



**Mission and Development in  
Peru's Southern Highlands, 1958-1988**

LEUVEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

**NOAH OEHRI**

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of Liberation**

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# Introduction

In early 1958, a regional newspaper based in Puno ran a series on villages abandoned by the central government. How could it be that Lima is paved with luxury construction, parks and twenty-story buildings while the people of the southeasternmost region of Peru lived “with a paleolithic backwardness of more than a century”? Residents of Nuñoa, located on the wide northern plains of the altiplano, reclaimed the construction of a new bridge to facilitate circulation and hoped that the achievements of modernization, including electricity, running water and health care, would be provided to the inhabitants of the small villages of the *sier-ra*. In the same vein, the villagers of Patambuco, situated further to the northeast of the department, also lamented that they had been forgotten by the successive governments in power. Thanks to their own initiative, however, the inhabitants succeeded in constructing a gravel road that connected the community to the road network where “the current of progress” circulated.<sup>1</sup> These forgotten villages’ sense of abandonment reveals how the *puneño* countryside was conceived as a place where the central government was absent. The villagers were not merely part of an unjust social order, but seemed to have been forgotten by the Peruvian state altogether.<sup>2</sup> Following a local saying, indeed, Puno is so close to heaven, yet so far from Lima.

Contrasts of tradition and modernity dominated contemporary portrayals of Puno in the late 1950s. By time the inhabitants of small villages and hamlets like Nuñoa and Patambuco complained about their abandonment, observers

- 1 Lucas Guerra, “Nuñoa, un pueblo abandonado a su propia suerte,” *Los Andes*, 07.01.1958; Julio C. Jiménez Oblitas, “Patambuco, de tierras ferraces pero abandonado a su propia suerte,” *Los Andes*, 06.02.1958.
- 2 Benjamin S. Orlove, *Lines in the Water: Nature and Culture at Lake Titicaca* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 13.

had already noticed the uptake of modern technology across other parts of Puno. Whereas farms started replacing rudimentary instruments with tractors, reed rafts crossed paths with recently introduced engine-driven ships on Lake Titicaca. Traditions of indigenous religion contrasted even more starkly with the transformations that modernity had brought to the southern highlands. “Indigenous people [...] continue to make offerings to the sun and the spirits of the high places”, a French ethnographer noticed in the early 1950s, “but know the plane, the railway and the telegraph.” This juxtaposition of what he considered old and new, backward and progressive, appeared indicative of the slow but steady modernization of Puno.<sup>3</sup>

The propagation of ideas of progress and modernity to the inhabitants of Nuñoa and Patambuco was arguably stimulated by a multitude of local and foreign actors who construed Puno as a “space of development” in need of intervention and salvation. They perceived a remote and harsh landscape, at the margins of a state that appeared to care little about its rural inhabitants. Many of these different agents of development subscribed to the *indigenismo* prevailing since the early 20th century, broadly defined as a heterogeneous political ideology preoccupied with the fate of the (for Peru) unparalleled “density of the indigenous mass” in Puno.<sup>4</sup> As a *space-to-be-developed*, the region hosted abundant projects, initiatives and organizations which aimed to further the modernization of Puno and the national integration of its population.

The exasperation of the inhabitants of Patambuco and Nuñoa also resonated with a new generation of Catholic priests, missionaries and laypeople arriving in Puno from the late 1950s onwards. The mainly foreign pastoral agents occupied parishes which had thus far been abandoned or rarely visited by a priest. They opened kindergartens, renovated schools and built health centers across the territory. According to the first prelate of Ayaviri, the church needed to launch a “peaceful revolution” in order to counter the threat of a violent and, even more dauntingly, atheist one. Since the fate of Catholicism in Latin America was at stake, the church had to reconsider its pastoral work and contribute to the social transformation of territories where the Peruvian government had barely been present. For its ambitious plan to be successful, the church needed clerics, teachers and medical personnel, as well as cars, didactic material and financial support from abroad.<sup>5</sup>

3 Jehan Vellard, *Dieux et parias des Andes: les Ouros, ceux qui ne veulent pas être des hommes* (Paris: Emile-Paul, 1954), 36-37.

4 François Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina* (Lima: Institut Français d’Etudes Andines, 2012), 23.

5 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri à l’heure du Concile,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 13, octobre 1962, 326-29.

In the village of Ollachea, for instance, Swiss nurse Denise Robichon established a health dispensary in 1965. In her words, it was a “small and poor” place where the majority of the population was malnourished – relying on a diet of “potatoes, corn and onion” – and where electricity and running water remained an unimaginable luxury. Besides offering free health care to the inhabitants of the region, the church also financed infrastructure projects and contributed to the education system in support of its parishioners.<sup>6</sup> Thanks to their social commitment, laypeople and missionaries quickly gained the trust and admiration of the population in Ollachea and its surroundings. In a 2011 interview, the director of the local kindergarten, which still carries the name of Robichon, expressed his gratitude for the “good things [she did] for everyone.” Further emphasizing the legacy of this ‘peaceful revolution’, another senior resident went as far as to claim that Robichon and her colleagues “brought modernity” to the region.<sup>7</sup>

This snippet of the church-led development in Ollachea is but one telling illustration of how religious and lay actors became actors of modernization in their own right. In the context of emerging discourses on the ‘third world’, they increasingly questioned to what extent their preaching of salvation and religious orthodoxy had to more actively address challenges of human development. The so-called ‘spirit’ of the Second Vatican Council translated into an embrace of the modern (and secular) world and of the hopes and dangers it represented for the Catholic faith. While pastoral agents actively promoted charitable projects in their parishes, the Vatican manifested its conscience of the problems of inequality, injustice and indifference through papal encyclicals. *Populorum Progressio* (1967) notably affirmed that “the progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the church.”<sup>8</sup> The Catholic Church, so it seemed, had proven that there exists a moral responsibility for all Christians to manifest their solidarity and provide relief. Commentators even assumed that that the influence of Vatican II upon Catholicism was to permanently alter the relations between the developed and the developing world.<sup>9</sup>

In Latin America, the *aggiornamento* of the church coincided with the so-called second evangelization of the subcontinent. In response to the calls for support for many abandoned and understaffed parishes, Latin America experienced a missionary revival during the second half of the 20th century. For many foreign actors – like Robichon and her colleagues – the encounter with prevalent pover-

6 Denise Robichon, “Un dispensaire: Ollachea,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 287–88.

7 “Las huellas de nuestro pasado,” *Apahata. Boletín Informativo de Minería Kuri Kullu*, abril 2011.

8 “*Populorum Progressio*,” Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Development of Peoples, 26.03.1967.

9 Georges Hourdin, “Deux événements favorable au Tiers-Monde,” *Croissance des Jeunes Nations*, no. 51, janvier 1966, 3; Georges Hourdin, “Édito: Chrétiens contre la faim,” *Croissance des Jeunes Nations*, Numéro Special, no. 42, mars 1965, 3–4.

ty and inequality served as a “spiritual trigger” for their commitment to Catholic social teaching.<sup>10</sup> In the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, the Catholic Church upheld an even more fervent critique of communism, but also sought to create better prospects for the impoverished masses at risk of launching a revolution. In line with the 1959 Declaration of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) on the socio-economic problems in Latin America, the church reaffirmed its commitment to Catholic social teaching to create a more equal and just social order.<sup>11</sup> The counter-revolutionary discourse of the Alliance for Progress further legitimized the social agenda of the continental church and the many missionaries engaged therein.

This church-led commitment to development translated into multifaceted engagement on the part of religious and lay actors. Throughout the 1960s, notably, processes of church reform and secularization led pastoral agents to reformulate their mission in response to the supposed abandonment of Puno. In this regard it is important to underline that Puno did not form a world apart, but was an integral part of a system of global circulations and domestic control.<sup>12</sup> The fact that villagers from Nuñoa and Patambuco felt otherwise is thus not only a reason to critically examine the politics of modernization and its local manifestations, but also a motivation to inquire what it meant – and entailed – for its inhabitants to belong to Peru or even the Catholic Church.

## Questioning Development and Liberation

Towards the end of the 1960s, the emphasis on material progress was subject to mounting criticism across Latin America. According to many activists, the peripheral economy of the subcontinent hardly benefitted from the growth that liberal theories of modernization had been promising for numerous years. The prevalent discourses of development appeared inadequate in the face of the structural problems of inequality. At the same time, the emphasis on foreign aid risked making both state and church increasingly dependent upon financial resources from abroad. These debates also resonated with religious intellectuals, who articulated a new *leitmotif* for church reform; the ideal of *liberation*.

Liberation denotes a process of radical transformation. In the book of Exodus, liberation entails crossing a desert – a long and difficult journey from domination to emancipation, an escape from bondage to the Promised Land. It is a time of

10 Catalina Romero, “Cambios en la relación Iglesia-sociedad en el Perú: 1958–1978,” *Debates en Sociología*, no. 7 (1982): 120, 125.

11 AOP, CELAM, Declaración “La Iglesia ante los problemas economico-sociales de América Latina,” 14.11.1959.

12 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 16.

doubt and trial. During their time of hardship in the desert, the pilgrims face the temptation to return to slavery. However, their time in the desert also increases their faith in the possibility of breaking free from oppression, to a life free from servitude and injustice. Indeed, it is hope for a better future, lying at the end of the journey, that underscores the transformative process. Thanks to spiritual guidance, the pilgrims ultimately become agents of their own liberation – finally belonging to the new, just society they had longed for.<sup>13</sup>

In the early 1970s, Latin American theologians appropriated Exodus as a fundamental schema for liberation theology. For them, it not only revealed the political message of the Bible, but essentially proved that God intervened in history to help the downtrodden and oppressed from enslavement.<sup>14</sup> Exodus notably inspired their focus on the concept of praxis as a central theological locus. Drawing inspiration from continental Catholic reform, the founding fathers of liberation theology reaffirmed the need for the church to actively address structural oppression. Furthering the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, the Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín (1968) questioned the *modus operandi* of the clergy while advancing the archetype of a pastor committed to support and defend his flock. These messages of ecclesiastical and pastoral renewal were particularly well received among those theologians and clerics confronted with social sins (i.e. poverty, exploitation, injustice) that contradicted their gospel. Brazilian theologian Clodovis Boff later defined (liberating) praxis as a “*complexus of practices orientated towards the transformation of society.*”<sup>15</sup>

This (spiritual) commitment to liberation responded to a given geographical context, a space where these promises for transformation could inspire local praxis. This (Latin American) space was often portrayed as one of inequality and oppression: political landscapes where ruling governments craved personal enrichment more than they cared about the common good; social landscapes where the poverty of the many sustained the wealth of the few; and, ultimately, ecclesiastical landscapes where charity was often preached but rarely practiced. It was within these spaces that the old order had to be challenged and a new world had to be fought for. Indeed, for the theologians who subscribed to these ideas, it was through the transformation of these landscapes of oppression that landscapes of liberation, the just society at the end of the Exodus, would eventually emerge.

13 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 7th ed. (Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1975), 203–07; Mary Watkins and Helene Shulman, *Towards Psychologies of Liberation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 36.

14 John Coffey, *Exodus and Liberation: Deliverance Politics from John Calvin to Martin Luther King Jr.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15–16.

15 Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 6–7.

The department of Puno was one of these landscapes where many church representatives longed for a radical transformation to overcome structural injustice and inequality. In a workshop in early March 1973, seminarists of the Diocese of Puno discussed the latent social conflict they observed on Peru's altiplano: a system of domination which sets in opposition the rich and the poor, oppressors and oppressed. Whereas the former benefitted from significant economic resources and political influence, the latter had limited access to land, education and political representation. This dialectical understanding of the social order also had spatial manifestations: essentially, the dominant class lived in urban areas, the exploited class in the countryside. How could the church, the seminarists wondered, respond to this situation of injustice? And how could they, as future priests, engage in and facilitate the envisioned transformation of society?<sup>16</sup>

Motivated to strengthen a progressive priesthood that identified with the poor masses and was no longer complicit in the oppression of the people, the participating seminarists outlined several requirements for liberating pastoral work. Those wanting to become priests should have satisfactory knowledge of the social milieu, a humanistic education and assert a concrete commitment to realize the divine teachings with specific regard for the altiplano context. The envisioned pastoral reforms not only questioned the content of their religious mission and their evangelization practice, but also the very identity of the church as the People of God. Liberation thus indexed not only a promise of social transformation and an end to oppression, but indeed also a time of trial, debate and scrutiny for all those actors seeking to reformulate their pastoral discourses and practices in order to "demythologize their religious life". Only in so doing, the seminarists claimed, could the "church of Puno [...] respond to the urgent demands of the peasantry in search of their liberation."<sup>17</sup>

The (unequal) distribution of land remained at the heart of these discourses of liberation. Since the long-awaited 1969 agrarian reform did not solve the aspirations of the rural population, the contentious debates on how the vast landscapes were to be fragmented and owned continued for another two decades. Government officials, scholars, development agencies, religious actors and non-governmental organizations accompanied these often conflictual processes and defended their respective vision of rural development. A particularity of the debates over the development of Puno is their ambivalent nature. Whereas many actors shared the broad ideal of more or less radical change, they lacked common objectives and often ignored the aspirations of those they sought to 'integrate', 'modernize'

16 AOP, 13 Realidad Nacional y Luchas Populares, Conclusiones generales del encuentro de los seminaristas de la diócesis de Puno, Chucuito, 05-07.03.1973.

17 AOP, 13 Realidad Nacional y Luchas Populares, Conclusiones generales del encuentro de los seminaristas de la diócesis de Puno, Chucuito, 05-07.03.1973.

or ‘liberate’.<sup>18</sup> Even as peasant organizations assumed the leadership in the land structuration process in the late 1970s, the department remained a battleground for competing ideologies and ideas of development and modernity.

The translation of ideas of (more or less radical) transformation in contemporary pastoral practice is a far from obvious process that unfolded over several years, if not decades. Be it in the name of development or in the name of liberation – respectively along lines of modernization theory or more radical critiques of capitalism – pastoral agents had to rethink and renew their spiritual and social mission. After all, they had to implement some of the most profound global and continental church reforms according to the circumstances and imperatives of their pastoral work in southern Peru. How could they expect their parishioners to regularly attend Mass and find time for prayers if they struggled to secure their daily income? To what extent did they aim to ‘bring modernity’ to their parishioners? In what way, if at all, were they to address structural problems which often perpetuated the poverty of those they spiritually cared for? How did they reconcile their pastoral authority with their commitment to promote grassroots activism? In which circumstances did pastoral agents (re)negotiate the boundaries of faith and politics? And to what extent did pastoral agents, in so doing, interrogate the colonial nature of their mission and legacy of the church?

For the purpose of this book, I examine the imbrication of discourses of mission and transnational Catholic activism in Peru’s southern highlands from the late 1950s until the late 1980s. These three decades represented a time of regeneration and change for the Catholic Church across Peru in general, and in Puno in particular. The Peruvian episcopacy published a pastoral letter “On certain aspects of the social question in Peru” in January 1958, criticizing the concentration of wealth and calling for fair wages and better working conditions.<sup>19</sup> Concurrently, the Diocese of Puno was subdivided into three independent jurisdictions which aimed to better respond to the spiritual and social needs of parishioners. The timeline ends in the late 1980s, when reform currents within the church were subject to criticism by ecclesiastical authorities. Cardinal Juan Landázuri Ricketts, who presided over the episcopal conference from 1955 and fervently welcomed and defended church reform throughout the following decades, resigned in 1990. The Catholic Church in Peru, “the cradle of [Latin American] liberation theology”, was soon dominated by conservative clerics adherent to Opus Dei or the *Sodalitium Christianae Vitae*.<sup>20</sup> In Puno, albeit more gradually than in other parts of the coun-

18 Jean Morisset, “The Department of Puno as a Territory to Be Developed in Southern Peru – Geographic Views on the Problematics of Integration,” *Revista Geográfica*, no. 79 (1973): 26–27.

19 Secretaria General del Episcopado del Perú, *Primera Semana Social del Perú: Exigencias sociales del catolicismo en el Perú* (Lima: Talleres Mercagraph, 1959), 7.

20 Todd Hartch, *The Rebirth of Latin American Christianity*, Oxford Studies in World Christianity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 153.



try, the church would also change its pastoral work and, from the late 1980s onwards, opt for an increasingly less public profile.

The two jurisdictions examined in this book are not homogenous structures, but a patchwork of different Catholic institutions and parishes. Through the arrival of religious congregations, priests and laypeople from abroad, the department also hosted an “international mosaic” of actors working for the local churches.<sup>21</sup> After its creation in 1958, the Prelature of Ayaviri constituted a mission territory for the majority-French clergy who committed to the evangelization of the northern provinces of the department, comprising both arid plains of the altiplano and the subtropical lowlands leading to the Amazon basin beyond the mountain peaks. Ayaviri, with its 17th-century Baroque cathedral, was the only sizable town of the prelate. The “monumental church” with its “immense paintings with golden frames”, which gave missionaries the impression of “great prosperity”, differed from the simple housing surrounding the old center of the town inhabited mostly by “authentic Quechuas”.<sup>22</sup> The Diocese of Puno, founded almost a century earlier, too, served mostly Quechua-speaking parishioners in the provinces adjacent to the northwest of Lake Titicaca. It encompassed the two largest towns of the department, the political capital of the same name and the commercial hub of Juliaca, as well as rural villages and hamlets on the vast altiplano plains between and beyond these urban centers.

At its core, this book traces the transnational interplay between the Catholic Church as a global institution and the parish as its local representative. The Prelature of Ayaviri and the Diocese of Puno hosted priests, women religious and laypeople from Western Europe committed to the evangelization of the predominantly indigenous parishioners. Defying dichotomous ideas of foreign domination and indigenous resistance, I examine initial encounters and the evolving power relations pastoral agents and parishioners were subjected to, as well as established themselves. My approach thus allows for a more nuanced study of how foreign and local actors formed an integral part of the ongoing endeavors of mission, development and liberation. Connecting the local and the global, this book ultimately demonstrates the complex ways church reforms translated into concrete if ambivalent transformations in Peru’s southern highlands.

As much as my research explores historical developments within the Catholic Church of Puno, it is not exclusively a history of the church. It is also a history of how (rural) development was envisioned, debated and reclaimed in one of the most populous, yet most impoverished departments of Peru. In 1961, *El Comercio* even

21 José Luis Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 2nd ed. (Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, Universidad Nacional de Juliaca, 2016), 249.

22 R.P. Mouly SS.CC., *Pérou: terre de contrastes* (Paris: Tolra, 1961), 85-86.

claimed that “Puno has the worst living standard in the world.”<sup>23</sup> During the following three decades, successive governments committed to the ideas of *desarrollismo* and economic nationalism contributed to the transformation the socio-political landscapes of Peru’s southern highlands. Agrarian reform, the mobilization of the peasant population and ensuing land restructuration permanently altered the *puneño* countryside. Modernization, urbanization and migration led to rapid demographical changes in a region that had historically relied almost exclusively on its agrarian sector. Many new actors, be they social movements, intellectuals, public officials and NGOs, entered the political landscape and left their mark at the regional and local level.

Religious and lay actors, the protagonists of this research, sought to facilitate, accelerate and alter these processes through their spiritual and social engagement. The Catholic Church, in many ways, constitutes a prism which reflects political developments in the mid- to late 20th century and sheds new light on them. Unlike the seminarists I referenced earlier, I do not seek to ‘demythologize’ the Catholic faith in my analysis of the liberating praxis of church representatives. Rather, I examine how pastoral discourses and practices evolved in response to church reforms with regard to the specific circumstances of rural Puno.

## Historizing Catholic Activism

This book builds on multiple historiographies, as it engages with scholarship on liberation theology and church reform in post-1968 Latin America and Peru and literature on both political and social reforms in the Peruvian countryside writ large and the social history of Catholicism in Puno in particular.

The contemporary history of the Catholic Church in Peru has, particularly when compared with Brazil and Central America, thus far drawn limited interest from social scientists and historians. Jeffrey Klaiber remains the principal reference for the study of 20th-century Catholicism in Peru thanks to his extensive research on the social history of the church. He counted the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of Cuzco and Puno, besides the *pueblos jóvenes* and the Peruvian Amazon, among the “most progressive pastoral regions in Peru”. In his view, the region distinguished itself through its “explicit identification with the peasantry”.<sup>24</sup> Besides the monograph of Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens on the history of the

23 “Situación actual es peor que la de 1956: Puno tiene el nivel de vida más bajo del mundo,” *El Comercio*, 10.08.1961.

24 Jeffrey L. Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821-1985: A Social History* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 322-25; Jeffrey L. Klaiber, “¡Somos Iglesia!: La Iglesia del Sur Andino, 1960-2006,” in *Políticas divinas: Religión, diversidad y política en el Perú contemporáneo*, ed. Fernando Armas Asin et al. (Lima: Instituto Riva-Agüero, PUCP, 2008), 375-87.

Maryknoll mission in Peru, regional histories of the Catholic Church are scarce and can mostly be attributed to former religious and lay collaborators. Existing literature - often focusing on pastoral letters, biographies of local bishops or their personal testimonies - tends to perpetuate the exceptionality of the so-called Iglesia del Sur Andino. (Former) collaborators of the church or affiliated actors replicate the same narrative of pastoral reform, focusing on the appraisal of church authorities as “men of hope” or clerics “in the heart of their people”.<sup>25</sup>

My analysis also draws inspiration from scholarship regarding what is considered one of the central problems faced by successive governments of Peru: its integration of, and relation to, the rural population. The “*problema del indio*” of the first half of the 20th century was later rearticulated as the peasant or “rural question” that both political actors and intellectuals sought to respond to.<sup>26</sup> The research of popular subfields within social and cultural anthropology - “Andean studies”, “peasant studies” and “community studies” - have been critically reviewed over the last decades. Many of these studies arguably fail to account for the heterogeneity of the Andes, but perpetuate the narrative of a “monolithic Andean *mentalité*”.<sup>27</sup> Informed by this criticism, I aim to critically discuss anthropological knowledge production during the 1960s and 1970s, while also taking into account studies on religious anthropology and examining how research activities themselves contributed to pastoral action and reform in rural Puno.

This book also aims to contribute to regional history through its examination of an understudied facet of social and political history. A small number of historians, most notably José Luis Rénique, have written the most comprehensive works on the contemporary history of Puno. In their works, they have acknowledged that the Catholic Church - described as the “radicalized foreign clergy” or the “militant church” - played a significant role in the transformation of Puno and the southern highlands and contributed to the emergence of peasant movements.<sup>28</sup> The lack of

- 25 Francisco d’Alteroche, *T testimonio de un caminar: vivir el evangelio de América Latina* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 2011); Andrés Gallego, *La señal de cada momento: documentos de los obispos del Sur Andino 1969-1994* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1994); Gustave Moyon, *Le cavalier solitaire des Andes* (Paris: Éditions S.O.S., 1983); Cecilia Tovar, *Dos obispos del Sur Andino: Luis Vallejos, Luis Dalle, en el corazón de su pueblo* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1982); Luis Zambrano and Mauricio Rodríguez, *Jesús Calderón, hombre de la esperanza* (Cuzco: Instituto de Pastoral Andina, 1997).
- 26 Javier Igúñiz, ed., *La cuestión rural en el Perú*, 2nd ed. (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1986); Manuel M. Marzal, *Historia de la antropología indigenista: México y Perú* (Barcelona, Iztapalapa, México: Anthropos Editorial del Hombre, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Iztapalapa, Division de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, 1993).
- 27 Kathleen S. Fine-Dare and Linda J. Seligmann, “Introduction: The Andean World,” in *The Andean World*, ed. Kathleen S. Fine-Dare and Linda J. Seligmann (London, New York: Routledge, 2019), 8.
- 28 See among others Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 249-55; José Tamayo Herrera, *Historia social e indigenismo en el altiplano* (Lima: Trentaitrés, 1982), 137-38.

more detailed scholarship on the evolution of the discourses they consider ‘radical’ or ‘militant’ stems from the limited scientific research conducted outside the geo-political centers of knowledge. In response to the “indifference suffered by Puno and almost all of southern Peru”, the Universidad Nacional del Altiplano launched the Biblioteca Puneña in 2014 – a “weapon of war” comprising over one hundred titles on the history and politics of the department – which represent the victory of “subaltern identities”.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, existing literature draws a picture of the recent history of the Catholic Church in Puno that remains ambiguous. By ascribing certain characteristics – i.e. political, radical or militant – to pastoral work, scholars perpetuate the idea that faith is inherently depoliticized and thus contradict the very premise of the writings of liberation theologians. The prevalent focus on macro-developments within the Catholic Church fails to account for how reform processes take place at a smaller scale, within ecclesiastical jurisdictions and parishes. The emphasis on social change as the outcome of religious and lay activism, moreover, overshadows their contingent nature: how pastoral reform is debated, defined and embraced at a local level.

This book questions these narratives of Catholic activism in Puno by exploring how religious and lay actors encountered, construed and altered its contrasting landscapes. It is thus not a history of an exceptionally ‘militant’ church, but of how prevalent discourses of development and liberation built on a dichotomous perspective of local society which set in opposition elite and masses, oppressors and oppressed. It is the history of a transnational network of pastoral agents who navigated these contrasts and formulated its religious responses accordingly: sometimes by challenging existing social hierarchies, other times by affirming the alterity of parishioners in terms of class or ethnicity. In other words, it is an attempt to shed critical light on discourses of modernity and development by examining the personal and institutional trajectories of actors and institutions who negotiated and expressed their critique of the colonial power matrix of which they once (or still) formed a part.

## Terms of Analysis and Methods

Throughout my research, I deal with different interpretations and implications of ‘progressive’ Catholicism and liberation theology. These terms, sometimes used interchangeably, do not however refer to a homogeneous reform movement within the Catholic Church. Following Klaiber, labels such as ‘progressive’ and ‘conser-

29 Edgardo Pineda Quispe, “Presentación” to Harry Tschopik, *Magia en Chucuito* (Puno: Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, 2015).

vative' are arbitrary and context-dependent. A key criterion helping to distinguish them is the acceptance of the conclusions of Vatican II and Medellín.<sup>30</sup> Drawing on liberation as the guiding paradigm of pastoral reform, theologians mobilized a concept with a complex history in Latin American thought. When using the term 'liberation theology' – rather than the multiple liberation theologies that arose in different spatial and temporal contexts – I refer specifically to Latin American liberation theology as a heterogeneous sub-current within the continental Catholic Church. Examining the local reception of theological writings and ecclesiastic documents, I aim to discuss the inherently situated nature of both pastoral reform and rural (Catholic) activism, or the social and political organizing on the part of religious and lay actors.<sup>31</sup>

The principal actors of this study are pastoral agents: secular and diocesan clergy, missionaries, women religious, and laypeople. Although also active in pastoral work, local religious intermediaries are, in order to avoid any ambiguities in the upcoming discussions, not included within this category. Rather, I will refer to them as catechists and 'animadores' – depending on the prevailing terminology – and discuss their role as local lay agents working for and alongside pastoral agents who, in most instances, came from other parts of Peru or from abroad.

With regard to the rural population, the terminology is a bit more complex. Discussing archival sources and written documentation, I seek to reflect the wording of the respective authors which, as in ethnographic research, has been subject to significant change in Peru. Through the agrarian reform law of 1969, most notably, the (official) terminology changed from 'indigenous people' to 'peasants', emphasizing economic relations rather than cultural difference. When these ethnic or class parameters are not discernable or not used in written documentation, I will follow the example of anthropologist Benjamin Orlove and "sidestep a long debate".<sup>32</sup> I have decided to use the term 'parishioner', which primarily reflects a spiritual relation rather than a socio-economic, cultural or, essentially, colonial one. At the same time, using different terminology also allows for a more nuanced discussion of how the latter criteria are imbricated in the relationship entertained with pastoral agents.

My research is principally informed by my understanding of pastoral action as a central element for the local receptions and manifestations of church reform. The Catholic Church is a global organization with hierarchical structures at different geographical levels and instances. However, it is through the words of local

30 Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821-1985*, 309.

31 Stephen J. C. Andes and Julia G. Young, "Toward a New History of Catholic Activism in Latin America," in *Local Church, Global Church: Catholic Activism in Latin America from Rerum Novarum to Vatican II*, ed. Stephen J. C. Andes and Julia G. Young (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), xii.

32 Orlove, *Lines in the Water*, 58-59.

pastoral agents that religious doctrine and episcopal pronouncements get translated and transmitted to the parishioners. As such, “the local level is in a position to actually remake the political ideology to which all [...] Catholics are expected to subscribe.”<sup>33</sup> Pastoral agents, in other words, adapt their sermons, pastoral care and socio-political engagement to a given context where they provide spiritual and social guidance. My focus on the pastorate, as a localized practice of transmission of religious doctrine, examines how global and transnational reform dynamics within the Catholic Church were redefined and reframed at a local level.

This book examines religion – notably in the form of rural Catholic activism – from a critical, historical perspective. As Bruce Lincoln has stressed in his *Theses on Method*, the historical study of religion needs “to insist on discussing the temporal, contextual, situated, interested, human and material dimensions of those discourses, practices and institutions that characteristically represent themselves as eternal, transcendent, spiritual and divine.” Following Lincoln, I intend to critically study pastoral discourses and practices as temporal and contextual text and action that informs my reasoning and argumentation as a historian.<sup>34</sup> In agreement with Daniel Levine, moreover, I consider that a nuanced analysis of how religious and lay actors sought to rearticulate development and liberation in their sermons, prayers and social activism requires me to carefully “construct or reconstruct the context in which these [religious] ideas resonate”.<sup>35</sup>

The analysis first and foremost draws on abundant source material from ecclesiastical archives. Both the Archivo del Obispado de Puno and the Archivo Histórico de la Prelatura de Ayaviri constitute the principal sources of information as these archives have preserved extensive documentation pertinent to this research. Significantly, these sources allow me to analyze processes of pastoral reform at different scales, as they contain information on developments in specific parishes and across the jurisdiction, as well as on regional pastoral cooperation. The archives of the Sagrados Corazones in both Lima and Paris revealed further details on the work of foreign missionaries in Ayaviri, and provide interesting insights into the inherent transnational dynamics of mission in southern Peru. I have also consulted numerous public archives which provided further insights, including notably the Hemeroteca Nacional del Perú, the archives of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva and the Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP) in Lima. The contextual analysis of my research is indeed largely informed by media sources stemming notably from Puno-based newspaper *Los Andes* and

33 Carlos Astiz, “The Catholic Church in Latin American Politics: A Case Study of Peru,” in *Latin American Prospects for the 1970s: What Kinds of Revolutions?*, ed. David H. Pollock and Arch R.M. Ritter (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 133.

34 Bruce Lincoln, “Theses on Method,” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 17, no. 1 (2005): 8.

35 Daniel H. Levine, *Popular Voices in Latin American Catholicism, Studies in Church and State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 18.

the magazine *Album de Oro*, but also by multiple publications and bulletins either edited by the church or affiliated institutions, namely *Horizons Blancs*, *Páginas*, *Pastoral Andina* and *SUR*. In addition to these written sources, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with priests, missionaries and lay actors involved in pastoral work in the southern highlands from the early 1960s until the late 1980s.

Notwithstanding the abundance of primary sources, the reliance on written and audiovisual sources produced by a male-dominated, hierarchical institution like the Catholic Church also limits the scope of this study. The underrepresentation of women, lay agents, religious intermediaries and parishioners writ large in church archives indeed appear paradigmatic of the institution. Inquiries into the archives of the *Hermanas de los Sagrados Corazones* and the *Congrégation de Sainte Marie de la Providence de Saintes* - both active in Ayaviri - have unfortunately only yielded limited information. Conscious of archival silences, I have attempted to include these underrepresented actors and voices whenever possible and seek to critically discuss the positionality of those priests and missionaries whose work alongside women religious and lay agents allowed them to build a lasting legacy of Catholic activism in southern Peru.

## Structure

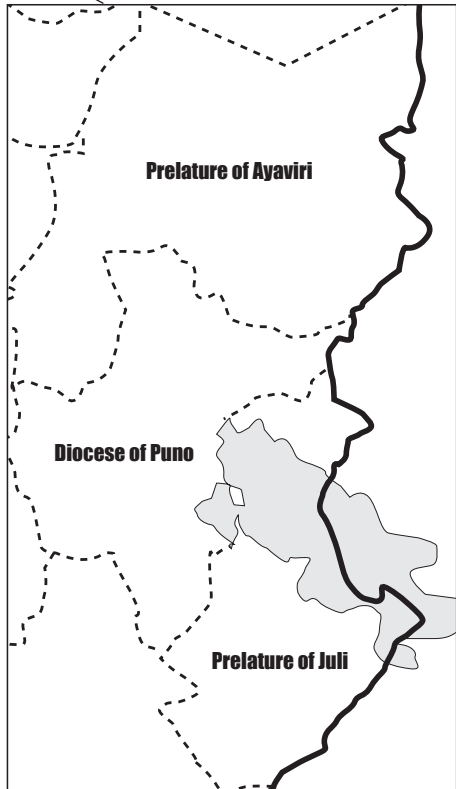
This book is divided into three different parts. The first part covers the period up until 1968 and is subdivided into three chapters. Chapter 1 traces the history of mission and development in the department of Puno throughout the first half of the 20th century, with a particular emphasis on the 1950s. It notably examines the work of a limited number of actors responsible for disseminating ideas of social and religious progress which, reflective of the predominant *indigenista* currents, targeted the mostly rural population of the department. Chapter 2 discusses the arrival of new Catholic leadership, both in the Prelature of Ayaviri and the Diocese of Puno. In the face of the supposed ignorance of rural parishioners, religious actors aimed to foster religious change via acts of charity. Fueled by conciliar reforms, they embraced a new responsibility for the social well-being, deemed a condition for the successful religious mission. Finally, Chapter 3 examines how missionaries in Ayaviri sought to develop new solutions to the agrarian impasse through religiously inspired unionization and colonization schemes. Although these projects had a limited success in substantively improving rural livelihoods, they succeeded in strengthening the presence of the Catholic Church in the *puneño* countryside.

The second part is dedicated to the study of pastoral reform in the aftermath of global and continental Catholic reform coinciding with the regime of the armed forces (1968-1979). Chapter 4 contrasts the utopian character of the reform pro-

cesses and examines revolution and liberation as the two key concepts respectively defended by state and church. The following two chapters trace changes in pastoral work by focusing on how social-scientific research and the domestic socio-political context fueled new understandings of mission. Chapter 5 discusses the complex relation between anthropology and evangelization in the Prelature of Ayaviri, aiming to understand how new approximations to the 'missionized' challenged the missionary zeal of a church whose pastoral practice was subject to debates and reforms during the 1970s. Chapter 6, in turn, analyzes pastoral reform as a personal and collective experience, focusing particularly on the work in the pastoral region of Azángaro and on regional pastoral cooperation within the Instituto de Pastoral Andina.

The last part discusses the imbrication of pastoral action and political mobilization throughout the 1980s. In Chapter 7, I will introduce the socio-political context that the pastoral agents faced during the transition to democracy. Based on the work of Radio Onda Azul, I will then analyze how the increasingly violent context forced the church to offer a different pathway to the land crisis. Chapter 8 examines how pastoral agents forged a new understanding of 'community' in their collaboration with both parishioners and peasant movements, creating a new, supposedly authentic ideal of rural organization that would liberate the countryside.





**PART I**

**MODERNIZING  
CATHOLICISM  
(1943-1968)**



# 1

## ‘Compulsive Modernization’

A great drought that affected large parts of southern Peru in 1956 aggravated the widespread poverty of the predominantly rural population of Puno. In April 1956, Peruvian newspapers reported on “one of the most acute climate phenomena in history” due to the lack of rainfall since the previous October. As approximately 60% of the cattle were condemned to disappear and the potato harvest only amounted to a fifth of the previous years, the second most populated department of Peru was threatened by hunger and famine.<sup>1</sup> Since the drought continued the following years, local commentators decried the “permanent crisis” that Puno found itself in. The lack of rain had not only diminished regional harvests, but also accentuated the seemingly chronic problems of the department, including the insufficient road infrastructure, barely existing electricity supply, unequal distribution of land and the “eternal Indian problem.”<sup>2</sup>

The economic crisis propelled by the continuous drought evidenced the existence of a neo-colonial class divide in Puno. The urban elite could count on sufficient resources to cope with the lasting economic crisis and ensuing hunger. Those most affected by the drought formed part of the large majority of the population who lived in the countryside, spoke an indigenous language and carried out manual labor in haciendas or on the scarce land that they owned. According to an article published in *Los Andes* in spring 1958, the drought had translated into a tragedy for the rural dwellers, describing the *indios* as “defeated by the contingency of [...] hunger, sadness and cold.”<sup>3</sup> Most of those who suffered from the imminent con-

1 “Temen que hambruna se presente en Puno,” *La Prensa*, 11.04.1956; “4 millones de cabezas de ganado sin pastos por la sequía en Puno,” *La Prensa*, 16.05.1956; “Puno, Cuzco, amenazados por hambre y crisis comercial,” *El Comercio*, 18.06.1956.

2 “Puno: Crisis Permanente,” *Los Andes*, 12.04.1958.

3 “Puno sigue golpeado por el Destino,” *Los Andes*, 14.04.1958.

sequences of the drought however struggled to make their voice heard in Lima. In the face of the restrictive voting legislation barring the illiterate population from participation, less than 10% of the population of Puno participated in the 1956 presidential elections. According to *puneño* intellectual Emilio Armaza, it was thus of utmost importance to launch literacy campaigns among the indigenous masses so that successive governments would care more about the “indefinite and unjust” abandonment of Puno.<sup>4</sup>

For the Catholic Church in Puno, the fate of its rural parishioners predominantly remained a subordinate concern in its mission to strengthen the Christian faith. During the late 19th century, missionary action across the altiplano benefitted significantly from the foundation of the Propaganda Fide institute in neighboring Arequipa. The so-called “popular missions” emanating from the institute resulted in multiple evangelization campaigns to the often-abandoned parishes across the highlands.<sup>5</sup> With the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1898) and the subsequent rise of Catholic social teaching, the deplorable situation of indigenous parishioners was subject to increasing scrutiny by episcopal synods and councils. Numerous Catholic authorities and intellectuals in Lima expressed increasing social concerns about the indigenous population, condemning abuse and exploitation and, in paternalistic fashion, underlining the need for material help and (spiritual) education. However, there are only few accounts of these concerns actually manifesting in clerical support for the revindications of the regional peasantry. One notable example is Valentin Paniagua, priest of Pomata, whose public sermons and actions in favor of the rights of the *indios* of his parish led to his incarceration and subsequent escape from Puno in 1904.<sup>6</sup>

The case of Paniagua is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that there still do not exist extensive studies on the reception of social encyclicals in rural parishes during the first half of the 20th century. Like in other parts of Latin America, the church in Puno is predominantly presented as conservative and fundamentally anti-modern before the Second Vatican Council, thus ignoring the Catholic social activism which emerged in Peru since the late 19th century.<sup>7</sup> This

4 Emilio Armaza, “El abandono de Puno,” *Los Andes*, 11.01.1962.

5 Álvaro Espinoza de la Borda, “Recuperando El Altiplano Para La Fe: El Colegio Apostólico de Arequipa y Su Labor Misionera En Puno En El Siglo XIX,” *Allpanchis* 38, no. 69 (2007): 100–03.

6 Ricardo Cubas Ramacciotti, *The Politics of Religion and the Rise of Social Catholicism in Peru (1884–1935): Faith, Workers, and Race before Liberation Theology*, Religion in the Americas Series (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 207–10; Augusto Ramos Zambrano, *Ezequiel Urviola y el indigenismo puneño: Tormenta altiplánica, Rumi Maqui y la Rebelión de Huancané* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso, 2016), 41.

7 Stephen J. C. Andes and Julia G. Young, “Historicizing Catholic Activism in Latin America,” in *Local Church, Global Church: Catholic Activism in Latin America from Rerum Novarum to Vatican II*, ed. Stephen J. C. Andes and Julia G. Young (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 305.

description notably results from the fact that many clerics entertained close relationships with *hacendados* and celebrated Mass in their chapels to carry out their mission. Puno's landowners, in turn, also counted the church - often possessing large estates - among their allies in the resistance to land reform, as the church disavowed political mobilization or militancy on the part of its parishioners.<sup>8</sup> For instance, when one of the most notable defenders of the rights of the indigenous population and pioneer of *indigenismo* in Puno, Francisco Chukiwanca Ayulo, accused the then bishop of crimes against his rural parishioners, he was publicly excommunicated in 1912.<sup>9</sup> More than thirty years later, in 1944, *puneño* intellectual Lizandro Luna lamented that the clergy continued to side with those seeking to abuse their power and authority. In his view, "many of the forms and customs of the colony remain intact" in the region as the priests still "exploit their flock with the tyranny of tariffs."<sup>10</sup>

The development of *indigenista* discourses and movements in the early 20th century had already criticized systematic abuses and exploitation of the indigenous population. Historian José Tamayo Herrera has identified five different currents among the activists and intellectuals dedicated to the "forgotten masses" of Puno: those defending either a pedagogical or legal perspective, advocating for political participation, criticizing the hacienda system or producing literary writings on 'Andean' identity. Some of the most prominent representatives of the burgeoning regional *indigenismo*, like José Antonio Encinas, Gamaliel Churata and the above-mentioned Francisco Chukiwanca, as well as associations like the Comité Pro-Derecho Indígena Tahuantinsuyo, could hence be ascribed to different currents within a larger political and literary ideology that had surged in Peru and other Latin American states, most notably in Mexico, during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>11</sup>

The *indigenismo* of Puno during these decades was particularly militant, as it coincided with important mobilizations in different rural districts. In many instances, the *indigenista* activists assumed the roles of organic intellectuals in the defense of the claims for land and justice of the indigenous population. A particularly well-studied example is the Rumi Maqui rebellion, named after the *nom de guerre* of former army major Teodomiro Gutiérrez Cuevas, who led an army of mostly indigenous peasants to attack the owners of the hacienda San José in December

8 Dan Chapin Hazen, *The Awakening of Puno: Government Policy and the Indian Problem in Southern Peru, 1900-1955: A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University, 1974* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1974), 427-28; Héctor Martínez, *Las migraciones altiplánicas y la colonización del Tambopata* (Lima: Centro de Estudios de Población y Desarrollo, 1969), 28.

9 Ramos Zambrano, *Ezequiel Urviola y el indigenismo puneño*, 51.

10 Lizandro Luna, "El Puma Indomable: La sublevación indígena de 1780 en Azángaro," in Samuel Frisancho Pineda ed. *Album de Oro IX*, 1982, 108.

11 Tamayo Herrera, *Historia social e indigenismo en el altiplano*, 300-01.

1915, which provoked a violent response by police forces.<sup>12</sup> In the aftermath of the failed uprising of Huancho Lima, whose brutal suppression resulted in several hundred deaths in early 1924, this “pragmatic *indigenismo*” closely involved in the struggle for land lost its preeminence. As large-scale peasant mobilizations vanished in the 1930s, the remaining *indigenistas* in Puno dedicated themselves mainly to literary works and debates within intellectual circles.<sup>13</sup>

Towards the mid-20th century, and particularly in response to the drought of the 1950s, various *indigenista* discourses gained in importance once more as they undergirded incipient processes of what Tamayo Herrera has framed as the “compulsive modernization” of the department of Puno.<sup>14</sup> This process was instigated by a multitude of local and foreign actors whose ideas and aspirations for development coincided:

[T]he objective of integration and modernization is [the patrimony of] the work of religious groups, rich peasants, migrants, teachers, lieutenant governors, students, etc: those who try to produce a new type of public opinion and attitude in the community that corresponds to a different concept of what is rational and irrational, of what is backward and advanced, and finally, of what they should and should not do.<sup>15</sup>

As this chapter seeks to illustrate, missionaries, development agents and associated scholars perceived Puno as a space on the doorstep of modernity as they promoted the birth of an educated, increasingly mobile and Catholic population, breaking with a past of illiteracy, marginalization and superstition. The opening of schools, improvement of infrastructure and the growth of the urban centers changed their perception of a region which, during previous decades, had often been characterized by the perseverance of the “mestizo-Indian status quo” that divided “between the [few] comfortable and the [many] exploited”.<sup>16</sup> Even in the countryside, the neo-colonial social hierarchies were increasingly fragile. Landowners were not in absolute control of the indigenous peasants they exercised their power over, but attempted to uphold their authority in the face of the progressive transformation of the rural economy.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding these changes, however, the rigid stratification of *puneño* society was but slowly changing.

12 Ramos Zambrano, *Ezequiel Urviola y el indigenismo puneño*, 360–79.

13 Annalyda Alvarez-Calderón Gerbolini, *En Búsqueda de La Ciudadanía Indígena: Puno, 1900–1930*, 1st ed. (Lima: Fundación M.J. Bustamante de la Fuente, 2021), 308–09.

14 Tamayo Herrera, *Historia social e indigenismo en el altiplano*, 111.

15 Graciela Soldevilla V., “Informe final del proyecto: El trabajo de organizaciones e instituciones extranjeras,” *Publicaciones IIDSA Informe No. 3* (Puno: Instituto de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo Social del Altiplano, January 1983), 5.

16 Vellard, *Dieux et parias des Andes*, 37; Hazen, *The Awakening of Puno*, 6.

17 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 83, 130.

## Dawn of New Missions

The religious actors who first formulated an *indigenista* agenda in Puno were Adventist missionaries. Arriving in the early 20th century, they disrupted the official Catholic hegemony and caused significant tensions across the region. In his account of the setting up of the mission “in the land of the Incas” from 1910 onwards, American missionary Ferdinand Stahl describes the “deplorable conditions of the Indians” and the role of the Catholic Church at length:

Those directly responsible for this terrible condition are the priests, who have had the Indians in hand ever since the Spanish conquest. They have posed as the Indians’ friends and advisers though all the while betraying them. They have always opposed any plan to help elevate them, and have kept them in ignorance and superstition. Drunkenness has been encouraged by these priests. In fact, the use of alcohol is always a complement of their religious feasts.<sup>18</sup>

This criticism, portraying the Catholic clergy as agents of oppression whose celebration of Christian faith fueled alcohol abuse, also reflects the self-perception of the Adventists as (sober) actors of religious and social change. From the time when they had been invited to support the local teacher Manuel Zuñiga Camacho in his mission to educate the indigenous population, they combined their work of evangelization with the provision of education and health services.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the Catholic priests, who aimed “to enrich themselves and satisfy their own lust”, the Adventist missionaries, according to Stahl, “taught the Indians how to keep clean”, vaccinated them and followed calls to provide aid in even the remotest regions. However, their actions soon encountered violent opposition on the part of the Catholic clergy. Stahl’s account of his missionary experience in Puno is rich with anecdotes of Adventist converts being forced to drink alcohol and how he and his wife Ana Stahl were subject to attacks by violent mobs, led by the local clergy and even the bishop of Puno.

The establishment of schools across the altiplano aimed to foster the Adventist mission through the promotion of social advancement for the indigenous population. Considered a sign of gratitude, many people from distant provinces pleaded with Stahl to extend the Adventist mission to further localities, build schools and provide education.<sup>20</sup> By 1928, they had established eighty-five primary schools across the altiplano. The Adventist institutions provided the local population with

18 Ferdinand Anthony Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1920), 118.

19 See also David Ruelas Vargas, “La Escuela Rural de Utawilaya: Una Educación Liberadora Desde Puno - Perú 1902,” *Revista Historia de La Educación Latinoamericana* 18, no. 27 (9 November 2016): 243–62.

20 Stahl, *In the Land of the Incas*, 125–31, 202, 240.



unprecedented possibilities for the improvement of their household economy. As they promoted hygiene, sobriety, literacy and personal leadership, the Adventists relied heavily on local cooperation to further expand their mission and establish new schools and religious communities. In so doing, missionaries and local intermediaries established a close alliance with converts and subtly challenged the prevalent hierarchy which had thus far restricted social mobility for the indigenous population.<sup>21</sup> The Adventist mission thus positioned itself as a renovating religious force that questioned both Catholic hegemony and its doctrinal alignment with the urban and rural elite.

