and

\textsuperscript{25}Hoffner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 130. \hfill \textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 146.

\textsuperscript{27}Diez de Medina, \textit{Revista Nacional de Cultura}, \textbf{XVIII}, no. 115, 61. \hfill \textsuperscript{28}Cometta Manzoni, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 25.
professional politicians gradually become entrenched. Many of the protest writers are now part of a loyal but rather disgruntled opposition. The Bolivian masses do seem to have been more loyal to leaders than to ideas as Max Nomad would have us believe.

To sum up, then, these random reflections on revolutions and intellectuals, we find that certain generalizations seem to be fairly valid, and also apply to what has been happening in Bolivia since the Chaco War and the National Revolution of 1952. Revolutionary literature is anticlassical in that it defies and discards past authorities. It is local and nationalistic rather than cosmopolitan. As Hoffer points out the revolutionary has infinite hopes in man's perfectability. The conservative looks to the past for guidance. In his cosmic optimism the revolutionary writer is anticlassical, and in his subjectivity, sentimentalism, and overdramatization he is almost romantic.

The place of the intellectual in a revolution is difficult to determine. Some evidence seems to indicate that while the writer of social protest is not nearly so influential as he would wish, nevertheless he plays a considerable role in the process of learing away old beliefs, in shaking the confidence or passivity of the people with regard to their old rulers, and in creating a receptivity for the coming of the revolution. After the revolution has started the writer may become its ex post facto theorist or even gospel writer.
In Bolivia especially one is left with the uncomfortable feeling that the intellectuals have been "used," that they have contributed far more to the revolution than it has given them. Their novels of social protest cleared the way, their indigenista sociology and mysticism created a dogma for the M. N. R. during and after the struggle against the old regime, and yet since that first great outburst just after the Chaco War they have been gradually displaced as the 1952 revolution eases into its more conservative stages and a new "establishment" takes over. The intellectuals of Bolivia are now somewhat disgruntled with their revolution, and one may confidently predict that unless it regains much of the earlier reformist vigor, they will gradually pass from a loyal to an antagonistic opposition.
CONCLUSION

It would seem that several firm conclusions and a few hypotheses may be drawn from the evidence so far presented.

The Chaco War which resulted in Bolivia's humiliating defeat during the 1930's was the main cause of the destruction of the old way of life in the country. The war may be likened to a sudden bright light which was cast on Bolivia's social malaise, so that it was no longer possible to avoid the obvious. The young soldiers and officers from the cities saw that the government on the altiplano cared nothing for their fate down in the Chaco, and that their fellow soldiers, the rural Aymará and Quechua, were starved, brutalized serfs. At last, with pomposity and empty glory dead, the youth of the country was able to see Bolivia as it really was—a caste-ridden, terribly divided, exploited, decadent country.

Since the Chaco War was in this sense the great awakener, it may be called one of the main causes, if not the main cause, of the Bolivian National Revolution which fought its way to power in April, 1952. The leaders of this great change were often men of the Chaco, and their convictions all arose from the knowledge which they had gained there. To destroy the traditional oligarchy which, to all intents and purposes, had
abandoned them in the Chaco, they swept away the old army, the power of the self-perpetuating ruling caste, and the undemocratic apparatus of control. To free the Indian they tried to educate him, instituted a program of land reform to make him his own master, outlawed pongueaje or personal servitude, and gave him the vote to make him a true citizen. To integrate the nation they emphasized nationalism, friendship between the regions, and new roads to move people to the vast eastern lowlands. Because they were nationalistic they wished to have economic independence and freedom from exploitation. To this end they nationalized the tin mines owned by la rosca, Patiño, Hochschild, and Aramayo, tried to diversify the nation's economy to escape the dependency on tin, concentrating especially on the new petroleum industry, and began a large program to make the country self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Above all these young revolutionaries, joined together in the M.N.R. party, tried to change the traditional pattern of authoritarian, ruthless government in Bolivia. While they have not always succeeded in abolishing the abuses of centuries in a few short years, and are themselves sometimes guilty of authoritarianism and ruthlessness to the opposition, yet they have conducted fair elections, extended the franchise, and wonder of wonders for Bolivia, two presidents have not only completed their terms of office alive and in Bolivia, but have calmly and peacefully handed over to their successor each time. Happen what may to the revolution the nation has been transformed and will never be able to return to the
old ways.