For those joining the Adventist faith, conversion was a transformative experience with significant repercussions for their social and religious life. Abstaining from alcohol and coca leaves, the freedom to dress in both Western and traditional attire – as long as the clothes were clean – as well as newly gained Spanish language skills led many converts to renegotiate their indigenous identity. According to historian Yael Mabat, they could “downplay some of the Andean racial barriers” and, at least to a certain extent, “cho[o]se between being Indians and displaying the new, presumably *mestizo* habits they acquired” while at the mission compound.<sup>22</sup>

In his seminal work on Andean sociology, French scholar François Bourricaud dedicates a large part of his analysis to the aforementioned social divisions of Puno and the subjacent dynamics of class and ethnicity that the religious missions were embedded in. His observations in different localities – including the departmental capital and a hacienda in the rural province of Azángaro – led Bourricaud to describe the existing hierarchies in Puno as a system of dependence:

[B]y dependence we simply mean that in any social relationship involving a white or a mestizo on the one hand and an indigenous person the other, and provided that this relationship presents a character of institutional constancy and regularity, the latter occupies a subordinate position with respect to the former and, furthermore, that this subordination goes far beyond what is functionally required by the very nature of the roles played by the indigenous person.<sup>23</sup>

In other words, he described a binary yet complex social order which divided those exercising power from those subject to the same power. Rejecting other, more ambivalent characteristics like culture or language, Bourricaud also uses the same approach to “define” the *indio*, as “one who in his relations with non-Indians occupies a subordinate position, instrumentally and symbolically.”<sup>24</sup>

21 Dan C. Hazen, “The Politics of Schooling in the Nonliterate Third World: The Case of Highland Peru,” *History of Education Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1978): 430–31.

22 Yael Mabat, *Sacrifice and Regeneration: Seventh-Day Adventism and Religious Transformation in the Andes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), 44–50.

23 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 31.

24 *Idem*, 31.

Notwithstanding this system of dependence, Bourricaud emphasized that “the distance between the dominating and the dominated group is lesser in Puno than in a colonial town or even in a town in the South of the United States.” He used various examples to defend this claim. For instance, he argued that the indigenous population would still benefit from certain prestige among the mestizo population, who expressed their admiration for the Inca civilization or the indigenous resistance against the Spanish Crown. In other words, even if the indigenous people were deemed “lazy, stealing, brutal and dishonest”, their past was “a treasure of glory of which the *misti* [mestizo] himself is proud.” Furthermore, Bourricaud claimed that many of the fundamental religious beliefs were shared among different social classes – an expression of socio-cultural and religious *mestizaje*. In his view, confusion persisted as to what could be considered autochthonous or not, as many indigenous traditions found their origins in ancient Hispanic customs.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to the more puritan Adventist mission, Catholic religious practices and *fiestas* often displayed this process of *mestizaje*. A short 1940s documentary produced by the *Noticiarios Peruanos* on Ayaviri, one of the major towns of the mostly rural department, provides further interesting insights into the practice and public celebration of Catholicism on the altiplano. Recording the *fiesta de la Virgen de Altagracia*, the commentator described how “thousands of indigenous Catholics” participated in a procession, “singing autochthonous songs”, “with typical headdresses, strange masks and adornments”. They then proceeded to attend bullfighting performances that took place during the festivities. The audience particularly cherished when the *torero* was attacked, deemed a “sign of magnificent agrarian cycles to come” or, according to the commentator, “expression of the primitive beliefs” of the locals. How Catholic tradition coexisted, or merged, with indigenous beliefs was also apparent when six representatives of the procession distributed food among the destitute. “The patrons”, the commentator noticed, were “properly dressed and carry on their chest the figure of the sun and on their backs the figure of the moon and the stars”, which was “undoubtedly a reminiscence of the ancient polytheist religion of the Incas assimilated to the Catholic *fiesta*.”<sup>26</sup>

The filming of these scenes in Ayaviri coincided with the arrival of a second North American missionary group. Unlike the Adventist mission led by Ferdinand and Ana Stahl during the 1910s and 1920s, Maryknoll clerics and women religious responded to calls of successive papal nuncios for foreign support for the understaffed or abandoned parishes of highland Peru. After their arrival in 1943, they sought to reinforce and propagate Catholicism, a faith perceived to be at risk

25 Bourricaud, 32-33, 197-98.

26 “Visiones de la ciudad de Ayaviri,” *Noticiarios Peruanos*, Sono-Viso Film Perú, Biblioteca virtual de la Biblioteca Nacional del Perú.

both due to the spread of Adventism and the seemingly incomplete evangelization of the indigenous population.

In the first decade of their mission, the American missionaries learned to navigate the complex local hierarchies and rapidly awoke sympathies with indigenous parishioners. Notably, during their three-year mission to the provinces of Carabaya and Sandia, they responded to many requests for religious services, traveling across the *sierra* and inhospitable tropical lowlands of northern Puno. Maryknoll provided religious services without charge, thus displacing local clerics who relied on (often excessive) tariffs. Moreover, they started hiring indigenous catechists who would assist the foreign clergy in reaching distant communities.<sup>27</sup> Unsurprisingly, the missionaries were perceived as particularly generous. Describing his visit to an Aymara community alongside Maryknoll priests, Bourricaud noticed that priests donated small gifts and sweets and therefore enjoyed particular prestige and affection among their indigenous parishioners.<sup>28</sup>

North American missionaries, be they Adventist or Catholic, hence defended a similar modernizing agenda paired with a particular concern for the indigenous population. They considered Puno a “frontier of Christianity” where their mission could lead to a lasting transformation of religious practices and social welfare for the mostly poor and marginalized parishioners.<sup>29</sup> Both the Maryknoll clerics and the Adventist Church promoted the prevalent values of social progress through their charitable mission while also constraining traditional *fiestas* they perceived contrary to Christian beliefs.<sup>30</sup> Their presence and actions also echoed mounting concerns to induce religious and social change among the indigenous population across Latin America towards the mid-20th century. The concluding document of the first Latin American Episcopal Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1955, for instance, underlined the responsibility of (Catholic) missionaries to “spiritually and socially elevate” their indigenous parishioners.<sup>31</sup>

The charitable actions of the Maryknoll missionaries, however, also challenged the work of many local clerics, often aligned with landowners and political authorities. Their credit and saving cooperatives, among other initiatives, were particularly well received. Considered *gente buena*, they could live comfortably off their own resources and share their wealth with the population in need. The national priests, in turn, often lived at the expense of their parishioners and thus regularly

27 Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, *The Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru, 1943–1989: Transnational Faith and Transformation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 61, 66, 97–103.

28 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 95.

29 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866–1995*, 180–81.

30 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 95, 189–90.

31 Declaración de los cardenales, obispos y demás prelados representantes de la jerarquía de América Latina reunidos en la Conferencia Episcopal de Río De Janeiro, parte 9, título IX, Misiones, indios y gente de color, 04.08.1955.

entered into conflict with the American clergy present in different rural and urban parishes across the department.<sup>32</sup> The popularity of the Maryknoll missionaries arguably led to resentments among those (local) clerics whose pastoral practice contrasted significantly with the one carried out by the wealthy North Americans. Indeed, many priests lacked the financial means to dedicate themselves to both their religious duties and social welfare.

Overall, then, the Catholic Church fulfilled multiple social functions reflective of the complex social hierarchies in Puno. For local landowners, the clergy reinforced the status quo by justifying the possession of large properties. The indigenous population, on the other hand, benefitted from the work of foreign missionaries whose concern for their fate led them to improve rural livelihoods. The fact that religious actors defended opposing allegiances unsurprisingly caused frictions within the church. Local and foreign clerics arguably held distinct conceptions of clerical privilege, social commitments and financial interests. They hence disseminated their own interpretation of the gospels and projected distinct images of the church to their parishioners. At the same time as missionaries attempted to forge a Catholic revival through their charitable actions, however, they still relied on the guiding power and pastoral authority they shared with their Peruvian colleagues. According to Fitzpatrick-Behrens, Maryknoll missionaries ultimately "initiated a process of eroding Puno's hierarchy" while simultaneously "imposing religious practices on subordinate people."<sup>33</sup>

## **(Resisting) International Development**

The assimilation and integration of the indigenous population preoccupied many politicians and intellectuals, who each advanced their own *indigenista* projects and politics. The decades from the 1920s up until the 1960s are marked by the rise of state-led *indigenismo*. By mid-century, state actors defended an increasingly scientific approach that sought to solve the "Indian problem" through social policies and the use of applied anthropology. Many scholars were actively involved in advancing and negotiating the agenda of international development projects. Anthropologists, for instance, relied on the conception that (indigenous) tradition and (occidental) modernity were "two opposing and excluding poles" in their articulation of ideas of acculturation, modernization and development.<sup>34</sup> This dichotomous understanding of rural society would also mark many of the development

32 Martínez, *Las migraciones altiplánicas y la colonización del Tambopata*, 64.

33 Fitzpatrick-Behrens, *The Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru, 1943-1989*, 63.

34 Carlos Iván Degregori, "Panorama de la antropología en el Perú: del estudio del Otro a la construcción de un Nosotros diverso," in *No hay país más diverso: Compendio de antropología peruana*, ed. Carlos Iván Degregori (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2012), 37-42.



**1. Milk for Breakfast for the Male Pupils in the Phara Primary School.**  
 (Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú, Los Recursos Humanos del Departamento de Puno, 116)

projects launched in Puno. Notably, it influenced the work of both international donors and organizations who, like the missionaries, supplanted the weak Peruvian state in a region where the transformation of rural society and the integration of its indigenous population had yet to be fostered at a large scale.

The drought of the late 1950s triggered increased domestic and international support and development aid. In response to the decimated harvests and widespread hunger, the United States development assistance provided emergency aid to the affected regions. Beneficiaries, like the pupils of the rural school in northern Puno depicted in Figure 1, received milk powder and foodstuffs. The distribution of these supplies, however, was not only inefficient, or – in the case of milk powder – not to the local taste, but also marked by significant controversy. During the so-called drought affair, local functionaries enriched themselves by reselling food while only providing a fraction of the foodstuffs to their supposed beneficiaries in highland Peru.<sup>35</sup> To support economic recovery, the same development assistance program funded a project called the Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú (PRDSP), which was to propel further research on natural and human resources which could serve as a basis for the economic development of the south-

35 “Peru: Stealing from The Starving,” *Time Magazine*, 07.04.1961; Edward M. Dew, *Politics in the Altiplano: The Dynamics of Change in Rural Peru*, *Latin American Monographs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 92–97.

ern highlands. This cooperation project would, at a later stage, also finance infrastructure, irrigation and credit projects across the southern highlands of Peru.<sup>36</sup>

As Puno was subject to increased attention from domestic and international development actors, it thenceforth became an arena that attracted a myriad of projects and programs seeking to improve infrastructure, promote prosperity and, ultimately, contribute to the modernization of the department. The PRDSP studies, part of the state-sponsored *indigenismo*, laid out the objectives of development based on anthropological studies of southern Peru. By examining regional demographics, political administration and landownership patterns, among others, these studies produced new insight into the functioning of highland society. At the same time, the PRDSP report also pointed out obstacles to the development objectives, which were mostly related to the existing social hierarchies and associated structural inequalities. Rigid stratification of classes contributed to maintaining the socio-political status quo and constrained economic progress of the majority of the regional population. This problem was even more accentuated in areas where class divisions were less permeable.<sup>37</sup>

In response to the agrarian crisis, marked by an overpopulated countryside with underperforming agriculture, a PRDSP report on economic resources identified the need for more efficient agrarian production and the colonization of tropical lowlands as two particular challenges of rural development. The use of modern technologies, easier access to credits and the opening up of a new agrarian frontier for human settlement would stimulate the regional economy and thus improve the livelihoods of its inhabitants. The report furthermore considered education to be essential for human advancement as it could "provide means for the formal integration [of the indigenous population] into national society" and thus "form useful citizens."<sup>38</sup>

Progressive urbanization, too, contributed to demographic changes that alter the existing dichotomous hierarchy opposing *indios* and *mestizos* through the addition of a new social category: the *cholo*. Bourricaud, whose work significantly contributed to the academic study of the *cholo*, described the latter as "an *indio* on the path of advancement and change."<sup>39</sup> If the indigenous peasants were defined by their relationship to those in a higher position on the social hierarchy, then the *cholo* group was, according to most accounts, defined by its difference to those occupying a lower position. The increased social mobility of the indigenous population was however conditioned by occupation and locality. In the view of social

36 "Plan Regional Para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú: Antecedentes y obras en ejecución," *Los Andes*, 05.05.1958.

37 PRDSP, "Los recursos de la región: Recomendaciones para su desarrollo," Informe, vol. XXVII, 1959, 146.

38 Idem, 51-90, 121.

39 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 35.

scientists, a *mujer campesina* was most likely to become a *chola* if she migrated to, and worked in, a larger village or town, cohabitating a space with mestizos. The PRDSP unsurprisingly framed *cholos* as the backbone of economic reformism in urban areas.

Embodying upward social mobility, the *cholo* group was hence considered the result of a slow but steady modernization process shaping regional towns. In other words, it represented a new urban proletariat that stemmed from the heightened social mobility of the indigenous peasantry.<sup>40</sup> The *cholo* bus driver who Bourricaud encountered in Puno in the mid-1950s might indeed embody this vision of progress. As a highly mobile, technically savvy individual, he embodied the *indio* who, to a certain extent, escaped the neo-colonial social structures still prevalent in the *puneño* countryside and thus, in the view of government officials, integrated into national society.<sup>41</sup>

In the aftermath of the Second World War, international organizations, too, assumed a pioneering role in articulating development objectives at a global scale. In a period of economic growth and recovery on the one side, and decolonization on the other, the stark social contrasts between and within countries became increasingly evident and fueled concern for the regions considered in need of development. In Latin America, these organizations targeted rural populations which, through their work as subsistence farmers, did not contribute to or partake in the envisioned progressive modernization of the subcontinent. Supporting the ethnocentric modernization agenda of national governments, technicians, engineers and civil servants addressed the supposed (cultural) backwardness and deprivation of the indigenous population as one of the central reasons for the lack of socio-economic progress. The same discourses of development were often replicated and reaffirmed in the public debates on the ambitions and actions of the supposedly abandoned *puneño* population. As stated by an editorial published in *Los Andes* in October 1959, ideals of “human progress” were “infiltrating people who for centuries [...] had no aspiration for any improvement.”<sup>42</sup>

The Puno-Tambopata Program (PTP), coordinated by the Peruvian government and different UN agencies under the leadership of the International Labour Organization (ILO), was one of the most important initiatives to promote social mobility and rural education in Puno. Part of the Andean Indian Program (AIP), it followed the directives established by a 1952 technical mission, which emphasized the need for consent from the beneficiaries, the “non-integrated sections of

40 Hazen, *The Awakening of Puno*, 419.

41 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 203-04.

42 “El progreso humano,” *Los Andes*, 16.10.1958.

the [national] population".<sup>43</sup> According to Jef Rens, deputy director of the ILO, the AIP principally aimed to promote the integration of indigenous populations in response to their own aspirations and the concerns expressed by relevant governments. He considered the doctrine of integration not to be racist, but to constitute an example of modern humanism which would demonstrate that the indigenous populations were "perfectly capable of assimilating all the modern techniques of production and of elevating themselves to the cultural level of the rest of their fellow citizens."<sup>44</sup>

Soon after its launch in 1954, the Puno-Tambopata Program was subject to critical scrutiny and struggled to meet its initial objectives. Whereas three educational centers on the shores of Lake Titicaca aimed to provide professional education to the rural youth, a center located in the Tambopata Valley intended to stimulate migration towards, and the agricultural colonization of, the tropical lowlands. According to the project analysis report of a program officer, Emile Tejada, there was no "magic way" to solve the problems that had existed for centuries. Any intention to do so, he emphatically underlined, had to question the motives underlying the development project:

Contrary to many opinions the people in the altiplano are not as needy in material benefits as it is often supposed. [...] They are not forgotten or forsaken people, they are merely apart from the white man's way of living and as such, one, at times, feels guilty of disturbing them from their lethargy and may even doubt if our efforts to change them, 'to integrate them into the cultural, economic and social life of the country', is the right approach. Could it be that in our effort to do so we are merely exposing them to further exploitation by forcing unto them a way of life we have failed to prepare them for?<sup>45</sup>

In particular, Tejada favored a welfare program focusing on education and rural development while criticizing the agricultural colonization project that condemned the "little fellow" to dislocate rather than those with the necessary knowledge and resources.<sup>46</sup> Faced with repeated criticism in the late 1950s, the office in the Tambopata Valley eventually functioned mainly as a small medical office and the focus of the program was placed on technical assistance on the altiplano.

The establishment of the workshops was also accompanied by a myriad of unforeseen problems as the PTP struggled to interact with, and be accepted by, the recipient population during its early years. Whereas the local project leader in spring 1956 still spoke of "unique possibilities" and the potential for "excellent

43 Ernest Beaglehole, "A Technical Assistance Mission in the Andes," *International Labour Review* 67 (1953): 530-32.

44 Jef Rens, "El Programa Andino," *Revista Internacional Del Trabajo* 84, no. 1-2 (1961): 494-95.

45 ILO Archives, File TAP/A 15 - 5, Emile Tejada, "Project Analysis Report," May 1955, 18-19.

46 *Idem*, 6.



results” in Puno, he expressed his disillusion as he decried the “complete chaos” and “indescribable anarchy” that reigned in the project nine months later.<sup>47</sup> The great drought on the altiplano had, in the meantime, aggravated the situation. As the PTP workshops still had no roof, locals accused the foreign personnel of “pre-vent[ing] it from raining, so that [they] can finish [their] constructions” and, in so doing, “condemned [them] to hunger.” Rumors soon started circulating that the villagers, portrayed as both vengeful and violent, would demolish the workshops or even burn the personnel alive.<sup>48</sup> If the foreign experts were welcomed in most areas, the attitude from the communities in and surrounding Taraco, where PTP planned a workshop for the Quechua peasantry, was outright hostile. According to the head teacher, the local population rejected the aid provided by the PTP as they feared that their children would be taken away from them. In his view, the mistrust could be traced back to the influence of persons who “in no way wish to see the Indians improve themselves [...] because they wish to continue exploiting them.”<sup>49</sup>

The archival files reveal stories of mutual distrust, hostile encounters and miscommunication between the ILO envoys and the *to-be-integrated population*. In numerous letters and reports, international experts describe the often difficult situations and the frustrations they experienced when visiting the different project sites. According to one representative, for instance, consulting the beneficiaries of the PTP was severely complicated by the fact that “the Indians of the altiplano have a habit of always answering ‘*sí señor*’.”<sup>50</sup> With little opportunity present the objectives of the program to local inhabitants, many foreign envoys unsurprisingly struggled to gain local support and trust. Those living in the surroundings of these workshops arguably had neither solicited foreign assistance, nor were they convinced they could benefit from a program which prepared them for careers they could hardly pursue in rural Puno.

By the time responsibility for the PTP was handed over to the Plan Nacional de Integración de la Población Aborigen in 1961, it had only delivered ambiguous results. In its news coverage of the visits of several ILO officials, *Los Andes* among others praised the “magnificent carpentry and mechanical workshops” established in Chucuito.<sup>51</sup> According to local commentators, these workshops proved

47 ILO Archives, File TAP/A 15 - 3, J. Papadakis, lettre à Jef Rense, Puno, 21.03.1956; J. Papadakis, lettre à Abbas Ammar, Puno, 28.12.1956.

48 ILO Archives, File TAP/A 15 - 3, J. Papadakis, lettre à Abbas Ammar, Puno, 13.12.1956.

49 ILO Archives, File TAP/A 15 - 50 - 1, Report for the second quarter (April-June 1957) submitted by Mr. Gabriel Ríos, Rural Education expert of UNESCO. During his fieldwork in Taraco, Héctor Martínez claimed that there have been rumors targeting the PTP, but that generally there was no resistance against their work. See Héctor Martínez, *El indígena y el mestizo de Taraco* (Lima: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Indígenas, 1962), 125-27.

50 ILO Archives, File TAP/A 15 - 3, J. Papadakis, lettre à Abbas Ammar, Lima, 01.08.1957.

51 “Inauguraron los talleres de formación profesional en Chucuito,” *Los Andes*, 28.04.1958.

that the living conditions of the regional peasantry could be improved with limited resources. However, due to the lack of sustained financial support as well as the above-mentioned difficulties, the PTP never became the "spectacular" initiative it had once been intended to.<sup>52</sup>

The Asillo Irrigation Project, although much smaller in scale, encountered a similar fate after its launch in 1956. It responded to the same *indigenista* objectives inherent to the PTP and the PRDSP by aiming to improve the water supply for local agriculture. According to a report on the introduction of the irrigation project in Accopata, a small community in the province of Azángaro, the project "offers a lesson in the sometimes rather careless investment of foreign aid."<sup>53</sup> The anthropologists tasked with the study of the irrigation project claimed that its engineers committed multiple errors, as they lacked a socio-economic survey of the region, a preliminary educational program or experience in irrigation farming, and, most notably, satisfactory communication with the local population. Whereas local mestizos and the neighboring Adventist community were considered receptive to technological innovations, the *Accopatinos* objected the irrigation system as they lost arable land to canal constructions and were afraid of government taxation or confiscation. Therefore, the peasants welcomed the engineers "with a barrage of sticks and stones" and would later be forced to cooperate by police and other local authorities.<sup>54</sup>

Although it was not labelled a "complete failure", the project hardly contributed to the community's agrarian development. Many of the inhabitants complained about the fact that the irrigation canals were too wide and thus posed a risk to animals and children. Moreover, and more importantly, the canals proved hardly useful for local agriculture for much of the year. During the rainy season, the canal system drained water from the pasture lands and thus made additional irrigation necessary. During the dry season, in turn, artificial irrigation was hardly useful in light of the risk that the water would freeze due to the low nocturnal temperatures. Instead of using the irrigation system for agriculture, *Accopatinos* eventually only benefitted from the increased water supply for their animals and families, supplanting previously constructed wells.<sup>55</sup>

The resistance to development initiatives on the part of the inhabitants of Taraco and Accopata echoed the prevailing mistrust between a foreign team of experts and the local population. Development agents portrayed the residents of both villages as unruly Indians who, for reasons they could hardly understand, rejected the generous aid they were offered. These descriptions evidence the in-

52 ILO Archives, File TAP/A 15 - 5, Emile Tejada, "Project Analysis Report," May 1955, 5.

53 Hernán Castillo Ardiles et al., *Accopata: The Reluctant Recipient of Technological Change* (Ithaca: Cornell Peru Project, Dept. of Anthropology, Cornell University, 1963), 10.

54 Castillo Ardiles et al., *Accopata*, 70-72.

55 Castillo Ardiles et al., 70-72.

sufficient preparation of foreign experts and their miscommunication with local inhabitants. In Accopata, for instance, engineers were not aware that the hostility between the indigenous peasantry and the local elite “reached almost destructive proportions.” By imposing a new irrigation system, the foreign technicians were unsurprisingly identified as authoritarian *mestizos* who awoke suspicion and mistrust among the villagers.<sup>56</sup> The irrigation project could at least – in contrast to the PTP’s experience in Taraco – count on the eager support of the rural elite. Public works presumably appeased the tense relations between landowners and the peasantry by offering work for those particularly affected by the drought.<sup>57</sup>

The examples of both the PTP and the Asillo Irrigation Project reflect how local social dynamics determined the success of the efforts of the foreign actors intervening in the space of development. Altering a rural way of life which, as a PRDSP report recognized, offered “certain income, social relations and health” arguably exacerbated existing social tensions.<sup>58</sup> Whereas anthropologists considered the inhabitants of Accopata to be highly superstitious, development agents blamed the local elite in Taraco for mobilizing the indigenous residents to reject the establishment of a workshop. Rather than sustaining the idea that different groups were differently inclined to progress, these observations indicate that many foreign experts either failed to consult with the local population or lacked understanding of the complex social hierarchies they were embedded in.

In broader terms, these cases demonstrate the contingent nature of ethnocentric discourses of development. The objectives of integration and modernization – whether they were formulated by local or foreign, religious or civilian actors – required the collaboration of the local population without previous consent. In other words, missionaries and development agents imposed concepts of progress, modernity and religious change regardless of the desires and aspirations of the local population. According to Arturo Escobar, the objectives of modernization indeed rearticulated “forms of power in terms of class, gender, race and nationality” through its propagation of the “right values” among the indigenous population. In so doing, the intervening agents however often ignored the agency of the supposed beneficiaries of development – both in the past and in the present.<sup>59</sup> The criticism arising in the context of the previously discussed projects evidences how the supposed beneficiaries of development questioned the underlying power dynamics. Through their mistrust and resistance, they expressed their own agency

56 Castillo Ardiles et al., 70–72.

57 Dew, *Politics in the Altiplano*, 170.

58 PRDSP, “Los recursos de la región: Recomendaciones para su desarrollo,” Informe, vol. XXVII, 1959, 51–90.

59 Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 43, 49.

in processes which, in contrast to the stated objectives, risked undermining their role in local development.

Ultimately, the population affected by the irrigation project mobilized different strategies in expressing their distrust of the international initiatives. The inhabitants of the *parcialidad* of Gila, for instance, had been told by that their lands would be stolen by the adjacent *hacendados* or the government. Coinciding with this period of distress, local inhabitants reported a miracle, that is, a Marian apparition. When faced with a crisis in their relations to mestizos, the inhabitants thus “resort[ed] to the traditional Catholic pattern of miracle and its rewards.”<sup>60</sup> In Accopata, in turn, the scholars present to analyze the “reluctant recipients of technological change” were accused of being *pishtacos* – a bogeyman originating in regional folklore – and forced to leave the village.<sup>61</sup> The tales of *pishtacos* had previously surfaced with the introduction of mandatory military conscription and, too, appeared to constitute a response to a serious outside threat.<sup>62</sup> More precisely, as Mary Weismantel argues, the bogeyman not only “evokes violence and fear” but also “racial whiteness”<sup>63</sup> – aspects of foreign appearance and authority that arguably many of the anthropologists, development agents and missionaries shared.

The account of the early intervention of these actors illustrates that processes of compulsive modernization of Puno were ultimately at an incipient, and often contentious, stage by the late 1950s. Many of the actors and programs were met with resistance and resentment, while they could hardly extend their influence beyond the areas of certain parishes, schools and workshops. The transformation of the religious and socio-economic landscapes of the department was yet to be further propagated through the arrival of new actors, foreign and local, who renegotiated the prevailing agenda for mission and development with both increasing state support and local participation over the following years and decades.

60 Gabriel M. Escobar, *Organización social y cultural del sur del Perú* (México: Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, 1967), 63–64.

61 Castillo Ardiles et al., *Accopata*, Appendix.

62 Evelyn Ina Montgomery, *Ethos and Ayllu in Coasa, Peru* (High Wycombe: University Microfilms, 1972), 103.

63 Mary Weismantel, *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes, Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xxv.



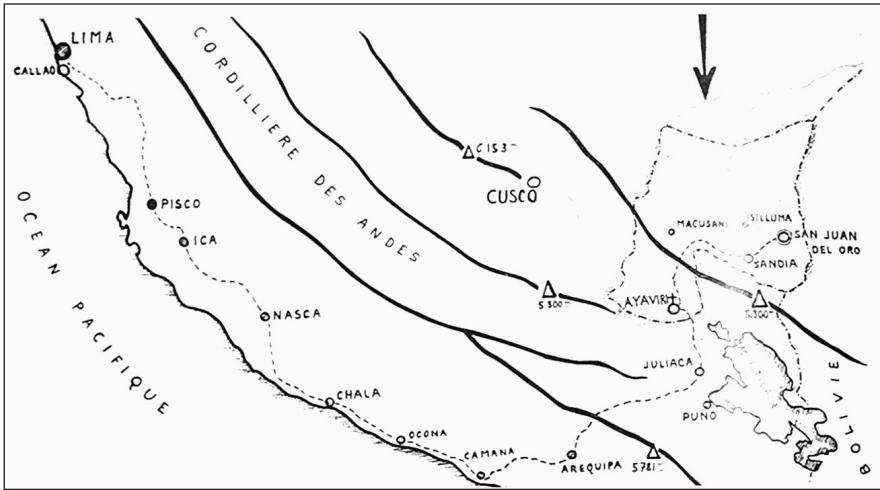
# 2

## Mission in Progress

When accepting an offer to take over administration of a prelatore, the Congregation of the Sagrados Corazones opted for a mission that differed significantly from its previous pastoral and social work. Established in Peru in the late 19th century, the Congregation was known for its Catholic boys' school in Lima, La Recoleta, an institution that fostered the early lives of some of Peru's most prominent intellectual and political actors. In 1917, Jorge Dintilhac, former principal of the Recoleta school, founded the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) whose first faculties were also located in Plaza Francia in the historic center of Lima. According to an internal report, the Congregation, since 1947 a Pro-Province of the French Sacrés-Coeurs, could be proud of its work among the ruling classes, having "educated the elite of [Peruvian] society."<sup>1</sup> By the late 1950s, however, the religious order was faced with a request to assume responsibility for a new ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Peruvian highlands. The creation of prelatres and their attribution to national and foreign religious congregations was a common practice in peripheral regions, which were usually either sparsely populated or home to a significant indigenous population. According to the former bishop of Puno, the religious congregation in charge of the new prelatore was to "maintain Catholic faith", contain "protestant propaganda" and provide the necessary economic resources to the local church.<sup>2</sup> Considering that missionary work in a rural environment would be "comforting in some ways, despiritizing in others", the provincial superior of the Sagrados Corazones eventually approved the request. In his view, assuming responsibility for a new highland jurisdiction would constitute a unique

1 ASCF, Rapport du R.P. Georges Piriou au T.R.P. Supérieur Général, 10.09.1957.

2 AOP, Alberto Dettmann, "Informe sobre las provincias de Sandía y Cabaraya, departamento de Puno - diócesis de Puno," 3.



**2. Southern Peru and the Prelature of Ayaviri.**  
*(Horizons Blancs, no. 26, janvier 1965, 260)*

opportunity for the congregation, especially for those priests not “made for education” or those “a little funny”, as the “Indians were unlikely to be offended even by a married priest.”<sup>3</sup>

The establishment of a new prelature encompassing the provinces of Melgar, Sandia and Carabaya (Figure 2) was first met with negative reactions. In response to the papal decision made in late July 1958, over 4,000 people gathered in Ayaviri in protest against the withdrawal of the Maryknoll congregation to the previously founded Prelature of Juli. According to *Los Andes*, numerous speakers at the event requested that the North American missionaries – “those who with love, kindness and true Christian action have reached the heart of the people, especially the humblest” – remain. As evidenced in the previous chapter, the popularity of Maryknollers stemmed to a great extent from their generosity, as they were known for their charity projects and invested heavily in ecclesiastical infrastructure. Chants of “*Maryknolls sí, otros no*” were an expression of how parishioners had grown accustomed to what a reporter framed as the “progressive, liberal, democratic and charitable” missionaries.<sup>4</sup> Not knowing what congregation was soon to replace them, many parishioners arguably feared that the incoming priests would have less resources at their disposal and thus discontinue the many projects initiated by their predecessors.

Notwithstanding these early signs of opposition, Luciano Metzinger assumed his role as prelate of Ayaviri in November 1958. By the time of his appointment,

3 ASCF, Rapport du R.P. Georges Piriou au T.R.P. Supérieur Général, 10.09.1957.

4 “En Ayaviri: gran meeting del pueblo católico,” *Los Andes*, 19.08.1958; Nolasco Nozco, “Postales de viaje: Ayaviri rugió colectivamente,” *Los Andes*, 26.08.1958.

twenty-five years after his ordination, Metzinger had already accumulated many experiences which would mark his trajectory as an individual and as a priest. Most notably, his life changed dramatically in late 1943 when he was imprisoned for his involvement in the clandestine communication of the French Resistance while working as a priest for the Sacred-Hearts congregation in Poitiers. After regaining his freedom when the Allied forces liberated the Dachau concentration camp in April 1945, Metzinger remained committed to priesthood and continued his work first in Canada and, from 1954 onwards, in Peru. In Lima, he assumed important roles for the congregation in the educational domain as he was both in charge of the construction of a new building for the Recoleta school and a professor at PUCP. His appointment to Ayaviri only a few years later came as a surprise for Metzinger, who was still unfamiliar with the history and culture of highland Peru, let alone the Quechua language.<sup>5</sup>

During his first pastoral visits to familiarize himself with the region thus far unknown to him, the new prelate was warmly welcomed by his parishioners. Local authorities in the parish of Santa Rosa, for instance, received Metzinger with champagne, “exquisite food and liquors”, and several speeches. The new prelate, according to *Los Andes*, in turn impressed his hosts with his “vast culture [...] friendliness and priestly qualities.” Metzinger furthermore promised to send priests to all parishes within the next decade, thus launching a “Catholic revival” in a region “abandoned by religious services for more than twenty years.”<sup>6</sup> In a pastoral letter written for the celebration of his assignment as resident prelate in March 1959, Metzinger underlined that the strengthening of Christian faith and morals among the local population could only be achieved with foreign help. To solve the problem of “spiritual desolation”, the prelate announced the rapid arrival of more priests from Europe.<sup>7</sup> According to a newspaper article criticizing the lack of religious personnel and the deplorable departure of the North American missionaries, it was indeed urgent for these clerics to arrive so that the “work and organization launched by the Maryknoll Fathers would not be jeopardized.”<sup>8</sup>

The first missionaries arriving alongside prelate Metzinger were confronted with a weak ecclesiastical infrastructure, lack of religious personnel and endemic poverty. It was upon them to strengthen the presence of the Catholic Church in a vast territory with poor road networks and to launch the construction of new

- 5 Gastón Garatea, “Semblanza de Mons. Luciano Metzinger, Ss.Cc.,” in *Luciano Metzinger: Hombre Libre Por La Fe* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1995), 11-21.
- 6 “Visita pastoral en Santa Rosa de Melgar,” *Los Andes*, 01.12.1958; Augustín Palomino, “Salutación parroquial al Monseñor Luciano Metzinger, en la visita pastoral a Santa Rosa de Melgar,” *Los Andes*, 02.12.1958.
- 7 AHPA, Cartas Pastorales, “Carta pastoral que dirige el Mons. Luciano Metzinger, Prelado Nullius de Ayaviri, a su clero y fieles con ocasion de la toma de posesión de la prelatura,” 22.03.1959, 2-3.
- 8 “Ayaviri,” *Los Andes*, 30.04.1959.



parish houses. Many of the missionaries initially struggled to adapt to the climate and the environment, which caused significant weight loss and even led a few of them to be forced to return to Lima for extended periods of rest. To avoid often day-long journeys on horseback to visit their parishioners, the prelatore swiftly purchased all-terrain vehicles which facilitated travels across northern Puno. Notwithstanding the rapid improvement of living conditions, the early 1960s would produce a lasting memory of struggle, hardship and solidarity. Jean-Marie Olivier, the first chancellor of the prelatore, retrospectively framed this period as a “heroic time” during which foreign clerics and lay agents conjointly surmounted initial difficulties for the sake of their commitment to the Ayaviri mission.<sup>9</sup>

Besides the reorganization of local parishes, missionaries also surveyed the ecclesiastical and religious landscape of northern Puno, characterized by “moral distress” and parishioners still “at the early stage of Christianity.” According to new arrivals, the observance of ancestral traditions and beliefs stemmed not from a lack of Christian faith, but from the abandonment of the pious indigenous population.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Metzinger (shown in Figure 3) expressed his admiration for the preservation of Christian faith in adverse conditions, while also condemning the “incredible [religious] ignorance”, the abuse of alcohol during *fiestas* and the high number of unmarried couples cohabitating and having children.<sup>11</sup> Following in the footsteps of the North American missionaries, the French clergy aimed to promote a stricter moral standard which advocated against alcoholism, coca consumption and the *servinancuy*, a probationary marriage custom. The parish diary by Jean Inizan, one of the first missionaries to work in Ayaviri, reveals how efforts to promote Catholic marriage would include significant financial incentives. If cohabitating couples still did not decide to register for marriage, they would be excluded from religious sacraments and barred from becoming godparents or *alferados*, sponsors of religious celebrations.<sup>12</sup>

In order to cover the vast territory with a limited number of clergy, the prelatore depended significantly on local catechists to carry out their pastoral work. The catechists of the prelatore, whose numbers increased from sixty to up to 250 within the first three years, received their education in catechist schools in Cuzco and Puno. Inspired by the catechist system previously introduced by the Maryknoll clergy, these “indigenous indoctrinators” supplemented the Catholic mission by catechizing children and adults, by supporting the educational campaigns and, if a priest was absent, presiding over prayers. “Without their collaboration”, Metzinger noted in an interview in 1962, “the progress in evangelization would be

9 Jean-Marie Olivier, interview by author, Montgeron, France, 9 January 2018.

10 R.P. Mouly SS.CC., *Pérou: terre de contrastes*, 98.

11 Léon Hubert, “Mgr Metzinger a conduit les élèves de Sarzeau sur les hauteurs de l’altiplano,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 5, octobre-décembre 1960, 103.

12 AHPA, Jean Inizan, “Domingo de Quasimodo,” *Diario parroquial*, 1959/1960.



**3. Luciano Metzinger on a pastoral visit.**  
 (Archivo Histórico de los Sagrados Corazones, Zona Andina, Lima)

very slow.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the catechists were in a unique position as an intermediary agent between the (foreign) clergy and the local communities. Their knowledge of Quechua made them highly valuable to the missionaries, who struggled to communicate with and to be understood by their parishioners, especially in the early years.

## **Catholics against Communism**

Elected as one of the youngest bishops in the world at thirty-five, Julio González Ruiz also attempted to launch a Catholic revival in the Diocese of Puno from 1959 onwards. Born into a noble family of Huánuco, in the central Andes, the Salesian cleric was named bishop of Puno only four years after finishing his theology studies in Italy. His predecessor Alberto Dettman, who had presided over the diocese for over a decade, left Puno warning both of the dechristianization of society and

13 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri à l’heure du Concile,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 13, octobre 1962, 327.

the growing threat of communism.<sup>14</sup> González Ruiz, in his first address to his clergy and parishioners, promised to continue promoting and deepening the Catholic faith. In particular, he aimed to search for and strengthen an “authentic Christianity” that the inhabitants of the altiplano were to fully embrace.<sup>15</sup>

His mission to promote more sincere and ‘authentic’ Christian beliefs, however, was complicated by the fact that the diocese, after losing the majority of the Maryknoll clergy to the newly founded Prelature of Juli, only had sixteen priests. Whereas a lack of clergy was a widespread phenomenon across rural ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Latin America, the Diocese of Puno had particular difficulties recruiting clergy as, in contrast to both other *puneño* prelatures, it could no longer count on a (foreign) religious congregation to supply staff. In a letter to the parish priest of his town of birth, González Ruiz expressed his desperation as he returned “from a summary visit to a good part of the diocese with [his] heart torn apart by the religious abandonment”.<sup>16</sup> By ‘abandonment’, one could assume he was referring to the deficient presence of the church in the countryside. In fact, many of the priests were of advanced age, ignored the laws of celibacy and often worked in isolated parishes that did not cooperate on religious or social matters. Unsurprisingly, his first pastoral letter therefore aimed to promote local vocation, calling upon “the sanity of the parents” to send their sons to the seminary.<sup>17</sup> Only through a well-staffed and educated clergy could the church successfully address and overcome the spiritual desolation of the region.

Anticipating a wait of several years to receive these future priests, González Ruiz invited foreign missionaries to bridge the shortage of clergy. In multiple letters to North American dioceses and religious congregations, the bishop emphasized the urgent need for clergy as the Catholic Church was at risk of losing its influence among the rural masses in light of the overwhelming social deprivation:

What is more, there is an intensive campaign of proselytism going on among the Protestants and Communists. It must be said that the dire poverty and exploitation of the Indian (who makes up almost the entire population) provides plenty of ground for the Communists to spread their evil doctrine among these poor people.<sup>18</sup>

14 AOP, Alberto Dettmann, “Exhortación pastoral que el obispo electo de Ica dirige al clero y a los fieles de la Diócesis de Puno al despedirse de ella,” 07.04.1959.

15 AOP, “Carta pastoral que el Mons. Dr. Julio González Ruiz dirige al clero y fieles de su diócesis con motivo de su consagración y toma de posesión de la sede,” Lima, Instituto Industrial Salesiano, 1959.

16 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, carta a P Wagner, párroco de Cristo Rey, Puno, 29.07.1959.

17 Julio González Ruiz, “Circular pastoral no. 1,” *Los Andes*, 25.09.1959.

18 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, carta a Edward F. Sweeney, Superior of the Society of St. James the Apostle, Puno, 15.08.1959.

In addition to inviting missionaries to rural Puno, González Ruiz also aimed to establish religious orders that could alleviate social and ideological failings. A Trappist monastery on a church-owned hacienda, for instance, could show the rural parishioners – who “do not know how to work the land” – to be more productive and thus raise their material well-being. Promoting religious mission in Puno, the bishop furthermore praised the disposition of the people of the altiplano to receive messages of social and spiritual progress, as well as promising that missionaries would have access to the comforts of modernity, particularly electricity and running water, despite the endemic poverty reigning in the region.<sup>19</sup>

The growing social concerns of the Catholic Church had particular ramifications for the new generation of clerics across the southern highlands. In contrast to the Adventist and Maryknoll missions, launched five and two decades earlier respectively, pastoral work in Ayaviri and Puno during the 1960s prospered in a period of far-reaching reforms. Catholicism and modernity were no longer strictly opposed forces; it was contended that the latter could embrace the former. Jesuit anthropologist Manuel Marzal framed the missionary enterprise to either assimilate or integrate the indigenous population as a “new *indigenismo* on behalf of the church”. Whereas the objectives of assimilation “wanted the *indios* to cease being *indios*”, integration – echoing the experiences of the Puno-Tambopata Program – aimed to modernize the countryside while “conserving positive values like culture, language, social organization and art.”<sup>20</sup> Marzal however fails to account for the distinct ecclesiastical aspect of the discourses and practices that other actors, both civilian and political, also subscribed to and propagated. Bishops like Metzinger and González Ruiz arguably aimed not only to foster development and modernization, but also to alter religious traditions which were perceived as contrary to their interpretation of the gospels. They hence had to reconcile these two objectives in their religious enterprise by forging a distinctively Christian perspective on social progress.

In October 1961, González Ruiz hosted a *semana social cultural* to discuss Catholic social teaching with clerics and parishioners in Puno. By that time, the clergy had already launched various charity projects, including the distribution of Caritas food aid, credit cooperatives and the recruitment of catechists who brought “literacy and principles of Christian culture and discipline to the peasantry”. In his closing speech, González Ruiz reiterated his fears that current social problems could lead Christians to believe “in exotic and extremist” doctrines. He therefore called upon every Catholic “to know, to study, to propagate, to mate-

19 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, carta a M. James, O.C.S.C., 23.11.1959; Julio González Ruiz, carta a Ferinand Richard O.M.I., Puno, 15.08.1960; Julio González Ruiz, carta a M.J. Lemieux, Archbishop of Ottawa, 24.09.1960.

20 Marzal, *Historia de la antropología indigenista*, 520.

rialize in concrete facts the social doctrine of the church.”<sup>21</sup> In his condemnation of communism, the bishop of Puno echoed the conclusions of the Punta del Este conference held two months earlier. For González Ruiz, it was clear that social progress – following the ideals of Catholic social teaching – was necessary to counter the looming threat of an atheist revolution.

The following year, the Diocese of Puno welcomed the first clerics who answered the calls for spiritual and social assistance to the population of the altiplano. Four priests from Jefferson City (Missouri) were tasked with rebuilding and administrating two parishes adjacent to Lake Titicaca. After their arrival in October 1962, the missionaries quickly adapted to the socio-religious context in the Puno area. They deemed their future parishioners “reserved” yet remarked that they would nevertheless “respond in a generous and childlike way to every effort that the priests make in their behalf.” Despite the often difficult circumstances, notably the absence of paved roads, the American priests recruited local catechists, built ecclesiastical infrastructure and, in their view, contributed to the transformation of the parish. In order to improve connectivity, for instance, they employed between twenty-five and 150 men for infrastructure works around their residence, in addition to 250 men working on the road by December 1966. Among other projects, they also constructed a recreation hall where they could show movies and television programs, to introduce their parishioners “to one of the real marvels of recent decades.”<sup>22</sup>

Embracing a similar *indigenista* agenda, the bishops of the three jurisdictions of Puno collaborated on many of their charity projects. In 1961, González Ruiz pleaded for inter-diocesan cooperation to be maintained, so that they could collectively improve rural education, recruit catechists and promote regional vocation. In fact, both the minor seminary and the catechist school in Puno continued to serve all three ecclesiastical jurisdictions. In the following years, the bishops fostered their cooperation notably with regard to these common institutions and the funds they received for regional development projects. Although they all feared a communist revolution, the three bishops, in their common program, took a pragmatic approach to attracting funding for regional catechesis efforts. In order to obtain financial help from the United States Embassy, for instance, they simply considered “writing something against Communism” in leaflets or educational material.<sup>23</sup>

21 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, “Discurso de clausura con ocasion de la Primera Semana Social Cultural Católica de Puno,” octubre 1961.

22 Joseph Maria Marling, *Peruvian Notes* (Jefferson City: The Catholic Missourian, 1967), 8–9, 83–84, 97.

23 AHPA, Reuniones Obispos Puno, Reunión de los tres prelados de Ayaviri, Juli y Puno, 08.03.1963.

Radio Onda Azul, the radio broadcaster of the Diocese of Puno, constituted one of the major collaborative projects throughout the 1960s. Established by the Maryknoll priests in May 1958, the radio station reflected an increasing openness towards modern technology among Catholic actors. In September 1957, Pope Pius XII issued his second encyclical on motion pictures, radio and television, or “the very remarkable technical inventions which are the boast of the men of our generation.” In his view, these inventions could serve not only for the spread of the “evil seed” but also, importantly, as an instrument for the propagation of Catholic doctrine as well as a medium for (mass) education.<sup>24</sup> Ever since Radio Sutatenza founded the first radio school in Colombia in 1948, mass education via radio waves spread throughout Latin America, often as an initiative carried out by the Catholic Church. Five years after its foundation, Onda Azul, too, launched a radio school in Puno. Broadcasting in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara, ROA catered especially for the monolingual audiences in rural areas. Given the anti-communist stance taken by the Catholic Church, the radio schooling program also proved advantageous since the technology provided to peasant communities – a device that captured only one channel – could not be (ab)used by political adversaries. The radio would thus, in the words of a radio representative, “make the reds bawl.”<sup>25</sup>

As an instrument for development, frameworks for mass education via radio waves shaped the first decade of Catholic broadcasting in Puno. The steady demand for (broadcasted) classes “from communities where not even the road has yet penetrated to” led to a sharp increase in the number of pupils towards the late 1960s. Simultaneously, Onda Azul and the Diocese of Puno had to ensure that they offered additional courses to *radio-auxiliares* who would then set up and lead the schooling sessions in their respective communities.<sup>26</sup> The collective practice of listening to the radio in either a communal space or a parish room, where up to fifteen pupils would gather to listen and learn, had a striking resemblance with Mass: the voice of the teacher transmitted through the radio was a voice of knowledge that addressed its audience from a distant position of material and moral superiority – authoritarian, to the point, as it could not be challenged or even responded to. Onda Azul had a monopoly on information and programming, transmitting knowledge in a unilateral direction to the mostly rural population through an instrument that did not permit for any interaction.

24 Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television, “Miranda Prorsus,” 08.09.1957.

25 Escuelas Radiofónicas del Perú (ERPP): Puno, *Boletín Mensual de las Escuelas Radiofónicas*, no. 1, marzo 1964.

26 Though not as resource intensive as building an actual school, the radio schooling program still required certain material for the pupils to work with: “A blue and white flag, a whistle, a transistorized radio with a fixed dial, a crucifix, an alarm clock, a blackboard with chalk and eraser, a shelf for the rural library of the place, texts for the students, pencils and notebooks for each student.” APO, Escuelas Radiofónicas del Perú (ERP): Puno, *Boletín Mensual de las Escuelas Radiofónicas*, no. 3, mayo 1964.

However, distance education, an emblematic policy of modernization, ultimately fell short on its promise of rapid socio-economic progress for the rural masses. As lessons could not be adapted to the education levels and needs of the illiterate population, the system could barely supplant the still weak public education system.<sup>27</sup> The dependence of radio schools on a rising number of teaching intermediaries, its changing curricula, and its high maintenance costs, too, made distance education in Puno subject to public scrutiny. Due to these growing logistical and financial difficulties, Onda Azul eventually ended the schooling program in 1969.<sup>28</sup>

## Transnational Charity

If the Diocese of Puno could draw on radio technology to support its religious and social mission, the Prelature of Ayaviri benefitted more from the transnational circulation of religious and lay personnel.

For missionaries coming from Europe, the propagation of the Catholic faith also depended on education and social welfare. Or, in the words of French priest and journalist Jean Toulat during his visit to Ayaviri: “How can he [Metzinger] preach to them about heaven without taking care of their condition on Earth?” A multitude of efforts to relieve symptoms of (material) poverty were supposed to provide better conditions for the religious mission. “The Metzinger Plan”, Toulat noted, was similar to the Andean Indian Program carried out by the International Labour Organization: improving the health care system, constructing schools, building infrastructure and, all in all, *modernizing* the northern provinces of Puno. Expressing his wariness at how the distribution of hundreds of tons of Caritas food aid fostered a begging mentality, Metzinger proposed programs that made a lasting contribution to the social welfare of his parishioners. Since knowledge was considered a condition for social progress, the plan promoted education in a region where approximately three-quarters of the population remained illiterate in the early 1960s.<sup>29</sup>

The Metzinger Plan reflected how missionaries rearticulated present misery and past glory when framing their *indigenista* discourse. In an interview for the occasion of the first session of the Second Vatican Council, Metzinger, portrayed as “bishop of the Incas” in the French media, lamented the indigenous population’s lack of progress:

27 Alan O’Connor, *The Voice of the Mountains: Radio and Anthropology* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006), xiv.

28 Nelson Figueroa, *Onda Azul: Una voz al ritmo de los tiempos* (Lima: Coordinadora Nacional de la Radio, 1996), 65–69.

29 Jean Toulat, *Espérance en Amérique du Sud* (Paris: Éditions S.O.S., 1968), 116–17.

We must fight against the appalling misery of our parishioners and integrate them as fast as possible into the national community. Our indigenous [people] who form 90% of the population of the Prelature still live at the margins of the nation's cultural, social and economic life, in conditions that are worse than those in which they had been found by the Spanish conquerors in the 16th century.<sup>30</sup>

Many of the publications issued by the missionaries mobilized the same ahistorical narrative, comparing the “Incas from the past” to the “Incas of today”, the once splendid civilization to the “pariahs” that now populated the Peruvian highlands. In a report destined for a European audience, missionary René Auffert framed the “Indian drama” as a process which left “today’s Incas [to live] entrenched in their mountains”, a “fallen, downgraded and despised” group that awaited social and spiritual uplifting.<sup>31</sup> In so doing, by disregarding political mobilizations since the Spanish conquest, and in particular the late 19th and early 20th century, the missionaries misrepresented and undermined local agency while also lamenting that previous evangelization campaigns had not been accompanied by the necessary social evolution.

The textual and visual representation of the miserable, dispossessed ‘other’, the descendant of a once proud civilization, was an integral part of a transnational process that aimed at channeling resources from Europe towards the prelature. During their travels in France and in circular correspondence, missionaries made use of visual and written media to represent the supposed religious abandonment and social misery they had encountered in northern Puno and, consequently, to ask for material and personnel support.<sup>32</sup> The discursive construction of Ayaviri as a place where European aid was necessary for both ecclesiastical and social development is exemplified in Metzinger’s appeal to the French youth in a special edition of the missionary magazine *Horizons Blancs*, entitled “S.O.S. on the Andes”: “your sacrifices and generosity can mean the salvation of an entire population.”<sup>33</sup> These funds fundamentally contributed to the acceptance of missionaries among their local parishioners. Thanks to the donations collected in Europe, French clerics could appease all those who lamented the withdrawal of Maryknoll missionaries by continuing the charitable practices of their North American colleagues.

Furthermore, the prelature hosted a large number of laypeople supporting its social mission. In 1962, for instance, Metzinger cooperated with a Swiss philanthropist to launch an aid campaign, *Le Valais vient au Secours d’Ayaviri* (Figure 4).

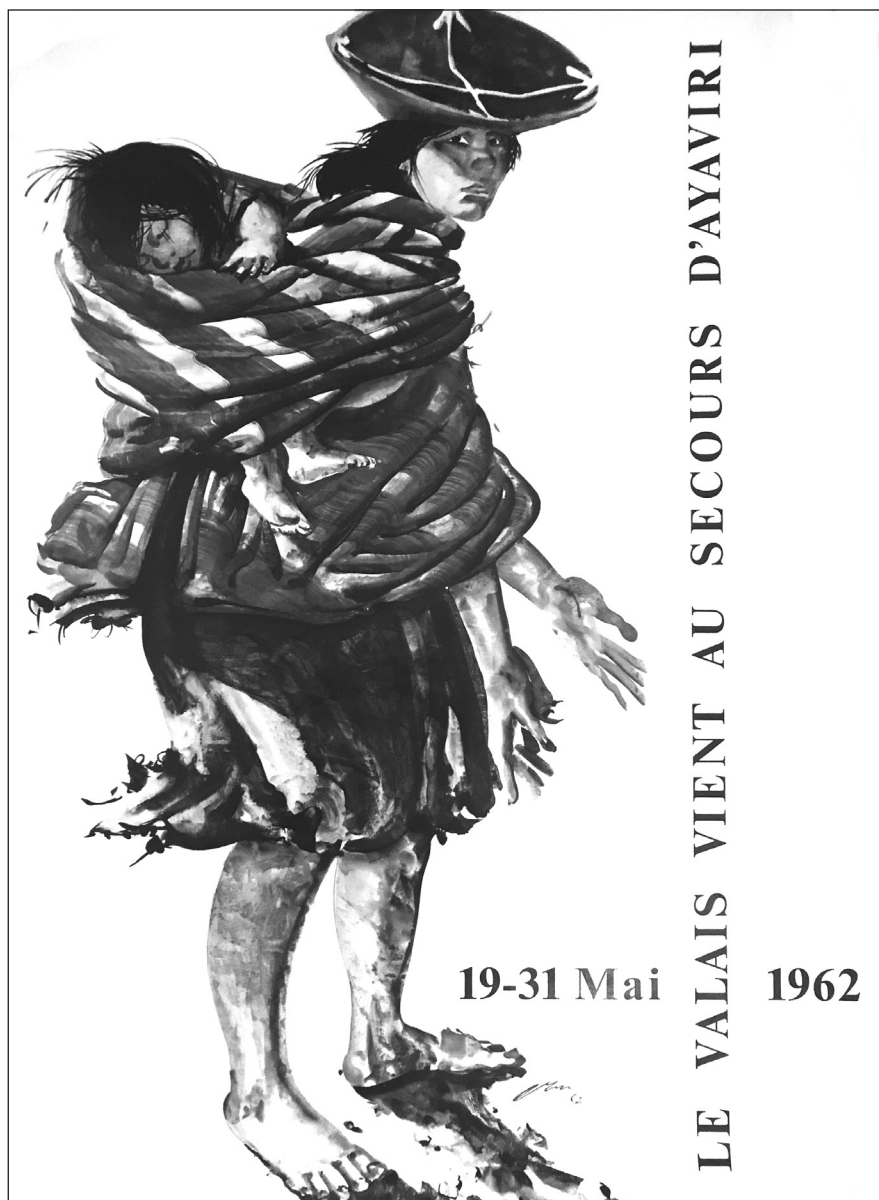
30 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri à l’heure du Concile,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 13, octobre 1962, 327.

31 René Auffert, “L’Inca aujourd’hui: un paria,” *Horizons Blancs*, spécial ‘S.O.S. sur les Andes’, 1960, 18.

32 Moyon, *Le cavalier solitaire des Andes*, 119, 134.

33 Luciano Metzinger, “Un appel de Mgr Metzinger,” *Horizons Blancs*, ‘S.O.S sur les Andes’, 1960, 19.





4. *Le Valais vient au Secours d'Ayaviri*, (Hans Erni), May 1962.  
(Collection Suisse d'Affiches, Médiathèque Valais; © Hans Erni-Stiftung, Luzern)

Residents of the Canton of Valais, through a documentary produced by Auffret, learned about how they could alleviate the prevalent poverty in Puno.<sup>34</sup> Sixteen Swiss volunteers, including nurses, teachers and agronomists, arrived in Ayaviri over the following two years and formed part of the transnational network of laypeople – including fellow francophone laypeople from Canada and France – operating across northern Puno in cooperation with the prelatore. Given that they pursued the same objectives of ‘integration’ as the ILO, Metzinger and the Swiss initiative also aimed to enhance coordination of their respective aid projects with the Puno-Tambopata Program through various meetings in Geneva.<sup>35</sup> This shows evidence of how the prelate aspired to establish alliances between different transnational actors whose *indigenista* campaigns coincided in both space and time. All told, such campaigns proceeded to make Puno, and particularly its northern provinces, a new laboratory of development.

These charitable actions resonated well with national and regional media, who reported on the clergy of Ayaviri and its “model bishop”. Metzinger, for instance, headlined articles in Peruvian newspapers because he “secured help from Europe”, aimed at “elevating the life standard of peasants” or launched “a real revolution in an explosive region”.<sup>36</sup>

Missionaries themselves, too, did not hesitate to praise their benevolence in public fora and broadcast media, constructing a new ideal of missionary work that reflected their purported status as agents of social change. The congregational journal *Horizons Blancs* published multiple articles and testimonies which commended the religious and social work undertaken by the prelatore. A special issue on Ayaviri published in early 1966, for instance, alluded to the “*grande oeuvre*” launched by the missionaries whose joint efforts were to “contribute to materially and spiritually safeguard” those who had a “hungry body and soul.”<sup>37</sup>

The Peruvian clergy working alongside their European colleagues, in turn, did not possess the resources to launch ‘*oeuvres*’ in their respective parishes. Relying on mass tariffs, donations or their position as school teachers, they continued operating at the margins of the social progress promoted by the recently arrived priests, women religious and laypeople. It is perhaps very telling that hardly any written legacy of the pastoral work of Peruvian clerics can be found in the archives for the period under consideration.

34 See Andrea Müller and Noah Oehri, “Mountains, ‘Indios’ and Cheese: A Multi-Sited Approach to Swiss Development Aid in the Andes,” *La Revista*, no. 80 (2020): 25–29.

35 ILO Archives, File RL 49-4-12, David Efron, “Minute No. 105,” 21.07.1962; Carlos d’Ugard, “Minute No. 232: Projet d’Ayaviri et de l’Association Suisse du Valais,” 12.02.1964.

36 AHPA, Textes Publicités, “Regresó obispo de Ayaviri: Consiguió ayuda en Europa,” *La Prensa*, 27.01.1963; “Elevar nivel del campesino se propone Mons. Metzinger,” *La Prensa*, 26.04.1964; “Verdadera revolución en una region explosive,” *Actualidad*, 03.03.1969.

37 Luciano Metzinger, “Editorial,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966.

## The Conciliar Spirit

The “*reconquista espiritual*” of Puno not only relied on an increased presence and social engagement of religious and lay personnel, but also on a different style of pastoral work. According to González Ruiz, the clergy had to approach their teachings of Catholic tradition and moral codes strictly and intransigently in order to induce religious change among the population. It was not for the clergy to adapt to defects and inappropriate demands of many parishioners, but upon the latter to respect the directives and teachings of the church. In contrast to the (rather benevolent) paternalism of Metzinger, the bishop of Puno insisted on reforming a pastoral practice that thus far required little religious obedience. At the same time, both bishops defended a similar, humanistic position with regard to the potential for social development. As stated by González Ruiz, the population of the altiplano “has the same human nature” as in other parts of the world and was therefore “capable of improvement, dignified progress, social promotion and authentic Christianity.”<sup>38</sup>

From 1962 onwards, discourses of progress were fueled by the so-called ‘spirit’ of the Second Vatican Council in its emphasis on the *aggiornamento* of the Catholic Church. Commenting upon the final session of the council, the Peruvian ambassador to the Holy See claimed that the church “has the means to harmonize the temporal and the eternal, material and moral, socio-economic progress and spiritual order” in its approach “to the people living in inhuman conditions”.<sup>39</sup> In his circulars, González Ruiz presented a positive account of the envisioned transformations. Already after the first session, he reported his enthusiasm by emphasizing that the ecumenical council would initiate “a new era in Catholicism”.<sup>40</sup> As an engagement with the modern world, Vatican II indeed promised to provide answers to the difficult role of the church: in many ways, its embrace of modernization translated into a greater preoccupation with social and political developments in the secular world. Several prolonged stays in Rome from 1962 until 1965 further allowed González Ruiz to recruit personnel and gather financial assistance for his charity projects.

This ‘new era’ translated into numerous ecclesiastic and liturgical reforms, including the use of vernacular languages during Mass. However, the reception and implementation of such reforms depended upon local bishops and ‘pastoral agents’ – a term, in fact, introduced by the council. The bishop of Puno emphasized that the council brought significant responsibilities for the Christians of the

38 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 25, 1963.

39 Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores del Perú, 5-0-A. Santa Sede 1965, Embajador Germán Aramburú, carta al Ministro de Estado en el despacho de Relaciones Exteriores, Ciudad del Vaticano, 10.09.1965.

40 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 24, 1962.

20th century to be the “architects of this transformation”. After the closing of the third council session, he appealed to the religious and lay personnel of his diocese:

I therefore make a very lively appeal to all of us without exception [...] to put into practice each and every one of the conclusions of our Holy Council. [...] Let no one be indifferent or feel free to act differently. So many abnormalities, abuses, arbitrariness that have been tolerated as a weight of centuries, today they will no longer have a reason to exist: the council has spoken and will continue to speak, and it will not be licit for us to continue with our own judgments or caprices.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the council was interpreted as a watershed moment that disallowed any return to the past. It was a wind of religious change that was to strengthen the Catholic Church in its mission – a new spirit that required for every Catholic to adapt and embrace a “post-conciliar conscience”.<sup>42</sup> As the conciliar reforms coincided with the opening of a regional seminary and new rural parishes, González Ruiz hailed the accelerated rhythm of change visible across the diocese. As early as April 1964, he affirmed that the static conception of religious life across the altiplano was breaking down as the Catholic Church attempted to keep pace with “a world traveling in supersonic machines.”<sup>43</sup>

The implementation of conciliar reforms and the development of a common pastoral approach required greater collaboration among religious personnel. In August 1964, the diocese organized courses for clergy and both male and female members of religious orders to study church reform and discuss the reform of pastoral methods. Discussing the “manifestations of pastoral anarchy” in the diocese at this event, the participating women religious suggested that some of them were hesitant to accept conciliar reforms and that geographical distance constituted a significant obstacle to pastoral coordination. In the same vein, the diocesan clergy alluded to a lack of fraternity among priests, the uneven distribution of economic resources as well as the lack of communication with the bishop. However, both women religious and clergy also expressed their willingness to collaborate further, notably through regular meetings among pastoral agents working in the same province. The priests, moreover, agreed to attempt communitarian parishes that would resolve prevalent issues of moral order and social isolation across the countryside.<sup>44</sup>

These constructive debates not only echoed the willingness for reform, but also the increasingly democratic governance of the diocese. The bishop agreed to change how episcopal authority was exercised, framing it not as a symbol of

41 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 29, 1964.

42 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 35, 1966.

43 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 30, 1964.

44 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 31, 1964; Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 32, 1964.

religious and moral superiority, but as a form of obligation, requiring him to work towards ecclesial community, especially in collaboration with the clergy.<sup>45</sup> According to Jeffrey Klaiber, the “modern church” began to embrace contemporary Western values, including “pluralism, dialogue, respectful intellectual criticism, and psychological maturity.” Religious institutions hence began to adopt the traits of “modern [...] enterprises” as they committed to long-term planning, efficient usage of capital and personnel.<sup>46</sup> *Los Andes* retrospectively commended these changes, as journalists described González Ruiz’s transformation from an initially highly conservative cleric who established “strict norms” with regard to dancing, adultery and communism, to a “modern bishop” with “new ideas in a new period” of Catholicism in Puno.<sup>47</sup>

The following year, the clergy of Ayaviri also attempted to launch a *pastoral de conjunto* in response to conciliar reforms. During an event in May 1965, priests discussed the liturgical reforms resulting from the conciliar constitution *Sacrosantum Concilium*. Over the course of these *Jornadas*, however, several issues emerged. Similar to the situation in Puno, increased pastoral coordination risked failing due to the lack of infrastructure and the large distances between the parishes. Moreover, pastoral agents could not agree on the appropriate evangelization methods. Some priests did not in fact approve of the emphasis on liturgy over catechism, as they perceived liturgical education as less efficient when working with “Christians with small remnants of immemorial customs interspersed with paganism and superstition”, to use Metzinger’s words. Ultimately, the prelate thus advised pastoral agents to implement liturgical reforms “in a prudent manner [and] without haste”.<sup>48</sup>

Beyond liturgical reforms, the most important conciliar document for the missionaries in Puno was *Gaudium et Spes*, the pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world. It underlines the contemporary opportunities and challenges in a world deemed both “powerful and weak, capable of the noblest needs or the foulest”, on the path to “freedom or to slavery, to progress or retreat, to brotherhood or hatred.”<sup>49</sup> In its discussion of the role of the church in the face of these contrasts, *Gaudium et Spes* articulates a discourse of development which foregrounds the agency of all Catholics in the ongoing transformation of the modern world. Be it in the promotion of human dignity, socio-economic development or political participation, the pastoral constitution invites Christians to contribute to peace and prosperity for mankind by upholding the principles of charity and justice.

45 AOP, Julio González Ruiz, Circular pastoral no. 35, 1966.

46 Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821-1985*, 246.

47 “Destituyen de su cargo de obispo a Mons. Julio González Ruiz,” *Los Andes*, 17.04.1972.

48 AHPA, Consejo Prespiterial, Acta de la jornada pastoral, mayo 1965.

49 *Gaudium et Spes*, Introductory Statement: The Situation of Men in the Modern World, 07.12.1965.

Following historian Gerd-Rainer Horn, it was easy to see how certain passages in *Gaudium et Spes* indeed “provided wind in the sails of social justice campaigners around the world.”<sup>50</sup> Its message of development and (Christian) transformation, for instance, also manifested in the programs launched by the Catholic Church that sought to promote the integration of the indigenous population into the state and church. According to Metzinger:

In making this social effort, the prelature remains in the conciliar line of [*Gaudium et Spes*]; a church which does not content itself with bringing a social doctrine, but wants to work to achieve an order of justice, human dignity and fraternity, and which, in so doing, not only contributes to restoring the Indians’ full rights as citizens, but leads them to feel truly part of the people of God.<sup>51</sup>

In other words, the *aggiornamento* of the Catholic Church fueled a humanistic optimism for harmonious development, to be brought about through the spiritual and social engagement of its representatives.

Through their endorsement of the conciliar spirit, church representatives in Puno thenceforth developed new pastoral discourses which both addressed material well-being and fostered obedience to Catholic (social) doctrine. In a visit to the province of Carabaya in late 1965, for instance, Metzinger held numerous exhortatory talks in which he focused either on social or religious issues of concern. Depending on the audience, he “addressed the meaning of [...] social justice, charity and Christian education”, while, on the same or different occasions, also stressing “the fulfillment of the commandments [and] the obligation to banish certain superstitious and pagan customs.”<sup>52</sup> However, missionaries were more successful in providing charity than (permanently) altering religious traditions. Metzinger recognized that the prelature partly prioritized social work over its religious mission, as socio-economic problems were deemed more urgent and as it was “easier to obtain financial aid from international entities for such projects.”<sup>53</sup>

The rapid changes in the ecclesiastical landscape of Puno ultimately responded to both local and global reform dynamics which, building on conciliar documents, forged a Catholic response to poverty, inequality and injustice. In 1967, the Peruvian episcopacy welcomed the papal encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, emphasizing that the development of Peru required “audacious, profoundly innovative trans-

50 Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 18.

51 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri: programme social de la prélatrice,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 31, avril 1967, 452.

52 AHSC, Boletín, Alfredo Kratz, “La visita pastoral,” *Boletín de la Prelatura de Ayaviri*, no. 1, mayo 1965.

53 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri social,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 40, juillet 1969, 205.

formations”. The bishops actively supported these transformations by endorsing political reform and propagating Catholic social teaching.<sup>54</sup>

## Reforming a Rural Parish

Many of the missionaries arriving in Latin America had embraced a social commitment intrinsically linked to their vocation. Contemporary mission, in other words, translated into an “*engagement tiers-mondiste*” for many French clerics working abroad.<sup>55</sup> In a letter directed to Metzinger in October 1965, for instance, four Fidei Donum priests assured that their principal motivation for working in Ayaviri rather than another diocese was to assist and support the poor in both spiritual and material terms.<sup>56</sup> By opting for mission in Peru, they chose to put themselves at the service of parishes that they sought to lastingly transform through their presence. However, these missionaries often struggled to integrate into, and adapt to, complex local socio-political milieus which they had been previously unfamiliar with. This brings us to the case of Coaza.

Like other villages of the Peruvian highlands in the late 1950s, *Los Andes* described Coaza as a place at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. Located in the high valleys of the province of Carabaya, the birthplace of photographer Martín Chambi had not been connected by road until mid-century. In response to the “stagnation of its economic and social progress”, following a news report, the inhabitants of Coaza decided to “fight for the conquest of civilization through a road that connects them with more developed villages.” After more than four years of work, without any state support, the villagers finished the infrastructure project, which soon translated into the arrival of “new people, new things”, newspapers and products. Describing them as a “people with great aspirations”, the article contended that the *coazeños* had lived up to their reputation as “real soldiers of work”.<sup>57</sup>

Anthropologist Evelyn Montgomery, who wrote a study on the social organization of the *ayllu* in Coaza, was less enthusiastic about the prospects for development. In 1962, there was no regular communication as, depending on the season, trucks either could not drive on the winding paths or preferred to only do the twelve-hour journey from Ayaviri to Coaza twice a month. Besides a few shop

54 AOP, Declaración del Episcopado Peruano, Lima, 16.07.1967.

55 For further discussion, see Denis Pelletier, “De la mission au tiers-mondisme: crise ou mutation d’un modèle d’engagement catholique,” *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 177 (October 1966): 3–9; Olivier Chatelan, *Mission religieuse ou engagement tiers-mondiste? Des clercs entre Europe et Amérique latine* (Nancy: Arbre bleu éditions, 2020).

56 AHPA, San Juan del Oro, Louis Le Guern, Jean Berthelot, Gustave Moyon, Yves Troal, carta colectiva a Luciano Metzinger, 02.10.1965.

57 E. Estanislao Andrade Aguilar, “Coaza: Pueblo de grandes aspiraciones,” *Los Andes*, 29.11.1958.

owners and artisans, she observed, the majority of the almost 4,000 inhabitants of the district remained subsistence farmers, growing mostly potatoes. The more fertile, tropical lowlands located a few days on foot from Coaza also attracted seasonal migrants, but the search for gold in that region had thus far been poorly rewarded.<sup>58</sup>

The first resident priests assigned to Coaza in spring 1961 had to organize the pastoral and social work in a vast district that had previously rarely been visited by Catholic clergy. Upon arriving, following the directives from Metzinger, Michel Denis and Juan Chambi first had to familiarize themselves with the local authorities, whose advice and collaboration was to be of major importance for the parish. The success of their mission, in other words, was contingent upon friendly relations with the influential ruling class. Under no circumstances were the French parish priest and his Peruvian assistant to get involved in political affairs; only “with much delicacy and finesse” were they to intervene in cases of abuses of power or mistreatment. The most important obligation of the priests was to spread Catholic doctrine, making use of assistance from catechists and school teachers to reach residents in the small *parcialidades* that they could only sporadically visit.<sup>59</sup> Besides his religious mission, Denis was responsible for the distribution of Caritas aid and also aimed to launch a *centro social* that would help local residents to overcome their “backwardness”, considered “worse than during the Inca period”.<sup>60</sup>

Notwithstanding these directives to respect local customs, the early missionary work in Coaza remained marked by increased tension and conflict over religious beliefs and practices in the highland parish. Montgomery argued that the *coazeños* were “manipulating their religious beliefs for their special needs and convictions”, rejecting dominant narratives that portrayed them as “confused in their religious beliefs”. However, the observance of these religious traditions, relating to both Catholic saints and the agricultural cycle, led to a serious conflict between Michel Denis and his parishioners. According to Montgomery’s observations, the French missionary prohibited certain *fiestas* in order to curtail alcohol and coca consumption, built a new church in which the “*indios* could not feel that they belonged” and, overall, disrespected religious traditions:

By removing the drama and joy from Coaza’s life and leaving it without recreation [...], it is more likely that alcohol consumption has increased, rather than decreased. He [Michel Denis] is also concerned about the absence of ecclesiastical and civil marriage ceremonies, but the cost of church marriage is so high that virtually no young couple can afford it. To complete this alienation, he expressed quite openly

58 Montgomery, *Ethos and Ayllu in Coasa, Peru*, 31–32, 38, 40.

59 AHPA, Coaza, “Directivas para el R.P. Miguel Denis y el R.P. Juan Chambi,” Ayaviri, 10.04.1961.

60 AHPA, Coaza, “Centro social de Coaza,” Michel Denis, Ayaviri, 08.09.1962.



that he did not like indigenous food or music and therefore never participates [in fiestas].<sup>61</sup>

The animosity towards the French missionary not only fueled passive resistance among the local population, but also encouraged them to have Uchuhuma recognized as a separate indigenous community from Coaza. Local inhabitants, according to Montgomery, solicited autonomy as they feared further prohibitions on religious celebrations from the priest. Since, in his writings, Denis had “demonstrated real concern for the *indios*”, Montgomery blamed the existing crisis largely on a lack of communication between the priest - who did not speak Quechua - and his parishioners.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, evidencing this concern, in a newspaper article for the French *La Croix*, the priest had not only emphasized the need for religious obedience and increased church attendance, but also criticized the “hidden racism” and injustice to which the indigenous population were subjected “by a handful of European descendants”.<sup>63</sup>

The increased tensions within the Coaza parish also drew critical attention from the prelate of Ayaviri. Whereas Metzinger welcomed the charity projects in Coaza, he cautioned Denis to be careful with regard to the religious changes he sought to introduce. “By brutally changing certain customs that for them [parishioners] are the expression of religion”, Metzinger warned, “we risk alienating them from religion itself.”<sup>64</sup> In other words, missionaries could only slowly and progressively alter religious practices. The inherent tensions of a missionary endeavor seeking to propagate the Christian faith and Catholic morals as well as tolerate local traditions, however, proved to be problematic for certain missionaries. Since Denis’ pastoral practice was not welcomed by local parishioners and he experienced difficulties adapting to the highland parish, he eventually left Coaza in 1963.

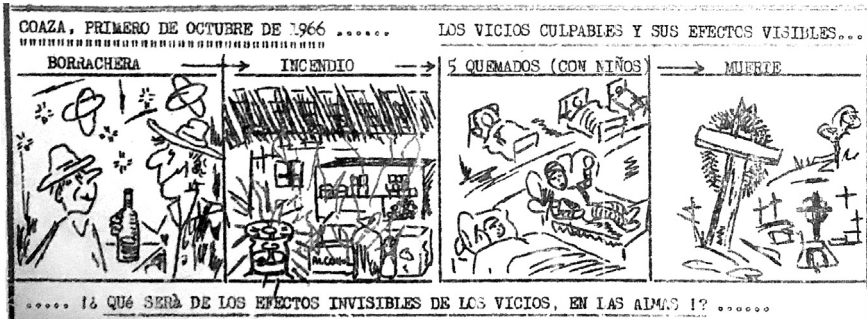
His successor, then thirty-five-year-old secular priest Jean Berthelot from the French diocese of Bourges, sought to create fertile ground for evangelization in the Carabaya highlands. Echoing Jean Toulat, Berthelot claimed that “an empty stomach has no ears” and that he would “announce the gospel to a desert” if he would not work towards “lifting the Indians out of their ignorance and sub-human living conditions.” Among other initiatives, and in cooperation with a nurse, teacher and agronomist from France and Canada, Berthelot established a health dispensary, a kindergarten and a school canteen in the district. These projects

61 Montgomery, *Ethos and Ayllu in Coasa, Peru*, 119–20.

62 Montgomery, 119–21.

63 Michel Denis, “Un prêtre lorrain raconte: Comment je suis devenu curé dans la sierra du Pérou,” *La Croix*, 06.05.1962.

64 AHPA, Coaza, Luciano Metzinger, carta a R.P. Miguel Denis, Ayaviri, 17.07.1961.; AHPA, Coaza, Luciano Metzinger, carta a R.P. Miguel Denis, Ayaviri, 24.05.1961.



**5. 'Los Vicios Culpables'**  
**[Coaza Chasqui, no. 8, octubre 1966]**

aimed to promote education, improve the household economy and, eventually, make the *coazeños* more receptive to the Catholic gospel, rather than the “ancestral paganism” still practiced by the majority. In the meantime, Berthelot admitted, the methods used for evangelizations would “hardly result in any conversion”.<sup>65</sup> Notwithstanding these poor prospects for a Catholic revival, the French missionary claimed to spare no effort in visiting every village in the district at least four times a year and hoped that his endeavors would still contribute to the harmonious progress of Coaza.<sup>66</sup>

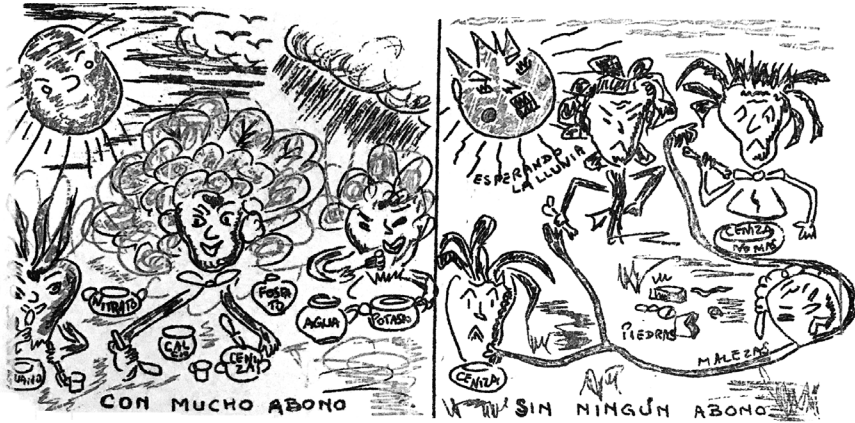
In order to facilitate communication with his parishioners, Berthelot created a parish bulletin, *Coaza Chasqui* – named after the messengers of the Inca Empire – in 1966. As a medium for its parishioners, it used colorful illustrations and text to educate readers and inform them about hygiene, religious affairs and charity projects.<sup>67</sup> Reflecting the *indigenista* agenda of the Ayaviri mission, the bulletin aimed to induce changes in religious and moral behavior, present social initiatives and encourage the integration of the population. The illustrations reflect the diversity of the parish’s social programs, as it sought to fight against alcohol abuse (Figure 5), promote technical change in agriculture (Figure 6) and recruit members of a new peasant cooperative (Figure 7).

While one section of the bulletin, “¿Por qué, padrecito?”, discussed church-related matters in a dialogue with a curious believer, another section called upon readers to “know the laws of the country”, which would “defend them against abuse”

65 AHPA, Coaza, Juan Berthelot, carta circular, 01.06.1966; Jean Berthelot, “Coaza: jardin d’enfants,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 189–90.

66 AHPA, Coaza, Juan Berthelot, carta circular, 01.06.1966; Jean Berthelot, “Coaza: jardin d’enfants,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 189–90.

67 Berthelot among others published a testimony in a French journal in which he particularly decried the lack of hygiene, precarious housing and endemic poverty. See “Au Pérou: La grande misère des Indiens de la Sierra,” *Croissance des Jeunes Nations*, no. 53, mars 1966, 11–13.



6. 'Las Plantas se Alimentan'.  
 (Coaza Chasqui, no. 10, diciembre 1966)

and help in establishing recognized indigenous communities.<sup>68</sup> In later editions, the content grew increasingly political: *Coaza Chasqui* reiterated claims for social justice and called for an end to “injustice, illegality, irregularities [and] abuse.”<sup>69</sup> In contrast to his predecessor, Berthelot thus did not seem to respect his directives to deal with abuses with ‘care and finesse’ or, speaking more broadly, to avoid any interference in political matters.

At the same time, Berthelot’s criticisms reflected the local reception of conciliar directives alluding to the responsibility of the church for the common good of humanity. As Metzinger lamented the reigning misery and injustice in 1967, he specifically referred to the persistent exploitation of the indigenous population in a semi-feudal system across the continent. Even if the church had no “social, economic or political mandate or purpose”, he argued that the clergy, “by virtue of their insertion in the world”, could extend their ministry to “all human realities and problems.”<sup>70</sup> Following the conviction that the prelate could not remain silent or inactive in the face of the deplorable social conditions reigning in northern Puno, the missionaries were not only to provide momentary relief, but to support their parishioners in the lasting transformation of the social order.

Such a change was not to upset authorities and ruling classes, however, as that risked harming the religious mission and the missionaries’ acceptance in rural parishes. In 1965, Metzinger feared that Berthelot’s “unrelenting attitude” towards those he judged as “despicable exploiters” risked upsetting the authorities

68 AHPA, Coaza, *Coaza Chasqui*, Boletín parroquial, no. 1, marzo 1966; *Coaza Chasqui*, Boletín parroquial, no. 3, mayo 1966.

69 AHPA, Coaza, *Coaza Chasqui*, Boletín parroquial, no. 7, septiembre 1977.

70 Luciano Metzinger, “Programme social de la Préature,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 31, avril 1967, 449–52.



**7. 'La Cooperativa'.  
(Coza Chaski, no. 11, enero 1967)**

and would eventually “neutralize his actions, even with the Indians.”<sup>71</sup> Berthelot, in turn, lamented the lack of application of the principals affirmed in the conciliar documents, as he was convinced that the religious mission relied on certain social and human conditions that had yet to be established. In a fragile social order where calls for social change immediately translated into an attack on the status quo of landowners and authorities, he unsurprisingly faced significant difficulties in his role as parish priest.

The critical content of the parish bulletin, the establishment of a peasant cooperative and the public statements of Berthelot triggered an increasingly negative reaction on the part of the authorities. As he identified exploitation of the peasantry as the most pressing social problem affecting the district, Berthelot sought to address existing grievances and demand respect for the laws protecting indigenous people from abuse.<sup>72</sup> According to the French missionary, “some well-known people in Coaza do not appreciate the development of their fellow citizens” as they launched “a campaign of defamation and slander of all kinds” against the parish.<sup>73</sup> In November 1966, he sent a letter to the governor of the department rejecting the defamatory campaign, arguing that local authorities resented his actions for the poor and his predications of Catholic social teaching. This work in favor of local development, Berthelot claimed, did not appeal to those seeking to “take advantage of the situation of extreme poverty and ignorance of our region.”<sup>74</sup>

Petitions and letters sent to the prelate of Ayaviri also illustrate how Berthelot’s activism provoked different reactions from the authorities and the parishioners, either criticizing or applauding his work as a missionary. In a letter sent to the bishop in 1966, for instance, the “authorities and the Catholic people of Coaza” denounce the work of Berthelot for his behavior towards some of his parishioners, accusing him of aiming to make the Catholic faith disappear, or, through his in-

71 AHPA, San Juan del Oro, Luciano Metzinger, carta a Luis Le Guern, 13.07.1965.

72 AHPA, Coaza, Juan Berthelot, carta circular, 01.06.1966.

73 AHPA, Coaza, *Coaza Chasqui*, Boletín parroquial, no. 9, noviembre 1966.

74 AHPA, Coaza, Juan Berthelot, carta al señor prefecto del departamento de Puno, 14.11.1966.



**8. Ayaviri Clergy, 1968.**  
 [Archivo Histórico de los Sagrados Corazones, Zona Andina, Lima]

sults in Quechua against the elected authorities, aiming at “upsetting the spirit of the *masa campesina*.”<sup>75</sup> One year later, however, the “humble parishioners” of the same district sent a letter to the bishop requesting an indefinite prolongation of residence for Berthelot and the parish nurse, Chantal Grégoire, whom they had to thank for the realization of many projects of far-reaching significance for the community.<sup>76</sup>

The growing conflict among the parishioners – as well as the stark contrast between Berthelot and his predecessor – are ultimately illustrative of the heterogeneous nature of missionary activity across northern Puno. According to Denise Robichon, a Swiss nurse who worked in the prelatore from July 1963 onwards, the missionaries who arrived in the prelatore during the first decade were builders (Figure 8). Many priests would turn buildings that resembled “potato cellars” into their parish buildings and “spoke exclusively through wood, nails and cement”. Others launched their mission in isolated valleys and enjoyed solitude to such an extent that they would barely leave their parish for several years. Again others embodied the “typical colonial clergy” who abused their domestic staff or “needed a lot of Mass wine even if they did no longer celebrate every day.” Berthelot, however, was arguably among the “precursor[s] of the new wave of priests who were to follow [...] and engage in politics.”<sup>77</sup>

75 AHPA, Coaza, Copie du mémorial, Autoridades y pueblo católico del distrito de Coaza, 08.08.1966.

76 AHPA, Coaza, carta al señor obispo de Ayaviri, 20.07.1967.

77 AHPA, Provincia Melgar, Denise Robichon, carta a Francisco d’Alteroche, 1985.

The fact that Berthelot counted both supporters and opponents among his parishioners shows evidence of the difficult reception of a post-conciliar pastoral practice which called for social justice and structural change. The majority of the Ayaviri clergy still did not criticize or challenge social hierarchies - or the neo-colonial land structures associated therewith. Therefore, the prelature was required to develop other responses to the land conflict which had been unfolding since Peruvian independence. As the next chapter will demonstrate, these projects further accentuated existing tensions over landownership while continuing to promote alternative ideals of socio-economic progress in rural areas.



# 3

## Pastors on Pastures

Situated between 3,600 and 4,000 meters above sea level, the altiplano has always demanded a great deal from those who wish to till its soil. The harsh climate, alternating between an arid winter and a rainy summer season, is characterized by significant diurnal temperature variations. During the colder (on average) winter months, the temperatures regularly fall below freezing point at night, while daytime temperatures often exceed fifteen degrees Celsius. The cold climate and recurrent droughts naturally limit the productivity of regional agriculture. Only in the more fertile lands on the shores of Lake Titicaca, often prone to flooding, can farmers expect regular harvests of native crops, notably potatoes and quinoa. In the more arid areas further away from the lake basin, livestock farming prevails.

After Peruvian independence, the altitude and climate of the region favored the integration of the altiplano into the global wool trade. Regional shepherds, whose alpacas, llamas, sheep and vicuñas fed off the hardly fertile pastures of the arid altiplano in northern and eastern Puno, would become exporters of wool, which was in high demand by the English textile industry. The construction of the train line connecting the towns of Ayaviri, Juliaca and Puno to the regional commercial hub of Arequipa, financed by English merchants, further stimulated the wool trade from 1874 onwards.<sup>1</sup>

The boom of the wool export economy also fueled the expansion of the hacienda system across the altiplano from the 1860s onwards. According to Nils Jacobson's study of the northern province of Azángaro, the prevalent social structure increasingly crystallized in the altiplano's land tenure: as the size of large estates and smallholdings expanded, the (neo-)colonial system of dependence between in-

1 Del Pozo-Vergnes, *De la hacienda a la mundialización*, 35–43.



digenous peasantry and rural elite was further exacerbated.<sup>2</sup> Through successive expansion, haciendas ended up gaining up to one-third of Azángaro's usable lands in a period of sixty years and would, through the aid of strong-arm command and indigenous labor, eventually dominate the altiplano landscapes. This process provoked strong opposition on the part of many rural dwellers, most notably during the Rumi Maqui rebellion of 1915, until a rapid fall in global wool prices in the early 1920s put an end to the hacienda expansion. The resulting economic crisis led to a surge in social tensions across the *puneño* countryside. At the broader level, moreover, the rural crisis contributed to the growing debates on the "Indian Problem" as a central tenet of Peru's national identity.<sup>3</sup>

When physician Maxime Kuczynski Godard visited the neighboring province of Melgar in the early 1940s, he witnessed how the fate of the indigenous population still depended upon the hacienda system. Some of them were characterized by a "very modern" treatment of their *colonos*, and were even "imbued with a sense of social justice." On one estate, for instance, the indigenous peasants received an appropriate salary and even additional benefits and rewards for cattle breeding. Whereas the *colonos* on this hacienda seemed satisfied, others could hardly claim the same. In fact, there were limited incentives for reform of a system which functioned thanks to the availability of an abundant labor force. According to Kuczynski, some estates exploited the landless peasantry, as *gamonales* - a term for ruthless and exploitative landowners or estate administrators - obliged them to work while only paying minimal salaries. These precarious conditions were also conducive to the tradition of cattle rustling. As a self-defense measure for the *colonos* against their landowner, Kuczynski considered this social practice, "*robito*", as illustrative of both the endemic poverty and the historic antagonism between *indio* and *misti* (non-Indian).<sup>4</sup>

Violent confrontations and legal disputes over landownership, often reflective of this antagonism, continued to characterize the rural economy into the second half of the 20th century. On the *Día del Indio* in late June 1958 - deemed a "cruel irony" - over 4,000 peasants were evicted from their lands in the province of Azángaro as a court ruled in favor of the land claims of the hacienda San José. Criticizing this judgment as a "mortal blow to democracy", *Los Andes* published an article lamenting the inaction of the government, whose "pseudo-*indigenistas*" were only interested in the fate of the rural masses during their electoral campaigns. The hacienda San José was, in comparison to more modern estates, consid-

2 Nils Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition: The Peruvian Altiplano, 1780-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 203-05.

3 Jacobsen, 333, 344.

4 Máxime Kuczynski-Godard and Jacobo Alva Mendo, *Los Andes peruanos: llave-Ichupampa-Lauramarca-Iguain: investigaciones andinas*, Serie Clásicos sanmarquinos (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2004), 70-71.

ered “a hindrance and a backdrop to progress” which still used “archaic and primitive methods”. As the district was “asphyxiated by this octopus that surrounds it”, according to this article, evictions further perpetuated the misery of local inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> Almost a year later, an indigenous woman from the same province published a complaint in *Los Andes*, claiming that two *gamonales*, “using all sort of tricks and in a brutal manner”, sought to seize her small property and incorporate it into the adjacent haciendas.<sup>6</sup>

When the French missionaries arrived in Ayaviri in the late 1950s, land tenure in Puno was thus considered in desperate need of reform due to the growing conflicts of interests in a society that depended primarily on agriculture. Like in other parts of Peru, agrarian reform had for a long time been subject to public debate and violent confrontations. “The history of republican Puno”, José Luis Rénique argues, “has been, fundamentally, a continuous struggle for land.”<sup>7</sup> In his 7 *Ensayos*, political philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui famously argued that the “Indian problem” had its roots in landownership rather than being of a cultural or moral nature. If the feudal system of land tenure remained in place, he claimed, no other attempts to solve said problem could be successful.<sup>8</sup> Resolving the unequal access to land was hence at the core of the concerns for both religious and civilian actors propagating rural development and, with more urgency, for the peasant population demanding their historical right to land.

The unequal distribution of land, however, constituted but one of the factors contributing to the crisis in the agrarian sector towards the late 1950s. Increased demographic pressure and the consequential subdivisions of *minifundios*, impoverished soils and a lack of technical and financial stimuli also conditioned the livelihoods of the peasant population. Heavy rains following the period of extreme drought, moreover, affected harvests in 1959 and 1960. Peasants lacking (sufficient) land, as well as day laborers, were particularly affected by the worsening circumstances on the altiplano. A local journalist suggested that the rural inhabitants had to colonize new areas of land, diversify their incomes and use modern agricultural machinery in order to “rehabilitate and incorporate themselves into civilized life” and thus enjoy “the human and social privileges” of the 20th century.<sup>9</sup> In the same vein, a 1957 study published by *Perú Indígena* questioned whether the indigenous population could ever be integrated into the Peruvian nation while

5 Ricorsi, “Cruel ironía - Se festeja el Día del Campesino y se desaloja de sus tierras a más de 4'000 familias en la provincia de Azángaro,” *Los Andes*, 13.08.1958.

6 Gregoria Zamata, “Queja,” *Los Andes*, 17.04.1959.

7 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 28.

8 José Carlos Mariátegui, *7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (Caracas: Fundación Biblioteca Ayacucho, 2007), 36.

9 J.V. Salazar, “Puno y sus problemas: El habitante del altiplano necesita producir más para vivir mejor,” *Los Andes*, 13.12.1958; J.V. Salazar, “Puno y sus problemas: La agricultura del altiplano no es rudimentaria y eventual,” *Los Andes*, 15.12.1958.

living in dire poverty: “Can the people, notwithstanding their enthusiasm, ever evolve in these circumstances” or “assimilate to occidental culture?”<sup>10</sup>

Given a broad consensus with regard to the necessity of agrarian reform, politicians, *hacendados* and peasants focused on defending different interests with regard to its eventual objectives, scope and results. From the redistribution of hacienda domains and agricultural colonization of the rainforest lands, to technical assistance and financial support for increased productivity, “agrarian reform in the altiplano [...] meant different things to different people.”<sup>11</sup> In late 1961 and early 1962, national and regional conferences sought to discuss possible solutions to the agrarian and political impasse. Whereas the National Forum on Agrarian Reform organized by the Acción Popular party endorsed the plans for agrarian reform proposed by the presidential candidate Fernando Belaúnde Terry, many *puneño* intellectuals attending an almost simultaneously held regional symposium emphasized the need for further research on the complex agrarian system of Puno.<sup>12</sup> Peasants’ representatives and *hacendados* in fact criticized the Belaúnde reform proposal, respectively deeming it too conservative or not conservative enough. These disagreements reflect the fact that despite the urgent need for it, agrarian reform in Puno was particularly complex. It risked either leading livestock farming to ruin, dependent as it was on skilled staff as well as technical and financial investments, or upsetting the peasants with a more moderate expropriation and redistribution policy.<sup>13</sup>

In defense of their interests, the peasantry could rely on two rival organizations which supported more or less radical agrarian reform. The communist Federación Departamental de Campesinos (FDC) was established in November 1958, followed two years later by a Christian Democrat movement, the Frente Sindical de Campesinos (FSC). While the former supported socialist political parties and concentrated largely on the lakeside provinces of Puno and Huancané, the latter was founded to advance the political ambitions of Néstor and Roger Cáceres Velasquez, members of an influential family of merchants in Juliaca. The FSC, the better organized and more active of the two peasant groups in the early 1960s, embodied a surge in clientelist politics in Puno. It supported the division of *latifundios*, the provision of technical assistance to the peasantry and the construction of schools, which in turn increased the popularity of the Cáceres brothers and helped

10 Carlos Peña, “Problemas socio-económicos del departamento de Puno,” *Perú Indígena* 6, no. 14-15 (1957): 40.

11 Dew, *Politics in the Altiplano*, 169.

12 “Conclusiones del Forum Nacional de Reforma Agraria,” *Los Andes*, 01.02.1962; “El domingo 21 se inauguró el Primer Simposio sobre Reforma Agraria [...],” *Los Andes*, 23.01.1962; “Segundo día del Simposio sobre Reforma Agraria,” *Los Andes*, 24.01.1962.

13 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 140; Dew, *Politics in the Altiplano*, 171-72.

them win municipal and national elections.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, this new peasant organization was also subject to criticism, deemed a *cacique* movement, whose purpose was to support political candidacies and expand the rights of rich landowners to the detriment of the “vindictive appetite” of the poor *colonos*.<sup>15</sup> Although *puneño* groups could not compare with the peasant movements in Cuzco under the leadership of Hugo Blanco, who successfully occupied several haciendas throughout the La Convención valley, the threat of a similar radicalization resulting in land invasions, political turmoil or even a violent revolution still loomed across the Peruvian altiplano in the early 1960s.