The intellectual life and the literature of Bolivia have closely paralleled the above events. Before the Chaco War, with the exception of Argüedas, Tamayo, Mendoza, and a very few others, the writers of Bolivia ignored their homeland, looked to Europe for inspiration and style, while appearing blind to the awful realities around them. One has the impression of an immobile, almost mummified way of living which would only crack under a violent shock.

The Chaco War provided that shock. With the political, economic, and social rebirth of the nation came an intellectual revolution. The young writers of the Chaco generation feel themselves to be completely cut off from those that went before. Life and the country are seen by them through entirely different pairs of spectacles. Suddenly faced with a new knowledge of their country, the writers began pouring out books at a rate never before seen in Bolivia.

Led by their social novelists the intellectuals had three great aims. First they wished to discover and explain this new Bolivia of which they had just caught a glimpse. What, they wondered, was the essence of the nation? What was bolivianidad? How could such a diverse and divided nation be welded into one? To find out they explored the vast unknown regions of the country, opening them up to their fellow citizens by the written word. Who were the Bolivians? A whole new series of works tried to explain the psychology of the Indians, the ambitions of
the cholos, and the place of both in the Bolivia of the future.

The second banner of the Bolivian revolutionary writers was social justice. Shamed by defeat in war into having a long, reconsidering look at their patria, these sensitive intellectuals were even more ashamed at the picture of misery, degradation, and exploitation which they saw. They demanded an end to these abuses and a new concept of social justice for the oppressed. None of the old loyalties were sacred to these zealous reformers. The hacienda, the newspaper, the school, the mine, and the courts of justice were all dissected and castigated. For the Indian of the mines and the fields especially, these protesting authors felt deep sympathy: that oppressed individual was the backbone of the country to them, so that unless he was kindly but quickly rehabilitated progress of any lasting kind would be impossible.

The last great aim of the new generation of writers was an independent culture and way of life for Bolivia. The country, they felt, could never be great while it remained philosophically dependent on other parts of the world. As a proud and growing nation Bolivia should be able to produce thinkers, ideas, and a cultural atmosphere of its very own. One result of this has been the mística de la tierra which we have mentioned, a kind of Andean earth worship with heavy admixtures of geographical determinism, pantheism, and indigenismo, because to these mystical writers the Indian is the natural product of the Andean environment, and therefore harmoniously at home in it. The second
result of this urge to achieve a cultural independence has been to supply intellectual fuel to the revolutionary movement. Born of young men who knew that they wanted to change the decadent country, but were not quite sure or agreed how it was to be done, the revolution has collected much of its ideological equipment as it went along, most of it, in fact, after the fighting of April, 1952 was long over.

The intellectuals, then, have been part of the revolution. Much of its enthusiasm has come from them as has much of its new viewpoints on things Bolivian. The writers' most suitable weapon has so far been the novel. The greater exactness demanded by such social sciences as sociology or history does not sit well with the almost religious convictions, violent hatreds, and great hopes of a revolutionary generation.

The place of an intellectual writer in a revolution is hard to determine exactly, and any conclusions must be tentative. In Bolivia the social climate has been consistently unfavorable to writing. Few read, it is hard to publish, and the censor has too often caused hurried departures to neighboring lands. Many intellectuals grow despondent in a Latin American country such as this, and feel that they have little influence. It is certainly true that their writings are not so influential as they would wish, but there is also evidence that they do have more influence than the few statistics would indicate. Those who read in Bolivia occupy high places, the intellectuals and politicians are both part of an extremely small elite—even since the revolution—and in
this group authors and their works are often better known than figures whom one would consider should be more prominent. If at times the writers seem to be "tools" of the revolution, which sometimes has an anti-intellectual tinge, if they receive an unfair share or none at all of the honors which result from victory, then at least when the revolution is a fairly democratic one such as in Bolivia, they may criticize or galvanize the leadership if the government party passes into its conservative, institutional phase too quickly.

All the available evidence seems to indicate that the western scholar should be sympathetically critical of the Bolivian National Revolution and its offspring. If their past is shoddy and their glorious future still very distant, at least the effort has been made to put their house in order. That this effort has been started, with all its many mistakes, by men who seem dedicated to humanistic, representative ideals rather than to ruthless authoritarianism is as surprising, considering the nation's history, as it is inspiring. Whether one feels sympathy or distrust, however, it must be plain to all that the country and its thinkers have changed beyond recall since the already distant days when so many died in the thorns and gravel of the Chaco.
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