Through its counterrevolutionary mission in Latin America, the Catholic Church also aimed to formulate a response to the struggles over land and rural welfare. The charitable campaign of many religious and lay actors, like the one discussed in the previous chapter, was criticized for furthering and legitimizing existing inequalities, however. In 1967, theologian Ivan Illich lamented the intrinsic colonial nature of the contemporary missionary enterprise, describing the Latin American church as a “colonial plant that blooms because of foreign cultivation.” Reflecting the post-colonial critiques expressed by Frantz Fanon, among others, Illich claimed that the church had (again) become part of an imperial tradition which sought to “indoctrinate a way of life that the rich have chosen as suitable for the poor.”<sup>16</sup> He hence not only condemned the unequal power relations perpetuated through an often paternalistic church, but also questioned the agency of missionaries and ‘missionized’ in the process of modernization.

In their involvement in the contentious debates on the agrarian crisis, the mostly foreign clergy in Ayaviri, too, rearticulated their role of pastoral guidance and authority among the rural parishioners. François Bourricaud had in the late 1950s already questioned whether educational and infrastructure programs, which depended both on their local reception and the intensity of the intervention, would suffice to deter the surge of political radicalism in the region.<sup>17</sup> Missionaries also feared that the construction of schools, roads and health centers would be insufficient to relieve social grievances across the countryside. To deter communism, they had to address the prevailing land conflict and offer support to peasants suffering from abusive labor relations or not having sufficient land. A number of priests therefore initiated two projects that promised to support the household economy of rural parishioners: the establishment of Christian rural syndicates and the agrarian colonization of the subtropical Tambopata Valley.

14 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866–1995*, 193–95.

15 A. A. A., “Colaboración: ¿Qué es el Partido Demócrata Cristiano?,” *Los Andes*, 06.04.1962; Castillo Ardiles et al., *Accopata*, 38; Ricardo Claverias, “El mercado interno y la espontaneidad de los movimientos campesinos Puno 1950–1968,” *Allpanchis* 11–12 (1978): 165.

16 Ivan Illich, “The Seamy Side of Charity,” *America Magazine* 116, no. 3, 21.01.1967.

17 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 139–41.

## Christian Revolution

By the early 1960s, the Catholic Church actively engaged in discussing the problems resulting from inequality in landownership. The second *semana social* held in Arequipa in 1961, for instance, was dedicated to the study of the “controversial topic” of property; its functions and distribution. According to coverage by the Catholic newspaper *El Deber*, the discussions among others led to a new understanding of the role of the clergy in support of the indigenous population:

We have observed how prelates, priests and lay people have unanimously condemned the situations of privilege and injustice that reign in Peru with our Indian brothers. That old theory that religious [actors] held hands with the powerful has been distorted when it has been established that the only brother of the indigenous person is the priest who, sacrificing comfort, penetrates the most remote regions of the territory to treat those compatriots as human persons.<sup>18</sup>

Overlooking, for now, *El Deber's* overstatement of the supposedly radical change of the allegiances of religious actors, this statement reveals how the church aimed to be perceived: as an institution caring for the well-being of the marginalized, often isolated rural population.

Mounting concerns for the peasant population were manifested through debates on and responses to the prevalent agrarian crisis. In a presentation on landownership in Puno, the supposed backwardness of economic and cultural development was attributed to the complex intersections between “adverse factors of the environment” and the “absence of land and bad distribution of property.”<sup>19</sup> The concluding statements of the *semana social* expressed strong criticism of the system of land tenure. Calling for an “authentic agrarian reform”, the presiding bishop insisted that any agrarian reform should be adapted to regional and local circumstances and accompanied by programs of social assistance inspired by Catholic social teaching.<sup>20</sup> In response to the *semana social*, the Catholic Church also had to address the fact that it also possessed extensive property holdings. Many ecclesiastical jurisdictions, including the Diocese of Puno and the Prelature of Ayaviri, sold or redistributed their often extensive rural estates over the following years.

In a context of latent land struggle, the prelature sought to actively respond to the calls for a transformation of the agrarian sector in Puno. French missionary

18 “Segunda Semana Social,” *El Deber*, 09.08.1961.

19 AHPA, *Semana Social*, Guillermo Bustamante y Rivero, “La propiedad agraria serrana en el caso de Puno,” Arequipa, agosto 1961.

20 Mons. Leonardo Rodríguez Ballón, “Confianza y responsabilidad,” *El Deber*, 09.08.1961; Mons. José Dammert Bellido, “Mayor estudio y atención a los problemas nacionales,” *El Deber*, 09.08.1961.

Francis Bléher attended the *semana social* together with Luciano Metzinger. Reacting to news from catechists that they had been approached on behalf of Marxist union leaders, Bléher decided to counteract these currents by establishing Christian unionism in the prelature.<sup>21</sup> In August 1963, he invited two leaders of the Christian Syndical Movement (Movimiento sindical cristiano del Perú, MOSICP) from Lima to Ayaviri to give lessons in unionization to community leaders and head catechists. Very soon, later the same month, the Centro Sindical Nor-Puno (CSINOP) was founded. Its first bulletin, *Revolución*, commended the fact that the peasantry had come to organize itself and that the unions would serve as an indispensable instrument to improve working conditions. Appropriating the term ‘revolution’, Bléher coined a distinctive term by underlining that a “Christian Revolution” was necessary for Puno. The aims of the syndical center, in line with the name of its bulletin, thus went beyond better remuneration for agricultural labor:

The Christian Revolution means changing the current capitalist social order for a society based on social justice and the common good. [...] What must be achieved to secure the well-being of the workers is the transformation of the current capitalist system. Social Christianity condemns capitalism to the same extent as it condemns communism.<sup>22</sup>

Claiming that it was neither partisan nor confessional, despite its adherence to the Christian social teaching outlined in the 1961 papal encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, the Christian Revolution propagated by CSINOP aimed at challenging the existing social structures seen as the root causes for hunger, exploitation and misery.<sup>23</sup> According to Bléher, the creation of syndicates reflected both his mounting concerns about the abuse the peasants were subjected to and his familiarity with the work of the principal Catholic trade union in France, the *Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens*.<sup>24</sup>

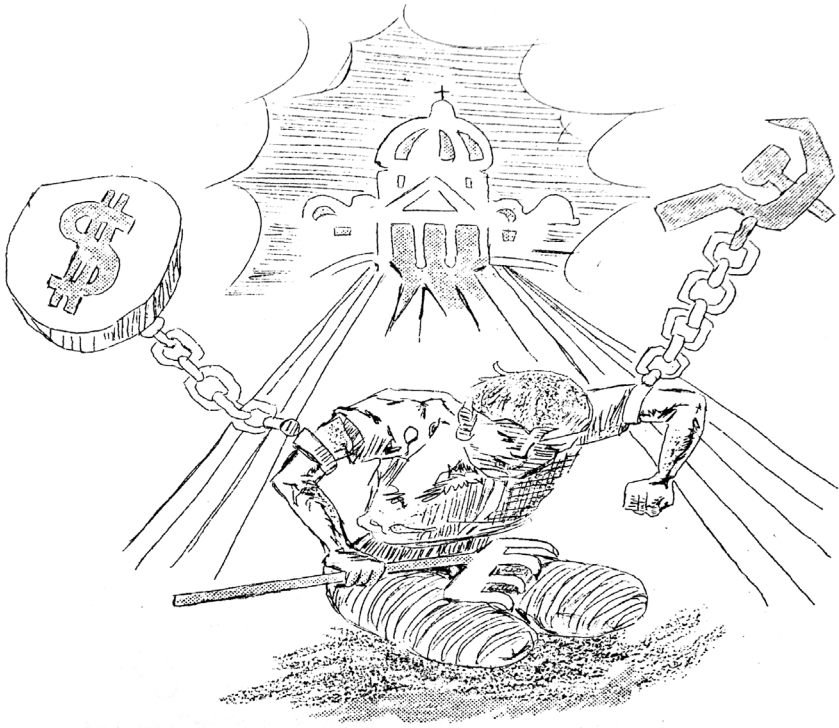
The cover of the fourth edition of *Revolución* (Figure 9) evocatively illustrates the projected Christian Revolution. As the peasant is held in chains by the forces of capitalism and communism, the church has to spread its social doctrine as an alternative to the opposing ideologies detrimental to the well-being of the rural population. From its heavenly position, shedding light on the humble peasant, the church enjoins its downtrodden parishioners to free themselves from bondage – quite literally, ‘enlightening’ them – and, ultimately, leads them to embrace the Christian Revolution as a foundation for the transformation of society.

21 Francis Bléher, “Les Syndicats Chrétiens Paysans,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 291.

22 AHPA, Sindicatos, CSINOP, *Revolución*, Boletín no. 1, año 1, agosto 1963.

23 AHPA, Sindicatos, CSINOP, *Revolución*, Boletín no. 1, año 1, agosto 1963.

24 Francis Bléher, interview by author, Montgeron, France, 10 January 2018.



**9. 'Christian Revolution'.  
IAHPA, Sindicatos, CSINOP, Revolución, Boletín no. 4, año 1, diciembre 1963]**

In addition to the establishment of branches of Christian syndicalism across the northern provinces of Puno, the prelature also sought to promote agricultural education. In April 1964, Bléher was involved in the establishment of the Instituto de Educación Rural (IER) 'Waqrani' in Ayaviri with the aim of instructing male - later also female - parishioners to contribute to the rural development of the region. The idea for the IER originated in Chile, based on the initiative of bishop Rafael Larraín, and schools were subsequently established in Peru by local bishops in the rural departments of Chancay, Cajamarca and Puno. According to anthropologist Susan Bourque, these institutions reflected early attempts of the Catholic Church to strengthen its presence across the Peruvian countryside. As an example of how to "mobilize the *campesino*", the IER constituted a response to the "increasing popularity of nationalism, communism and Protestantism", which threatened the "predominance of the [church's] influence with the peasant."<sup>25</sup> Since the prelature also lacked a Catholic organization for the rural youth,

25 Susan Carolyn Bourque, *Cholification and the Campesino: A Study of Three Peruvian Peasant Organizations in the Process of Societal Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1971), 64.

Metzinger furthermore invited the director of the Movimiento Internacional de la Juventud Agrícola Rural Católica to send personnel for the creation of a local branch, which was eventually established in early 1966. Thus, reflecting the CSINOP's proclaimed aim of promoting the "recognition and respects of the Indians' rights" as well as assuring their "social ascension", the prelatore developed a comprehensive program for the rural sector that sought to overcome past misery and create conditions for progress.<sup>26</sup>

With more than fifty-five local unions only half a year after its creation, CSINOP was subject to criticism from its main competing faction in rural syndicalism. Roger Cáceres, leader of the FSC, complained to the provincial superior of the Sacred-Hearts congregation in Lima about the syndical center established in Ayaviri. The latter defended the work of the prelatore, but conceded that Bléher made "unorthodox declarations" in his bulletin.<sup>27</sup> Repeating the same arguments as his brother, Néstor Cáceres told Bléher that the "church had no business in unionism", thus defending the monopoly of the FSC among anti-communist peasant unions in the region.<sup>28</sup> In a newspaper article published soon after their conversation, "the dynamic clergyman" was quoted as saying that the other existing peasant union, namely Cáceres' Frente, only served as an instrument for his family, trying to secure both financial and political support rather than working for the benefit of the peasantry.<sup>29</sup> In a letter to Metzinger the same week, the CSINOP committee reaffirmed that their interest did not lie in politics, but in the "improvement of the peasantry and their enrollment within the margins of progress and culture."<sup>30</sup>

For the promotion of Christian syndicalism across the countryside of the prelatore, Bléher could count on a large network of local interlocutors. Prior to the creation of CSINOP, the then youngest priest of the prelatore was responsible for the recruitment and training of catechists as well as being leader of the Ayaviri youth center. At the so-called *ciudad de los jóvenes*, Bléher not only initiated the creation of local soccer and basketball teams, but also organized conferences and gave lessons on Catholic social teaching. Many of the young students and catechists actively supported the French missionary over the following years by becoming professors at the IER or syndical leaders.<sup>31</sup> According to Bléher, he and his supporters initially traveled to different haciendas to recruit employees for the creation of a local

26 Francis Bléher, "Les Syndicats Chrétiens Paysans," *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 292; Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 185-86.

27 AHSC, Ayaviri: Correspondencia, Carpeta Ayaviri 1958-1970 Prelado Metzinger, Informe al P. Pro-Provincial sobre una conversación con el Dr. Roger Cáceres, 13.11.1963.

28 AHPA, Sindicatos, Francis Bléher, carta a Luciano Metzinger, 08.12.1963.

29 Bléher later denied having made these claims to the journalist. AHPA, Sindicatos, *La Prensa*, "Sindicatos campesinos en Puno," 10.01.1964; AHPA, Sindicatos, Francis Bléher, carta a Dr. Roger Cáceres, 12.02.1964.

30 AHPA, Sindicatos, Comité ejecutivo CSINOP, carta a Luciano Metzinger, 07.01.1964.

31 Francis Bléher, "Cité des Jeunes," *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 292.



union. As this kind of political activism risked provoking a violent response on the part of the landowners and their representatives, the early syndical gatherings usually took place after nightfall. If Bléher could easily recruit local supports, he struggled to convince the Maryknoll congregation from the neighboring province of his idea of syndicalism. In his view, the American missionaries also opposed the exploitation of indigenous labor, but could not comprehend CSINOP's critique of capitalism.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the rapid expansion of Christian syndicalism, many of the young unions struggled to defend the ideals of a Christian Revolution on their own. As suggested by the list of speakers during the inauguration of a local branch in the village of Santa Rosa, the unions made the peasant claims gain visibility and a public audience. The same list, on which besides Bléher figured multiple speakers from different peasant communities, haciendas and existing unions, however, also hints at the difficulties in coordination and leadership of Christian unionism.<sup>33</sup> Even if peasants working both on and outside of haciendas were under pressure from local *gamonales* and authorities, they had different interests to defend. Whereas the *colonos* primarily aimed to improve their working conditions within the hacienda system, the *comuneros* sought to gain access to land and defend their territory.<sup>34</sup> Francis Bléher, officially named "doctrinal advisor" of CSINOP, was arguably, as with other lay movements associated with the Catholic Church, its unofficial leader and driving force. This dependency on centralized, clerical leadership conditioned the success of many of the recently founded local unions. In the parish of Coaza, for instance, Jean Berthelot reported that the establishment of a CSINOP branch in early 1965 appeared to have "a certain influence" that resulted in the diminution of exploitation and abuse. However, he reserved criticism for the fact that unionism was still in its early stages in Peru; in his words, local syndicates "were even abandoned by those who established them", particularly in remote areas.<sup>35</sup>

After their successful foundation, moreover, local unions often exacerbated tensions with landowners and competing unions that opposed religious interference in rural politics. According to a police report, a group of landowners of the district of Crucero, for instance, came to denounce the establishment of a new syndicate and accused the local priest of being "a real communist" whom they threatened to expel from the parish.<sup>36</sup> In the same vein, Metzinger claimed that the establishment of a syndical center encouraged the "enemies of the prelature"

32 Francis Bléher, interview by author, Montgeron, France, 10 January 2018.

33 AHPA, Nuñoa, "Federación campesina de Santa Rosa y Central Sindical Nor Puno," enero 1964.

34 Claverias, "El mercado interno y la espontaneidad de los movimientos campesinos Puno 1950-1968," 156-57.

35 AHPA, Coaza, Juan Berthelot, carta circular, 01.06.1966.

36 AHPA, Sindicatos, carta de la Jefatura de Puno, XIII Region de Policia, 08.10.1963.

to further “mobilize public opinion and public authorities” against the Ayaviri clergy.<sup>37</sup>

A 1965 report by the International Development Foundation (IDF, a CIA-backed organization) sheds critical light on how the socio-political activism of Francis Bléher fueled the competition among the three main peasant unions in Puno. Sympathizers of the FSC considered the unions from Ayaviri “a force against communist gains in the department” resolving work disputes “along religious lines, generally favorable to the employers.” They notably deemed Bléher to be “a real problem”, since the French priest, unlike the Maryknollers, did not “stick to [his] rightful business of being [a] missionar[y].”<sup>38</sup> Mutual mistrust and animosity among the existing organizations evidences that syndical leaders, above all else, intended to promote their respective ideologies to the detriment of those who were considered ‘anti-peasantry’. Up until the mid-1960s, the Cáceres’ FSC and Bléher’s CSINOP managed to contain the communist threat, thus securing their positions of influence as members of parliament and the Catholic Church, respectively. Often more educated, wealthier peasants (usually bilingual) assumed roles in local administration and thus benefitted from an intermediary status negotiating with employers, authorities and union leaders.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, the IDF report suggests, poorer peasants had very little say in processes of unionization:

The *campesino* does not really think he can have a part in decision-making processes, which will affect him directly. Such things are always done ‘from the top’ and then filter down. The *puneño*’s attitude is one of wait and, occasionally, receive: he has learned - in fact been trained - to stand, hat in hand and eyes downcast, as his toes trace aimlessly in the dust, and to hope for an occasional gift from above.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, the report claimed that the peasant organizations that flourished in the early 1960s undermined the agency of those they sought to represent and defend. According to this perspective, organizations’ top-down approach further fostered what was considered a relationship of dependency between union leaders and their rural members. The rapid success of CSINOP, according to the IDF support, could indeed be traced back to “the fact that free food and clothing from Caritas is distributed through the hands of the priests who lead the operation.”<sup>41</sup> At the same time, the report does not take into consideration to what extent peas-

37 AHPA, Provincia Melgar - Historia, Luciano Metzinger, carta a Javier Correa Elias, 23.11.1963.

38 International Development Foundation, “Campesinos and Their Organizations in the department of Puno - Peru,” Unpublished Field Report, Second Section (Peru, May 1965), 9-10.

39 Claverias, “El mercado interno y la espontaneidad de los movimientos campesinos Puno 1950-1968,” 165.

40 International Development Foundation, “Campesinos and Their Organizations in the department of Puno - Peru,” 1-2.

41 International Development Foundation, 9-10.

ants may have participated in the various syndical schemes, and were thus active agents in the unionization process, with the sole objective of receiving material aid and professional education. This strategy could be framed as a distinct “everyday form of peasant resistance” by which peasants expressed their agency through ordinary actions that (materially) benefitted them.<sup>42</sup>

The critical reception that Christian unionism received from some quarters had at its center a notion of charity as a paternalistic practice – and its role in the political (de)mobilization of the *puneño* peasantry. Illich severely criticized what he considered the “seamy side of charity”: missionaries who perpetuated the colonial power matrix through financial and material donations. In his view, foreign aid allowed the “‘gringo’ to keep the ‘underdeveloped’ quiet.”<sup>43</sup> Many of the CSINOP publications and documents, however, fundamentally rejected the labelling of Christian syndicalism as charity. The *Revolución* bulletin displayed the efficiency of the programs and courses offered by the syndical center, reporting on the gains achieved in salary negotiations with *hacendados* and the claims presented against labor abuse and exploitation. For instance, in 1966, the IER Waqrani hosted a workshop for union leaders from different haciendas in the province of Melgar, discussing labor legislation, syndical structure and agrarian reform.<sup>44</sup> It thus partly responded to the claims for a *Nueva Escuela* which *puneño* intellectual José Antonio Encinas had raised four decades earlier. In his view, a school was not merely a space for literacy campaigns or administrative tasks, but a “center for social agitation and, as such, a political element” that “had to go towards people, embracing their needs and aspirations.”<sup>45</sup>

Although portrayals of CSINOP as a charity organization can be seen as inaccurate, criticisms of its dependency upon clerical leadership were better founded. Over the years, Francis Bléher gained notoriety for his political activism, as he acted as a protagonist in regional agrarian disputes. In fact, the number of unions further tripled between 1963 and 1966. After his involvement in a strike in spring 1967, where he assumed the leadership of the Ayaviri strike committee, the departmental president strongly criticized Bléher and called for him to be sent elsewhere:

[As] advisor of MOSCIP, in the town of Ayaviri, he continually has disputes with landowners and administrators [and] has marked influence on the mass of peas-

42 Jim Scott, “Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13 (January 1986): 6.

43 Illich, “The Seamy Side of Charity”.

44 AHSC, Boletín Prelatura, Ramón Montesinos, “Sindicalismo cristiano en marcha,” *Boletín de Información y Coordinación Pastoral*, no. 9, octubre 1966.

45 José Antonio Encinas, *Un Ensayo de Escuela Nueva En El Perú*, 2nd ed. (Miraflores: Minerva, 1959), 89.

ants, as a religious preacher in the church against alleged abuses by landowners and *gamonales*. The same [priest] took the floor addressing the audience to act proactively during the departmental strike.<sup>46</sup>

Put differently, the president portrayed Bléher as a troublesome missionary who abused his position to instigate political mobilizations and upheaval. However, the influence of Bléher would ultimately only be short-lived. When he did not return to Ayaviri in 1967 due to the heightened scrutiny he was subjected to by the police in the aftermath of the strike,<sup>47</sup> the ‘Christian Revolution’ lost its momentum and, through the subsequent agrarian reform, grew obsolete.

In his exceptional commitment to many rural parishioners, Bléher is not necessarily representative of the heterogeneous nature of missionary activity across the young Ayaviri prelate. Did the French missionary, following the words of Ivan Illich, “carry a foreign pastoral approach and a foreign political message”?<sup>48</sup> Yes and no. Whereas the syndicates articulated new ideals of a Christian social order different from both the prevalent semi-feudalism and an atheist revolution, they also actively contributed to the prevalent ideals of *desarrollismo*. As a doctrinal leader of the union movement, Francis Bléher questioned and challenged the social order in the *puneño* countryside, if sometimes only cautiously. As evidenced in the upcoming chapters, however, it was only from the late 1960s onwards that a large number of clerics renegotiated the imbrication of faith and politics for pastoral work. Therefore, the rural activism spearheaded by Bléher might indeed constitute a liberating praxis *avant la lettre*.

## Frontier Mission

The improvement of working conditions and labor rights could not solely resolve the agrarian impasse in Puno on its own. The agricultural colonization of the Tambopata Valley, located in the tropical lowlands of the province of Sandía, represented a solution to the lack of land and volatile climate conditions prevailing on the highlands. Seasonal migrants, whose numbers tripled between 1948 and 1958 in response to the coffee boom, divided their time between their “families, houses and animals” on the altiplano and “their lands and crop cultures” in the Tambopata Valley.<sup>49</sup> As discussed in the first chapter, the Puno-Tambopata Project initially aimed to support the colonization process as it was deemed to provide “new sourc-

46 AHPA, Párrocos Anteriores, Leoncio Miranda Terrazas, prefecto del departamento de Puno, carta a Luciano Metzinger, 15.05.1967.

47 Francis Bléher, interview by author, Montgeron, France, 10 January 2018.

48 Illich, “The Seamy Side of Charity”.

49 Martínez, *Las migraciones altiplánicas y la colonización del Tambopata*, 251.

es of income and a somewhat different environment” while “never completely severing the cultural, economic or family ties of the indigenous habitants of the altiplano.”<sup>50</sup> Following the opinion of several expert commissions, however, the ILO eventually abandoned its objective to promote the settlement of the subtropical valley.

The idea of large-scale colonization regained prominence during the presidency of Belaúnde Terry as complementary, if not an alternative to, the stalling agrarian reform process. In his view, population growth had to be met with an expansion of lands for crop cultivation or livestock farming in order to guarantee food security and bring the man-to-land ratio back into balance. Echoing the title of his book *Peru's Own Conquest*, the president expressed his strong support for citizens to explore and cultivate the thus far unexploited regions along the eastern slopes of the Andes and proposed the construction of road infrastructure to encourage this process.<sup>51</sup>

Deficient infrastructure and a lack of institutional support had indeed hampered the scope and success of the temporary settlements alongside the Tambopata river. Characterized by its wild, diverse scenery, ranging from the Andean peaks up to 5,430 meters high to the valleys of Yanahuaya and Tambopata at an altitude of 600 meters above sea level, the province of Sandia, according to a tourist promotion, “possesses magnificent landscapes separated from the boring, cold and horizontal monotony of the altiplano.”<sup>52</sup> Communication between the mountains and valleys of the northernmost province of Puno, however, proved to be a difficult endeavor. In the late 1950s, *Los Andes* published multiple articles and editorials advocating for paved roads connecting the humid valleys of Sandia, arguing that Puno otherwise risked “staying on the side of the road to progress.”<sup>53</sup> For the settler communities, colonizing the tropical lowlands meant building a new temporary existence in an environment that was previously unknown – a space of hope, for new income and future prosperity, and fear, of natural hazards and tropical disease. “Overcoming the rigors of all kinds in an environment such as the jungle”, the settlers, “undaunted in their efforts, without help, without supplies, without medicine that civilization has created”, were to “live and die for the sake of obtaining a living space.” In response to their supposed misery, a November

50 Émile Tejada, “Outline of Proposed Project at Puno,” January 1955, UNDOCS (last consulted 05.02.2018).

51 Fernando Belaúnde Terry, *Peru's Own Conquest* (Lima: American Studies Press, 1965), 149–56.

52 Nicolas F. Narvarte Maldonado, “Panorma turístico de la provincia de Sandia” in Samuel Frisancho Pineda ed. *Album de Oro X*, 1983, 119.

53 J.V. Salazar, “Avanzar de la carretera de penetración a la región selvática de Puno,” *Los Andes*, 25.10.1958; “Editorial: La colonización de la selva sur peruana,” *Los Andes*, 10.12.1958; “Inauguración del camino de herradura Sina-San Juan del Oro,” *Los Andes*, 18.07.1959; “Editorial: La carretera a Tambopata,” *Los Andes*, 15.10.1959.

1959 editorial in *Los Andes* called for rigorous support to be provided to the tropical lowlands.<sup>54</sup>

Faced with the increased seasonal migration towards the *ceja de selva* and numerous calls to provide aid to the recently arrived settlers, the Prelature of Ayaviri decided to support the colonization process. Mobilizing the same discourse of integration put forward by the Puno-Tambopata Project, a 1962 development plan argued that there was a moral dimension to the settlement process:

The highlands cannot nourish all its inhabitants. The virgin forest, on the other hand, offers immense possibilities. The advantage of the relocation would be twofold: the indigenous family would become proprietary and independent, thus quickly assuring a higher standard of life than on the altiplano. The change of environment, climate and life conditions further facilitates the uprooting of the indigenous [people] from their ancestral, anti-hygienic habits and their integration into the national community.<sup>55</sup>

In other words, the clergy considered that the dislocation of the altiplano population towards the subtropical lowlands would not only be conducive to their national integration, but also to alter their religious and social customs. The change of environment, they believed, would lead the settlers to abandon traditions linked to their respective places of origin and, to a certain degree, adopt a new identity – one appropriate to the agricultural frontier. In late 1962, the prelature initiated a project of “directed colonization” which sought to establish 200 families in a jungle colony equipped with a technical center, health dispensary and agrarian cooperative. Even if the plans for the colony were eventually abandoned, the endeavor reflects how projects of directed or assisted colonization in the Tambopata Valley constituted “a laboratory of indigenous promotion”.<sup>56</sup>

Adelbert Vanfrachem, a “fearless Flemish” priest of the Sacred-Hearts congregation, was tasked with constructing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure for the Catholic Church in the Tambopata Valley. Although San Juan del Oro, the largest village in the valley, was founded because settlers sought to build a chapel in the early 1950s, the Catholic Church did not establish a permanent presence until 1960. Besides his work to build the local parish, Vanfrachem offered religious services to the settler families spread across the valley, “visiting even the most remote sectors, baptizing children, delivering care to the sick and marrying

54 José Rodríguez Arenas, “Concluir vía Tambopata es necesidad inaplazable,” *Los Andes*, 14.11.1959.

55 Archivo Hermanos SS.CC., Ayaviri – Pastoral, Programa de promoción y desarrollo de la prelatura de Ayaviri, 1962.

56 MISEREOR Archiv, Project 232-006-0003, Luciano Metzinger, Colonización en Pampa Grande, 20.08.1962; Marzal, *Historia de la antropología indigenista*, 518.

couples that sometimes already had grandchildren.<sup>57</sup> In his correspondence with Metzinger, he shared a comprehensive testimony of his initial work in the parish as well as his long treks on foot through the subtropical valley. Knowing which paths to take and how to avoid contact with mountain lions, the Flemish missionary claimed that his experience in San Juan del Oro would “soon allow him to write a travel guide for the rainforest.”<sup>58</sup>

Responding to the desolate religious situation across the valley, where “Christians awaited priests like plants awaited water”, Metzinger promised unconditional material and personnel support. In his view, the parish of San Juan constituted a special concern for the church since “the future of the prelature”, through the continuous colonization process, would be “down there”.<sup>59</sup> His objective to increase the ecclesiastical presence in the Tambopata Valley, however, did not necessarily respond to the demands of the settler population. Vanfrachem had previously expressed his discontent with the lack of demand for religious services, insufficient interest of catechists and low church attendance after the end of saint festivities.<sup>60</sup> Later the same year, the prelature sent a French missionary, Louis Le Guern, to support his Flemish colleague. Throughout the next decade, Le Guern witnessed the transformation of what he retrospectively considered a “small village” with “few streets, few permanent residents, an infrequently visited school and a lot of suffering.”<sup>61</sup> Put differently, he portrayed a miserable place that would significantly benefit from the increased presence and social engagement of religious and lay actors.

With the arrival of the first female religious congregation in the prelature came hopes for a further improvement of the livelihoods of local inhabitants. Three women religious from the *Congrégation de Sainte Marie de la Providence de Saintes* established a girls’ school in San Juan del Oro in early 1963. Soon after their arrival, they realized that “everything still need[ed] to be done” in a region that lacked “social, intellectual and religious development.”<sup>62</sup> In their circulars, the sisters reported on the slow progress they had achieved. By July 1963, they already observed “a light transformation” of the morals and spirituality of the school attendees. Once they started offering glasses of sweetened milk to all pupils they could count on a rapidly growing number of girls coming to class. One year after they opened the school, the women religious already had to hire additional

57 Louis Le Guern, “San Juan del Oro,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 40, juillet 1969, 195.

58 AHPA, San Juan del Oro, Adelbert Vanfrachem, carta a Luciano Metzinger, 1961.

59 AHPA, San Juan del Oro, Luciano Metzinger, carta a Adelbert Vanfrachem, 04.10.1961; Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri, mon diocèse,” *Horizons Blancs* no. 8, juillet–septembre 1961, 187.

60 AHPA, San Juan del Oro, Adelbert Vanfrachem, carta a Luciano Metzinger, 10.02.1961; Adelbert Vanfrachem, carta a Luciano Metzinger, 18.02.1961.

61 Louis Le Guern, “San Juan del Oro,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 40, juillet 1969, 195.

62 Les Religieuses de la Providence, “Nos débuts missionnaires à San Juan del Oro,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 18, janvier 1964, 8.

staff to take care of the growing number of registered pupils. Thanks to the construction of a local hospital and a paved road connecting San Juan to the regional capital of Sandia, to be opened in 1966, they perceived their workplace to be a “rapidly changing environment” that would soon “transform the existing religious ignorance and superstitions”.<sup>63</sup>

The prelature was committed to channeling further financial and personal resources toward the development of a functioning ecclesiastical and social infrastructure in the Tambopata Valley. In 1965, it announced the establishment of a technical assistance center run by the French non-governmental organization *Compagnie Internationale du Développement Rural*. Similar to the engagement taken by the Christian syndicates, the center established local cooperatives that sought to ameliorate price conditions for the settlers, who for the most part cultivated coffee destined for export.<sup>64</sup> The rapid improvement of social and ecclesiastical infrastructure in the Tambopata Valley evidences how the prelature’s *indigenista* agenda impacted the pastoral action in and around San Juan del Oro. “The harmonious development of the valley”, according to *Horizons Blancs*, hence “owes a lot to France.”<sup>65</sup>

The envisioned development of the Tambopata Valley in many instances took a high modernist logic.<sup>66</sup> Religious actors actively sought to advance the rapid modernization of the region through their collaboration with technical engineers, medical staff and government officials. The completion of the road connecting San Juan del Oro to the regional capital of Sandia, in particular, raised their hopes that the valley would welcome more settlers occupying and drawing profit from the uninhabited areas of the jungle. Resident priest Le Guern noted in an article that even if the settlers led “a life of suffering” while awaiting the first coffee harvest, the communities in the valley were characterized by an “internal dynamism”. “Within twenty years”, he wrote in 1964, “they will have evolved a lot with the arrival of paved streets, the help of radio schools and technical counsel.”<sup>67</sup>

From a religious perspective, the assertion circulated extensively among the clergy that peasants would abandon their habits and customs once they left the altiplano environment. However, this ultimately proved inaccurate. In his socio-religious study on the Catholic Church in northern Puno (see Chapter 5), Thomas Garr asserts that even if San Juan del Oro can be considered a “laboratory

63 Les Religieuses de la Providence, “Nos débuts missionnaires à San Juan del Oro,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 18, janvier 1964, 8.

64 E.P., “Le C.A.T. de Santa Clotilde,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 40, juillet 1969, 210; Archivo Hermanos S.S.C.C., carta circular del P. Nicolas, San Juan del Oro.

65 Louis Le Guern, “San Juan del Oro,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 40, juillet 1969, 195.

66 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale Agrarian Studies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

67 Louis Le Guern, “Au Pérou dans les contreforts andins,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 19, avril 1964, 61-62.



for the prelature” due to its rapid social transformation, religious practices would not change accordingly. “The traditional habits found on the *sierra*”, the author claims, not only continue to be observed by the settlers, but they “have even been adapted to the new environment.”<sup>68</sup>

The constant nature of migratory movements into and out of the valley further complicated the pastoral work in the parish of San Juan del Oro. Nicolas Castel, who replaced Vanfrachem as second resident priest in the parish, described the work among the settlers as an “ungrateful” experience:

In their immense majority, the Indians still consider themselves (in a large sense, of course) members of their parish of origin. San Juan is for them but a work place, the land that permits them to live. Even if we were to evoke profound religious sentiment (which is not the case), the religious practice during their presence among us would be as complicated for them as it is for seasonal workers in France. This is further complicated by the fact that we are dealing with poor people [...] whose work days represent their daily bread.<sup>69</sup>

In this extract, one sees how the discursive construction of the Sandia frontier as a laboratory of social transformation arguably failed to consider to what extent migratory realities and kinship ties to the highlands would impact religious practice in the Tambopata Valley. The agricultural frontier, Castel argues, was perceived merely as a source of income, reflecting how the agricultural colonization primarily constituted an economic necessity for the settler communities. During their presence in the valley, moreover, they were fully committed to the harvest of culture crops and thus could not spare sufficient time to participate in religious services. As much as it might have dashed the hopes of the clergy in San Juan del Oro, the (temporary) settlement of the valley could not inherently lead to a process of religious conversion.

The missionaries’ efforts to accommodate and support settler communities were also challenged in terms of their implications for the development of local settlements. Following Julia Collins’ anthropological study on seasonal migration towards the Tambopata Valley, the colonization process would in most cases not alter the settlers’ quality of life. As Collins asserts, when the same social structure and the same market forces are in place – those that “extract peasant surplus” and “undervalue peasant production” – then “the settlement of new land only perpetuates poverty.”<sup>70</sup> In line with her arguments, we need to question the accounts

68 Thomas M. Garr, *Cristianismo y religion quechua en la prelatura de Ayaviri* (Cuzco: Instituto de Pastoral Andina, 1972), 202, 209.

69 AHSC, Ayaviri - Correspondencia, carta circular del P. Nicolas, San Juan del Oro, 28.10.1969.

70 Jane Lou Collins, *Unseasonal Migrations: The Effects of Rural Labor Scarcity in Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 171.

depicting the subtropical lowlands as a dynamic and prosperous frontier. Four years after his early, optimistic account, Le Guern, too, did not hide the fact that the settlers' living standards were not altered through migration of residence in subtropical forests. Rather, they faced problems common to the frontier environment, including malnutrition, soil erosion and struggles to trade their coffee harvest beneficially.<sup>71</sup>

Based on his pastoral work among the communities of the Tambopata Valley, Le Guern claimed that, despite all difficulties, the settlers had not experienced a "complete failure":

From a moral perspective, they [settlers] have taken a step back from their often-annihilating traditions and habits of the highlands. They gained conscience of their creative power, their human value. More than others, maybe, they gain awareness about their backwardness and seek to overcome it.<sup>72</sup>

In his view, the location of a community could hence be considered a determining criterion for that community's advancement towards national integration. This is the case irrespective of any adverse consequences for health and economic stability. For the missionaries in San Juan del Oro, agricultural colonization still held promise as a means for social mobility and religious conversion. For this reason, Le Guern did not hesitate to advocate for an expansion of the settlements towards the Amazon basin. Settlers in search of prosperity and progress, in his words, were hence to further penetrate into the "green hell".<sup>73</sup>

The binary perspective that contrasted a stagnating altiplano to a prosperous agricultural frontier ultimately perpetuated the prevalent narratives of Puno as a landscape of contrasts. In their encouragement of the agricultural colonization, European missionaries praised the subtropical Tambopata Valley as a space of social transformation, a sort of Promised Land that would allow for the harmonious and prosperous development of indigenous settlers. In this process, the Ayaviri clergy positioned themselves as agents of social change who could facilitate the transformation of frontier landscapes while also reducing social tensions on the altiplano. In other words, following Illich's critique, missionaries chose a way of life they deemed conducive to the religious conversion and social progress of (landless) peasants, and, however subtly or graciously, pressured these peasants to integrate into a changed way of life.

It however remains highly unlikely that settler communities subscribed to the same idea of a Promised Land - let alone that ordinary members of the peasant

71 Le Guern, "Quechuas et Aymaras se préparent à attaquer l'enfer vert," *Horizons Blanc*, no. 34, janvier 1968, 27.

72 Le Guern, "Quechuas et Aymaras," 27.

73 Le Guern, 27.

unions endorsed the Christian Revolution as the ultimate solution to the land question. For rural parishioners, participation in the establishment of Christian syndicates and seasonal migration towards the agricultural frontier equated to forms of enrichment, through the material and educational resources provided by the prelatore. Through these actions, however, they neither embraced the Christian Revolution as a model for the restructuring of the rural economy nor committed to permanently settling in the Tambopata Valley, thus defying the objectives and diminishing the results of both projects. These projects arguably struggled in the face of an increasingly tense environment in which the “old order” was threatened by the “lack of patience” of the peasant populations and the looming threat of violent uprisings, land occupations and revolutionary movements.<sup>74</sup>

By the end of its first decade, in 1968, the Ayaviri mission had not usurped the fragile old order that still prevailed over the landscape of Puno. Although Metzinger conceded that a foreign visitor would still perceive “the same material, moral and spiritual poverty” that he had found a decade earlier, he claimed that the prelatore had been transformed into a “lively and active Christian community”.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the prelatore had significantly grown over the course of the decade as more missionaries, laypeople and resources arrived in Puno. The propagation for Christian social teaching even occasionally confronted the regional socio-political milieu, as both landowners and the Cáceres brothers opposed clerical involvement in peasant organizations. Ultimately, however, the radical transformation of the social order was not to be brought about by the church. On the 10th anniversary of the prelatore, the socio-political and ecclesiastical landscapes of Puno would be subject to renewed scrutiny through both the coup d'état of the Peruvian military forces and the Second Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín. The revolution, so it seemed, would arrive at last.

74 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri: Conditions sociales, économiques et religieuses,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 26, janvier 1966, 286.

75 Luciano Metzinger, “Ayaviri religieux,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 40, juillet 1969, 191.

## **PART II**

# **LIBERATING EVANGELIZATION (1968-1980)**



# 4

## Liberation and Revolution

Throughout the late 1960s, growing local social and political concerns among the Latin American clergy were increasingly manifested outside of theological debates. The Second Vatican Council, in its call to engage with the modern world, had motivated Catholics to critically address structural problems like underdevelopment, poverty and inequality across a continent experiencing revolutionary upheaval and a repressive response. Camilo Torres, the Colombian priest turned *guerrillero*,<sup>1</sup> is probably one of the most notorious representatives of this new militant Catholicism increasingly disheartened by the lack of change. Salomon Bolo Hidalgo, a Peruvian priest and founding member of the Frente de Liberación Nacional, is another noteworthy example. Their disillusion also extended to the status quo maintained by the Catholic Church, and its conservative role in society. Despite an increasingly “revolutionary mood infecting the clergy working among the poor”, it seemed overall that Catholicism was “a mere salve for oppressed groups and justification for the oppressors” rather than “a positive force for change.”<sup>2</sup> For many clerics, responding to the material and structural injustices that affected the continent implied that the Catholic Church should adopt a prophetic role, that is, by actively denouncing the current ‘reality’ and announcing new ideals for Latin American society.<sup>3</sup>

Reform-oriented sectors of the Catholic Church in Peru adopted a prophetic stance in criticizing, publicly debating and, increasingly, attempting to influence

- 1 Daniel H. Levine, “Camilo Torres: fe, política y violencia,” *Sociedad y Religión: Sociología, Antropología e Historia de la Religión en el Cono Sur* 21, no. 34–35 (2011): 59–91.
- 2 Lilian Calles Barger, *The World Come of Age: An Intellectual History of Liberation Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 26–27.
- 3 José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 8th print (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 123–26.

socio-political developments towards the late 1960s. In March 1968, *El Comercio* printed a declaration made by thirty-five priests who decided to “break an intolerable silence” in the face of “a chronic situation of injustice, backlog, oppression and public immorality” that was reigning in the country. Calling for the construction of a more just and fraternal society, they criticized the unequal distribution of wealth and land (notably in the agrarian sector), the lack of political reform within the educational and taxation systems, and a deficient protection for natural resources. In particular, these priests, “without any connections to syndical, political or economic institutions”, blamed the liberal economic system and the “capitalist mentality [...] infiltrated our political constitution, judiciary system and other institutions” as a fundamental obstacle to any aspiration to build a new Peru for all Peruvians, emphasizing that a profound change seemed impossible “without a revolutionary transformation of all structures.” At the same time, they also lamented their previous silence and indifference, perpetuating the idea of religion as an ‘opium of the people’. Together with other clergy and laypeople, they now aimed to adopt a “courageous attitude, commanded by the Christian conscience, in the face of the current situation.”<sup>24</sup>

Later the same year, within a short space of time, both the Catholic Church and, following a military coup d'état, the government launched processes of radical transformation, framing their own utopian projects for Latin America and Peru, respectively. If the military generals and – to a lesser extent – clerics considered these changes to be revolutionary, they referred to the comprehensive nature of the transformations that they simultaneously envisioned. Revolution was ultimately not only about reformulating the current socio-political environment, but about building a different society altogether.

The 1968 Second Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín constituted a watershed moment for the continental church, as it attempted to respond to both the Second Vatican Council and clerical calls for a sweeping socio-political change, calls that had already manifested outside of the Catholic hierarchy. Concluding the conference in early September 1968, the participating bishops formulated a *Mensaje a los pueblos de América Latina* in which they outlined their commitment to the continent's people, and their response to its structural problems: a landscape of contrasts, where a “promising reality and rafts of hope” coexisted with “the tragic signs of underdevelopment”. The bishops emphasized that their contribution to processes of societal transformation, the forging of the *hombre nuevo*, was to be led in cooperation with public and private actors:

4 Julián Salvador de la Cruz, Augusto Camacho Francia, “Declaración de sacerdotes peruanos,” *El Comercio*, 22.03.1968.

The new image of the Latin American man demands a creative effort: the public authorities, energetically promoting the supreme demands of the common good; the technicians, planning the concrete paths; the families and educators, awakening and orienting responsibilities; the peoples, incorporating themselves to the effort of realization; the spirit of the gospel, animating through the dynamic of a transforming and personalizing love.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, the bishops underlined that their contribution was not to compete with the efforts of other public institutions and actors in solving complex problems. Rather, they aimed to facilitate these efforts and provide spiritual guidance alongside the envisioned transformation.

In engaging with the problems of endemic poverty and underdevelopment, yearning for a solution to them, clerics and theologians began debating and conceptualizing a response appropriate to the Latin American context. Ideologies of development, characterized by the quest for economic prosperity and (European) modernity, had been prominent among many clerics yet were subject to criticism by the school of dependency theory towards the late 1960s. Many who had previously expressed an unshakable belief in rapid material progress and modernization ultimately criticized the fact that development seemed to lead to the concentration, rather than the fair distribution, of wealth. Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the founding fathers of liberation theology and its most notable representative in Peru, disapproved of the economic reductionism of development. In his view, the quest for development ignored the complex imbrication of poverty and dependency. “*Desarrollismo*”, he argued, was synonymous with reformism and modernization, with “timid measures” that had proved inefficient and did not consider the fact that the underdevelopment of many countries was the “by-product of the development of other[s].”<sup>6</sup>

A different concept, liberation, had been used to describe the conflicts surrounding the global decolonization process as a form of human emancipation against (foreign) domination. Overall this notion insinuated a much more profound transformation – not merely of the socio-economic context, but of systemic injustices and oppression in the social, cultural and political domain. Thus, when the term ‘liberation theology’ was coined, almost simultaneously, by religious

5 Segunda Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, *La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio*, “Mensaje a los pueblos de América Latina,” Medellín, septiembre 1968.

6 Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Liberation and Development,” *Cross Currents* 21, no. 3 (1971): 247.



intellectuals across the Americas,<sup>7</sup> it referred to liberation as a historic process in which the people “slowly assume conscious responsibility for their own destiny”, according to Gutiérrez.<sup>8</sup> In the words of Klaiber, liberation was not about a “move up from underdevelopment”, but, like the biblical story of Exodus, “a march toward freedom from the First World, economic imperialism and multinationals, and from the forces within [...] which hold the people in a state of servitude.”<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the paradigm of development, insinuating a trajectory of modernization following a set of imposed (and foreign) ideals, liberation thus denoted the quest to pursue a transformation from within the Latin American poor.

For many liberation theologians, the book of Exodus indeed represented a paradigmatic experience: describing an inescapable commitment to the transformation of this world and the liberation of humankind. It is a story of crossing the border, drawing the line between an old order left behind and a new order to be constructed – the process of exiting a state of (structural) sin to reach the Promised Land. Gutiérrez’s interpretation, however, differs from that in the Old Testament by claiming that all humans – not simply guiding figures like Moses – can exercise their right to self-determination and thus fulfill their liberation in communion with others.<sup>10</sup>

Theologians promoted *hombres nuevos* as predestined subjects of the projected transformations: those who had been oppressed, marginalized and discriminated against, constituted sectors of particular concern for reform-oriented clerics. According to Gutiérrez, liberation presupposed the emancipation of humankind as it aimed for a society in which humans “were freed from all servitude and [became] actors of their own destiny.” As the church was still aligned with the dominant rather than the dominated groups, however, it first had to “overcome [its own] colonial mentality” and “put down roots in a continent in revolutionary trance.”<sup>11</sup> Since the ideas and ideals of a radical transformation of the church were mostly conceptualized by bishops and religious intellectuals, questions arose regarding the very representation and inclusion of these ‘new men’: How did theological discourse understand the agency of the subjects in the process of liberation, and address it?

7 In her intellectual history of liberation theology, Lilian Calles Barger discusses how ‘liberation’ was appropriated as a paradigm both by African-American and Latin American theologians in the late 1960s. James H. Cone for instance published his work *A Black Theology of Liberation* in 1970, one year ahead of Gutiérrez’s *Teología de la Liberación*. See Barger, *The World Come of Age*, 22–29.

8 Gutiérrez, “Liberation and Development,” 254.

9 Jeffrey L. Klaiber, “Prophets and Populists: Liberation Theology, 1968–1988,” *The Americas* 46, no. 1 (1989): 4–5.

10 Joel S. Baden, *The Book of Exodus: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 196–98.

11 Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 131–32, 184.

Paulo Freire's pedagogical model for awareness-raising served as an important inspiration for post-Medellin theological writings. Whereas ideas of liberation often remained "abstract and theoretical", Freire's "mind-altering education" offered a compelling instrument to foster the agency of the poor masses.<sup>12</sup> In his 1970 monograph *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the Brazilian pedagogue outlined 'conscientization' through dialogue as an essential method to awake and foster aspirations for liberation:

The correct method for a revolutionary leadership to employ in the task of liberation is [...] not 'liberation propaganda'. Nor can the leadership merely 'implant' in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. The correct method lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leader, but the result of their own conscientization.<sup>13</sup>

The development of critical awareness, Freire hoped, would not only allow a shift in power relations between students and teachers, or citizens and revolutionary leaders, but also allow the oppressed to see themselves as "men and women engaged in the ontological and historical evolution of becoming more fully human."<sup>14</sup> Their awareness of oppression, in other words, would eventually lead these men and women to assume their human agency and actively pursue their own liberation.

Theologians also engaged with other social science perspectives which helped them overcome the prevalent dualisms of thought and action, sacred and profane. They often mobilized dialectical thinking, as developed within frameworks of dependency theory and Marxist analysis, in their writings. Many Latin American theologians used Marxist theory - as an instrument of ideological, social or economic criticism - that is compatible with the foundation of Christian faith. Clerics, albeit to a lesser extent, also incorporated social-scientific knowledge which helped them situate their praxis in a historical context. Among other benefits, they could use anthropological and sociological studies to critically review their own pastoral discourses and practices. Social sciences thus provided the necessary knowledge on how faith could act as a transformative praxis.<sup>15</sup>

As a historic process, liberation indeed not only seeks to overcome a past and present deemed unjust and oppressive, but also projects towards a distinct, new future. In line with Gutiérrez, faith and political action only enter in relation through an utopian project:

12 Barger, *The World Come of Age*, 76.

13 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Education (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 49.

14 Freire, 47-48.

15 Barger, *The World Come of Age*, 102.

The historical project, the utopia of liberation as creation of a new social consciousness, as an appropriation of not only the means of production, but also of political management and ultimately of freedom, it is the proper place of the cultural revolution, that is to say, the place of the permanent creation of a new man in a different and supportive society.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, one can consider the project of liberation as an incentive for social and political action - or revolution - because of how it is a continuous, ongoing process. Rather than “turning a fighter into a dreamer”, Gutiérrez emphasized the potential of utopias in fueling radical commitments and concrete social practices for the ‘new men’.<sup>17</sup> By locating salvation in the present, as the product of divinely sanctioned, revolutionary action, Gutiérrez underlined that “human history was the theater in which we encounter God”, and thus the very space where liberation was eventually to materialize.<sup>18</sup>

Liberation theology, in other words, fostered its own vision of how humanity was to engage in the transformation of society. According to religious scholar Manuel Vásquez, theologians not only “appropriated [...] a set of analytical tools” from Marxism, but also shared its “post-Enlightenment version of the modern emancipatory project”. Put differently, theologians trusted that the ‘new men’ could radically transform society despite adverse circumstances like institutionalized violence, classism and racism. Informed by both the writings of Freire and his readings of Hegel and Marx, Gutiérrez indeed defended the idea of a “unified, collective subject” - the poor - “engaged in a cosmic battle to bring history to fulfillment.” This vision of transformation was, in contrast to a purely proletarian class struggle, marked by a Catholic heritage in its interpretations and perspectives. As previously stated, in theological writings of the time, the struggle of the poor in Latin America was most commonly represented by the bondage the people of Israel were subjected to in Egypt.<sup>19</sup> This comparison also led theologians to understand liberation as an agentive process, a praxis the poor themselves had to commit to.

16 Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 318-19.

17 Gutiérrez, 318-19.

18 Barger, *The World Come of Age*, 71-72.

19 Manuel A. Vásquez, *The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity*, 41-43.

## Mobilizing the People

If the Medellín conference declared that the continent was at the threshold of radical change, then political events in Peru shortly after could be seen as presaging the dawn of such a new epoch. The Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces, which overthrew the government of Belaúnde Terry just one month after the conclusion of Medellín in the midst of a deepening political crisis, echoed some of the utopian ideals of the Latin American bishops and the priests' declaration, as it aimed for a radical transformation and a break from the given socio-political and economic status quo. Liberation theology – that is, the core theological current which emerged in the aftermath of the Medellín conference – arguably shared the same revolutionary ideals by calling not only for an end to “economic, social and political dependence” of the subcontinent, but also for a “qualitatively different society”.<sup>20</sup> Utopian dialectics were expressed through the denunciation of an existing order and the annunciation of a new one. Both revolution and liberation were understood as (historical) processes whose objectives of an ideal society were to be achieved progressively: aimed for, if never fully attained.<sup>21</sup>

The revolutionary agenda developed by the military forces after the coup d'état in October 1968 was itself partly inspired by Catholic social teaching. Klaiiber described the army generals as “cultural Catholics” who were cautious to not offend the Peruvian episcopacy, since they reckoned the church an influential political institution in support of their revolutionary agenda. Seeking a third way – neither capitalist nor communist – the so-called revolutionary humanism defended by the military generals regularly drew upon Catholic social teaching, like the syndical movement discussed in the previous chapter. Both military and religious authorities in fact sought to position themselves as leaders among the lower classes and support their respective struggles for political and economic emancipation. The clerics followed a twofold strategy. On the one hand, they attempted to influence the revolutionary agenda of the military government by propagating their Christian ideals of societal change. On the other hand, they also actively sought to distance themselves from the government to gain legitimacy and trust among the marginal classes.<sup>22</sup>

Across the board, the success of societal transformation envisioned in both theological and political discourse depended on the participation and mobilization of the population in its favor. Changing the values of the marginalized, still

20 Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 131.

21 Eugene Gogol, *Utopia and the Dialectic in Latin American Liberation* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–5.

22 See Jeffrey L. Klaiiber, *Religion and Revolution in Peru, 1824–1976*, International Studies of the Committee on International Relations, University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 173–74, 179–80; Dirk Kruijt, *Revolution by Decree: Peru, 1968–1975*, Thela Latin America Series (Amsterdam: Thela Publishers, 1994), 69–70.

mostly rural, Peruvians was considered of critical importance in this process. Yet, following the then prevalent opinion of social scientists and political leaders, state and church representatives faced significant difficulties when attempting to do so. Peasants, for instance, were considered “the largest and most downtrodden group in Third World nations and their orientations the most antithetical of those of the new men.”<sup>23</sup> Incorporating these marginalized actors in the processes of revolution and liberation was hence considered a critical task for both revolutionary government and reform-oriented sectors within the Catholic Church.

Outlining the objectives of the Peruvian Revolution, the military generals under the leadership of Juan Velasco Alvarado envisioned a “full participatory social democracy” as the future model of economic and political organization. As emphasized repeatedly in government propaganda, the participation of the majority of the population was considered the principal channel through which the new society could be established.<sup>24</sup> Forging a new society thus meant including disenfranchised populations in the socio-economic decision-making processes and shaping them to become driving forces of revolutionary change, according to the visions of the military generals. To achieve this “Velasquian utopia”, the government saw itself confronted with the fundamental question of how it could integrate its citizens into the projected transformation of society.<sup>25</sup> Assessing the response to this question, many contemporary scholars have pondered the curious case of a revolution seemingly imposed from above. Their fundamental query was: “Is not a military regime inherently biased toward hierarchy and order and thus inherently opposed to a real revolution?”<sup>26</sup>

The revolutionary government mobilized ideals of (popular) participation and social mobilization, especially, as essential processes in the reformulation of the existing power structures. The domestic oligarchy – those previously holding the power of decision-making – were increasingly losing their economic and political privileges to the benefit of the popular masses. By describing the societal transformation as a revolutionary process rather than a reform, the generals aimed to emphasize that the alteration of the relation between social classes was neither partial nor moderate. Rather, the military government, as it emerged in response to a crisis of political hegemony and socio-economic structural change dating back to the 1950s, aimed to comprehensively alter existing social hierarchies within

23 Cynthia McClintock, *Peasant Cooperatives and Political Change in Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 5.

24 OPA, 2 SINAMOS, “8 preguntas a la Revolución Peruana: Nociones elementales de política,” Lima, 1973, 27.

25 José Luis Réniqne, *Incendiar la pradera: un ensayo sobre la “revolución” en el Perú*, 1st ed. (Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, 2015), 116.

26 McClintock, *Peasant Cooperatives and Political Change in Peru*, 14, 59.

Peruvian society.<sup>27</sup> This populist rhetoric in opposition to the oligarchy resonated particularly strongly in the countryside, where neo-colonial class structures opposing *colonos* to *hacendados* still persisted. According to historian Martín Sánchez, “to integrate the Andean peasant population [into the Peruvian political community] was to close the long period of oligarchic-colonial Peru.”<sup>28</sup>

The 1969 agrarian reform, constituting one of the most emblematic and historically significant transformation processes launched under Velasco Alvarado, indeed exemplifies how the military government construed its vision of popular participation. When Velasco Alvarado announced the agrarian reform on 24 June – until then known as the ‘*Día del Indio*’ – he underlined both the historic significance of the transformation of the Peruvian countryside and the cooperative character of the future agrarian economy. Beyond the structural changes regarding landownership, the military government construed the peasant (*campesino*) as a central actor in the revolutionary process. In his speech, Velasco Alvarado declared that the term ‘indigenous community’ (*comunidad indígena*), due to its “racist rhetoric and unacceptable prejudice”, was to be replaced by ‘peasant community’ (*comunidad campesina*). Referring to a recent declaration by a number of clergy emphasizing the urgency of agrarian reform, he argued that not only the peasants, but also the “proletariat, students, the majority of intellectuals, priests and industrialists” would endorse land redistribution. Together, they formed the “*auténtico pueblo*”, which the military generals yielded their support to.<sup>29</sup>

In its attempt to integrate rural dwellers into the revolutionary nation-building project writ large, and the agrarian reform in particular, the military government thus forged a new identity discourse which foregrounded class allegiance rather than ethnic difference. The officialization of the Quechua language and educational reform further aimed to fostered senses of belonging to the Peruvian state by mobilizing certain symbols and values the peasantry identified with. In other words, the populist discourse assimilated “*lo andino*” to “*lo popular*” in its appeal to incorporate the rural population of the Peruvian *sierra*.<sup>30</sup> During the Velasco government, for instance, Tupac Amaru II became an integral part of Peru’s

27 Anibal Quijano, *Problema agrario y movimientos campesinos* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1979), 27–28.

28 Juan Martín Sánchez, *La revolución peruana: ideología y práctica política de un gobierno militar: 1968–1975*, Historia y geografía Sevilla (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Universidad de Sevilla, Diputación de Sevilla, 2002), 163.

29 Juan Velasco Alvarado, *Velasco, la voz de la Revolución* (Lima: Oficina Nacional de Difusión del SINAMOS, 1972), 52–53.

30 Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism* (London: NLB, 1977), 171–72; Sánchez, *La revolución peruana*, 103–04; Carlos Iván Degregori, “El estudio del otro: cambios en los análisis sobre etnicidad en el Perú,” in *Perú 1964–1994: economía, sociedad y política*, ed. Julio Cotler (Lima: IEP, 1995), 313.

military discourse and visual propaganda as a historical symbol embodying both revolutionary ideals of anti-colonialism and agrarian reform.<sup>31</sup>

The inherent ambiguities of this new peasant identity provoked significant scholarly debate. In 1971, historian Eric Hobsbawm applauded the transformation thus far achieved by the Peruvian Revolution. In an anonymous reply to his writings, an anthropologist criticized Hobsbawm for his “narrow neo-colonialist” view, notably because of his alleged characterization of the Indian as a “rural anachronism” whom the military government would liberate from backwardness and deprivation:

The rationale is as follows: by conceptually converting the Indians into peasants, they can be neatly assimilated into the Western class structure of the ‘European’ colonial masters as the rural proletariat. As such, the cultural differences, which mark the Indians as a colonized people, can be quietly and legitimately ignored and their humanity can be officially recognized by the colonizers.<sup>32</sup>

This criticism mirrors the divergent research agendas and competing schools of thought within anthropology and sociology, focusing their research, respectively, on ethnic or class dimensions. An early, notorious example of the debate on peasant identity took place at a 1965 roundtable discussing the latest novel of José María Argueda, *Todas las Sangres*: whereas the French sociologist Henri Favre claimed that during his field research in the Central Andes he “did not encounter *indios*, but rather exploited *campesinos*”, the author of the novel defended his use of ethnic references by emphasizing that there was “an undoubtable difference” between the two terms.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the hopes of both military leaders and the Catholic Church, the integration of the peasantry in the revolutionary project ultimately did not prove successful. In 1972, a government official acknowledged that the *campesinado* “did

31 Anna Cant, “‘Land for Those Who Work It’: A Visual Analysis of Agrarian Reform Posters in Velasco’s Peru,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 44, no. 1 (February 2012): 1–37; Raúl Hernández Asensio, *El apóstol del los Andes: el culto a Túpac Amaru en Cusco durante la revolución velasquista (1968–1975)*, 1st ed., Estudios históricos (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2017); Javier Puente, “Second Independence, National History and Myth-Making Heroes in the Peruvian Nationalizing State: The Government of Juan Velasco Alvarado, 1968–1975,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* 22, no. 3 (1 September 2016): 231–49; Charles F. Walker, “The General and His Rebel: Juan Velasco Alvarado and the Reinvention of Túpac Amaru II,” in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, ed. Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 49–72.

32 Anonymous, “Peruvian ‘Indians’ in response to Peru: The Peculiar ‘Revolution,’” *The New York Review of Books*, 15.06.1972.

33 Guillermo Rochabrún S. and José María Arguedas, *La Mesa Redonda sobre “Todas las Sangres” del 23 de junio de 1965*, Lengua y sociedad (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2000), 40, 46.

not profoundly feel an authentic class affiliation”, lacked the necessary participatory tradition and continued to suffer from semi-feudal relations in many rural contexts.<sup>34</sup> In Puno, for instance, many beneficiaries of the agrarian reform grew increasingly suspicious of the government technocrats. The agrarian reform regrouped haciendas into so-called “associative enterprises”: large, cooperative-style structures with variable governance models and membership criteria. At the same time as the government promised peasants “land for those who work it”, technocrats and local bureaucrats still decided on production schedules, type of produce and, eventually, on the collectivization and redistribution of benefits in the thirty-eight enterprises created across the department.<sup>35</sup>

Over the course of the 1970s, peasants grew increasingly disillusioned with the results of the agrarian reform. Even if it was one of the most radical and far-reaching ones in Latin America, both in terms of the number of beneficiaries and the size of land,<sup>36</sup> the state-led agrarian cooperativism which replaced the hacienda system was subject to mounting opposition. The overthrow of Velasco Alvarado in August 1975 started the second – and more politically conservative – phase of the Peruvian Revolution under General Francisco Morales Bermúdez, during which the agrarian reform process stalled. By the late 1970s, following a period of sustained economic crisis and political repression, the beneficiaries of the reform reclaimed the dissolution of associative enterprises and the redistribution of the enterprises’ land (see Chapter 8).

## An Option for the Poor

Deconstructing the highly ambiguous notion of ‘poverty’ is critical to a nuanced understanding of the mission of the Catholic Church as outlined by Medellín and liberation theology. When the Latin American bishops declared their ‘option for the poor’, they sought particularly to address *material* poverty, which was consid-

34 Carlos Delgado, *El proceso revolucionario peruano: testimonio de lucha* (México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1972), 166–74; Javier Puente, “The Military Grammar of Agrarian Reform in Peru: Campesinos and Rural Capitalism,” *Radical History Review* 2019, no. 133 (1 January 2019): 87–88.

35 In the department of Puno, 1,451 haciendas were regrouped in ten Cooperativas de Producción Agrícola (CAP), twenty-three Sociedades Agrícolas de Interés Social (SAIS) and five Empresas de Propiedad Social (EPS). See Del Pozo-Vergnes, *De la hacienda a la mundialización*, 130; Claude Auroi, *Contradictions et conflits dans la réforme agraire péruvienne le cas de la SAIS Rio Grande (Puno)* (Genève: Institut universitaire d’études du développement, 1980), 32–33; Felix Mohnheim, “Die Entwicklung Der Peruanischen Agrarreform, 1969–1979, Und Ihre Durchführung Im Departement Puno,” *Geographische Zeitschrift, Erdkundliches Wissen*, no. 55 (1981): 16, 32.

36 Nelson Manrique, “Historia de La Agricultura Peruana, 1930–1980,” in *La Economía Peruana Entre La Gran Depresión y El Reformismo Militar*, ed. Carlos Contreras, Compendio de Historia Económica Del Perú 5 (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2020), 194.



ered “against the will of God and [a] fruit of injustice.” At the same time, the final document outlined two other aspects of poverty. Whereas *spiritual* poverty designates the “attitude of openness to God”, poverty *as commitment* characterizes how the church adopts “the condition of the needy of this world to bear witness to the evil it represents”.<sup>37</sup>

With the definition of poverty in theological terms caught between material deprivation and Christian commitment, the question arises as to how theologians approached and defined the subjects of theological concern, post-Medellin. In fact, many different references to the subjects of the envisioned transformations circulated in contemporary religious discourse. A prominent term in the Bible, ‘the poor’ was often used interchangeably with the “the oppressed”, “the marginalized” or “the exploited”: terms which stress the relational dimension of poverty. Gutiérrez indeed emphasized that “the poor exist because they are victims of other humans”, a result of a given political economy.<sup>38</sup>

Theological discourse can hence emphasize certain specific dimensions of poverty, while also risking underrepresenting others. Following the criticism of theologian Ethna Regan, the poor could indeed be described as a “generalized proletariat, a homogeneous group of sufferers and victims whose distinct personhood is subsumed for rhetorical purposes.”<sup>39</sup> The multivalent character of ‘the poor’ means that, while their unity was foregrounded, their internal diversity was often diminished. In the case of Peru, this emphasis on a collective identity for the popular classes mirrored both the populist rhetoric of the military government and the increased prominence of dependency theory in social science research. The often simultaneously used term *pueblo* evidences the Marxist class approach embraced by many theologians and clerics. Less attention was paid to other dimensions of oppression and marginalization, and their intersection with poverty. The absence of indigenous figures in the early writings of Gutiérrez, for instance, has been subject to criticism.<sup>40</sup>

This ambiguity of the theological discourse post-Medellin, however, allowed for greater freedom of action for many sympathizing religious and lay actors. Eventually, it was upon them to identify the ‘poor’ according to their interpretation of local power structures and social hierarchies. Thus, in most instances, pas-

37 Segunda Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, *La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio*, “XIV Pobreza de la Iglesia,” Medellín, septiembre 1968.

38 Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 371.

39 Ethna Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 153.

40 David R. Brockman, *No Longer the Same: Religious Others and the Liberation of Christian Theology*, *New Approaches to Religion and Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 110; Julio Lois, *Teología de la liberación: opción por los pobres*, Colección historia de la iglesia y de la teología (San José: Editorial DEI, 1988), 177–78.

toral agents had to negotiate their own way forward, designing their own 'option for the poor' for each context they encountered.

In Peru, the episcopal conference provided guidance for pastoral agents for their work towards a liberating evangelization of the poor. The principal mission of the Catholic Church - evangelization - meant spreading the gospel and announcing the liberation of humankind. As religious and lay actors had to assure the "social and historic relevance" of this message, they embraced politics as the "terrain in which liberation is realized" not merely in a distant future, but in the present. The recipients of the message could, in dialogue with other parishioners, clergy and religious authorities, reflect and decide upon their commitment to support urgent political, economic and social transformations. Since pastoral work was directed to a determined audience, the episcopacy cautioned that evangelization "presupposed serious and critical knowledge" of regional history and the socio-political context. Only in this way could the liberating message of the gospel be understood and hence contribute to a heightened religious and political awareness.<sup>41</sup>

Although the Peruvian episcopacy welcomed the conclusions from Medellín, the ensuing church reforms did not lead to sudden, radical transformation of the ecclesiastical landscape in Peru. Rather, the Catholic Church witnessed a process of further internal diversification, where new political and religious positions were discussed, adopted and refuted among a heterogeneous group of clerics. Gustavo Gutiérrez, Jorge Alvarez Calderón and Alejandro Cussianovich, together with other local and foreign clergy, spearheaded a 'progressive' reform movement within the Catholic Church in Peru. They formed part of the Oficina Nacional de Información Social (ONIS), a religious network similar to *Cristianos por el Socialismo* in Chile and *Sacerdotes por el Tercer Mundo* in Argentina. ONIS, though it only counted a small fraction of the domestic clergy among its members, marked the image of a new Peruvian church in its social commitments and influenced moderate sectors to position themselves more favorably with regard to Catholic reform currents.<sup>42</sup>

In its objective to raise popular conscience and assist the poor in realizing their political and social aspirations, the Peruvian episcopacy both commended and criticized the political reform agenda. Whereas the Velasco government celebrated the sesquicentennial day of independence in July 1971 by emphasizing that the Peruvian Revolution constituted a "second liberation", the bishops cautioned that this process of liberation was still ongoing; indeed, it had not come close to com-

41 AOP, XLII Asamblea Episcopal Peruana, "Evangelización: algunas líneas pastorales," enero 1973.

42 Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821-1985*, 280.

pletion.<sup>43</sup> Only a few weeks after the *fiestas patrias*, the episcopacy presented its contribution for the 1971 Synod of Bishops on Justice in the World. Underlining the need for greater social justice, the bishops called for the rejection of capitalism and even went so far as to recognize that “socialist currents [of thought]” capture the aspirations of many Christians for legitimate reasons. Representing the Catholic Church in a “country situated at the crossroads of history”, they mostly welcomed the government’s reform agenda and reiterated their support for its ambitious objectives. At the same time, they also raised criticism of the lack of “real and direct participation in the revolutionary action” by its purported subjects. In the face of the ambivalent political developments – reflective of the authoritarian and top-down nature of the revolution – the episcopacy had to “denounce the forces which [...] impede the process of change in favor of the people” and support “those sectors of the church (bishops, priests, laypeople) who have assumed a serious commitment” for the liberation of all Catholics.<sup>44</sup> Despite feelings of mutual sympathy, the military government and the episcopacy thus found themselves at odds over their respective ideas of (more or less) radical transformation.

Criticism of Velasco’s government was most pronounced in the sectors that most fervently endorsed the post-Medellín reform movement within the Peruvian Catholic Church. This “multinetwork environment” – including the church faction, ONIS, the Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas and its publishing house Centro de Estudios y Publicación – used *Páginas*, a bi-weekly magazine, as a “voice for liberation theology” in Peru.<sup>45</sup> In the first two years after its foundation in 1972, *Páginas* included articles and editorials on many of the main activities of ONIS members at that time, for instance publications on liberation theology, workshops on the political thought of Mariátegui and Marx, and regional and international conferences of religious actors. Towards the end of the government of Velasco Alvarado, the mostly anonymous contributors also expressed growing criticism of the inherent contradictions between authoritarian rule and popular participation. For instance, *Páginas* published an opinion piece calling for the active participation of

43 Carlos Aguirre, “The Second Liberation? Military Nationalism and the Sesquicentennial Commemoration of Peruvian Independence,” in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, ed. Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 43–44; “Mensaje evangélico del Episcopado Peruano en ocasión de celebrarse el 28 de julio los ciento cincuenta años de la Independencia Nacional,” in José Marins, Teolide María Trevisan, and Carolee Chanona, *Praxis de Los Padres de América Latina: documentos de las conferencias episcopales de Medellín a Puebla, 1968-1978* (Bogotá: Ed. Paulinas, 1978), 344.

44 Conferencia Episcopal Peruana, “Sobre la justicia en el mundo,” *Iglesia en el Perú*, no. 1, octubre 1971.

45 The Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas is an interdisciplinary research center founded in Lima in 1971 by Gustavo Gutiérrez and fellow theologians, social scientists and lay activists who, initially, entertained close ties with the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. See Peña, *Theologies and Liberation in Peru*, 110–17.

the working class in the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist system.<sup>46</sup> With regard to agrarian reform, a 1974 special issue demanded that the peasantry, too, was allowed to organize autonomously and overcome the exploitation it was subjected to in many of the newly created associative enterprises.<sup>47</sup>

The same 'progressive' sectors also scrutinized the role of the church in fostering popular participation. Two years after commenting that the country was 'at the crossroads of history', the Peruvian episcopacy had barely raised any significant criticism concerning the lack of popular involvement in the revolutionary process. Contributors to *Páginas* further lamented that the church had neglected the crucial task of raising the awareness of oppressed classes or contributing to their "revolutionary dynamism".<sup>48</sup> Observing the rise of conservative forces within the Catholic Church - notably after the foundation of Sodalitium Christianae Vitae apostolic society in late 1971 - the magazine also noted that the church appeared to be making a "return to mistrust and authoritarianism" and had thus abandoned "its service to the oppressed."<sup>49</sup> According to a 1975 declaration by ONIS, the construction of a vaguely defined "popular church" still remained at its incipient stage. Since the Catholic Church was not clearly committed to the existing class struggle, in many instances it neglected to "assume the point of view of the most forgotten" as a basis for its evangelization practice.<sup>50</sup>

The disillusion of certain religious and lay actors who endorsed liberation theology can be traced to some central characteristics of post-conciliar reforms in Peru. After the "euphoria of Medellín" and the end of the first phase of the military government under Velasco Alvarado, many clerics lost "confidence in the efficacy of political slogans or ideologies for transforming society".<sup>51</sup> Numerous scholars have discussed potential causes for this. For example, sociologist Luis Pásara has identified four traits of "radical Catholic style" - as embodied by ONIS - which inhibited the further advancement towards the ideals of a popular church in the early 1970s. The 'progressive' reform movement was both clericalist and vertically structured, carried and sustained by theologians and clergy rather than laypeople or grassroots actors. In Pásara's view, ONIS was also an elitist movement which was largely "dedicated to sophisticated theoretical discussions among the anointed few" that could not communicate their intellectual ideals to a broader audience. Utopianism, he finally argues, led said actors to adopt a collectivized

46 "Gobierno, pueblo, izquierda," *Páginas* 1, no. 26, abril 1973, 7-9.

47 "Reforma agraria y nueva sociedad," *Páginas* 1, no. 46, agosto 1974, 5-19; "Apuntes sobre las luchas campesinas en el proceso de reforma agraria 1969-1974," *Páginas* 1, no. 46, agosto 1974, 21-30.

48 "Editorial," *Páginas* 1, no. 28, mayo 1973, 2-3.

49 "Nuestro compromiso en 1973 (II)," *Páginas* 1, no. 22, enero 1973.

50 ONIS, "Situación política y exigencias evangélicas," *Páginas* 1, no. 51, marzo 1975, 10-15.

51 Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821-1985*, 300-01.

understanding of the people as subjects of social transformations irrespective of their real-life experiences and habits.<sup>52</sup>

Echoing critiques they themselves levelled at the military government, the reform movement within the Catholic Church of Peru struggled to integrate the purported agents of liberation in its project of religious and political transformation. The progressive rhetoric of many theologians contrasted with a far more complex ‘reality’, where many religious and lay agents either did not embrace liberation theology, or struggled to adapt to its ideals. As discourses of development and progress were supplanted by revolution and liberation, reform-oriented pastoral agents had to find new ways of building a local church. The obligation indeed lay with these pastoral agents to translate their ‘option for the poor’ into their sermons and evangelization practice and, consequently, to foster leadership or revolutionary dynamism among their parishioners. The *pueblo*, after all, was to feel part of the church (*‘el pueblo de Dios’*) and thus participate in a process that sought to forge a faith community aspiring for its liberation. Otherwise, liberation theology risked – as seen in the fate of the Peruvian Revolution – remaining an unfulfilled, utopian project of (religious) elites that was disconnected from those popular masses it sought to support and identify with.

## The Church in the Highlands

The proclamation of an ‘option for the poor’ had particular ramifications for those pastoral agents working in the rural highlands of southern Peru. Alejandro Cussianovich argued that the “rapid and radical change” the country was undergoing obliged the church to rethink its own role and consider how it could respond “to the aspirations of the popular masses.”<sup>53</sup> In the department of Puno, it was mostly the aspirations of the peasantry (i.e. the large majority of the population), that the church had to respond to:

[I] believe that in the face of the *campesinado* problem, our church is far from having found a satisfactory way of presence and action: pastoral care for the rural world is still at an embryonic state. [...] Likewise, there is a great desire among the clergy to seek new forms of insertion [...] to leave a westernized church in order to respond better to the idiosyncrasy of the *puneño* population.<sup>54</sup>

52 Luis Pásara, “Peru’s Leftist Angels,” in *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, ed. Scott Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 291–301.

53 AOP, Alejandro Cussianovich, “Reflexiones sobre los signos de los tiempos,” *Iglesia en el Altiplano: Informativo Pastoral*, no. 3, agosto 1970.

54 AOP, Alejandro Cussianovich, “Reflexiones Pastorales,” *Iglesia en el Altiplano: Informativo Pastoral*, no. 1, junio 1970.

Even if the bishops in Puno expressed significant support for building a different church, the question remained how pastoral agents could respond best to the religious, social and political aspirations of those they worked with. Faced with the expectations set by Medellín, the Catholic Church was to commit to the “long and tiresome” task of situating itself in, and adapting to, an ever-changing socio-political landscape in which its objective to cater to the marginalized population could trigger “personal tensions, resistances and prejudice” among the pastoral agents. Put differently, the church in Puno had to “realize its mission in a precise historical context”.<sup>55</sup>

This mission context, the *puneño* countryside, too, had undergone a slow but steady transformation since the late 1960s. According to a contribution to *Album de Oro* on the province of Melgar, the military government further fueled a process of integration launched in the early decades of the 20th century. Describing the “idiosyncrasy” of the rural inhabitants in 1972, Mercedes Bueno Morales, an Ayaviri-born teacher, commended the social redemption promoted by rural schools and military reformism. Overcoming the self-defeating characteristics of the “classic Indians” – “introverted, sad and suspicious” – she argued that both education and agrarian reforms were “awakening [them] from their century-long stagnation”. Although, by the early 1970s, Bueno Morales considered the advanced incorporation of the peasantry into national life “indisputable”, she nevertheless appealed for more educational and technical support to further accelerate structural change across the altiplano.<sup>56</sup>

In the Prelature of Ayaviri, the development of the female center of the Instituto de Educación Rural, under the leadership of women religious from the Sagrados Corazones congregation (Figure 10), is evidence of how the education of rural parishioners evolved during the early 1970s. Following a highly gendered and paternalistic model of education, women religious initially aimed to make peasant women “aware of their high dignity so forgotten in the rural milieu and to prepare them for her tasks as wives and mothers”. The young students were eventually to “lose their sullen air” and become girls “of pleasant and simple manner”. In her thesis on the liberating education she witnessed in Ayaviri, Sister Ana Teresa Echecopar, describes a new, Freire-inspired method that, from 1970 onwards, radically altered the previously existing teaching style. In her view, “it was a question of breaking with an education that was domesticating humans in order to reach liberated women, responsible of the society they live in.” Based on the pillars of conscience, politics and literacy, the new teaching method proved to be particu-

55 AOP, Alejandro Cussianovich, “Reflexiones Pastorales,” *Iglesia en el Altiplano: Informativo Pastoral*, no. 1, junio 1970.

56 Mercedes Bueno Morales, “Síntesis monográfica de la provincia de Melgar,” in Samuel Frisancho Pineda ed. *Album de Oro III*, 1972, 85-86.



**10. Instituto de Educación Rural Feminino**  
 (Archivo Histórico de los Sagrados Corazones, Zona Andina, Lima)

larly helpful in preparing many students for their subsequent work as promoters of governmental agencies in rural districts.<sup>57</sup>

Despite early efforts for cooperation, there also existed tensions between the revolutionary state and the Catholic Church. One month after the coup d'état, the three bishops issued a pastoral letter criticizing the "continuous neglect of the department of Puno", challenging the lack of attention and resources the then third most populated department of Peru received. Or, in line with this disapproval of the *costeño* centralism, they wondered "for how much longer [they] ha[d] to suffer from the control of their lives exerted from Lima."<sup>58</sup> The process of agrarian reform, raising significant expectations, soon left many residents of the *puneño* countryside feeling disheartened. Even if it abolished most *latifundios*, it did not resolve claims for land redistribution among those peasants not working on associative enterprises. In an open letter to Velasco Alvarado published in 1971, clerics and women religious from the Diocese of Puno cautioned that an "authentic revolution" could not rely solely on the reform of state structures and laws, but also had to manifest in "hearts and ways of thinking."<sup>59</sup>

The Diocese of Puno however also faced significant internal difficulties as Roman authorities forced bishop Julio González Ruiz to abdicate after thirteen years

57 Ana Teresa Echeopar T., *Hacia una educación liberadora de la campesina peruana* (Lima: PUCP, 1972), 52, 57-62.

58 AOP, Carta pastoral de los obispos puneños, 04.11.1968.

59 "Carta abierta que los religiosos de la diócesis de Puno dirigen al Presidente de la República," *Los Andes*, 11.09.1971.

of apostolic work. This decision caused significant controversy in the regional and domestic press. The reasons invoked by the nuncio – including his “criticizing [of] the papal authority”, his statement that “that the clerical function was only temporary” and his “sexual obsession” – targeted a cleric who was known as a “modern”, “rebel” or “scandalous” bishop.<sup>60</sup> Rejecting these accusations, Gonzalez Ruiz claimed that he merely followed post-conciliar reforms, cared for the social well-being of his parishioners and promoted local vocation. Those commenting upon the “forced renunciation” indeed applauded his massive investments in charitable work and infrastructure and his promotion of a “new spirit” which aimed for the church to follow the “signs of time”.<sup>61</sup> His often criticized behavior – insisting on being called by his first name and dancing at *fiestas*, among others – coupled with the reform of his pastoral agenda, arguably proved too controversial for Catholic authorities. As outlined in an issue of *Los Andes*, a protest meeting organized in Puno in May 1972 “was concurred by a peasant majority”, a sign of recognition of González Ruiz’s social work in rural Puno.<sup>62</sup> The protests eventually led to the temporary occupation of the cathedral. However, this did not lead the Vatican to reverse its decision. In November 1972, Jesús Mateo Calderón Barrueto was appointed as the successor of González Ruiz.

In the midst of the growing leadership crisis, pastoral workers of the diocese organized a week of reflection to discuss the development of a new social and pastoral agenda across the altiplano. They particularly lamented that the church remained part of an oppressive structure which does not respect the religious traditions of the Catholic faithful.<sup>63</sup> Anthropologist Fernando Fuenzalida, present at the workshop, emphasized that the distinct religious practices in urban and rural spaces reflected different social and cultural subsystems existing across the highlands. A social-scientific understanding of these complex belief systems and religious practices, he argued, can help offer new perspectives on the social consequences of religious change.<sup>64</sup> Concluding the workshop, the participants hence decided that the clergy would “commit to discover and value the culture and reli-

60 “Destituyen de su cargo de obispo a Monseñor Julio González Ruiz,” *Los Andes*, 17.04.1972; Alfonsina Barrionuevo, “El obispo del escándalo,” *Caretas*, no. 456, mayo 1972; Arturo H. Alberca, “Apasionada nota sobre Mons. Gonzales,” *Oiga*, 21.07.1972; “El ‘affaire’ Mons. González,” *Páginas*, no. 7, junio 1972, 11–12. The circumstances surrounding his forced abdication inspired a novel on the role of the Vatican, see Alfredo Encinas Martín, *Deserción En El Vaticano* (Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 2004).

61 Alfonsina Barrionuevo, “El obispo del escándalo,” *Caretas*, no. 456, mayo 1972; “Lo que hizo en Puno el ‘obispo del escándalo’,” *Sucesos*, 28.04.1972.

62 Jorge Flórez Aybar, “Un mitin y una esperanza que se esfuma,” *Los Andes*, 11.05.1972; “La catedral continua en poder de rebeldes,” *Los Andes*, 06.06.1972.

63 AOP, “Semana de reflexión pastoral de la diócesis de Puno,” Chucuito, 06–11.03.1972.

64 AOP, Fernando Fuenzalida, “Antropología y liturgia,” *Semana de reflexión pastoral*, Chucuito, marzo 1972.



giosity of the peasantry” as a means to overcome their marginalization within the church. Furthermore, they also agreed that the church had an active role to “orient the political conscience of the peasant masses” and support local leadership in the revolutionary process.<sup>65</sup>

Overall, however, stated intentions to adapt to the socio-religious environment and to foster political participation also raised significant questions. The coming-into-being of new, conscious subjects of radical transformation had thus far remained an (elite) project developed by religious intellectuals. Departing from these theological debates largely produced in Lima, religious and lay actors faced the challenge to renegotiate these utopian ideals in the *puneño* context. But how could they respect indigenous religious practices if, at the same time, they tried to promote evangelization? To what extent could they overcome paternalistic tendencies if, simultaneously, they aimed to instigate social mobilization? And, in broader terms, how did religious and lay actors, often with the help of social scientists, aim to challenge the colonial legacy of the church through the transformation of the Catholic pastorate?

These questions notably resonated with the many missionaries in Latin America who were subject to increasing criticism for both their evangelization practices and their continuous support of seemingly outdated development ideologies. A 1972 *Horizons Blancs* editorial claimed Catholic missionary activity was headed towards an ethical impasse, where the very legitimacy of the presence of foreign religious personnel was being challenged. As the writer in *Horizons Blancs* put it, and other missionaries increasingly asked, did they, after all, “through their presence and actions, not maintain an ecclesiastical neo-colonialism?”<sup>66</sup>

All told, the spirit of Medellín had a myriad of meanings, implications and consequences for pastoral agents and parishioners in both the Prelature of Ayaviri and the Diocese of Puno. During a time of radical transformations for church and state, new ideas of religious and socio-political change emerged and were subject to scrutiny. As discussed in the following two chapters, it was ultimately for pastoral agents to debate and embrace their own ‘option for the poor’ and thus question the very meaning of the concepts of mission and (rural) development in their quest for liberation.

65 AOP, “Semana de reflexión pastoral de la diócesis de Puno,” Chucuito, 06–11.03.1972.

66 P. Denis Pryn, “Missionnaire aujourd’hui,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 53, octobre 1972, 77.

# 5

## Anthropological Concerns

In March 1969, Edmond Gauthier, a French Fidei Donum priest, published an article in the missionary magazine *Parole et Mission* criticizing the work undertaken by the foreign clergy in Ayaviri.<sup>1</sup> In his view, the focus on social work, to which most priests were thus far committed, made the church appear like a charity organization whose mission ended up fostering paternalistic relations with its parishioners. Characterizing this charitable enterprise as an “illusion”, Gauthier criticized the practice of collecting funds from abroad for development projects whose success and impact was often questionable. As “gringos among the Indians”, he argues, the missionaries had to rethink their pastoral practice among those “mysterious souls” that still seemed out of reach because of “their culture, their language and their ancient beliefs”. In Gauthier’s view, to translate the gospel and adapt it to the “profound psychology of the Indian”, required a long-term presence of missionaries, if not, at best, their replacement by indigenous priests.<sup>2</sup> Published under a pseudonym, Gauthier’s critique proved controversial among the Ayaviri priesthood, yet it is also reflective of emerging debates on new understandings of, and new approaches to, indigenous peoples’ ‘mysterious souls’.

A few months earlier, fellow missionary Louis Dalle attended an offering to *Pachamama* at a hacienda outside of Ayaviri. With careful detail, Dalle summarized his experience on that November night spent observing a ceremony he had no previous knowledge of. Reflecting upon his observations, Dalle raised questions regarding parallels with Catholicism and the insertion of pastoral agents in the regional socio-religious environment. In line with Gauthier, he criticized

1 I would like to thank the editorial board of Allpanchis for allowing me to reproduce the article “Misión en cuestión: Antropología y evangelización en la Prelatura de Ayaviri (1968-1975)”, previously published in Allpanchis 47, no. 86, 2020, 59-102.

2 P.M., “Un gringo chez les Indiens,” *Parole et Mission* 12, no. 44, 1969, 54–55, 58.

a focus on practices of development that “continue to collide with the indigenous soul” as the population was often neither involved nor consulted for the “projects, initiatives, programs and materials” coming from abroad. A new pastoral orientation, in his view, had to understand the “most profound values” of the population and, by doing so, “give back confidence” to the men and women of the Andes.<sup>3</sup>

New understandings of the socio-religious identity of the ‘mysterious’ other, however, required ethnographic studies of their religious beliefs and practices. In the postwar era, missionaries in the Andes became increasingly conscious of the need to comprehend the socio-religious context of their mission. Jacques Monast, one of the first representatives of the so-called second evangelization on the Bolivian altiplano in the late 1950s, for instance, describes how he gained knowledge on his parishioners through his pastoral work:

After the period of great discoveries that in truth never ends, the missionary begins to understand things from within. He appreciates better the elements of a mentality different from his own. He becomes less categorical, more human. Under the rough exterior, he discovers a soul. Under the poncho that smells of coca, he recognizes someone.<sup>4</sup>

His account of missionary experience in Bolivia thus reads as both a personal testimony and an ethnographic study of his Aymara parishioners. Sharing these ‘discoveries’, Monast points to the need for a distinct understanding of mission in Latin America. Contemporary missionaries were no longer operating on a Christian frontier, but had to navigate the complex legacy of colonial evangelization.<sup>5</sup> To a certain extent, the approach of Monast preceded the concerns for a new, research-informed mission practice that has been repeatedly raised in documents emanating from Catholic reforms of the 1960s. *Ad Gentes* and *Gaudium et Spes*, in particular, called for a close approach towards local (religious) culture through adaptation to language, rites and folkloric expressions, and the production of knowledge about them.

In April 1968, the missions department of CELAM organized a small conference in Melgar, Colombia, to evaluate pastoral activity and discuss new orientations, necessities and local demands in “mission territories”. In dealing with these topics, the missions department, under the leadership of Colombian bishop Valencia Cano, first scrutinized the contemporary meaning of ‘mission territories’, that is, the space where evangelization efforts were required despite centuries of Cath-

3 Luis Dalle, “El Despacho,” *Allpanchis* 1 (1969): 154.

4 Jacques Émile Monast, *Los indios aimaraes: evangelizados o solamente bautizados?* (Buenos Aires: C. Lohlé, 1972), 261.

5 Andrew Orta, *Catechizing Culture: Missionaries, Aymara, and the “New Evangelization”* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 73–74.

olic presence. In the base document for the conference, *La realidad de las misiones en América Latina*, several perspectives on the notion of mission and its territorial manifestations are outlined. Whereas under canon law, only those jurisdictions dependent upon Propaganda Fide are officially considered mission territories, the base document suggests that many, if not most, of the seventy-five prelatures existing across the continent should be considered missions. The author José Manuel Román argues that the clergy across these jurisdictions, as well as in certain dioceses, are facing an “anthropological problem” – a significant presence of indigenous or Afro-descendent populations deemed insufficiently evangelized – as well as a lack of socio-economic development, notably in the field of education.<sup>6</sup> As exemplified by the case of Ayaviri, this situation further fueled these jurisdictions’ dependence upon (foreign) religious congregations, whose staff and capital had to be mobilized to large extents to sustain these unofficial mission jurisdictions.

A sociological survey of the work of missionaries, encompassing religious personnel working in mission territories across the subcontinent, as well as their superiors at the head of dioceses, prelatures and vicariates, evidenced the complexities of contemporary mission experiences. Among other aspects, the study revealed the insufficient preparation of religious actors, with a large majority working “at the margins of analysis of native societies”, as well as a lack of interest among missionaries for local economic and social structures and the so-called “magical-religious primitive context.”<sup>7</sup> In fact, 56% of the study participants claimed that their parishioners were but “superficially Catholic”, emphasizing that previous missionary efforts had not been sufficiently successful. Anthropologist José de Recasens traced the reason for these failings to the fact that missionary activity over the past four and a half centuries only affected one part of the social structure:

Unless the missionaries have full and absolute knowledge of the details of the native peoples’ systems of life, the patterns of conduct, the patterns of thought, the ideas and values proper to another culture and, moreover, the dynamic structure and function they perform for these other people, the task of spiritual direction cannot be carried out effectively.<sup>8</sup>

6 José Manuel Román, “La realidad de las misiones en América Latina,” in *Antropología y evangelización*, ed. Departamento de Misiones del CELAM (Bogotá: DMC, 1969), 191–212.

7 José de Recasens, “Resumen general y conclusiones de la encuesta (Interpretación y evaluación de los datos),” in *Antropología y evangelización*, ed. Departamento de Misiones del CELAM (Bogotá: DMC, 1969), 89–90.

8 José de Recasens, “Consideraciones antropológicas al cambio cultural (dinámica de las misiones),” in *Antropología y evangelización*, ed. Departamento de Misiones del CELAM (Bogotá: DMC, 1969), 132.

In other words, missionaries can only overcome past failures with the help of a more comprehensive knowledge of the environment they are working in. Anthropology, from this point of view, thus becomes an indispensable tool for the missionary in his work as an agent of (religious) change. Or, in the words of another participant, “all pastoral action, in particular the missionary one, [...] necessarily has to be anthropological.”<sup>9</sup>

The calls for close cooperation between anthropologists and missionaries affirmed that the ethnocentric missionary practice could only evolve through a distinct understanding and appreciation of religious and cultural pluralism. Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, another participating anthropologist, presented the perspective of the missionized in his critical account of the “directed cultural change” sought by the missionaries. In his view, religious agents often repudiated and belittled (indigenous) culture – “a piece of art, a unique phenomenon” – when aiming to introduce or foster Catholic religion. Since the appreciation of different cultures results from knowledge and profound understanding of other ways of life, he called upon missionaries to study their parishioners “like an anthropologist.”<sup>10</sup> The final document eventually affirmed that the missionaries “had to respect cultural differences” and help their parishioners develop “according to their respective characteristics.”<sup>11</sup>

In many instances, the debates held in Melgar reproduced existing preconceptions of missionaries and anthropologists regarding their distinct approaches vis-à-vis the subject of their work. Whereas missionaries are considered as agents of disruptive change that aim to impose their religion unaware of (or indifferent to) its impact on the larger socio-cultural dynamics, anthropologists are portrayed as defending their subjects of study against foreign imposition.<sup>12</sup> The archetype “missionary-anthropologist” advanced by the participants, in turn, strives to imbricate the methodology of both actors: someone that aims to spread a religious message, but adapts this message in line with the acquired knowledge of, and respect for, the local socio-religious context.

This idealization of the ‘missionary-anthropologists’, however, also raises significant questions as to what extent these actors could indeed become the “spokesmen for this ignored and despised world [of] the American indigenous population.” It is notable that, at the same time as he pleaded for the indigenous

9 Luis R. González, “Elementos de antropología útiles para el misionero,” in *Antropología y evangelización*, ed. Departamento de Misiones del CELAM (Bogotá: DMC, 1969), 173.

10 Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, “El misionero ante las culturas indígenas,” in *Antropología y evangelización*, ed. Departamento de Misiones del CELAM (Bogotá: DMC, 1969), 150, 158.

11 Departamento de Misiones del CELAM, *La pastoral en las misiones de América Latina*, 2nd ed., Iglesia nueva (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1972), 30.

12 Claude E. Stipe et al., “Anthropologists Versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions [and Comments and Reply],” *Current Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (April 1980): 165–79.

people to be respected, and protected from ethnocentric mission practices, Reichel-Dolmatoff also emphasizes the need for modernization: the *indios* should receive seeds, tools and education, and benefit from the “good and the positive, material and spiritual, that our civilization can offer.”<sup>13</sup> His ambiguous and paternalistic argumentation indicates how missionaries and anthropologists still retained the authority to decide what was good and positive with regard to processes of acculturation and the religious traditions of indigenous parishioners. In other words, Reichel-Dolmatoff and his fellow colleagues arguably failed to recognize how they maintained some of the power structures they themselves criticized.

The colonial nature of contemporary missionary activity in Latin America, and the nature of scholarly contributions to this milieu, were subject to significant criticism in the early 1970s. In the Declaration of Barbados, eleven anthropologists denounced the role of state, church and fellow scientists in perpetuating the colonial condition of indigenous populations. Arguing that “the inherent ethnocentric aspect of the evangelization process is also a component of colonialist ideology”, the declarations called for the suspension of all missionary activity and appealed to the responsibility of the church to support the indigenous population in their struggles for liberation.<sup>14</sup> Highly controversial in its message, the Declaration spurred several critical reactions. The Asunción Statement, developed in March 1972 by delegations from across the continent and Christian denominations, countered the Barbados declaration by reaffirming that “mission work is the very *raison d'être* of the church” and hence not subject to negotiation. Recognizing that “our churches have not succeeded in impregnating Latin American societies with a liberating Christian love, free from discrimination of race, creed or culture”, the signatories reaffirmed the need for the emancipation of the indigenous population, yet – partially echoing liberation theology – inscribed it fully within the religious and social mission of the church.<sup>15</sup>

## Instituto de Pastoral Andina

Towards the end of the 1960s, the regional coordination of pastoral work among the dioceses and prelatures in Peru’s southern highlands gained in importance as bishops sought to find common responses to the growing problems with vocation, catechist education and evangelization. The minor seminary San Martín de Porres of Puno, for instance, faced a continuously decreasing number of students cou-

13 Reichel-Dolmatoff, “El misionero ante las culturas indígenas,” 158.

14 “Declaration of Barbados: For the Liberation of the Indians,” *International Review of Mission* 62, no. 247 (July 1973): 268–74.

15 “Asunción Statement: The Church and Its Mission Among the Indians of Latin America,” *International Review of Mission* 62, no. 247 (1 July 1973): 275–77.

pled with financial difficulties that led to its closure in late 1968. After more than twenty-five years of efforts to promote local vocation, first spearheaded by the Maryknoll missionaries, and then supported by all three *puneño* jurisdictions, only twelve priests had completed their seminary studies. Many of those, after living “a life protected and separated from the reality” during their studies, “experienced a great shock when living in a small and poor village” and were thus dissatisfied in their profession. The lack of interest among seminarians, as well as their “flourishing bourgeois attitude”, not only undermined the efforts to promote vocation but, similar to the criticism of paternalistic development aid, raised questions about the future of the Catholic mission in Puno altogether.<sup>16</sup>

In February 1968, the bishops of the department of Puno discussed how they could reorient and coordinate their pastorate among the mostly rural parishioners. A new center for pastoral research, they suggested, could offer a “better understanding of the peasant of the altiplano and his necessities” to the priests working in Puno. Luciano Metzinger pleaded for further regional cooperation including the jurisdictions of the departments of Apurímac and Cuzco. Reflecting diocesan commitment to the projected research center, he promised to secure funding by presenting a proposal to the national episcopacy and foreign donors.<sup>17</sup> Two months later, it was also Metzinger who, alongside the prelate of neighboring Sicuani and Gustavo Gutiérrez, attended the small conference of the CELAM missions department discussed above.

In order to respond to their ‘anthropological problem’, the bishops agreed to establish the Instituto de Pastoral Andina (IPA) later the same year in the city of Cuzco under the leadership of French cleric Louis Dalle from the Sacred-Hearts congregation. Constituting the principal initiative to coordinate and foster pastoral reform in all jurisdictions between Juli and Abancay, it aimed to adapt pastoral work to the geographic milieu of the southern highlands. As “an expression of the existing pastoral concern”, IPA also intended to contribute to a common pastoral orientation in the different dioceses and prelatures.<sup>18</sup> Clergy could build on the mounting interest in religion among many of the recently founded departments of anthropology in various universities across Peru. Anthropologists from the University of Cuzco, most notably Oscar Nuñez del Prado, had previously signaled their interest in offering classes to interested parish priests.<sup>19</sup> Through the publication of its bulletin and the magazine *Allpanchis*, IPA provided a platform

16 AHPA, Reunión Obispos Puno, Clausura del Seminario Menor San Martín de Porras, 03.10.1968.

17 AHPA, Reunión Obispos Puno, Reunión en Ayaviri, 14-15.02.1968.

18 AHPA, IPA, “Reflexiones sobre las posibles modificaciones del Instituto de Pastoral Andina,” Cuzco, 20.09.1968.

19 AHPA, Reunión Obispos Puno, Reunión en Ayaviri, 14-15.02.1968.

for scholarly exchange and debates on new perspectives about religious beliefs and practices for both clergy and social scientists.

The invitation to the first course for pastoral agents, which included, among others, classes on ethnology, applied anthropology and religious anthropology, underscored the need to overcome the major obstacles faced by the missionaries of the Andes:

It is no exaggeration to say that the soul of the Indian is a mystery to those who are strangers to his environment. Not only because of its traditional mutism, but also because of the great difference in psychology, vision of things and the cultural backwardness of centuries. These factors act as barriers that prevent us from knowing the Indian in depth, appreciating his values and the possibilities for faith. One can speak of an even greater ignorance when one tries to describe his religious world. [...] Establishing pastoral care on these vague appraisals is a risk if one wants to lead the Indian towards a personally lived faith, and towards a renewed church.<sup>20</sup>

Attendees of the course, lasting for over a month, thus aspired to overcome any barriers of knowledge that had previously impeded missionaries' comprehension of (and relationships with) their parishioners. According to a subsequent survey, most participants indeed attended the course out of "a desire to understand the indigenous people and to be able to help them".<sup>21</sup>

By discursively constructing the mysterious soul as an embodiment of the unknown, that is both physically close yet mentally out of reach, the indigenous 'religious world' was rendered an object of scrutiny and fascination for all those who aimed to adapt and (re)negotiate their missionary zeal. Through their participation at the courses offered by IPA or their participant observation of religious ceremonies, they could discover beliefs and practices that supposedly remained hidden from their view. José Luis González, a Spanish missionary in Ayaviri, for instance, recalls how he had long conversations with Luis Dalle after attending a nocturnal offering to *Pachamama*. Despite working on the highlands for an extended period, both Dalle and González felt that this experience - considered both "confusing" and "fascinating" - had ramifications for their pastoral action. "We woke up to a reality", González stated, "that, despite its proximity, had remained invisible [to us]."<sup>22</sup>

Recent sociological studies, in turn, had affirmed that the missionary presence also raised questions and doubts among those whose opinion had often been ig-

20 AHPA, IPA, "Instituto de Pastoral Andina: programa de estudios," n.d.

21 AHPA, IPA, "Conclusiones del estudio de opinión en el cursillo del IPA," Cuzco, 20-26.09.1968.

22 José Luis González, "Una experiencia eclesial: el Sur Andino," in *Dos obispos del Sur Andino: Luis Vallejos, Luis Dalle, en el corazón de su pueblo*, ed. Cecilia Tovar (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1982), 20.



nored in discussions on the anthropological problem: the local parishioners. Researchers commissioned by Ivan Illich's Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in 1968, for instance, evidenced how the attitude towards foreign clergy varied according to the wealth, age and gender of the Catholic population in two ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the southern highlands. Even though the consulted parishioners in the Prelatures of Juli and Sicuani, for instance, generally held a positive opinion of the missionary presence, respondents would also criticize some missionaries for wearing civilian clothing, consider them agents of US imperialism, or accuse them of "taking advantage of the ignorance of the people". In both prelatures, the interviewees blamed the material and often physical distance between them and the foreign religious personnel for many of the negative attitudes towards the mostly North American clergy. Concluding the surveys, the investigators hence argued that the mutual resentments between missionaries and missionized can be traced back to "cultural differences" that shaped their respective encounters and inhibited a better reciprocal understanding.<sup>23</sup>

Jesuit anthropologist Manuel Marzal, responsible for IPA's classes on religious anthropology, aimed to bridge these differences by forging a new relation between the representatives of the church and the still predominantly rural parishioners. He cautioned that these relations often suffered from mutual misunderstandings and mistrust. In the introduction to his first study commissioned by IPA,<sup>24</sup> *El mundo religioso de Urcos*, Marzal outlined his objective to overcome barriers of religious and social nature:

For many years the priests have officially ignored all the agrarian religiosity of the peasants (the offerings to the land, the *t'inkas* to the cattle...). And even in forms of worship of Catholic origin (blessings, stewardship, pilgrimages...), priests have shown little interest, especially in the wake of the theological currents of secularization. What the common people like, the priest does not. That is why a sincere dialogue is needed.<sup>25</sup>

To create a basis for this dialogue, however, priests had "to divest themselves of their securit[ies]", of both a cultural and religious nature. In other words, Marzal pleaded for church representatives to question their status as members of "the dominant culture" and "the true religion". Anthropological research into reli-

23 Jaime Ponce G. et al., "Peru: Juli - 1968: actitudes y estructuras sociales," CIDOC Cuaderno no. 46 (Cuernavaca: CIDOC, 1970); Pedro Negre Rigol and Franklin Bustillos Galvez, "Sicuani, 1968: estudio socio-religioso," Sondeos no. 60 (Cuernavaca: CIDOC, 1970).

24 The research focused on the designated "pilot parish" of the Prelature of Sicuani, a space where anthropological knowledge could inform, if not completely transform, evangelization efforts.

25 Manuel M. Marzal, *El mundo religioso de Urcos: un estudio de antropología religiosa y de pastoral campesina de los Andes* (Cuzco: Instituto de Pastoral Andina, 1971), ii-iii.

gious traditions and ceremonies, he hoped, would be conducive to said dialogue by representing and further elucidating the “religious voice of the peasantry”.<sup>26</sup>

In a time where, according to Marzal, “everything was possible” in the Latin American Catholic Church,<sup>27</sup> clerics could hence question and critically reflect upon their mission in the countryside more so than ever before. As an impetus to pastoral reform, however, invitations to anthropological forms of knowledge production were solely offered through religious actors and church representatives. Thus, arguably, it was not a dialogue among equals, but one where religious actors retained the authority to decide the extent to which they were willing to renegotiate their pastoral work. IPA indeed foremost sought to “help priests, religious women and laity [...] to become better pastoral workers” before attempting to make *indios* better Christians.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, the ‘anthropological problem’ encountered and criticized by many missionaries was theirs (alone) to solve.

## “The Indian Face of God”

A decade after the creation of the prelature, the clergy of Ayaviri increasingly questioned the ethnocentric perspective that had marked the early missionary presence in northern Puno. In a meeting in January 1969, the priests in attendance agreed on new pastoral orientations for the upcoming year, which included a short- and long-term objective. For the time being, they decided to continue with a focus on evangelization and catechism. In the foreseeable future, however, the work launched by IPA should provide concrete results and recommendations which were to be taken into consideration for the reform of pastoral work.<sup>29</sup> In a letter circulated the following year, Metzinger criticized pastoral practice that lacked recognition and respect for local religious customs even more explicitly. Such an approach, he argued, led the “naturally introverted” parishioners to “isolate themselves and hide the treasure of the beliefs and traditions of their ancestors.” Facing a challenge to discover and understand the “[indigenous] soul, mentality and culture”, the prelate called upon all pastoral workers to “assemble and collect data obtained during the daily contact with parishioners.”<sup>30</sup>

26 Marzal, ii-iii.

27 Manuel M. Marzal, *Testimonio*, 23.10.1995, Lima (manuscrito) quoted in José Sánchez Paredes, “Manuel M. Marzal, S.J. Vida, pasión y obra de un antropólogo peruano,” in *Los rostros de la tierra encantada: Religión, evangelización y sincretismo en el Nuevo Mundo. Homenaje a Manuel Marzal, S.J.* (Lima: Institut Français d’Études Andines, Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2013), 30.

28 Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821–1985*, 323.

29 AHPA, Consejo Presbiterial, Reunión sacerdotal del 03.01.1969.

30 AHPA, Provincia Melgar-Historia, Luciano Metzinger, Circular no. 1 a los sacerdotes, 1970.

In the early 1970s, Thomas Garr and Manuel Marzal spearheaded these church-led efforts to promote research on religion in Ayaviri. They embodied the “missionary-anthropologists”, those religious actors whose social science background permitted them to examine and analyze indigenous religious beliefs – what Marzal later framed as “*el rostro indio de Dios*”<sup>31</sup> – for the sake of a better understanding and contextual adaptation of missionary engagements. Replicating and building upon previous studies, Garr and Marzal discussed the perseverance of religious pluralism in spite of centuries of (Catholic) evangelization. However, their interests did not lie solely with the analysis of religious practices, but also in offering recommendations for how pastoral agents could mobilize anthropological knowledge in their sermons, catechisms and social engagements. Or, more broadly speaking, they were interested in how the church could “adapt to its people [...] and respond to the demands of a radically different culture”.<sup>32</sup>

The somewhat ambivalent character and methodology of these studies was subject to criticism, especially in retrospect. In his review of ethnological studies of the 1970s, Frank Salomon included the studies that responded to the calls from the Second Vatican Council to reexamine relations between non-Christian religions and Catholicism. Subsuming these analyses into the then burgeoning field of “Andean Studies”, he nevertheless emphasized that the research had often been carried out by churchmen who “only instrumentally” applied anthropological ideas and methodology.<sup>33</sup> Garr acknowledged that his work could not be understood as a “purely anthropological ethnography”, yet claimed that his presentation as a priest helped him gain access to the local population and avoid being merely considered a “gringo”, or, as nevertheless happened once, “a CIA agent.”<sup>34</sup> Although offering some “artisanal methods for religious research” in a 1972 article published in *Allpanchis*, Marzal retrospectively feared that the information obtained by clerics (with no social science background) would likely include elusive phrases as they risked being perceived as the “heirs of old idolatry extirpators”. Offerings to *Pachamama*, widely practiced across the southern highlands, would then for instance be reduced to a practice “only followed by the ‘*comunidades de altura*’”, who thus “represent the frontier to barbarity.”<sup>35</sup>

Besides examining the local understanding of the “Christian God”, both missionary-anthropologists – albeit Garr more extensively than Marzal – also ana-

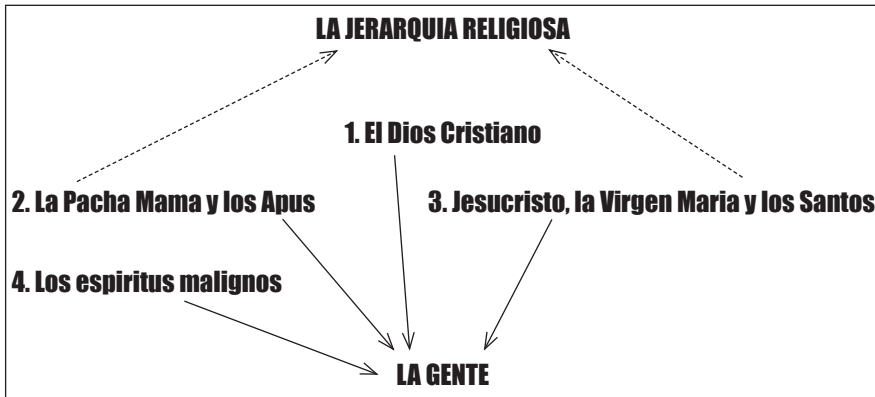
31 Manuel María Marzal, *El rostro indio de Dios* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1991).

32 Garr, *Cristianismo y religión quechua en la prelatura de Ayaviri*, 2–3.

33 Frank Salomon, “Andean Ethnology in the 1970s: A Retrospective,” *Latin American Research Review* 17, no. 2 (1982): 100.

34 Garr, *Cristianismo y religión quechua en la prelatura de Ayaviri*, 5–8.

35 Manuel M. Marzal, “Investigación socio-religiosa y pastoral,” *Allpanchis* 4 (1972): 185–201; Manuel M. Marzal, *Tierra encantada: tratado de antropología religiosa de América Latina*, Estructuras y procesos Ed. Trotta Ser. Antropología (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2002), 252.



11. Vision of the Sacred World.  
 (Garr, *Cristianismo y Religión Quechua*, 184)

lyzed the role of deities of the traditional pantheon who were supplicated to safeguard cattle, harvest and houses:

A world in which there is a supernatural reality behind every important physical manifestation: of a goddess who is the earth [*Pachamama*], of divinities who inhabit the hills [*Apus*], of beings who appear in the rocks, ravines and rivers and of phenomena which, if they are not natural beings themselves, are in any case instruments of other beings: hail, snow, rain, frost, wind, lightning and the rainbow. [...] Thus, the religious life of the peasant consists in trying to appease benign beings and avoid evil ones: an effort that enters into every aspect of his life, even what we would call the most profane.<sup>36</sup>

Garr also outlined the respective roles of these deities and spirits, emphasizing the utilitarian nature of many of the religious ceremonies, which often related to the traditional agricultural cycle. In August, before the start of sowing season, for instance, he attended a ceremonial blessing of the *chacra*. The ceremony consisted principally in the offering of food and coca leaves which, after praying for abundant harvests, the attendants burned on the ground. Other accounts - “mentioning more esoteric elements” - reflect how these ceremonies differed from village to village. The ceremony, following Garr’s description, also incorporated Christian elements: not only did the participants ask God’s forgiveness for their sins, but they also placed the offerings in the form of a cross. The benediction of the *chacra* by a Catholic priest was however considered supplementary to the offerings to *Pachamama*.<sup>37</sup>

36 Garr, *Cristianismo y religion quechua en la prelaturo de Ayaviri*, 131.

37 Garr, 147-51.

Based on their respective observations and inquiries in different parishes, the missionary-anthropologists made attempts to conceptualize the nature of religious beliefs and practices. In his discussions of religious celebrations and the concept of God in three rural parishes, Garr underlined the simultaneous existence of “traditional religion” and Catholicism, a binary constellation that was, in practice, often mutually intertwined and inseparable. Therefore, while aiming to understand the “sacred world” of the parishioners he interviewed, he struggled to express and articulate said religion. Through the chart above, depicting the religious hierarchy he wished to deduce (Figure 11), Garr tried to illustrate and structure beliefs in both Catholic saints and the “Quechua pantheon”. In so doing, he arguably oversimplified the complex “religious cosmos” of the peasantry. As Garr himself conceded, these beliefs were indeed impossible to define.<sup>38</sup>

Examining the religious beliefs in Ayaviri, which was by the mid-1970s considered a town inhabited by *cholos*, Marzal faced similar difficulties. Interested in understanding how processes of modernization impacted the image and perception of God, he based his analysis on Clifford Geertz’s influential model of “religion as a cultural system.”<sup>39</sup> Marzal affirmed that since religion and culture are inseparable, so too are the beliefs in Christian and ‘Andean’ deities in the syncretic beliefs of the *ayavireño* population. In his words, it is impossible to conceive of God if not through “one’s own way of thinking and feeling the universe, one’s own cultural heritage”. Simply put, the religious beliefs of parishioners can only be understood through “their own [human] experiences”.<sup>40</sup>

This observation, however, also points to some of the inherent difficulties faced by both missionary-anthropologists, who originated from Spain and the United States, respectively. They sought to discuss religious phenomena that they could only describe, not truly understand, and they attempted to make sense of these phenomena not through their own socio-religious practice, but only through the testimonies they received and the ceremonies they observed. The religious and lay actors they wrote these studies for, too, for the most part, could also not share the same cultural heritage or experiences as their parishioners.

One of their original hypotheses, that there existed a correlation between processes of modernization and secularization in wealthier parishes, also proved to be inaccurate. Development and progress, the predominant objectives of pastoral work during the previous decade, had hardly fostered Catholic beliefs among rural

38 Garr, *Cristianismo y religion quechua en la prelatura de Ayaviri*, 16-17, 183-84.

39 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87-125.

40 Manuel M. Marzal, *Estudios sobre religión campesina*, 2nd ed. (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1988), 53-55, 120; José Leopoldo Piedra Valdez, *La misión andina: la historia de la Palabra encarnada en los Andes*, 1st ed. (Lima: Universidad del Pacífico, 2013), 109.

parishioners. If missionaries had since colonial times “brought a series of saints and rituals related to agriculture”, they did not succeed in replacing religious traditions and worship of the agrarian deities and spirits. Concluding his analysis, Marzal thus unsurprisingly asks: “What should the institutional church do with this ‘belief in God’ of the Andean people?”<sup>41</sup>

The response of the prelatore was to focus on reformulating its pastoral activity, both in terms of the positionality of priests and catechists as well as the Christian messages they spread. In his analysis of the role of church representatives, Garr emphasized the dynamics of class and power, which played a crucial role in how pastoral agents were perceived. These undercurrents appeared to be particularly relevant when it came to the role of the local parish priest, regardless of whether he was Peruvian, as was the case in Orurillo, or French, in Coaza and San Juan del Oro:

The priest in the countryside belongs to a social class unattainable for the peasant. It may be that the same priest is from the same region as the people, but once he has become a priest, in the opinion of the people, he has separated himself from that vulgar world. The parish priest can make many efforts to be open and understanding of the problems of people of all social classes and can try to break the boundaries of these classes in his dealings with people, but he will always be ‘different’ and a ‘stranger’. [...] According to the peasants themselves, a total identification of the priest with them would be a contradiction.<sup>42</sup>

The prevalent perceptions of catechists were very similar to the ones held of priests, even if, in theory, there was no prestige or power connected to the tasks of these religious intermediaries. As Garr points out, however, the case was often the contrary. Those who enjoyed certain prestige and authority within a community were more likely to be elected catechists, and the head catechists in both Coaza and Orurillo tended to abuse their position for financial benefit and political influence, thus risking becoming “new religious *gamonales*.” To confront and change the role and perceptions of pastoral agents, Garr underlined the need to foster a “local church” that no longer depended on foreign *padrecitos*, still considered members of the dominating power after centuries of oppression through the “white structure” of Catholicism. Furthermore, he suggested strengthening the authority, autonomy and the education of catechists, as they ultimately constituted the intermediaries with whom the peasants could (or at least should) more easily identify.<sup>43</sup>

41 Marzal, *Estudios sobre religión campesina*, 137, 148.

42 Garr, *Cristianismo y religión quechua en la prelatore de Ayaviri*, 161–62.

43 Garr, 167–68, 218–19.

In addition to reforms of the pastoral and catechetical model, religious actors were called upon to adapt the content of their sermons and religious celebrations, which had thus far often consisted in “occidental concepts”. In particular, Garr hoped that pastoral agents could begin to “express the gospel in terms [the parishioners] can conceptualize themselves and thus reflect on their own intimate experience of revelation”, if possible in Quechua.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Marzal petitioned with pastoral agents to assist their parishioners through the processes of modernization and political reform and help them discover new means for the expression of belief while not forgetting that all cultures face the same facilities and difficulties in grasping and articulating the mystery of God.<sup>45</sup> Even though neither of the authors explicitly referred to the concept, they both expressed the need for an “inculturated” pastoral practice which valued and, at least partially, incorporated local beliefs. They hence remained optimistic that their ambitious recommendations could lead the church in Ayaviri to develop a distinctively local (religious) identity. The prelature could, following their perspective, become one of the first jurisdictions in advancing the inculturation of faith during the second evangelization of Latin America. Similar endeavors to establish an “autochthonous church” in San Cristobal de las Casas (Mexico), endorse an “*iglesia indígena*” in Chimborazo (Ecuador), or promote a “theology of inculturation” on the Bolivian altiplano also only materialized from the mid-1970s onwards.<sup>46</sup>

Jean Berthelot has provided a more critical testimony based on his personal experience in northern Puno. After six years as parish priest in Coaza (1962–1968), Berthelot married Chantal Grégoire, who ran the health dispensary in the same district, and quit working for the Prelature of Ayaviri. His thesis, *Religion, Pouvoir et Développement dans la Sierra de Carabaya* (1972), like the two studies previously analyzed, examines the region he previously worked in from the perspective of sociology of religion and cultural anthropology. Rather than relying on short-term fieldwork, however, his analysis is based on the documentation collected during his missionary presence. As discussed in Chapter 2, Berthelot’s work in the highland parish altered the ecclesiastical and architectural landscape of Coaza. As mentioned by the *Album de Oro* in 1970, among the “noteworthy buildings” in the village of approximately 500 inhabitants were the health dispensary, kindergarten and new church building, “all of which is the work of foreigners”.<sup>47</sup> Notwithstand-

44 Garr, *Cristianismo y religion quechua en la prelatura de Ayaviri*, 216.

45 Marzal, *Estudios sobre religion campesina*, 149–50.

46 Michel Andraos, “Iglesia Autóctona: An Indigenous Response to Colonial Christianity,” in *Decolonial Christianities: Latinx and Latin American Perspectives*, ed. Raimundo Barreto and Roberto Sirvent (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 135; Andrea Müller, “Kirche, Ethnizität Und Mythos. Die ‘Revolution Des Poncho’ in Ecuador (1960–1990),” *Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte* 59 (2019): 263–64; Orta, *Catechizing Culture*, 3–5.

47 Benjamin Dueñas Tovar, “Ensayo monográfico de la provincia de Carabaya,” in Samuel P. Frisancho ed. *Album de Oro V*, 1975, 48.

ing his commitment to his parish and the social work among its inhabitants, as carried out alongside his future wife, Berthelot also criticized the state of pastoral practice throughout the prelature. For instance, Metzinger noted that before his departure Berthelot had regretted the lack of practical application of directives from Vatican II, was “particularly opposed to giving sacraments” to the parishioners, considering their non-Catholic beliefs, and supported the idea of recruiting married indigenous priests.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, what may be considered a radical stance on pastoral work also manifests in his analysis of the imbrication of religion and power in the province of Carabaya. In his thesis, Berthelot comprehensively examined the mission context in the highlands of northern Puno, discussing regional demographics, agriculture, class and ethnicity, among other topics. His analysis of religion reveals a detailed knowledge of indigenous religious practice even if he never attended an offering to *Pachamama*.<sup>49</sup> He however emphasized the difficulty in observing and explicating what he calls “*religion indienne*” (including “myths” and “magic”) for the benefit of an occidental audience, as it was practiced clandestinely and could not be plainly reduced to European ways of thinking. Berthelot therefore criticized the labelling of beliefs as syncretic (language employed by Marzal), because it summarizes and dissimulates “a series of phenomena or processes that are extremely different” from each other. According to his understanding, parishioners “did not change religion when they pass from an offering to *Pachamama* to [Catholic] mass” – they simply incorporated certain Christian practices into their belief system. In contrast to the observations made by both Garr and Marzal, Berthelot considered the population of Carabaya as maintaining a religion which remained “profoundly Indian”, despite its superficial adoption of Catholic signifiers.<sup>50</sup>

If parishioners had managed to resist religious conversion, they were still subjected to the (symbolic) domination of the Catholic Church. Furthering the (cautious) criticism raised by Garr, Berthelot notably decried the privilege of the priest who is approached by his indigenous parishioners with the same attitude as a *mestizo*, “extremely respectful and humble”, reflecting “a feeling of inferiority long interiorized.” The parish priest is considered a member of the upper class and sits among local authorities, in stark contrast to indigenous religious practice that had been “condemned by Catholicism to secrecy” and which was usually carried out at night. It is thus no surprise for Berthelot that the indigenous habitants of the village of Coaza are “hesitant [...] to occupy the few benches in the church or chapel” as it is considered “the place for *mestizos*.” Due to the intrinsic association between

48 AHPA, Parrócos Anteriores, Luciano Metzinger, carta a C. Moller, Sous-secrétaire de la Congrégation pour la Doctrine de la Foi, 17.08.1968.

49 Jean Berthelot, “Coaza: Une ‘chrétienté’ quéchua,” *Parole et Mission* 11, no. 40, 1968, 535–37.

50 Berthelot, *Religion, pouvoir et développement dans la sierra de Carabaya*, 255, 258, 307–8.



Catholic religion and social status, many catechists considered their relation to the priest a source of prestige and a means for personal advancement. Based on the testimony of one of his catechists, Berthelot reflected upon how the competition surrounding catechist positions further underlined the idea that Catholicism embodies “dominant society”, an end of marginalization and oppression that many catechists had presumably longed for.<sup>51</sup>

From the same perspective, Berthelot also criticized the most recent attempts to apprehend the ‘indigenous soul’ and adapt pastoral practice in the southern highlands accordingly. Both Garr and Marzal, in their respective analysis, suggested that it was necessary to “‘Christianize’ a legitimate native revelation” or “liberate [the indigenous religious vision] from its lame elements”, thus distinguishing between “legitimate” characteristics of indigenous religious practice and those considered of little or no value.<sup>52</sup> According to Berthelot, a search for Christian values in indigenous religious practice that ended up dividing between ‘true’ and ‘false’ religion was equivalent to an act of extirpation, and thus only further cemented the unequal power relations forged by the dominating religion:

“Truth’, ‘legitimacy’, the ‘reality’ of the ‘true human values’[...] are being determined in reference to the axiology established by the dominating culture. So that, for the church, evangelizing the Indian finally translates into imposing a way of thinking, feeling, acting, conform to Peruvian society [...] To the point where we can ask ourselves today – and for longtime already – whether for Peru and for the Andean church it’s not a mistake to be born, or remain, Indian.”<sup>53</sup>

In sum, Berthelot overall strongly criticized the unequal power relations the church benefitted from, “today like over four centuries ago, when the Western and autochthonous civilizations first met.”<sup>54</sup> The colonial heritage of contemporary Catholicism and its manifestation as a dominating religion that marginalized indigenous beliefs, not only underlined the complex interplay between ethnicity, class and religion in the Andes, but also, in his view, called into question the legitimacy of continuous evangelization practice (notwithstanding mounting anthropological concerns). In a similar vein, Julio González Ruiz, like Berthelot dedicated to the study of sociology after his abdication as bishop of Puno, also lamented the enforced religious changes on the altiplano in his dissertation.<sup>55</sup>

51 Berthelot, *Religion pouvoir et développement dans la sierra de Carabaya*, 276–77, 312–14.

52 Garr, *Cristianismo y religion quechua en la prelatuza de Ayaviri*, 227; Marzal, *Estudios sobre religión campesina*, 150.

53 Berthelot, *Religion, pouvoir et développement dans la sierra de Carabaya*, 276.

54 Berthelot, 313.

55 Julio González Ruiz, *Tradition Religieuse et Changement Dans Le Haut-Plateau de Puno* (Paris: E.H.E.S.S., 1980).

Even if the missionary-anthropologists criticized the colonial extirpation practices, they did not question mission as – in accordance with the Asunción Statement – they saw it as the very *raison d'être* of the church. Echoing the criticism raised by Berthelot, French priest Juan Hugues outlined the predicament of many contemporary missionaries in a 1972 contribution to the *Boletín Informativo* of IPA: “How [do we] respect the culture of the Southern Andes if, at the same time, [we] change its religion?”<sup>56</sup> The purported inculturation risked further exacerbating the contradiction between a proclaimed respect for religious tradition and acts of (Catholic) evangelization.

The controversial debates surrounding the uses and abuses of anthropology in missionary activity, exemplified by the work of Berthelot and the Declaration of Barbados, reveal how contentious the conduct of social-scientific studies and their application in new evangelization practice were. For example, Luis González, head of the Mexican Centro Nacional de Pastoral Indigenista, argued that scholars, state and religious actors working among indigenous communities had to stop “invent[ing] him [the Indian] to maintain or extend their areas of oppression”, and rather had to “discover” the indigenous person.<sup>57</sup> His call for an “Indian *indigenismo*” mirrored the convictions of the missionary-anthropologists working for IPA: it was about uncovering a mystery, creating new forms of knowledge and producing a new understanding of religion. At the same time, their ‘discovery’ was also intrinsically tied to the pastoral reform process which, in turn, manifested ideals of a culturally sensitive Catholicism, as the aim of the new evangelization practice.

As much as these anthropological inquiries were based on different objectives and approaches, they attest to how the systematic analysis of religion raised questions on pastoral reform across the southern highlands from the early 1970s onwards. In contrast to the two missionary-anthropologists, who reconciled their scholarly approaches with their aspirations for a local incarnation of the Catholic Church, Berthelot arguably professed little sympathy for the Ayaviri mission. At the same time, all three studies shared certain limitations in view of the positionality of the researchers. For instance, whether due to linguistic difficulties or issues with their research designs, Berthelot, Garr and Marzal showed little interest in understanding the aspirations and opinions of (local) laypeople regarding pastoral reform – and even less in what female parishioners felt about these processes. While Berthelot discredited further evangelization among indigenous parishioners altogether, the two missionary-anthropologists hoped that clerics would involve more local laypeople and religious intermediaries in their parish. As Garr’s

56 AHPA, IPA, Juan Hugues, “Respetar la cultura: un problema para la Iglesia?” *Boletín Informativo IPA*, no. 19, noviembre 1972.

57 R. Luis Gonzalez, “Anthropology and the ‘Indian Problem,’” *International Review of Mission* 62, no. 247 (1973): 284.

and Marzal's studies rightly foresaw, and as next section of this chapter will discuss, it was indeed upon pastoral agents to discuss how they aimed to proceed with pastoral reform in light of the (anthropological) knowledge at their disposal.

## Questioning Pastoral Reform

In the Prelature of Ayaviri, the most significant reforms of pastoral work coincided with a change in ecclesiastical governance. After Metzinger was elected Secretary-General of the Peruvian episcopacy in early 1971, the prelatore was administered *ad interim* by Edmond Gauthier before Pope Paul VI named Louis Dalle the new prelate of Ayaviri. Like his countryman and predecessor Metzinger, Dalle had survived Nazi concentration camps in the final months of the Second World War, albeit prior to his ordination in 1946. After his arrival in Peru, he held influential positions within the Sagrados Corazones congregation in Lima until his engagement in the southern highlands.<sup>58</sup> Through his nomination as director of the newly founded Instituto de Pastoral Andina in 1968, he contributed substantially to the early reform of missionary practice through anthropological research, thus accumulating significant knowledge on the regional socio-religious environment.

Before his enthronement ceremony in late December 1971, Dalle convened a meeting with clergy, women religious and laypeople to discuss pastoral reform within the prelatore. Five working groups examined the topics of pastoral orientation, parish organization, pastoral agents, catechists and laypeople, respectively.<sup>59</sup> These discussions brought to the fore persistent difficulties in defining the roles of religious and lay personnel and in maintaining relations with the Catholic population across the prelatore. Moreover, the noted lack of preparation and resultant inactive role of catechists was subject to scrutiny, and reform. From then on, rather than catechists (a term associated with colonial extirpation practices), religious intermediaries were to be called *líderes* or *animadores cristianos* in line with what was recognized as their important role in the evangelization process. Echoing the concerns of the anthropological studies in process, as well as the debates held at IPA, the working groups elaborated on some of the main reform trajectories that would shape the prelatore throughout the 1970s, culminating in the 1978 Pastoral Plan. Commenting on the role of Louis Dalle, a *Horizons Blancs* article emphasized that the new prelate “manifested his knowledge of the indigenous milieu”

58 ASHC, Mons. Louis Dalle - Documentos Publicaciones, Louis Dalle, “Dans le Bagnes Nazis”; for a more extensive study of the biography of Dalle, see Gabriel Campredon, *Louis Dalle : un homme libre*, 2nd ed. (revue et complétée) (Mende: G. Campredon, 1986), 49–69.

59 AHPA, Consejo Pastoral, Grupo de Trabajo no. 1 “Pastoral de la prelatore”; no. 2 “Sistema de trabajo de párrocos”; no. 3 “Los agentes de la pastoral”; no. 4 “Los catequistas”.

and expressed his “concern for pastoral action based on the [regional] reality” before assuming office as prelate of Ayaviri.<sup>60</sup>

Early accounts of the pastoral reform process revealed certain inconsistencies between the envisioned, ambitious reforms and their implementation. In his 1973 report based on an extended visit to Ayaviri, Fernando Abalos Murillo, head of missions of the Sacrés-Coeurs congregation, provided a detailed analysis of the efforts undertaken to renew missionary work in the prelatute over the previous five years. In his observations, Abalos Murillo commends the well-developed studies of religious anthropology within the region – something he had not witnessed in other jurisdictions<sup>61</sup> – and the role of the clergy in the knowledge production on indigenous beliefs. At the same time, the author was surprised by the “discrepancy [...] between the known religious anthropology and its pastoral application” across the prelatute. In his view, pastoral agents had to address the recommendations formulated by Garr and Marzal when developing a new evangelization practice:

Rather than Christianizing (which often means making others like us), it is a matter of discovering, or better still, of helping to discover the possibilities of the Andean people, the positive aspects of their authentic values, the profound meaning of their practices, rites, etc. and thus allowing the Quechua to open up to faith in Christ, so that they can make a clear decision for or against it.<sup>62</sup>

The report thus promotes an idealized type of evangelization that, in its aim for inculturation, affirms the alterity of the indigenous Christian rather than undermining it. Echoing the ideas of inculturation, Abalos Murillo suggested that the “contemporary Quechua Christian” can “reinvent an authentically Christian gospel that is incarnated in his culture.”<sup>63</sup> The ‘authenticity’ of the Catholic faith, in other words, no longer depended upon its obedience to the Vatican, but on its incorporation of local (religious) beliefs, symbols and values. As such, the role of the church was to assist in discovering a new way of being Christian for the population, supported by anthropological data.

Religious intermediaries, particularly those from rural parishes, were among the parishioners most likely to be first involved in these reforms. Their collaboration with clerics, however, was subject to criticism. In a 1972 letter, a group of catechists from the southern highlands commended the bishops for their knowledge

60 Alfredo Kratz, “Ayaviri: Mgr Louis Dalle succède a Mgr Lucien Metzinger,” *Horizons Blancs*, no. 50, janvier 1972, 12–13.

61 For comparison, see Fernando Abalos Murillo, *Missionnaires en action: activité missionnaire actuelle de la Congrégation* (Rome: Pères des Sacrés-Cœurs, 1976).

62 ACSCF, Fernando Abalos Murillo, carta a los padres SS.CC. de la prelatuta de Ayaviri, 20.12.1973.

63 *ibid.*

of the socio-religious environment, but regretted the absence of women religious across the countryside. The catechists argued that only through better cooperation with nuns and experts in artisanal work could their wives, who were often neglected in the new religious and social agenda of the church, also receive training. With regard to their work alongside the priests, the catechists deplored the persistent heterogeneity of pastoral work across the region:

We see that among the parish priests there are many differences: some visit the communities quite a lot, others only attend the urban population and do not move to the countryside, again others leave the parish to be teachers; some only give sacraments, others also do evangelization, several are bossy and act like patrons, others help us quite a lot.<sup>64</sup>

A later statement issued by the directorate of the regional catechist center uses more critical language, complaining that “the language barrier”, “the supposed lack of time” and “attitudes of superiority if not contempt for others” impede the dialogue with religious intermediaries.<sup>65</sup> This dialogue was deemed particularly necessary since bishops, priests and women religious continued to maintain a lifestyle that was significantly different from their local collaborators and parishioners.

The purported objective of a new evangelization practice not only required the support of religious intermediaries, but also religious personnel. Notwithstanding the efforts to recruit foreign personnel, more than half of the parishes across the Prelature of Ayaviri and the Diocese of Puno remained vacant by 1969. In the early 1970s, missions across Latin America were more dependent than ever upon Western religious congregations and *Fidei Donum* priests. The continental Catholic Church was indeed affected by a structural crisis. In particular, this crisis resulted from the lack of autochthonous vocation coupled with the critique regarding the significant presence of foreign clergy.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, efforts to increase local vocation in Peru’s southern highlands were hardly successful. An initiative to promote married catechists, which did not receive support from the Vatican, can serve as a telling example. In its rejection, the Apostolic Nunciature of Peru argued in 1972 that “among the thousands of catechists in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru only about twenty have basic education of European standards” and were thus unsuitable for ministry. Criticizing

64 AOP, Carpeta Catequesis y Animadores, “Carta de los catequistas a la Iglesia Sur Andina,” 19.08.1972.

65 AOP, Guido Delrán, “Informe del consejo de dirección del IRCEA a la asamblea episcopal zonal,” Cuzco, 24.08.1972.

66 Hans-Jürgen Prien, *La historia del cristianismo en América Latina* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1985), 1027–34.

this objection to the “optional celibacy” for local clergy, clerics deplored the nuncio’s lack of understanding of the difficult situation the Catholic Church in the southern highlands found itself in.<sup>67</sup> This response not only fueled the structural crisis in terms of religious personnel, but also revealed the rupture between ongoing reforms within certain ecclesiastical jurisdictions and notions of Catholic universalism that remained a Eurocentric project(ion) of religion at odds with these envisioned transformations.

The Prelature of Ayaviri thus continued to rely on the work and contribution of predominantly European clerics. In late 1973, the prelatore had nineteen priests to take care of the approximately 150,000 people living across the three provinces of northern Puno. However, it was not the number of priests that mattered the most, but their capacity to accept, and adjust to, the difficult working environment. The reorientation of the Ayaviri mission called for clerics who could adhere to and respect the imperatives of anthropologically informed pastoral work. Thus, the ideal missionary was not only physically and mentally capable, but would willingly renounce certain comforts for the sake of his apostolate among rural parishioners. For San Juan del Oro, for instance, Nicolas Castel proposed to send a “young, physically and spiritually resilient priest, ready to live a peasant lifestyle, completely detached from power”, who passes most of his time alongside his parishioners, successfully recruits catechists and, “obviously, must speak Quechua or Aymara, or better, both languages.”<sup>68</sup> In a letter to the congregational superior, Dalle hence requested “adapted personnel” for work in the prelatore. In particular, he was looking for “young and physically strong” priests who could “penetrate the animist spirit of our people and present the gospel in the same perspective.”<sup>69</sup> Without new missionaries, in other words, the church could not provide guidance to the ‘Quechua Christians’.

The lack of qualified personnel, however, affected the entire Congregation and highlighted the differences between pastoral work in Lima and the southern highlands. A 1970 report on the religious personnel of the Sagrados Corazones, for instance, underlined that the Quasi-Province lacked younger priests, yet also drew attention to the particularity of the situation in Ayaviri. The priests of the altiplano, the report noted, felt isolated and considered that the priests working in rich coastal communities had little interest in their work.<sup>70</sup> Just like for public officials – for whom deployment to Puno was often equivalent to a punishment – many priests dreaded the difficult working conditions of the highland mission.

67 AOP, Nuncio apostólico, carta a Edward Fedders del 09.08.1972, Noticias Aliadas no. 46, noviembre 1973.

68 ACSF, Nicolas Castel, “San Juan del Oro,” *Rapports sur les Missions*, 14.08.1973.

69 AHPA, Congregación SS.CC., Louis Dalle, carta al Superior de la Congregación, 28.09.1973.

70 AHPA, Cong. SS.CC. Lima, Quasi-Province SS.CC. Pérou, Rapport au Chapitre General de 1970, août 1970.

The absence of exchange and feelings of isolation increasingly weighed on the relations between Ayaviri and the Congregation in Lima. Expressing his discontent with the lack of support received, Dalle criticized the attitude of the *limeño* priests who, as he put it, catered to people who secretly wished for the *indios* “who refuse to accept the Western lifestyle” to simply disappear.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to their difficulties developing an ‘incultured’ evangelization practice and recruiting further personnel, the clergy and laypeople also had to reflect upon the social objectives of their mission in Puno. According to Abalos Murillo, the church in Ayaviri appeared to have developed a “post-evangelization” pastoral practice despite the “pre-Christian” state of local society, which, as he recalled, was still marked by an “immense material misery” and “inhumane living conditions”. He therefore questioned to what extent the church truly addressed the socio-political aspirations of its parishioners:

Does the church of Ayaviri in fact contribute to the enormous duty of the development of this ‘new man’, aware of his human dignity, of his rights to full personal development, to a just place in the human community, that is, to create that ‘other’ Indian?<sup>72</sup>

Mirroring theological and *indigenista* discourse on the new man or “*nuevo indio*”,<sup>73</sup> the author emphasized the need to rethink how evangelization could contribute to the liberation and, ultimately, salvation of humankind. The responsibility of the church in the development or creation of this new, other *indio* thus reveals the inherent ambiguities of the incipient pastoral reforms in Ayaviri. To change the structures of injustice and marginalization, the church had to transform (and convert) the indigenous population, as was “demanded by the gospel.” At the same time, pastoral agents also had to respect and valorize the distinct indigenous identity and religion of these ‘Quechua Christians’. In the concluding remarks of his report, Abalos Murillo therefore rightfully asked whether “it’s [even] possible for there to be a *modern* Southern Andean man [...] who does not have to renounce his ways of being, thinking and living etc.?”<sup>74</sup>

The social-scientific understanding of religion indeed raised complex questions regarding the very meaning of mission for the prelature, which neither anthropologists nor the clergy could respond to. Whereas the use of social sciences

71 AHPA, Cong. SS.CC. Lima, Louis Dalle, carta a Jan Scheepens, 20.02.1976.

72 ACSCF, Fernando Abalos Murillo, carta a los padres SS.CC. de la prelatura de Ayaviri, 20.12.1973.

73 José Uriel García, *El nuevo indio*, Clasicos peruanos (Lima: Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 1973).

74 ACSCF, Fernando Abalos Murillo, carta a los padres SS.CC. de la prelatura de Ayaviri, 20.12.1973.

promised to solve the mystery behind the indigenous soul, the increased knowledge production on religious beliefs and practices also challenged the essence of evangelization practice in terms of its implications for those who were considered only superficially Catholic. Debates on whether there could exist a Quechua Christian and how the church could appropriate and respond to religious pluralism and popular religion could not, ultimately, yield a definitive answer in Louis Dalle's early years of ecclesiastical governance.

Towards the mid-1970s, and partially as a result of the many unresolved questions, this 'anthropological turn' lost its momentum and the early attempts at the inculturation of the Catholic faith were not developed further at a broad scale. In contemporary and retrospective observations, the opinion prevails that the push towards inculturation was "interrupted by liberation theology" or fell victim to "the urgency of structural problems."<sup>75</sup> Certainly, the accumulation of anthropological knowledge seemed to not adequately respond to the growing calls of its parishioners for rapid socio-political transformations in the countryside. In contrast, liberation theology justified a renewed emphasis of pastoral work on the advancement of social justice by putting forward class analysis as an instrument to understand and address the oppression of the rural poor.

At the same time, as further examined in the next chapter, it is important to emphasize that pastoral reform was an ongoing, heterogeneous process throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Religious and lay actors continued to question colonial legacies of mission while, simultaneously, aiming to articulate a new ideals of (liberating) evangelization and social change. Whereas liberation theology can be credited for the greater focus on awareness-raising and political mobilization, it arguably did not interrupt ongoing reforms of the *Sur Andino*, but altered their course by furthering pastoral agents' critical engagement with the local implications of mission and its consequences for the desired religious and socio-political transformations.

75 Alejandro Estenós Loayza and Manuel Ugarte Cornejo, "La Iglesia católica en el altiplano: cinco décadas de trabajo pastoral en la prelatura de Ayaviri (1959-2005)," *Allpanchis*, no. 73-74 (2009): 37; González, "Una experiencia eclesial: el Sur Andino," 21-22.





# 6

## Opting for the Peasantry

When a group of Swiss Fidei Donum priests arrived in Puno in late 1968, they had little previous knowledge of the altiplano environment or the working conditions of their future mission. Preparing for their work on a continent they had never visited, they could not find answers to many of their questions. How quickly would they adapt to the high altitude and challenging climate? Would they succeed in renewing religious life in their new parish? And how would their parishioners react to their presence? One of the missionaries, Benno Frei, recalls that “there was little information available” and they did not know anyone to inquire with about Puno, let alone the parish where they were to be sent. With regard to the episcopal decision for them to work in the parish of Putina, he believes that “it was obvious that we would get a position nobody else wanted.”<sup>1</sup>

Like other foreign clerics, the Fidei Donum priests responded to the local bishops’ call for help to staff and support a previously abandoned parish. A colleague of Frei, Marcos Degen, had already decided to work in Latin America during his time at the theological seminary, coinciding with the years of the Second Vatican Council. Committed to becoming a missionary, he spent two years studying theology at the Latin American seminary in Madrid, where at a later stage he was joined by his colleague Frei. During a workshop with Latin American clerics in Belgium, Degen found himself confronted with questions about his future destination as a Fidei Donum priest: “Everyone asked me where I was going to work. Come to Brazil! Come to Colombia! Come to Peru!”<sup>2</sup> One of the priests present at the workshop, Claudio Colquehuanca, “one hundred percent Quechua”, told Degen about his work alongside the bishop of Puno, Julio González Ruiz, which “impacted [him]

1 Benno Frei, interview by author, Küsnacht am Rigi, Switzerland, 29 May 2017.

2 Marcos Degen, interview by author, Juliaca, Peru, 7 July 2017.



**12. Province of Azángaro.**

José Luis Rénique, "Apogee of a 'Third Path': Mariáteguismo, 'People's War' and Counterinsurgency in Puno, 1987–1994", 309]

enormously.” As Benno Frei recalls, several Latin American bishops passed by the seminary in Madrid searching for employees. However, it was their encounter with González Ruiz, who came to visit them in their Swiss diocese during his time at the Second Vatican Council, which led the priests to opt for a mission on the Peruvian altiplano. After two years of work experience in Switzerland, a requirement set by their bishop in order for them to go to Peru, Degen and Frei arrived in Puno in November 1968. “It was a very interesting time”, Frei recalls, as “bishops just returned from Medellín”, and González Ruiz “had experienced a real conversion” through both Vatican II and the Latin American Episcopal Conference.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after their arrival, they would explore the parish and its surrounding villages and hamlets in the province of Azángaro (Figure 12). Their new home lay in the flat plains of the altiplano, situated at an average of almost 4,000 meters above sea level. As one of the only sources of information available, a 1961 tourist guide described the landscape as marked “by Indian shepherds [...] with their flocks of sheep, llamas and alpacas”. The wide plateau itself, the guide continues, is productive and desolate, impressive and melancholic at the same time.<sup>4</sup> Home to Pedro Vilca Apaza, the leader of a late 18th century indigenous rebellion, the region of Azángaro has been considered a “cradle of revolution” despite becoming a center of an “avalanche of hacienda expansion” during the 20th century.<sup>5</sup> The many haciendas that the Swiss missionaries encountered during the late 1960s were however soon to fall victim to the agrarian reform and be regrouped into associative enterprises of often even larger size. The government of the armed forces had declared its revolutionary ambitions in the aftermath of the coup d’état but one month prior to the arrival of the Fidei Donum priests.

Over the course of the next decade, Degen, Frei and their colleagues would experience the unfolding of reforms of both state and church through their perspective as missionaries. As foreign observers, they witnessed how the military government sought to solve historic grievances for landownership. As parish priests, they supported, engaged with and learned from their parishioners. And as employees of the Diocese of Puno, they contributed to articulating a new regional commitment to the rural poor.

This chapter draws on the oral testimony of the Swiss priests and their Spanish and Peruvian colleagues in the province of Azángaro. These testimonies not only account for their individual experiences, but also reveal the social process of commemorating (Catholic) activism in Puno. Memories have to be understood as embedded in a specific social context, subject to continuous processes of reinterpretation, silencing and forgetting. Following sociologist Elizabeth Jelin, “mem-

3 Benno Frei, interview by author, Küsnacht am Rigi, Switzerland, 29 May 2017.

4 Juan Esteban Maguiña, *1961 Guide to Peru* (Lima: J.E. Maguiña, 1961), 202, 206.

5 See Chapter 6 in Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition*.

ory is not the past, but the way in which subjects build a sense of the past” in the present, and even its projections towards the future.<sup>6</sup> The testimonies of priests and missionaries thus not only reflect their shared experiences of rural activism in the *puneño* countryside, but also how they construed a common pastoral discourse in the aftermath of the Medellín conference which, as evidenced in the second part of this chapter, also influenced regional cooperation across the southern highlands.

## From the Alps to the Andes

Like the French clerics in neighboring Ayaviri, the Fidei Donum priests in Putina could initially rely on significant financial resources, which allowed them to overcome the material and structural difficulties of their work in the countryside. In contrast to the Peruvian clergy, most of whom worked exclusively in urban parish centers, dependent upon revenues from religious services and teaching, the Swiss clergy “never had any financial worries” as they could afford motorized transport and had resources to “carry out many great projects” in Putina and its surroundings. This could, Frei supposes, also be a source of envy for clergy in other parishes: “One simply knew that ‘los suizos’ in Putina had a lot of money at their disposal”. The charity projects that could be carried out with the support of donations from their respective dioceses, he claims, “obviously made us appear generous” in comparison to those that did not have the means to do so.<sup>7</sup>

A report on the altiplano parish published in the Swiss Caritas magazine *Sonntag* elaborates on the aid provided by Switzerland to the “descendants of the Incas” – notably the female parishioners – who faced great misery:

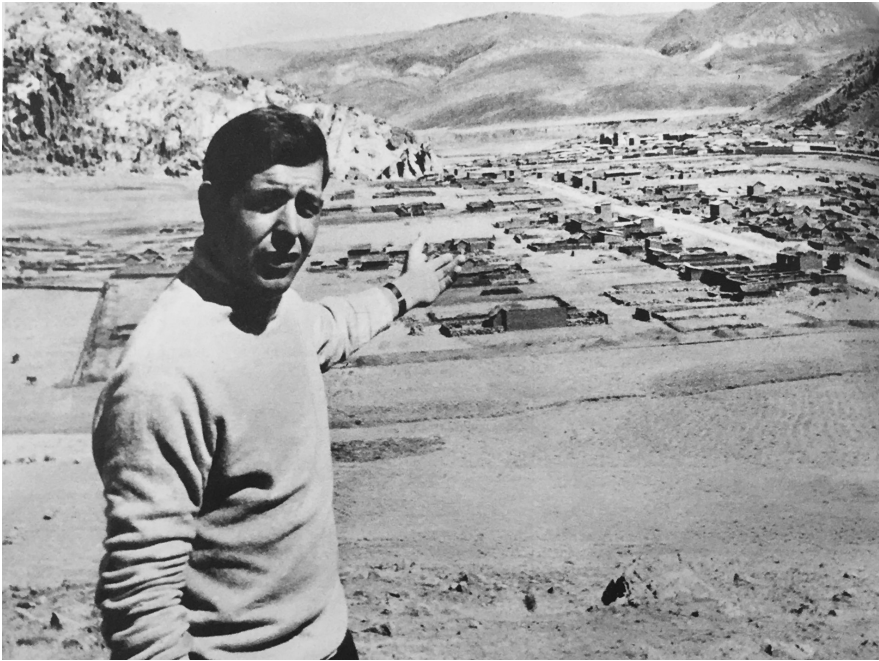
Putina did not have its own priest for several years. The missionaries had to rebuild everything, except for the wonderful old church. [...] In their development aid, they are successful with the ‘Club de Madres’. Women are organized in associations and a social assistant teaches them in hygiene, child care and household management. Through the women the spirit of progress enters the family.<sup>8</sup>

Tellingly, the *Sonntag* report on the work of the Fidei Donum priests is included in an article entitled “Hope for the Future through Development Aid” in which Marcos Degen figured prominently in a picture in front of Putina, which describes

6 Elizabeth Jelin, *La lucha por el pasado: cómo construimos la memoria social*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2017), 16.

7 Benno Frei, interview by author, Küsnacht am Rigi, Switzerland, 29 May 2017.

8 Carl Gähwyler, “Auf Besuch bei den Nachfahren der Inkas,” *Sonntag*, no. 30, 26.07.1970, 23.



13. Marcos Degen in Putina, 1970.

[Carl Gähwyler, "Auf Besuch bei den Nachfahren der Inkas," *Sonntag*, no. 30, 26 July 1970, 23]

him both as parish priest and, probably also as a result of his previous apprenticeship as a stonemason, as the principal development agent of the altiplano town.<sup>9</sup>

Local media also applauded the pastoral and charitable work carried out by the Swiss team after their arrival in Putina. An article on *los Padres Suizos* published in the Azángaro-based magazine *Makaya* recalls the many projects carried out by the missionaries during their first three years. Be it *salones comunales*, parish houses, sewerage or the supply of drinking water, the work of Benno Frei, Marcos Degen and Conrado Kretz, who joined in 1970, received great praise from the author. The priests, described as "social, cheerful, enthusiastic and still young", were said to exemplify good pastoral work because of their "impeccable morality" and "discipline with regard to timing", but also, notably, because they have a "conviction to help the people in need" and "extended their labor of evangelization to the countryside".<sup>10</sup>

However, the prevalent emphasis on development aid was subject to doctrinal changes from the early 1970s onwards. After Frei's departure to a parish in the outskirts of Lima, his countryman Otto Brun joined the pastoral team in Putina.

9 Gähwyler, "Auf Besuch bei den Nachfahren der Inkas," *Sonntag*, no. 30, 26.07.1970, 23.

10 José Solórzano Salas, "Los padres suizos," *Makaya - órgano de la asociación nacional de periodistas del Perú: filial Azángaro*, año 11, no. 3, diciembre 1971, 26-27.

Influenced by his reading of – and personal encounters with – Gustavo Gutiérrez, Brun endorsed criticisms of predominant forms of *desarrollismo*. In one of his first circular letters, he disapprovingly comments upon the work of his fellow colleagues:

So far our team in Putina and surroundings has built a lot. A great deal of money has been invested [...] This might have been right and necessary as a first step. But let's not forget: money forges dependency and submission. I cannot shake the feeling that the '*padre*' here is both 'priest and emperor in the village', a small lord, whose hand or wallet is reached for and kissed.<sup>11</sup>

His criticism arguably did not question the good intention of other missionaries, who aimed to make a difference through the charitable initiatives and projects funded by their respective dioceses. Rather, he wondered to what extent such benevolence ended up undermining local agency while also fostering the wrong incentives for participating in church. Ultimately, the relations built around monetary transactions risked perpetuating the idea that the church was an institution both foreign and, at least financially, domineering.

If the statement of Brun initially proved controversial, it also reflects the contingent nature of the debates on the reorientation of pastoral work. Against the backdrop of the growing influence of dependency theory and liberation theology, many foreign priests, women religious and lay agents contemplated the nature of their mission and its ulterior socio-economic consequences. In the parish of Putina, these often lengthy deliberations eventually led to an agreement among the missionaries. Together with Francisco Gmür and Charles Jeannerat, who had joined the team in 1974, they eventually established a more restrictive aid policy. Since “many people suppose that we are running a bank in Putina where unlimited amounts of money can be withdrawn”, they actively sought to no longer live up to their reputation as “rich uncles from Europe.”<sup>12</sup>

In their quest to build a church that no longer relied upon foreign personal or material resources, the *Fidei Donum* priests attempted to forge a better cooperation with local lay agents. As Degen recalls, “there were many communities and it was impossible to be in all of them”, the reason for which the work with catechists was deemed particularly suited to reach parishioners residing outside of the town of Putina.<sup>13</sup> In 1974, the new bishop Jesús Mateo Calderón gave Brun responsibility for the recruitment and education of catechists in the diocese. This duty allowed him to travel across the altiplano, even visiting parishes on the islands of

11 Otto Brun “Putina, ja aber,” Circular from Putina, November 1972.

12 Marcos Degen, Conrado Kretz, Otto Brun, Carlos Jeannerat, Francisco Gmür, Circular from Putina, June 1975.

13 Marcos Degen, interview by author, 7 July 2017, Juliaca, Peru.

Amantani and Taquile. In the countryside surrounding Putina, the recruitment of local lay agents also constituted a priority for the Swiss team. The pastoral work alongside these religious intermediaries was not short on contradiction, however. Given their institutional support of the work of catechists, the Swiss missionaries worried that they undermined grassroots initiatives in Putina:

[The catechists] should take over, in their respective villages or communities, a position of leadership. In order to achieve that, there is need for organization, courses and money. [...] But we don't know if the courses we offer provide the correct answer to these problems? And the money? It remains a sign that the church is not autochthonous, but remains in a state of dependency!<sup>14</sup>

Questioning the extent to which they contributed to the process of building an independent church, they announced to the readers of their circulars in June 1975 that they were on a “difficult [...] search for solutions.”<sup>15</sup> In the midst of a process of doctrinal reform, as outlined in the next section, the Swiss Fidei Donum priests increasingly cooperated with fellow missionaries and clerics in neighboring parishes to negotiate a new role for the church in support of its rural parishioners.

## A Provincial Commitment to the Campesinado

During regional meetings held in the early 1970s, discrepancies between the discourses and practices of pastoral reform in the southern highlands came to the fore. According to the participants in the annual conference of the Instituto de Pastoral Andina in 1974, many parishioners still perceived the church as a force “against all change”, characterized by its absence in popular struggle, or worse, as a structure that “identifies with the *gamonal*”. In line with the teachings of liberation theology, pastoral agents in attendance spoke in favor of pastoral practice that refuted paternalistic tendencies, as part of its objective to assist the poor. “When wanting to help the poor in general”, they claimed, “we must prioritize the desire to serve them, love them, make friends with them, learn from them and understand them.”<sup>16</sup>

The following year, participants in the subsequent meeting delved deeper into the colonial and occidental character of the church. Since women and indigenous people remained largely absent, they lamented that the reform process launched

14 Marcos Degen, Conrado Kretz, Otto Brun, Carlos Jeannerat, Francisco Gmür, Circular Letter from Putina, June 1975.

15 Marcos Degen, Conrado Kretz, Otto Brun, Carlos Jeannerat, Francisco Gmür, Circular from Putina, June 1975.

16 “Encuentro de Yucay, julio 1974: plenarios,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 3, agosto 1974, 25–30.



by the Second Vatican Council appeared to remain a “struggle among white men.” The support of the peasantry, or the regional adaptation and concretization of the option for the poor, thus raised questions concerning the positioning of religious and lay actors with regard to rural parishioners: How could they “evangelize [while] sharing the life of the people” if, as many acknowledged, they still identified as part of the “possessing class” carrying “the weight of their own culture”? And to what extent could they, in their position as “observants of the Andean world”, get to “know, listen and understand [...] the way of thinking and living” of those they wanted to evangelize?<sup>17</sup>

In 1975, almost three years after assuming office as bishop of the diocese, Jesús Mateo Calderón circulated a letter outlining the objectives of pastoral work on the altiplano. While still inscribing the mission of the *puneño* church within the universal Catholic Church, he nevertheless emphasized that religious and lay actors had to respond to a specific socio-religious and demographic context:

People, mostly peasants, secularly neglected and oppressed, that now awaken and emerge with vigor, and are willing to fight to free themselves from anachronistic, oppressive, and conservative structures due to clamorously unjust laws and customs. [...] Hence the need to place ourselves definitively in this line of a church that seeks the total liberation of mankind.<sup>18</sup>

Calling upon pastoral agents to “illuminate” their parishioners, discover and understand their religious values, foster awareness and strengthen the “communitarian values” of the peasantry, the bishop repeated many of the most prevalent concepts advanced by liberation theologians. Referring indifferently to an “Andean”, “autochthonous” and “popular” church, his 1975 circular affirmed the ideal of a local church which “sought after the participation and co-responsibility” of parishioners. To further advance the cooperation among a “heterogeneous” group of religious and lay actors, Mateo Calderón established three different pastoral regions - Azángaro, Juliaca and Puno - in which those working for the diocese were to meet regularly, in order to discuss and coordinate their work.<sup>19</sup>

By the mid-1970s, new pastoral agents, both domestic and foreign, occupied the parishes of the region of Azángaro and thus collaborated closely with the Swiss missionaries in neighboring Putina. Ronald Llerena and René Pinto formed part of a group of Peruvian clerics who took responsibility for the parish of the provincial capital. One year after their arrival, in 1976, two Spanish missionaries, namely Luis Jesús López and José María (Chema) Gómez, were named parish priests of

17 “Tercer encuentro regional del Surandino,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 12, octubre-noviembre 1975, 7, 11.

18 AOP, Jesús Mateo Calderón, Carta circular, 18.05.1975.

19 Ibid.

Asillo and the surrounding villages and communities. As driving forces of pastoral change, these clerics shared two characteristics that they repeatedly emphasized in their respective testimonies: their young age (i.e. forming part of a post-conciliar generation) and a pastoral commitment to work outside the parish centers.

The educational and professional trajectories of these priests were shaped by the social and religious reforms of the 1960s. Originally from the department of Arequipa, Ronald Llerena was aged twenty-three when he was ordained a priest in 1967. The following year, he formed part of the group of clerics publicly condemning inequality and injustice in a declaration to *El Comercio*, as referenced in Chapter 4. Otto Brun was finishing his seminary studies in Paris in May 1968, where he hoped for the church to renew itself in response to the ongoing civil unrest in France. Even in Francoist Spain, where Luis Jesús López grew up, the late 1960s awoke aspirations for reform among a number of clergy. Since the seminary of the missionary institution he was a member of, the Instituto Español de Misiones Extranjeras (IEME), was under highly conservative leadership, López and his colleagues decided to study at the Jesuit Universidad de Comillas in Madrid, where they “were taught in a different mentality”. Forming part of a generation educated when the conciliar spirit was at its height, López argues that it should not be forgotten that “what happened in May 1968”, when he was twenty years old, “affected [them]” and that these circumstances “help to understand why someone acts a certain way and not another.” When he arrived in Asillo together with his colleague Chema Gómez, it was unsurprisingly the young priests and missionaries he cooperated with the most:

How did we find it? Well, a church that after Medellín had begun to understand that we had to change the church [...] that wanted on the one hand to help the peasants, but there was also the problem of the traditional priests, the old clergy, who had a different mentality, and who did not enter into this logic. In other words, those who did enter were [...] the Peruvians who were in Azángaro and those of us who came as missionaries. [...] We were young people, almost all of us, around 30 or 40 years old.<sup>20</sup>

René Pinto concurs by affirming that when he started working for the Azángaro parish alongside Llerena one year after his ordination in 1974, he joined a “really interesting team [...] with a compact ideology.”<sup>21</sup>

The priests of Asillo, Azángaro and Putina, in fact, all formed part of the ONIS clerical movement. For José Luis López, the biannual meetings organized by the group allowed for a critical analysis of the social and political situation in his host

20 Luis Jesús López, interview by author, Calca, Peru, 17–18 June 2017.

21 René Pinto, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

country, and thus marked his trajectory as a priest who was to adapt to the perspective of liberation theology. In the same vein, René Pinto shared these aspirations for a pastoral commitment with those parishioners most in need. Criticizing the outdated hierarchy within the Catholic Church, he recalls that he never aimed to become a “*cura de misa y olla*”, referring to a priest solely dedicated to the administration of sacraments.<sup>22</sup> As a representative of the regional ONIS section, his colleague Ronald Llerena witnessed how priests across the country “wanted to become a different church”.<sup>23</sup>

Their reading of liberation theology and aspirations for a distinct pastoral engagement also led them to rearticulate the objectives of their mission in the *puneño* countryside. The peasantry, the rural masses whose claims for land had been thwarted by agrarian reform, embodied the poor as subjects of liberation. The decline and end of the Velasco Alvarado regime led many pastoral agents, who once sympathized with its revolutionary ideals, to form part of the growing number of actors assuming a “*campesino* activism” in the later years of the 1970s.<sup>24</sup> Llerena, for instance, remembers how his reading of Gutiérrez’s seminal work led him to seek work at a rural parish. “My personal commitment was not simply the preferential option for the poor”, he emphasizes, “but for the poor peasant”.<sup>25</sup>

Following their objective to support the social and political aspirations of their rural parishioners, the priests in the province of Azángaro intensified contact with the peasant communities outside the parish towns they resided in. René Pinto recalls how the ‘option for the peasantry’ primarily translated into an increased presence of pastoral agents in the countryside:

In the team we have always been people who had contact with all the communities. I remember that we had missions and we would go to the communities, we would meet with the people, men and women, and there we developed a little plan that we had. First, to see the problems of the community. What problems were there, and frankly there was a lot of fear, but there were also people who were very aware, community leaders, who said what they were suffering from at this time: lack of seeds, frost, the transport of their products, broadly, the lack of valorization of the peasant products.<sup>26</sup>

These problems were subject to discussions among the clergy and lay agents working across the province. They notably aimed to understand the prevalent disdain for the indigenous peasantry and the contingent topic of land distribution. Their close contact with rural parishioners was also echoed in their participation in local

22 René Pinto, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

23 Ronald Llerena, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 25 August 2017.

24 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866–1995*, 218.

25 Ronald Llerena, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 25 August 2017.

26 René Pinto, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

celebrations, if invited by the sponsor of the festivities. “When we arrived in the countryside and people saw us as *gringos*, they thought we were in favor of the *mistis*”, as López puts it, until they realized that they were “*curas de indios*”.<sup>27</sup>

The arrival of young pastoral agents and the increased ecclesiastical presence across the countryside not only defined the pastoral agenda within the province of Azángaro, but also distinguished the region within the Diocese of Puno. In the two other pastoral regions, Juliaca and Puno, most priests and women religious had full-time jobs as teachers and could thus spare little time for pastoral coordination. In contrast, the clergy of Azángaro met multiple times throughout the year, coordinated their preparation for local *fiestas* and established a regional parish leaflet.<sup>28</sup> By mid-1976, as the Swiss Fidei Donum priests noted in a circular letter, the successful cooperation among the “strong teams” in their zone had not only proved fruitful for the development of new “models, ideas and approaches”, but had also led Azángaro to “determine the pastoral work at a diocesan level” as they set the pace for the reform agenda across the jurisdiction.<sup>29</sup> By the end of the decade, it was also the first province to include a parish under female leadership. Two German laywomen worked predominantly with Christian base communities in and around Santiago de Pupuja.

## Evangelization of the (Rural) Masses

During the second half of the 1970s, religious and lay actors across the southern highlands engaged in a formalized debate surrounding evangelization practices, as was called for by their reading of liberation theology. Summarizing the outcomes of a workshop held at IPA in early 1977, Chema Gómez discussed the difficulty in understanding the meaning of evangelization in a context that had been impacted greatly by Christianity for several centuries, and in which the majority of the population professed to be Catholic. The Spanish missionary denounced both previous campaigns of evangelization as well as the ongoing abuses of a Catholic indoctrination, which, in his view, favored the exploiting classes, and were both “colonial” and “fascist”. Gómez emphasized that the role of pastoral agents as “carriers of the gospel” was changing radically. They were no longer supposed to bring “something new to poor and ignorant people”, but to facilitate a process led by those who were no longer the object, but the *subject* of evangelization. Put

27 Luis Jesús López, interview by author, Calca, Peru, 17–18 June 2017.

28 Manuel Vasallo P., “Zona pastoral de Azángaro,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 25, agosto 1978, 38–39; AOP, 16 Citaciones para Reuniones Zonales, “Reunión de zona Azángaro,” Pucará, 16.04.1977.

29 Marcos Degen, “Die Equipe Putina in der Zone Azángaro,” Circular from Putina, June 1976.

differently, Gómez argued, the new “evangelization of the masses” had to come from, and be for, the poor *campesinado*.<sup>30</sup>

In his own attempt to explain his interpretation of liberation theology to a Swiss audience, Otto Brun outlined the complexities of the new evangelization practice. In his perspective, rural parishioners had to overcome negative experiences with Christianity, including its “imposition through swords and cannons” as well as its alliance “with the rich and powerful”. For Brun, the words of the Bible should no longer be understood as empty promises, but as a source of inspiration and encouragement for the rural parishioners’ personal and collective struggles. Since the situation of the peasantry, according to Brun, “is similar to [that] described in the holy scripture”, they could produce a historical understanding of its content. Through a “subversive and political reading”, the Bible hence could become a “weapon in the struggle for liberation”.<sup>31</sup>

Liberating evangelization was thus construed as an original, critical method for religious and lay actors to put their ‘option for the poor’ into practice. Based on their critical engagement with the colonial legacy of mission, pastoral agents adapted their message of liberation to the socio-political landscape of rural Puno. In particular, they aimed to embed their sermons within the problems and aspirations of rural parishioners. Readings from the gospel thus no longer constituted promises for future salvation, but rather calls for (divinely sanctioned) actions towards the transformation of an oppressive social order.

In many instances, these discussions on the liberating potential of evangelization followed a “third-world theology”, along the lines of the early writings of Gustavo Gutiérrez, rather than an “Amerindian theology”.<sup>32</sup> Replicating the efforts of the missionary-anthropologists examined in the previous chapter, pastoral agents still aimed to embed their praxis within a specific historical context. In their articulations of a new evangelization practice, however, they underlined the need to address the imbrication of faith and politics. As evidenced by Brun and Gómez, questioning the colonial legacy of the church translated into mounting criticism of the role of religious actors in perpetuating structures of oppression. Rather than adapting their pastoral work to the religious pantheon, the clerics in Azángaro sought to respond to the social concerns and political aspirations of their parishioners. Thus, in their pastoral discourse, they did not refer to *Pachamama* and the *Apus*, but to the claims for the redistribution of land and better remuneration.

Accordingly, pastoral agents in Azángaro articulated a distinct understanding of popular religion as both the foundation for and an obstacle to their pastoral work among rural parishioners. Following Luis Jesús López, many of their reli-

30 Chema Gómez, “Reflexión sobre evangelización,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 22, julio 1977, 12-20.

31 Otto Brun, Circular from Putina, Christmas 1976.

32 Paulo Suess, “Alteridad - integración - resistencia: apuntes sobre la liberación y la causa indígena,” *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* 2 (1985): 314.

gious practices – be they in honor of agrarian deities or of Catholic saints – reflected the difficult conditions of the peasantry: without access to financial support, fertilizer and sufficient land, they depended almost completely upon their animals, *chacras* and meteorological phenomena. These customs had also benefitted *hacendados* and priests, who “took advantage of the people’s [...] fear of God” and respect for the authority of his earthly representatives. Popular religion, in the view of López, thus had to be “rationalized” through a critical reflection about its “alienating” elements that legitimized the socio-political status quo and undermined the ability of rural parishioners to overcome their exploitation themselves. In his view, it was upon the pastoral agents to frame political experiences in a “liberating perspective”, thus forging a “new vision of religion” which was “based precisely on the problems experienced by the peasantry.”<sup>33</sup>

This imbrication of liberating faith and ‘*campesino* activism’, however, also raised questions with regard to the role of religious actors in shaping a process of evangelization they simultaneously claimed to no longer be the principal actors of. According to López, the idea not to ‘announce the gospel, but to help pronounce it’ indeed left many of his colleagues reflecting upon their own positionality, if not doubting their mission in the countryside altogether: “How to raise the grand themes of Christianity like salvation, liberation [...] so that they are not mere words detached from the socio-economic and political reality that [the *campesinos*] live in?” Besides the concerns that sermons and prayers lacked any meaning if they did not respond to a specific context, there also existed the risk of an “ideologization” of evangelization practice – that is, if pastoral agents chose to project their own vision of the peasant experience rather than presenting the actual possibilities for transformation. In response to these problems, Chema Gómez suggested a decentralization of the religious ministry, and an attitude of conversion in order to better understand religious and social aspirations, and agency, of local parishioners. Pastoral agents in Azángaro established three principal objectives for their work in 1979 to this end: “Elevation of the level of consciousness, consolidation of instances of reflections on faith [and] support for grassroots organizations.”<sup>34</sup>

Attempts to further this awareness-raising education and support autonomous peasant organizations notably manifested in the yearly gatherings of a group called *Cristianos en Lucha*. Organized in the aftermath of the 1977 national strike together with pastoral agents from the Prelature of Ayaviri, it constituted a regional forum assembling parishioners and lay agents from throughout the two adjoining provinces of Azángaro and Melgar. The gatherings embraced a Freirean methodology, fostering the critical conscience of the participants in an open de-

33 Luis Jesús López, “Religiosidad popular: un medio de concientización,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 2–4.

34 Chema Gómez, “Cuestiones en torno al modelo de Iglesia,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 29, diciembre 1979, 40–41.

bate, and organizing group work that relied on the minimal intervention of pastoral agents. The participants of the gathering were selected accordingly; those who had previously displayed political militancy were preferred, and attendees belonged, in the majority, to an altiplano peasant community.

The first gathering of *Cristianos en Lucha* united a small number of parishioners to discuss the ongoing crisis affecting the rural economy – notably the rise of living costs and the lack of land. When debating the structural causes underlying the agrarian crisis, participants not only pointed towards a system of two classes, “the exploiting and the exploited”, but also lamented the lack of organization among the popular classes. Regarding the role of religion, organizers interpreted statements like “when we fight we remember God” or “we celebrate the triumph of our struggles thanking God” as an appropriation of religious rhetoric by individual actors and collective groups. In a detailed report transcribing the first meeting, the responsible pastoral agents noted the significant political conscience among the *cristianos*. In their view, a “direct link between political struggle and faith experience” had been demonstrated by the discussions among participants.<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, Chema Gómez argued that these gatherings “contribute to the strengthening of an ecclesial conscience” among parishioners, and thus formed a new method for liberating evangelization.<sup>36</sup>

In the subsequent gatherings of the group, the *Cristianos en Lucha* further discussed the interlinkages between social mobilization and faith by distinguishing between different religious practices. Participants emphasized the existing dichotomy between those “following the path of Christ” in their political militancy and those Christians who still perceived the church as a subservient institution to political authorities and wealthy parishioners. Negative perceptions of the church were however also present in many of the communities of origin of the *cristianos*. Among other things, they reported the existence of a “punitive image of God” and negative experiences with clergy, as well as of parishioners going to church to receive food aid rather than for religious conscience.<sup>37</sup> Pastoral agents applauded this critical attitude and emphasized the distinction between “traditional (exploiting) religion” which legitimized the oppression of parishioners and discouraged social activism, and the liberating faith that supported the growing popular mobilizations.<sup>38</sup>

35 AOP, 12 *Cristianos en Lucha*, I Encuentro de *Cristianos en Lucha*, 08-09.10.1977, Documento de trabajo.

36 Chema Gómez, “Evangelización y campesinado pobre en el altiplano peruano,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 25, agosto 1978, 10.

37 AOP, Carpeta 12 *Cristianos en Lucha*, II Encuentro de *Cristianos en Lucha*, 22.07-23.07.1978.

38 Francisco Catalán, “Hacia una Iglesia popular: encuentro de *Cristianos en Lucha*,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 18-19.

## “The Baton of the Altiplano Church”

In line with the prevalent concerns for the active participation of parishioners in the transformation of church and society, the collaboration with religious intermediaries – who in the meantime had been reframed as “animadores” – was seen as an even more important task. In his work as doctrinal assessor of the Movimiento de Animadores Cristianos (MACC), Otto Brun recalls his responsibility for the recruitment and education of *animadores* across the diocese:

It must be said that my tendency in the formation was that the peasants be leading people, that they stop being mini-priests, as we have always said. Practically, many parishes had catechists with the parish priest’s assistant. So I have asked, and this has also caused me problems, that they have to become a little bit independent from the parish and get into the village and bring the political and social problems to the church. [...] My idea was that the catechists should have the baton of the church in the altiplano.<sup>39</sup>

As Brun further emphasized in an article published in *Pastoral Andina*, the *animadores* had to represent their *comunidades* and *parcialidades* in front of the parish priest. Put differently, they had to mediate between community and priest, rather than simply represent the church outside of the parish center. In order to do so, they were not to be employed, financially rewarded, nor resident in the parish house. Instead of focusing on the traditional tasks of catechists, including the translation of the gospel or the preparation of sacraments, Brun insisted that a fundamental “religious, socio-cultural and political” education was necessary for them to take over a role of local leadership.<sup>40</sup> Unsurprisingly, the recruitment of *animadores* was most successful among the parishes of Azángaro, which had a total of 408 religious intermediaries – more than half of those working across the diocese – by the early 1980s.<sup>41</sup>

This reconstituted division of pastoral labor had significant repercussions for those integrating into this reformed pastoral and catechetical system. Gregorio Quispe Arpaza, an *animador* from Cayacaya (Putina district), recalls in a written testimony how in the community he grew up in, they “were used to [waiting] for the arrival of the priest for everything”, including, notably, for baptisms and marriages. The priest, whose Mass he often read out in Latin, only visited occasionally and could thus not take care of sick or dying parishioners unless they were brought to the parish center. After following courses at the catechist school in

39 Otto Brun, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

40 Otto Brun, “Los animadores cristianos campesinos en Puno,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 22, julio 1977, 26-27.

41 AOP, “Informe sobre el Movimiento de Animadores Cristianos Campesinos, MACC,” 1981.



Puno, Quispe Arpaza could progressively assume responsibility for some of these tasks, even if he faced considerable obstacles at the beginning. He and his fellow *animadores* were perceived as “half priests” or Adventists, “because they do their worship without clergy.” Finding acceptance in rural communities was however difficult not only in terms of their religious role, but because being a Christian, in the words of Quispe Arpaza, also “meant to reject injustices, claim rights for the peasants.”<sup>42</sup> A Swiss documentary from 1978, tellingly named *El Grito del Pueblo*, portrays this ideal of social leadership. In a sequence where Otto Brun and fellow parishioners discuss the fact that a neighboring associative enterprise had not paid its employees, *animadores* raise their voices, exclaiming that it was upon them to “speak up about the means through which they can defend themselves” and “enlighten those who cannot understand”.<sup>43</sup> This task also applied to female parishioners, who rarely participated at the communal council and did not, with a single exception, partake in the filmed conversation.

The *animadores* published their own bulletin, *El Sembrador*, which reveals further details regarding the workshops and work experience of the MACC in different parishes across the province of Azángaro. Destined for a rural audience, it included news and updates regarding the agrarian reform laws, excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the current activities of the *animadores*. In May 1978, Quispe Arpaza, as acting executive secretary of MACC, together with his assistant Alejandro Yanqui, visited twelve peasant communities to prepare for the *fiesta* of San Juan. According to their published testimony, two communities had planned to actively participate in a protest about the rising food prices, deemed a “first important step”. At the same time, they recognized that the awareness-raising work they had carried out thus far “remained up the air” due to the lack of political mobilization in other communities. In fact, they witnessed very little “common conscience” among the peasantry and lamented in particular “the terrible situation of the women”, who still played an especially marginal role within the *animadores* movement.<sup>44</sup>

The framing of local lay agents as active subjects of evangelization placed high expectations on those who were either assigned or elected to become *animadores*. Even in cases where they did not receive any financial benefits or prestige through their association with a comparatively wealthy (often foreign) priest, *animadores* were arguably still assuming a role that was highly subject to scrutiny by both parishioners and clergy they interacted with. In line with Orta’s observations regard-

42 Gregorio Quispe Apaza, “Testimonio,” *Allpanchis XX*, no. 24 (1984): 146–47.

43 Peter von Gunten et al., *Der Schrei Des Volkes / El Grito Del Pueblo: Dokumentarfilm, Schweiz 1978*, Filmtexte 69 (Düsseldorf: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1980), 22–25.

44 AOP, Gregorio Quispe Apaza, Alejandro Yanqui, “Relato de la Fiesta de San Juan,” *El Sembrador*, no. 09, 1978.

ing mission work on the Bolivian altiplano, “catechists are intensely aware of their intermediate position” – they will often sense the way there are being watched, both by the clergy and the communities they work in.<sup>45</sup> As the testimonies of Quispe Arpaza and Yanqui hint at, the MACC indeed faced challenges across the diocese with regard to the receptions of the *animadores* in their respective communities, and their role as purported leaders in the pastoral and political domain. According to Otto Brun, both (older) priests and the older catechists had difficulties accepting, or simply refused to accept, the new role of the *animador cristiano*. Whereas certain priests “accept working with *animadores* as long as they help them do their work”, he argued, “they reject them if they ask for changes or criticize the priest” regarding his place in the status quo, his privileges or his financial administration. Older catechists, “mostly *mini-curas*” according to Brun, also criticized the work of *animadores* in fear of losing their small salary and “their fragile situation of privilege as an authority within their community.”<sup>46</sup>

In sum, parish priests and advisors supporting the MACC attempted to recruit and forge the ideal religious intermediaries: *animadores* not only had to spread the message of liberation, but also embrace a position of leadership in the organization and awareness-raising among rural parishioners. However, they could in many instances meet these expectations. In his final statement as advisor to the movement in early 1979, Brun acknowledges that many of the *animadores* had not participated in the popular movements that surged after the nationwide strike in June 1977 and were thus “away from the distress and sufferings of their people” and not at the height of their mission”. At the same time, he pointed out that there were examples of lay actors who played a significant leadership role in many parishes and in their communities.<sup>47</sup> In the same vein, in his account of the period, Ronald Llerena claims that “many of them later converted into [peasant] federation leaders at a district and provincial level.”<sup>48</sup> The synthesis of Christian commitment and leadership crystallized in the political activism of many members of the MACC. Gregorio Quispe Arpaza might be one of the most illustrative of these cases, as he went on to lead the Federación Interdistrital de Campesinos de Putina and would later become vice-president of the Federación Departamental de Campesinos de Puno.

45 Orta, *Catechizing Culture*, 169–70.

46 Otto Brun, “Los animadores cristianos campesinos en Puno,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 22, julio 1977, 26–27, 30.

47 Otto Brun, “Adiós, compañeros animadores,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 27, marzo 1979, 44–45.

48 Ronald Llerena, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 25 August 2017.

## Defining the Identity of the Regional Church

The reform trajectories of religious actors in the province of Azángaro mirrored and, to a limited extent, influenced pastoral reform processes across the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the southern highlands. Many priests and women religious assumed an option for the *campesinado* which led them to seek work in rural parishes. The increased presence of the church in the countryside manifested in regional debates on pastoral coordination. Numerous initiatives for coordination and exchange among pastoral agents emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Instituto de Pastoral Andina (IPA), as evidenced in the previous chapter, spearheaded these efforts as it constituted the principal center for research and exchange of the Iglesia del Sur Andino. If IPA provided a platform for coordination, it also constituted a forum for contentious debates on the very nature of pastoral action that should (or should not) be carried out across the region. Further examining these doctrinal debates within IPA towards the late 1970s, the second part of this chapter examines how religious and lay actors, inspired by their reading of liberation theology, negotiated a distinctive identity of the *Sur Andino* church and defined its pastoral agenda accordingly.

Although multiple efforts to strengthen cooperation among religious and lay actors existed in urban areas, Cuzco-based IPA mostly concentrated on the coordination of the so-called '*pastoral rural*'. According to a 1979 editorial of *Pastoral Andina*, the focus on the *campo* not only mirrored the fact that the southern highlands remained a predominantly rural area, but also that those working in the countryside "have carried out pastoral approaches with the greatest dynamism." In comparison to pastoral agents working in diocesan administration and urban colleges, the ones working in rural areas were unrestricted - working directly with and alongside the rural parishioners. They could discuss "problems related with the *campo*" within IPA, which in turn focused more towards "the advisors of catechists and the peasants in general."<sup>49</sup> The Instituto Regional de Catequesis y Evangelización Andina (IRCEA), another short-lived subsidiary initiative of regional coordination created in Cuzco, also catered to rural pastoral work. As a "structure of dialogue and space where *campesino* conscience and discourse can be elaborated", IRCEA specifically aimed to strengthen the role of local lay agents - be they called *líderes* or *animadores* - in community leadership and the evangelization of the southern highlands.<sup>50</sup>

Gustavo Gutiérrez, whose writings were particularly influential for reforms of pastoral work, regularly offered lectures and attended annual congresses in Cuzco.

49 "Experiencias pastorales," *Pastoral Andina*, no. 27, marzo 1979, 1.

50 AHPA, IPA, Guido Delrán, Noticias del IRCEA, *Boletín Informativo del IPA* 17, septiembre 1972.

After the initial emphasis on anthropological research under the lead of its then director Louis Dalle, IPA drew more inspirations from the writings of liberation theology from the mid-1970s onwards. Religious and lay actors aimed to develop pastoral approaches that responded to the socio-political context of their parishes. The objective of a liberating – rather than an ‘inculturated’ – evangelization had been formulated not only by pastoral teams in Azángaro, but also by other *campo* teams across the different ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

To a certain extent, developments of the curricula of the educational center under the auspices of the Instituto evidence these doctrinal changes. In June 1975, the IPA board of directors announced plans for the creation of a new educational center which aimed to promote an “Andean theology” and to foster the creation of a “renovated, autochthonous church” that “assimilated what is usable [of ‘traditional beliefs’] and discarded elements alien to the Christian faith.”<sup>51</sup> This project thus ignored the criticism raised by Jean Berthelot against the colonial forms of domination of Catholicism over other beliefs (Chapter 5). Just two years later, members of the institute expressed aspirations which contrasted greatly with these early plans. Rather than imitating a seminary, they suggested that IPA should help orient pastoral agents, via regional gatherings, informal supervision and further education. They hence resolutely defended an understanding of pastoral work as an ever-evolving praxis that benefitted from a critical, research-informed approach to the socio-political milieu. Asking for an educational offering that addressed the “national and local context” – including (church) history, Marxism and syndicalism – they also petitioned for courses on “Andean culture” and languages.<sup>52</sup>

These curricular developments illustrate how IPA was deeply embroiled in wider academic debates of the 1970s, despite its faith-based background (and *raison d'être*). With a rising interest in dependency theory and Marxism, numerous social scientists challenged the previously prevalent culturalist focus by studying the formation of social class across the countryside. There was hence a division between those opting for a *longue durée* perspective influenced by ethnohistory, and those (mostly domestic) intellectuals who engaged with the politics of *campesinismo*. While the former criticized what they saw as classist reductionism that ignored ethnic dimensions, the latter disapproved of research perspectives that ignored the economic structures underlying the functioning of rural society.<sup>53</sup>

51 AOP, Datos sobre el ‘Centro de Formación del Instituto de Pastoral Andina’ que abarca 9 jurisdicciones eclesiásticas, Cuzco, 07.04.1975.

52 AHPA, IPA, “Elementos para una proyección del Departamento de Formación del IPA,” Cuzco, 13.11.1975.

53 Javier Avila, “Entre archivos y trabajo de campo: La etnohistoria en el Perú,” in *No hay país más diverso: Compendio de antropología peruana*, ed. Carlos Iván Degregori (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2012), 192.

According to an internal report, IPA underwent a “change of perspective from an anthropological-cultural to a more social and classist one” by the late 1970s. References to the “indigenous” parishioners were replaced by officially endorsed terminology (i.e. *campesino* and *pueblo*), accordingly.<sup>54</sup>

The content and research agenda of the journal *Allpanchis* was also altered in response to the changing doctrinal conceptions of pastoral work. Already, during the early 1970s, the journal had evolved from a publication describing religious and cultural practices to a more expressly academic publication, for scholars interested in the emerging field of Andean studies. With the departure of Manuel Marzal and Mateo Garr in the mid-1970s, it abandoned its focus on religious anthropology.<sup>55</sup> In spring 1978, the IPA board of directors lamented that the journal still focused heavily on a “culturalist understanding” that hardly reflected the socio-economic and historical ‘reality’ of the region, let alone took into account the inherent “class problematic”. They therefore suggested appointing Alberto Flores Galindo, “a Peruvian researcher with links to the popular movement”, as the new director of *Allpanchis*.<sup>56</sup> Tellingly, under his leadership during the following five years (1978-1983), the content of the journal shifted beyond a focus on the discussion of ‘Andean’ religion and culture, by including studies of rural economy, agriculture, political mobilization, mythology and social organization within peasant communities.

The gradual shift to a different conception of pastoral work was not without controversy, of course. The contentious nature of these changes is reflected in the divergent opinions of pastoral agents published in contributions to *Pastoral Andina*. These contributions, overall, expose how liberation theology, as the new leitmotif for pastoral reform, was subject to different interpretations and criticism. In two articles published in 1977, a Jesuit priest from Cuzco criticized what he saw as a sole focus on “Marxist categories and methods” through the embrace of a “theology of liberation imported from European modernity”. Instead, he reclaimed a current within theology that was “committed to culture and popular religion” and therefore aimed to “defend a lifestyle respectful of local customs and traditions.”<sup>57</sup> The publications of the parish priests of Asillo, Luis Jesús López and Chema Gómez, as well, have attracted criticism for their supposed lack of comprehension of the ethnic and cultural dynamics inherent to the marginalization of rural parishioners. According to Juan Carlos Godenzzi, then working as a priest in Juli, one could not understand the *campo* based on a rational, materialist approach of

54 AHPA, Textes Publicités, IPA, “1955-1975: veinte años de caminar en el Sur Andino,” *Materiales de trabajo*, enero 1988, 88-89.

55 Louis Dalle, “Cambios en la directiva del IPA,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 18, octubre 1976, 3.

56 AHPA, IPA, Reunión de delegados del IPA, Ayaviri, abril 1978.

57 Rodrigo Sánchez-Arjona S.J., “Cultura quechua y teología,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 20, febrero 1977, 6.

social class and religion, as was called for by Gómez and López. Rather, Godenzzi claimed, pastoral agents should consider the “Quechua and Aymara particularities” inherent to the customs and religion of rural communities.<sup>58</sup> In an ensuing response, a fellow priest rebuked these claims for an “Andean theology” by stating that “weak reforms” inspired by an “inauthentic *indigenismo*” could not form an adequate response to the social crisis affecting the countryside.<sup>59</sup>

These controversial debates also manifested and exacerbated existing regional differences. Already in August 1975, participants at a regional episcopal assembly acknowledged “contradictory viewpoints” with regard to questions of supporting social movements against the military government: “some assumed a militant approach, others opt for accompaniment, again others think we should abstain ourselves.”<sup>60</sup> The bishops of certain jurisdictions, namely the Archdiocese of Ayacucho, the Diocese of Abancay and the Prelature of Chuquibambilla, no longer aligned with the doctrinal orientation of IPA and therefore withdrew their membership a few years later.<sup>61</sup> Other religious and lay actors – most notably those in the Prelature of Juli – still sought to defend pastoral approaches embedded within “Andean” traditions. A Maryknoll missionary claimed that, towards the late 1970s, the environment at IPA was “horrible” as it was marked by an “anti-American and anti-imperialistic” mindset and that the Spanish priests “smoked during mass to express their disdain for the more traditional clergy.” The lack of socio-political engagement of the clergy and women religious in Juli, where the Maryknolls still formed the majority, contrasted significantly with the pastoral action in the two other *puneño* jurisdictions. According to Fitzpatrick-Behrens, “Maryknoll’s emphasis on evangelization within the Andean culture” among the predominantly Aymara parishioners would eventually “establish them as outliers” among the pastoral agents assembling in Cuzco.<sup>62</sup>

In sum, developments within the research and educational curricula followed the ideal of a church in transformation, in motion, towards the *pueblo en marcha* or *en lucha*. According to Jesús Luis López, the incipient social crisis, the disillusion with military reformism and the rising migration movements (connecting rural communities to urban centers) led many rural parishioners to aspire to partici-

58 AOP, Juan C. Godenzzi, “Anunciar el evangelio a los pobres (aporte para la reflexión de la Iglesia en el Sur Andino),” marzo 1979; see also Juan C. Godenzzi, “Cuestión indígena y evangelización en Puebla,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 29, diciembre 1979, 20–37.

59 Nuncio Ferrante, “A propósito del artículo de Sánchez-Arjona,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 21, abril 1977, 4.

60 AHPA, Asamblea Regional, Acta de la Cuarta Asamblea Episcopal Regional del Surandino, 30.07–03.08.1975.

61 AHPA, Textes Publicités, IPA, “1955–1975: veinte años de caminar en el Sur Andino,” *Materiales de trabajo*, enero 1988, 92–95.

62 Fitzpatrick-Behrens, *The Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru, 1943–1989*, 211.

pate in the strikes and mobilizations that had multiplied in the late 1970s.<sup>63</sup> Thus, a more comprehensive understanding of the problems of the rural economy and a reformulation of the pastoral messages and sermons was considered essential to fostering liberating faith practices. In line with a 1979 editorial of *Pastoral Andina*, IPA – notably through its coursework, *Allpanchis* and production of didactic material – could make significant contributions to this process of transformation as it “shared the concerns to forge a new spirituality among pastoral agents” and supported the idea of “building a popular church”.<sup>64</sup>

## New Generation of Pastoral Agents

By the late 1970s, the jurisdictions that remained part of IPA had grown to prominence, regarded as bastions of liberation theology in Peru. Episcopal declarations contributed to fostering this reputation, by criticizing the persistent social and economic crisis affecting the countryside in the final years of the military government. In 1977, for instance, the letter *Recogiendo el Clamor* severely criticized the Peruvian authorities for their violent repression of popular protests occurring in the region. In the view of the bishops, this clamor of their parishioners was thoroughly justified and needed to be amplified:

For some time now, a situation of violence has been weighing on us that has become unbearable with the latest economic measures, the continuous rise in the cost of living, the freezing of salaries, the lack of labor stability, the low prices assigned to the products of the peasants, the scarcity of land for the majority of the peasantry [...] and many other measures that in fact harm the common people for the benefit of a minority.<sup>65</sup>

Though they were principally designed to be read out in Mass across the southern highlands, the pastoral letters also circulated in churches across the country and were reprinted by domestic media. As a “historic document without precedent in the recent history”, *Recogiendo el Clamor* was “received [in churches] with profound contemplation and with abundant applause [outside their walls].”<sup>66</sup>

63 Luis Jesús López, “Religiosidad popular: un medio de concientización,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 4.

64 “Editorial,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 29, diciembre 1979, 4.

65 “Recogiendo el Clamor” (July 1977) in Gallego, *La señal de cada momento*, 38.

66 “Obispos protestan,” *Tiempo*, 13.07.1977; also “Prelados del sur condenan violencia,” *Expreso*, 14.07.1977, 2; “Cinco obispos del sur emiten pronunciamiento,” *La Prensa*, 13.07.1977.

The departmental military leader cautioned the Catholic population to prudently interpret a letter “with a clear political content.”<sup>67</sup>

In light of the mounting domestic prominence of their pastoral work among the (rural) poor, the five dioceses and prelatures in Cuzco and Puno increasingly attracted priests, women religious and laypeople committed to supporting the push for liberating evangelization across the southern highlands. According to Eduardo Adelman, a Carmelite missionary in the Prelature of Sicuani, many of the pastoral agents arriving alongside him by the late 1970s and early 1980s did so with a specific commitment to the rural poor. Renouncing the comforts of modernity of their larger cities in coastal Peru or Europe, they specifically aimed to work in a challenging environment where their embrace of liberation theology would align with the local religious leadership. Those who made this significant sacrifice, Adelman critically notices, were often pastoral agents who “identified with leftist parties” motivated by their “dedication to radical social changes.”<sup>68</sup>

In 1978, the IPA board of directors deliberated the launch of an introductory course that aimed to provide comprehensive knowledge on regional history, political economy and liberation theology. After a decade of ongoing (rural) pastoral reform, the Instituto could draw on significant theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in order to offer lessons on evangelization methods and pastoral work. Marcos Degen, who had moved from the *puneño* countryside to Cuzco to assume the presidency of IPA, claimed that there was a need for an introductory course for people drawn to work in the southern highlands. The recent arrivals could benefit from what the Swiss missionaries had missed when they started working in Putina: a “systemic introduction” to the region that would “help people consolidate their option [for the poor].” The course thus mainly aimed to share precise information about “today’s Andean world” and – “from a liberating perspective” – to elucidate on the central problems of contemporary pastoral work.<sup>69</sup>

A comprehensive, and increasingly social-scientifically informed, understanding of the socio-political context was deemed conducive to the conversion of religious and lay actors. Conversion, in this case, did not refer to a change of religion, but rather supposed a subjective process of “repositioning” for pastoral agents (and parishioners) – an altered worldview.<sup>70</sup> In the southern highlands, conversion especially entailed a spiritual and personal rapprochement with the ‘other’, that is, the rural parishioner who was yet to feel part of the local church. In his

67 Jorge Mataliana Genit, “Comunicado oficial, no. 9,” *Los Andes*, 10.07.1977.

68 Eduardo Adelman, interview by author, Comunidad Campesina de Santa Barbara, Peru, 2 July 2017.

69 AHPA, IPA, Reunión de delegados del IPA, Ayaviri, abril 1978.

70 Ofelia Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*, SUNY Series in Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 158–59.



concluding remarks at the regional IPA conference in 1974, Gutiérrez had already called upon pastoral agents to make a “personal commitment” in embracing an ‘option for the poor’. He thus reaffirmed his previous comments on conversion as a condition for liberation: “to convert is to commit oneself to the process of liberation of the poor and exploited, to commit oneself lucidly, realistically and concretely.”<sup>71</sup> The same year, the Peruvian episcopacy had already suggested improving the preparation of pastoral agents, emphasizing the need for a “doctrinal renewal” which included – besides theology – courses on social sciences, philosophy and communication studies.<sup>72</sup>

Based on his experience in the province of Azángaro, Chema Gómez cautioned that a lack of discipline and preparation impacted the pastoral care religious actors could provide to their parishioners. Since they risked failing to “adapt to every peasant sector”, and thus not respecting the ecclesiological dynamic of the rural communities, pastoral agents had to establish a coherent pastoral commitment to their work across the countryside. What he referred to as a “permanent attitude of conversion”, notably, called for the “careful and precise preparation” of pastoral tasks which should avoid the introduction of “foreign” or “colonizing” ecclesiological content to the rural parishioners.<sup>73</sup>

In their objective of fostering a specific pastoral ‘option for the poor (peasantry)’, the introductory courses offered by IPA sought to promote both the individual and collective conversion of a new generation of pastoral agents. The first two-month courses, organized in autumn 1978 and spring 1979, respectively, provided a comprehensive curriculum with classes from both local and domestic scholars. The organizers notably counted on the support of the French Dominicans who had, in 1974, founded the Centro Bartolomé de las Casas in Cuzco.<sup>74</sup> Other lecturers included prominent scholars who worked across both the *ciudad imperial* and Lima: Alberto Flores Galindo, Francisco Verdera, Carlos Ivan Degregori, Luis Miguel Glave and María Isabel Remy, among others, respectively taught courses on colonial and contemporary history, economic analysis, recent cultural and political history as well as social science methodology. These courses were

71 “Encuentro de Yucay, julio 1974: resumen,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 3, agosto 1974, 30–31; Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 268.

72 AOP, “Los Agentes Pastorales,” Documento de trabajo de la XLIII Asamblea General de la Conferencia Episcopal Peruana, Síntesis de las conclusiones de las Asambleas Episcopales Regionales, Lima, 1974.

73 Chema Gómez, “Cuestiones en torno al modelo de Iglesia,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 29, diciembre 1979, 40–41.

74 Founded by French Dominican priests who were active within IPA, the Centro Bartolomé de las Casas aimed to be “a place of meeting and dialogue around all the problems of the Andean society, especially those related to the agrarian economy, the rural society and the peasant culture”. AOP, Carta de los fundadores del CBC al obispo de Puno, 07.07.1974.



**14. Curso de Teología, IPA, 1980.**  
**(Benno Frei, Instituto de Pastoral Andina)**

complemented by seminars on popular religion and evangelization, taught by Diego Irrarázaval and Jorge Alvarez Calderón.<sup>75</sup>

According to Degen, it was crucial for religious and lay actors from Europe and North America to learn to “criticize their own mentality”. The course would allow for them to critically engage with their personal positionality and continue this reflective process in group work with other foreigners.<sup>76</sup> However, course attendees were not solely expected to base these reflections only on the theoretical knowledge acquired during their time in the courses. Through the invitation of select pastoral teams, notably those from Azángaro who had most prolifically conceptualized ideals of conversion and liberating evangelization, the participants could draw inspiration from the practical methods propagated by certain parish priests. Chema Gómez “systematized” these experiences by providing an insight into the pastoral work that had been carried out over the previous years. Even if there was little exchange among experienced and new pastoral agents – who had often not yet accumulated any experience – Degen was confident that the participants were given the “elements to achieve a coherent option [for the poor]” and to successfully “incorporate into the pastoral coordination of the *Sur Andino*” spearheaded by IPA.<sup>77</sup>

The more than forty participants in the first two courses – a majority of whom were women – welcomed this systematic introduction. According to follow-up

75 “Informes del IPA: Departamento de Formación,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 58–62; “Evaluación del curso de formación permanente del IPA,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 28, agosto 1979, 85–89.

76 AHPA, IPA, Reunión de delegados del IPA, Ayaviri, abril 1978.

77 “Informes IPA: Departamento de Formación,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 58–62.

surveys, attendees particularly appreciated the varied curriculum, even if some suggested adding courses on peasant ideology, syndicates and politics as well as agrarian reform. Beyond their educational benefit, these courses also served as spaces of encounter and exchange, where religious and lay actors could befriend each other. Commenting upon her experience attending the course in spring 1979, Regina Riedel, a laywoman working in Sicuani, recalls that she highly valued the “possibility to study, get informed and discuss the social and religious context”. Through the “direct contact with pastoral agents from five jurisdictions of the southern highlands”, she felt like she belonged to a “coordinated church [...] from the first moment.”<sup>78</sup> The courses offered during these years, for instance those on theology lectured by Gustavo Gutiérrez (Figure 14), hence constituted important fora for exchange among the members of the Iglesia del Sur Andino.

In contrast to the ideal of a popular church often evoked in pastoral discourse, this coordinated church remained reserved to clergy, women religious and laypeople. IRCEA, which aimed to coordinate the work of *animadores*, struggled with its objective to foster both a political and religious conscience at once among rural parishioners. The prevailing focus on the political leadership of the *campesinado* risked jeopardizing the religious education of the future religious intermediaries as well as the role they were to assume for the liberating evangelization of the countryside. Citing regional differences as well as the fact that socio-political education had to be part of a broader effort – “religious, human and professional” – to include the rural population into the church, the bishops of the *Sur Andino* closed IRCEA in 1977 and thus de facto excluded religious intermediaries from regional cooperation.<sup>79</sup>

Over the following two years, participants in IPA’s regional workshops in Cuzco pondered whether and how the institute could integrate *animadores* and parishioners. Whereas there was little consensus as to whether specific courses should be offered at a regional level, many attendees pointed out the inherent contradictions of aiming to build a popular church without the inclusion of popular actors (such as peasants and household employees) in pastoral coordination. At the same time, questions arose regarding who – political militants, *animadores* or “*comuneros* in general” – to include and to what extent there was even a demand for inclusion in regional pastoral coordination on the part of parishioners.<sup>80</sup>

78 Regina Riedel, interview by author, Sicuani, Peru, 04.07.2017.

79 See AHPA, IPA, Carta abierta a los agentes pastorales del Sur Andino en ocasión de la suspensión de IRCEA, 16.11.1977; Klaiber, “¿Somos Iglesia!: La Iglesia del Sur Andino, 1960–2006,” 382.

80 AHPA, IPA, Reunión de delegados IPA, 26–27.04.1978, Ayaviri; Acta de la Asamblea General de IPA del 31.03.1979 en Cuzco; Acta de la Asamblea del IPA: delegados y comité directivo, 15.06.1979.

Without answers to these questions in the short term, IPA essentially catered to pastoral agents, who thus often remained the principle subjects of evangelization - rather than the (poor) parishioners themselves. This lack of “synthesis”, according to a Lima-based journal for rural Christian communities, reflected the still “confused” notions of the church as both a clerical and a popular institution.<sup>81</sup> This dichotomous understanding is partially evidenced in the revised statutes of IPA, accepted in December 1979. These statutes determined that IPA’s principal objective was to assure theologically sound and research-informed pastoral work among religious and lay actors. In rather vague terms, however, the statutes also emphasized that the institute aimed to “support the interaction with”, and the pastoral work of, those it considered the actual “basis” of the church.<sup>82</sup>

At the same time, the bishops of the *Sur Andino* publicly reframed their mission as an “accompaniment” of their parishioners: a standing-alongside, facilitating their parishioners’ own agency. In the 1978 pastoral letter *Acompañando a Nuestro Pueblo*, they reiterated that they “felt part of the people who [...] express their protest against injustice and their hope for radical change” and repeated their support for “independent organizations that emerge from the people”. In the same letter, the bishops also outlined who was part of the *pueblo* they sought to accompany: whereas they extensively discussed the situation of the peasantry who lacked land, sufficient revenues, education and medical attention, they also referred to the situation of household employees and other marginalized urban sectors who “suffer from the exploitation of the privileged classes.”<sup>83</sup> Following the sentiments of Louis Dalle as expressed in *El Grito del Pueblo*, it was about “paying attention to what [parishioners] themselves think”, capturing “what they strive after” and recognizing “what they want from the [church]”.<sup>84</sup> However, the framing of pastoral care as accompaniment, publicly proclaimed and articulated by many representatives of the church, was aspirational rather easily attainable. Ultimately, it left many of the fundamental questions among pastoral agents, whose objective of liberating evangelization relied on the collaboration of rural parishioners, unanswered: “How to build church so that the marginalized, the peasants, feel like they belong to it?” and “what is the role of the pastoral agents in this task of building church?”<sup>85</sup>

81 “Iglesia y mundo rural,” *Andenes*, no. 1, noviembre 1978, 10–12.

82 AHPA, IPA, Estatutos del Instituto de Pastoral Andina, 12.12.1979.

83 “Acompañando a Nuestro Pueblo” (September 1978) in Gallego, *La señal de cada momento*, 43–71.

84 Peter von Gunten et al., *Der Schrei Des Volkes / El Grito Del Pueblo: Dokumentarfilm*, Schweiz 1978, 31–32.

85 Chema Gómez, “Evangelización y campesinado pobre en el altiplano peruano,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 25, agosto 1978, 8–9.

Over the following decade, these questions resonated in an increasingly violent context, where agrarian and political conflict reached its apogee on the Peruvian altiplano. The rapidly changing socio-political landscape, however, did not constitute a rupture for the ongoing reform efforts underlined in the past three chapters. Rather, as I will discuss in the last part of this book, in response to violence and deepened conflict, religious and lay actors forged a new synthesis of theological influences and local imperatives, rearticulating their support of the *puneño* peasantry as an alternative to the models of development and revolution offered by the state and Sendero Luminoso. This so-called ‘third path’ was paved by a popular movement that rejected both political and structural violence. Rénique describes this third path as a “dynamic regional movement” opposing both the state counterinsurgency and the incursion of Sendero Luminoso while, simultaneously, supporting the “the biggest wave of land invasions in the Peruvian *sierra* since the 1960s.”<sup>86</sup> For the church, this third path also constituted a pathway to liberation: a movement that upheld many of the principles and ideas (i.e. social justice, solidarity and collective action) that pastoral agents had long advocated for and that were, ultimately, to manifest in the transformation of the *puneño* landscapes.

86 José Luis Rénique, “Apogee and Crisis of a ‘Third Path’: Mariáteguismo, ‘People’s War’ and Counterinsurgency in Puno 1987–1994,” in *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980–1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 308.

# **PART III**

## **MOBILIZING FAITH (1980-1988)**



# 7

## A Third Path

More than a decade after the coup d'état, most of those who had hoped for a profound transformation of Peruvian society were disillusioned with military rule. The government of Francisco Morales Bermúdez, it seemed, had betrayed the revolutionary ideals of his predecessor Velasco Alvarado and was responsible for causing one of the worst economic crises in contemporary Peru. Despite reasons to hope for improvements because of the foreseeable return of civilian rule, the socio-economic situation that the rural population faced in Puno remained dire. In 1978, numerous members of the *puneño* intelligentsia discussed the persistent problems affecting the department in a series of articles in *Los Andes*. Luis Quintanilla Torres, a lawyer and politician, expressed his disenchantment with the Peruvian Revolution in several articles. In his view, the national synthesis which Velasco Alvarado promoted did not fail because of the wrong ideas of social change and political reform. Rather, the military government had forgotten about the human and technical factor in these transformations. In contrast to the hopes of the population, Quintanilla Torres argues, “we witnessed a revolution of paper and words and not of things and deeds”. The agrarian reform was a particular disappointment to the millions of peasants who aspired for landownership. Instead of benefitting landless rural dwellers, the government ended up “creating bureaucratic structures that impoverished and indebted the country.”<sup>1</sup>

As many commentators emphasized in their contribution to debates regarding the underdevelopment of the department, the failures of the military's reformist agenda indeed had particular repercussions for the rural society of Puno. In another *Los Andes* article, former Maoist student leader and agronomist Ronald Bustamante Valdivia lamented that the responses to the structural problems

1 Luis Quintanilla Torres, “Integración y desarrollo,” *Los Andes*, 09.03.1978.





15. Peasant mobilization in Santa Rosa (Melgar), 1979.  
 (Álvaro Villarán, Instituto de Pastoral Andina)

of Puno – such as the road infrastructure – remained inadequate. In his view, Puno could only progress harmoniously once “semi-feudal and semi-colonial ties have been broken.”<sup>2</sup> In the same vein, Adán Zegarra Alférez, a sociologist from the Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, argued that the persistence of semi-feudality mirrored the contradiction between labor and capital. Only through a socialist revolution, he continued (following on from José Carlos Mariátegui’s political thought), would it be possible to permanently alter the relations of power in the *puneño* countryside.<sup>3</sup>

In light of the criticism the criticism often raised against the reforms of the military regime, the political landscape of Peru drastically changed over the course of the 1970s. Strong opposition to the government of Morales Bermúdez indeed created particularly favorable conditions for the emergence of left-wing sentiment and political mobilization. Disappointed by the increasingly conservative turn of the erstwhile radical revolution, many movement leaders drew inspiration from Marxism or liberation theology for the creation of new organizations and associations in the *barrios populares* of Lima.<sup>4</sup>

2 Ronald Bustamante Valdivia, “Puno quiere saber,” *Los Andes*, 25.03.1978.

3 Adán Zegarra Alférez, “Puno quiere saber: 3 notas sobre el carácter predominantemente capitalista de la sociedad peruana,” *Los Andes*, 22.04.1978.

4 Enrique Mayer, *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform*, Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 27; Antonio Zapata, *Lucha Política y Crisis Social: En El Perú Republicano 1821-2021*, 1st ed. (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2021), 304-05.

José Tamayo Herrera was particularly optimistic regarding the future course of the social mobilizations in rural Puno. Even though government bureaucrats had ended up forging a “symbiosis” between themselves and the economic elite, the military regime radically altered patterns of landownership, significantly increased state presence in rural areas and awakened political militancy among people who, two decades beforehand, had not even known the name of the members of government or parliament. In his view, the (rural) *pueblo* had benefitted from education, new means of transport and communication, and contact with the rapidly growing urban centers.<sup>5</sup>

The peasant movements and organizations founded in the late 1970s (Figure 15), too, rearticulated the kind of revolutionary rhetoric that had been abandoned by the military government. On the occasion of the *Día del Campesino* in 1978, the writer and poet Luis Gallegos Arreola did not hide his optimism for the current political activism of the peasantry:

Today the concept of ‘Indian’ has been lost. The peasant has been proletarianized through his contact with the workers in the industrial centers of the cities. Their revolutionary faith and conviction has been revitalized in unions. He is convinced that the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy are incapable of elaborating a political program, so he assumes a historical role in building the socialist society of the future, contributing the communal values of his culture.<sup>6</sup>

In his further explorations of the “new peasant ideology”, referring especially to the influence of Mariátegui, Gallegos emphasized that the peasants of the southern highlands were no longer under the tutelage of the Cáceres brothers or the church, like in the 1960s, or the corporatist government, as was still the case in the late 1970s. Rather, these peasants were seen as defending their own ideals, and their own faith in the “radical social transformations” that were close at hand.<sup>7</sup>

From 1980 onwards, it was the second government of Fernando Belaúnde Terry – re-elected president after his exile during the military government – who faced the difficult task of responding the continued economic woes, further worsened by the continental debt crisis, and to mounting popular discontent.<sup>8</sup> The new decade indeed witnessed a further proliferation of social mobilization, the strengthening of peasant organizations and a new agenda for rural development

5 Tamayo Herrera, *Historia social e indigenismo en el altiplano*, 137–38.

6 Luis Gallegos Arreola, “El Día Del Campesino,” *Los Andes*, 24.06.1978.

7 Luis Gallegos Arreola, “El campesino en el panorama político de la región de Puno: ideología campesina,” *Los Andes*, 05.07.1978; “El campesino en el panorama político de la región de Puno: nueva ideología campesina,” *Los Andes*, 08.07.1978.

8 Carlos Parodi Trece, *Peru, 1960–2000: Políticas Económicas y Sociales En Entornos Cambiantes*, 1st ed. (Lima: Universidad del Pacífico, Centro de Investigación, 2000), 165–67, 174–77.

embraced by those actors committed to their hopes for revolutionary change in the countryside. This growing *campesino* activism hence challenged the indifference of domestic authorities and the recurrent portrayals of the population of Puno as an abandoned people.

Another actor claiming increasing political space in Peru was one which outright rejected institutional politics: Sendero Luminoso. At the same time as democracy returned to Peru, the Maoist political party prominently launched its armed insurgency by burning ballot boxes in the village of Chuschi, Ayacucho. It was in the same department, whose sole university served as an intellectual breeding ground for many leading figures of the insurgency, that Sendero initially gained important territorial control through the incorporation of the impoverished peasantry into its war machine. From there, Sendero extended its influence into other departments of the central and southern highlands of Peru - regions which, alike Ayacucho, were characterized by a large rural population whose economic hardship and political disillusion made them an ideal target for the Maoist propaganda. Known for its brutal massacres of political opponents and civilians as well as its ideologization of violence, Sendero terrorized more and more districts and departments of Peru, including Lima, from the mid-1980s onwards.

It was also during the second half of the 1980s that Sendero Luminoso gained increasing influence and notoriety in Puno. Established in the region since 1970s, the Maoist sect carried out an increasing number of violent attacks against associative enterprises or local politicians opposed to their reign of terror. Sendero also fervently challenged the legitimacy local peasant organizations, which still operated within the democratic political framework and did not call for the eradication of all bourgeois institutions. However, this particularly violent and radical stance also garnered little sympathy among many of the *puneño* peasants, whose claims for land redistribution were better accommodated by the local *campesino* movements. Until the late 1980s, it was thus mostly up to cadres from other regions to sustain the armed operations of Sendero in Puno.<sup>9</sup>

## Religious Polarization

The progressive change of the rural political spectrum at the turn of the decade was, notably with regard to the emergence of peasant movement, spurred by the transformation of the ecclesiastical landscape. The Instituto de Educación Rural (IER) Waqrani (Chapter 3) still remained an important vehicle linking the Catholic Church with the nascent *campesino* organizations. Those benefitting from

9 Rénique, "Apogee and Crisis of a 'Third Path': Mariáteguismo, 'People's War' and Counterinsurgency in Puno 1987-1994," 319.

training at the so-called “Universidad Campesina Waqrani” – and by the early 1970s there were already over 1,500 of them – formed part of a wider network of individuals who, through their collaboration with certain rural parishes, had privileged access to resources provided by the church. In 1976, the IER reformulated its objectives by emphasizing that it sought to support the rural population as agents of their own liberation. Through their education both at the Waqrani estate and at their workplace, peasants were not only “to improve their material condition”, but “to be recognized as persons and a social group.”<sup>10</sup>

As liberation became the guiding principle of pastoral work, religious and lay actors came to outright reject the provision of charity. The question of money – notably regarding mass tariffs, remuneration of *animadores* and infrastructure projects – particularly confronted many foreign missionaries whose quest for a liberating praxis contrasted with their reputation as “*papa plata*” who arrived with the objective to renovate chapels and distribute milk powder. In Ayaviri, for instance, pastoral agents adopted drastic measures in response to the mounting criticism of *desarrollismo*. In 1979, the prelature completely abandoned the provision of Caritas aid to its parishioners. Echoing the theory of dependence and the criticism of Ivan Illich, religious authorities deemed food aid “a weapon in the hands of imperialism and the domestic ruling classes to silence the voice of the people.”<sup>11</sup>

References to class conflict and were increasingly common in the debates and declarations of pastoral agents questioning and challenging the political status quo across Peru’s southern highlands. In the spring of 1982, the Dutch theologian Henri Nouwen attended an IPA workshop in Cuzco that left him astonished at the “new style of this liberation-oriented church.” According to his travel diary, “the style of the dialogue, the fervor of the discussions and the ideological language suggested a meeting of a political party rather than a church group.” Reflecting upon the content of these conversations, Nouwen was particularly impressed by the political discourse of the predominantly foreign actors, which, in his view, resulted from their embrace of liberation theology.<sup>12</sup> The growing politicization of pastoral work not only intrigued many observers, but also provoked opposition from many members who no longer aligned with the growing rural activism on the part of religious and lay actors. For instance, one Italian missionary severely criticized that the Prelature of Ayaviri required its staff to endorse liberation theology, socialism and ecclesiastical independence from Rome.<sup>13</sup>

10 AHPA, IER, “Informe anual presentado por el IER Waqrani a la Asamblea General de Obras Sociales de la Prelatura de Ayaviri,” 16–17.12.1976.

11 AHPA, Consejo Pastoral, Reunión de la prelatura de Ayaviri en San Juan del Oro, 1979; Prelados, Louis Dalle, La prelatura de Ayaviri corta el programa de viveres de Caritas: carta explicativa.

12 Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Gracias!: A Latin American Journal* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 171.

13 AHPA, Párrocos Anteriores, L.V., carta a Louis Dalle, 14.06.1980.

If the church in Puno remained far removed from Lima and, indeed, remarkably independent from Rome, it was still affected by the political changes that came with the official end of the Peruvian Revolution. In contrast to the early days of the Velasco government, the Peruvian episcopacy could no longer find consensus on social and political debates during the late 1970s. Whereas many reform-oriented bishops actively criticized the government of Francisco Morales Bermúdez and supported the strikes and protests occurring at the time, other factions within the Peruvian Catholic Church sympathized with his more conservative politics. Due to this heightened polarization, the episcopacy refused to make a public pronouncement regarding the transition to a civilian government and the development of a new constitution. The bishops nevertheless welcomed that the separation of state and church envisioned by the 1979 constitution was in favorable terms to the Catholic Church, which continued to enjoy special privileges.<sup>14</sup>

This mounting disunion among the Peruvian episcopacy also reflected transnational dynamics, where ‘progressive’ clerics faced a conservative backlash against liberation theology. Although the final document of the 1979 CELAM conference in Puebla seemingly maintained the ‘spirit of Medellín’ in what was now its “*preferential option for the poor*”, the president of CELAM, Alfonso López Trujillo, advocated for the continental episcopal council to cater to the demands of the more conservative factions within the Catholic Church.<sup>15</sup>

During the following years, the Catholic Church in Peru made headlines multiple times as it was embroiled in a contentious controversy over the role of liberation theology in its pastoral work. In early 1983, the President of Congress criticized that there existed numerous “Marxist-Leninist clergy” who abused their position of influence for political reasons.<sup>16</sup> President Belaúnde Terry even accused some religious orders of cooperating with Sendero Luminoso due to their supposed sympathies with left-wing politics. A year later, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger released his *Instruction on Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology*, in which he accused Latin American theologians of spreading Marxist ideology. The Peruvian episcopacy subsequently discussed the content and influence of liberation theology in an extraordinary assembly. During the event, which lasted several days, the bishop of Puno was among the few who provided public testimony in support of the church’s ‘option for the poor’ and the work of Cardinal Juan Landázuri Ricketts. As a result of the ongoing disputes, and in preparation for the visit of Pope John Paul II in February 1985, the episcopacy agreed to elaborate on

14 Michael Fleet and Brian H. Smith, *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru*, Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 207–14.

15 Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821–1985*, 312–14.

16 “Paniagua exige que se investigue a obispos,” *El Diario*, 26.01.1983.

its own position, producing a manual on liberation theology that reflected a nuanced compromise between its adherents and opponents.<sup>17</sup>

Rather than providing a verdict on liberation theology, these discussions instead serve as evidence for the polarization of clerical opinions across Peru. A 1983 survey of the bishops on the role and reception of liberation theology in their respective ecclesiastical jurisdictions illustrated this division. From twenty-eight responses, fifteen bishops held a negative opinion, criticizing its Marxist doctrine, the creation of a “parallel” church, its revolutionary rhetoric and a (perceived, at least) lack of respect for ecclesiastical authorities and the magistrate. The thirteen bishops in favor argued that the writings of liberation theologians helped them in reorienting their pastoral work, and stimulated a more profound entry of the church into the everyday life of the poor.<sup>18</sup> In a separate letter to Cardinal Landázuri Ricketts in September 1984, women religious from different congregations also praised the importance of doctrinal renewal in favor of the poor. The same month, a large number of leading Peruvian scholars published a declaration commending the quality of the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez and his writings as “a reflection rooted in our Peruvian and Latin American cultural processes”.<sup>19</sup>

Alberto Flores Galindo summarized the controversy surrounding liberation theology and the papal visit in February 1985 as a contradiction germane to Peruvian Catholicism. In his perspective, the ambiguous messages delivered by the Pope, including his criticism of the materialist and atheist beliefs of Marxism, should theoretically have had little appeal to the audiences in the major cities of the coast, *sierra* and Amazon. In contrast to Europe, the Peruvian left had no anticlerical tradition and saw no inherent contradiction between Christianity and socialism. Peru, furthermore, was no longer mission territory, but had, as evidenced by the writings of Gutiérrez, developed independent (theological) thinking. At the same time, he lamented, Catholicism “was a component of our colonial domination and is part of our subordination to the West.” In response to the papal discourse, clergy, women religious, lay actors as well as political leaders from left to right did not engage in critical dialogue, but simply abided by the words of the Catholic authority. Since “everyone was fighting for papal assent”, Flores Galindo saw fit to concede, with a sense of regret, that John Paul II was ultimately right to claim that “the search for blessing [is] as a distinctive feature of Peruvian religiosity.”<sup>20</sup>

The regional pastoral coordination in the southern highlands, too, was affected by the heightened scrutiny many liberation theologians and bishops were subjected to from the late 1970s onwards. A few weeks after the visit of Henry Nou-

17 AOP, “La liberación en Cristo: manual de orientación sobre la teología de la liberación para agentes pastorales,” diciembre 1986; Klaiber, “Prophets and Populists,” 11.

18 AOP, Aportes de los señores prelados de la Conferencia, julio 1983.

19 “Sobre el debate de la teología de la liberación,” *Caretas*, 24.09.1984.

20 Alberto Flores Galindo, “Antes y después del Papa,” *El Zorro de Abajo*, no. 1, junio-julio 1985.

wen, in spring 1982, bishops Louis Dalle and Luis Vallejos Santoni died in traffic accidents within a short period of time. The choice for one of their successors points to the changed, more hostile conditions for activist clergy in the highlands. In Ayaviri, a French Fidei Donum priest, Francisco d'Alteroche, continued with the pastoral plan Dalle had elaborated in the late 1970s, "faithful to the option for those who suffer the most."<sup>21</sup> In the Archdiocese of Cuzco, however, the appointment of a new bishop affected the regional pastoral coordination under the auspices of IPA. As evidence for how "[Pope] John Paul II replaced progressive bishops with more conservative ones in a number of dioceses throughout the region", Alcides Mendoza Castro strictly opposed the pastoral reforms launched under his predecessor.<sup>22</sup> Soon afterward, the oldest and most populated jurisdiction of the Iglesia del Sur Andino withdrew from IPA and forced the Instituto to relocate from Cuzco to Sicuani.

## Voice of the Voiceless

Overall, on entering the new decade, it was clear that pastoral agents in the Prelature of Ayaviri and the Diocese of Puno faced an increasingly difficult environment.<sup>23</sup> In the southeasternmost department of Peru, the state, *campesino* movements and insurgent groups opposed each other, particularly from the mid-1980s onwards. It is safe to say that armed conflict and ongoing patterns of *campesino* mobilization produced "an explosive cocktail" on the Peruvian altiplano.<sup>24</sup> The presence of Sendero Luminoso mostly affected Azángaro and Melgar, provinces that were the scenes of numerous land invasions while also hosting, as previously discussed, parishes and diocesan institutions committed to rural (Catholic) activism. This highly tumultuous context led many political and religious actors to fear that the department of Puno risked becoming the "second Ayacucho" as the insurgency spread to the southern highlands.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Puno could count on

21 Alteroche, *Testimonio de un caminar*, 124.

22 Klaiber, "¿Somos Iglesia!: La Iglesia del Sur Andino, 1960–2006," 385; Anna L. Peterson and Manuel A. Vásquez, "Postconcialiar Roman Catholicism," in *Latin American Religions: Histories and Documents in Context*, ed. Anna L. Peterson and Manuel A. Vásquez (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 210.

23 I would like to thank Lexington Books for allowing me to reproduce parts of the chapter "Voices of the Church, Voices of the People", previously published in *Liberation Theology and the Others: Contextualizing Catholic Activism in 20th Century Latin America*, ed. Christian Büschges, Andrea Müller, and Noah Oehri (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 185–204.

24 Lewis Taylor, "Agrarian Unrest and Political Conflict in Puno, 1985–1987," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 6, no. 2 (1987): 135.

25 CVR, *Informe final*, 3.3 La Iglesia Católica y las iglesias evangélicas, 431.

numerous organizations and institutions who opposed the escalation of political violence, including the Catholic Church.

The radio station of the church, Radio Onda Azul (Chapter 2), can serve as a particularly insightful example of how the church responded to the escalating internal conflict. Described as “one of the best equipped and most politically progressive” radios on the altiplano,<sup>26</sup> ROA actively supported Catholic activism on behalf of the victims of violence. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación, CVR), mass media have adopted three different attitudes in the face of armed conflict: sensationalism, autoregulation (i.e. cooperation with the state) and independence. Ascribing Onda Azul to the last category, the Commission recognized the decisive role that the broadcaster played during the conflict as it “forged a public opinion favorable to the respect of human rights.”<sup>27</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, Onda Azul still functioned as a diocesan broadcaster, yet – deprived of funding from the Ministry of Education and the Maryknoll congregation – was subject to criticism for its limited programming. At a regional meeting in 1979, for instance, the pastoral agents of Azángaro lamented that the diocesan broadcaster was not supporting religious and lay actors across the countryside. In their view, ROA “lacked prepared personnel with a pastoral preoccupation” in order to “become the voice of the church” that establish its commitment to the rural population.<sup>28</sup> That same year, the bishops assembled at the third Latin American Episcopal Conference held in Puebla called upon Catholic broadcasters to “have channels [...] that assure intercommunication and dialogue with the world”, using a “audio-visual language” adapted to its audience, embracing its role as a “voice of the dispossessed” and assuming “the risk that this implies.”<sup>29</sup>

It took until the early 1980s for an “experience of popular communication” to take hold at Onda Azul.<sup>30</sup> Under new leadership and administration, the Catholic station embraced horizontality as an ideal for public broadcasting, rather than verticality. Echoing shifts in pastoral orientation, Onda Azul – like the wider church – sought to align itself more closely with its (spiritual) audience. In this context, Onda Azul not only assumed the role of a prophetic voice for and of the church. According to its 1985 doctrinal framework, it also became the ‘voice of the voiceless’, transmitting the voices that otherwise remained unheard:

26 Taylor, “Agrarian Unrest and Political Conflict in Puno, 1985–1987,” 149.

27 CVR, *Informe final*, 3.4 Los Medios de Comunicación, 534.

28 AOP, Reunión zonal de evaluación, Capachica, 16–17.11.1979.

29 Conclusiones de la Tercera Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, febrero 1979, 1069, 1091–94.

30 Raúl Rodríguez Chalco, “Radio Onda Azul: Una experiencia de comunicación popular en Puno,” *Allpanchis XXI*, no. 53 (1999): 197.



Without voice, because history brought a strange language to Puno, difficult to speak, and because communication media have always been out of reach and much less at their [those without a voice] service. Without voice, most of all, because they had been forced one or another time to remain silent, in many instances with incredible cruelty. Through its radio broadcaster, the church of the altiplano would like to offer a voice to the people that have none. A clear, strong and supportive voice, that does not only speak to them in their language of their pains and joys, but which is at their reach so that the people themselves can make themselves listened to and thus gradually recuperate their humanity.<sup>31</sup>

The doctrinal framework emphasizes that access to media had historically been limited for certain population groups that had thus far had no means of participating in media production: because they were monolingual, lacked education, or were without the necessary infrastructure. Through the practice of “giving voice” to subaltern subjects, the radio wanted to let its listeners express themselves freely in their own language on matters of personal or collective interest. At the same time, the objective to “give voice” perpetuated the paternalistic assumption that the (supposedly) voiceless subjects depended on Onda Azul. Conversely, the contrary was also the case. The radio’s role as *voz de los sin voz* ultimately relied on the very existence and collaboration of those disenfranchised voices it sought to amplify and circulate.

The idea of offering a voice for those who have none – broadcasting the “voice of the voiceless” – was a common paradigm for a church that had assumed a prophetic voice when denouncing injustice, oppression and violence while announcing a new social order.<sup>32</sup> In theological writings, the idea of *giving voice*, rather than simply *listening* to or *speaking* for, implies a process of emancipation for those subjects whose voices are to be mobilized and reproduced. Indeed, the objectives of horizontal communication and (popular) participation reflect not only the changing conceptions of communication in Latin America, but also echo the central premises of liberation theology. A paradigm with the ‘voice of the voiceless’ at its center, it must be said, appears to have a distinct, almost literal sense, when it is paired with the rationale of a radio broadcaster, that is, a transmitter of voices and sounds. ROA was thus not merely a mouthpiece of the Catholic Church, but also offered a discursive platform to actors and institutions associated with

31 AOP, Marco doctrinario de Radio Onda Azul, 1985, 2.

32 The bishop of San Salvador, Óscar Romero, most prominently embodied this role of a contemporary prophet denouncing the escalating violence in his country. See Óscar Arnulfo Romero, Rudolfo Cardenal, and Ignacio Martín-Baró, *La voz de los sin voz: la palabra viva de Monseñor Romero* (San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1986).

the church who actively sought to address the armed conflict raging in the landscapes of Puno.<sup>33</sup>

## Broadcasting Conflict

The Comité de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Puno (CODDEH-Puno), one of the most prominent organizations in defense of human rights, was one of those institutions. Established in December 1981 as a regional organization without political affiliation, it sought to ensure that international human rights law was “respected, defended and put in practice” throughout the department. Members of the committee, including numerous religious and lay actors, were notably committed to denouncing abuses, as well as providing judicial and material help to the victims of human rights violations.<sup>34</sup> In the context of mounting police and military presence across the region, CODDEH also had to assume the legal defense of peasants who were unjustly detained. It would regularly report on such actions through its own production on Onda Azul, *Voces Libres*, or via public announcements, such as Audio 1.<sup>35</sup>

### *Audio 1. CODDEH Statement on Onda Azul, January 1987*

Radio Presenter: [05:28] Statement. The CODDEH informs the citizens of the Department and conveys its concern regarding the following: The actions of repression to terrorist violence have increased since 18 December 1986, after the confrontation of combined police forces. Civil Guard, Republican Guard and Investigation Police of Peru, against Senderista commandos in Chacocunca, district of Asillo, province of Azángaro. [...] The raids and indiscriminate detention of people have been carried out in a violent and brutal manner, without respect for the integrity of the presumed culprits, and looting property belonging to the peasants. To date, and after several days have elapsed in several cases, and under the protection of Decree Law 046 that empowers the police forces to carry out investigations for a period of fifteen days, these are carried out slowly and bureaucratically, ostensibly harming the peasants who are taken from their places of origin to [the city of] Puno. [...] The Peruvian Constitution specifies that the Judicial Power is exclusively empowered to order the detention of persons, except in the case that the person

33 See also Noah Oehri, “Voices of the Church, Voices of the People,” in *Liberation Theology and the Others: Contextualizing Catholic Activism in 20th Century Latin America*, ed. Christian Büschges, Andrea Müller, and Noah Oehri (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 185–204.

34 AOP, Estatuto aprobado en asamblea general, Comité de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Puno, 02.12.1982.

35 Lupe Jara, “El Sur Andino, una Iglesia que responde a los signos de los tiempos,” in *Ser iglesia en tiempos de violencia*, ed. Cecilia Tovar (Lima: Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas, CEP, 2006), 564.

has been detained by the police at the moment of committing a crime in flagrante delicto. Article 2, Paragraph 20 of the Peruvian Constitution, which states: “No one may be detained except by written and motivated order of the Judge, or by the police authorities in case of flagrante delicto”. By not expressing its disagreement and rejection of these violating acts, the Judiciary declines jurisdiction and contributes to the deterioration of citizen tranquility. The department of Puno is not a declared emergency zone. Therefore, the aforementioned operation on 14, 15, 16 and 17 January is unconstitutional, violates guarantees, creates an unnecessary climate of unrest, restricts free transit and, due to the brutal conditions in which it was carried out, makes the police operation criminal. Finally, the CODDEH demands a prompt pronouncement from the Bar Association, rectification from the constituted powers and urges the civilian population to take measures to safeguard the tranquility of the citizens, which are not at odds with the isolation and rejection of terrorist violence, but do not imply deterioration of social and economic activities in the Department. [10:01]<sup>36</sup>

This announcement can be considered illustrative of the work of CODDEH, as it not only denounces police abuses, but also reminds the audience that the state of emergency had not yet been declared. In contrast to publishing a written statement, broadcasting via radio allowed the committee to reach wider audiences, while permitting a faster reaction to the events. Moreover, by outlining specific legal regulations, the announcement also promoted the knowledge of the laws applying to police inquisitions; in this case, for instance, the ‘brutal and violent’ police operations in the district of Asillo violated the Peruvian Constitution. CODDEH thus called upon the bar association of Puno to issue a statement and appealed for the safeguarding of public tranquility.

From 1986 onwards, inspired by the work of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Chile, all three ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Puno established Vicarías de Solidaridad<sup>37</sup> that, in collaboration with civil organizations<sup>38</sup> like CODDEH, not only accomplished legal and social tasks, but according to the CVR, also “prevented fear from paralyzing people in a time of great distrust.”<sup>38</sup> Among other responsibilities, the collaborating pastoral agents provided aid to orphans and widows, ensured that dignified burials were conducted, visited prisons, interviewed state agents, and collected and circulated all the information that it had obtained regionally and domestically about the conflict situation.<sup>39</sup> This information – often

36 ROA Archives, “Pronunciamiento Vicaría y CODEEH,” 1987, Audio cassette.

37 The very first Vicaría de Solidaridad in Peru was created in Ayaviri in April 1986, followed by the Diocese of Puno in October 1986; the following years the Prelatures of Juli and Sicuani also created their own. Lupe Jara, “El Sur Andino, una Iglesia que responde a los signos de los tiempos,” 565.

38 CVR, *Informe final*, 3.3 La Iglesia Católica y las iglesias evangélicas, 432.

39 Alteroche, *Testimonio de un caminar*, 138.

circulated among parishes via radio – was not only used to elaborate extensive chronologies and reports on the ongoing violence, but also to inform fellow citizens and denounce abuses at the hands of authorities.<sup>40</sup> Audio 2 presents an example of one of the Vicaría's pronouncements.

*Audio 2. Statement of the Vicaría de Solidaridad de Puno, January 1987*

Radio Presenter: [01:11] So what is happening in Puno? It is simply that the people of Puno can no longer walk peacefully through the streets. During a power outage, the police forces come out and ask for identity documents from all the people walking in the streets at that moment. It is natural for a policeman to ask a person for documents. But that three policemen do it, one pointing his gun at us, another shouting, and the other moving from one side to the other makes anyone nervous. For some, it is frightening. For others, it causes panic. And the least, we get scared. Is this how the police forces think they give us security? Is this how the police are the ones who give us protection? Or... is this how the police are scaring and frightening anyone? [...] Puno has not been officially declared a political emergency, but in practice we live as if it were so. At least at times they make it seem that way. But if here in the city of Puno the things we have said are happening, in the countryside, mainly in the province of Azángaro, things are worse. There, for example, people do not leave their homes after six o'clock in the evening. In Azángaro, nobody has declared an emergency in that province either, but the way the police forces act has made people stay indoors after six o'clock in the evening like little chickens. [...] For fear of being suddenly arrested, or for fear of being killed by a bullet, or for fear that once arrested they will be mistreated and accused of being terrorists. This presence of police forces, never seen before in our department, has been caused, as we all know, by the actions that Sendero Luminoso carries out in Puno. Nobody wants the presence of Sendero. We are all against destruction, death and terrorism. And this must be very clear, now that we are talking about the police forces. This does not mean that we defend the Sendero Luminoso. But, unfortunately, when a policeman points his gun at us while another one shouts at us and a third one asks us for our personal documents, it causes us as much fear and terror as the terror and fear caused by the actions of the Sendero. [04:02]<sup>41</sup>

This statement by the Vicaría de Solidaridad of the Diocese of Puno, broadcast together with the above-cited CODDEH announcement (Audio 1), lends a nuanced viewpoint from which one can witness the difficult position of ecclesiastical actors, including ROA, in the face of armed conflict. It critically addresses the turbu-

40 AHSC Zona Andina, Ayaviri – Vicaría de Solidaridad, Informe 1988, Servicios de la Vicaría de Solidaridad, enero 1989; AHPA, Vicaría de Solidaridad, “En defensa de la vida,” Servicios de la Vicaría de Solidaridad, 89.

41 ROA Archives, “Pronunciamiento Vicaría y CODEEH,” 1987, Audio cassette.

lent situation that affected the department from a regional point of view, emphasizing how the population was affected by police violence. At the same time, the statement especially refers to the worsened context in Azángaro, which remained a distant province from the perspective of the speaker residing in the *puneño* capital. According to media scholar John Mowitt, the ideal of accompaniment can indeed be misleading in radio practice, since it “functions to place the voice at once alongside and yet decidedly remote from the people.”<sup>42</sup> Towards the late 1980s, the provinces most affected by political violence were difficult to access for many journalists and non-governmental organizations. Both the Vicarías de Solidaridad and ROA thus relied on a network of local informants and collaborators to report on the conflict and assist the civilian population (from afar).

Condemning both the presence of police forces and of Sendero Luminoso, the presenter in Audio 2 echoed the position of many religious actors and organizations, who consistently deemed both parties equally responsible for the escalation of violence over the second half of the 1980s. Fearing any further aggravation of the situation, thus endangering human rights, the Vicarías de Solidaridad strongly opposed any declaration of a state of emergency or the envoy of military forces to the department.<sup>43</sup>

The two pronouncements above, furthermore, also partly reveal how notions of those ‘without voice’ were appropriated in human rights discourses transmitted via the radio. Critically engaging with the liberal universality germane to global(izing) human rights discourse, liberation theologians have defended the “rights of the poor” as a concept that emphasizes the specificity and vulnerability of the marginalized subjects suffering from systemic violence in their everyday lives.<sup>44</sup> These ‘rights of the poor’, however, do not seek to defend a given status quo, that is, rights that have already been obtained. Rather, from the perspective of theologians, the rights of the poor entail claims for social transformation - for the equal rights and liberties the poor yet have to receive.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, both CODDEH and the Vicaría de Solidaridad refer particularly to the situation of the rural population in Azángaro, whose response to the violence they experienced was shaped by their poverty. Without the provision of legal counselling or socio-economic support, human rights risked remaining an abstract concept of little applicability to the victims of political violence. By thematizing and addressing the situation in Azángaro through radio broadcasts, these organizations could thus draw specif-

42 John Mowitt, *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception*, A Fletcher Jones Foundation Humanities Imprint (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 99.

43 AHSC, Zona Andina, Ayaviri - Vicaría de Solidaridad, “Pronunciamento: Alto a la violencia y militarización en Puno,” 24.05.1989.

44 Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights*, 163.

45 Mark Engler, “Toward the ‘Rights of the Poor’ Human Rights in Liberation Theology,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 28, no. 3 (2000): 356.

ic attention to the population ‘without voice’ who experienced most violence, yet often lacked sufficient institutional or legal support to respond to human rights violations.

In the face of armed conflict, many religious and lay actors across Puno advocated for a mobilization on the part of those opposed to the presence of both military and Senderista forces. In May 1986, the Diocese of Puno organized the first “*Marcha por la Paz y Defensa de la Vida*” in response to both the political violence and the exacerbation of conflicts related to the restructuration of land. In his opening speech, Swiss missionary Francisco Gmür condemned both physical violence – “wherever it may come from” – and structural violence which respected neither the liberating message of the Catholic Church nor the existing human rights framework. The *marcha*, according to Gmür, was to defend “life, a dignified life, just, human and solidary”, as both the armed conflict and the lack of land were threatening the *puneño* population.<sup>46</sup>

*Audio 3. March for Peace and Defense of Life, May 1986*

Radio Presenter 1: [04:37] Well, a lot of us uh... can appreciate a group of... ladies, and... the same ones that are with a banner for example we can uh... read “Peace is peasants with full economic opportunities”, we lived or... they took... or “alive they took them, alive we want them”, disappeared detainees from Peru in nineteen hundred... eh... 81, 82... We can also read another... another banner: “Peace is the rejection of partisan totalitarianism”, “peace is development and social justice”, “peace is competent authorities”. And as well as these eh... placards or banners can be given to different expressions. “Peace is correct administration of justice”. So that is what the people of Puno are asking for. “Peace is also defense of their own culture”, among other expressions that we can... eh, reach all of you through... these waves. And that by the way, in the expression of the young people, of the adult people, of the people from rural areas, of the people from urban areas present in this manifestation of... the March for Peace and Defense of Life. A delegation from Santiago de Pupuja that has just arrived... has just arrived and is going to take its place in its corresponding place. [06:01]

Radio Presenter 2: [06:02] Well, that’s right. Eh... many people are arriving here at Pino Park in our city of Puno. March for Peace and Defense of Life [...] The year, uh... of this year 1986, the people of Puno, through its various Christian organizations in our department Puno, are present this morning to be in this important day [...] If the Christian believes in the fruitfulness of peace to reach justice, he also believes that justice is an unavoidable condition for peace. He does not fail to see that Latin America finds itself in a... in many parts, in a situation of injustice that can be called institutionalized violence, when entire populations lacking the necessary...

46 ROA Archives, Francisco Gmür, “Motivación de la marcha por la paz y la vida,” 10.05.1986.

such a dependence that prevents them from taking any responsible initiative. As well as any possibility of cultural promotion and participation in social and political life, thus violating the fundamental rights of man. We believe that today... the people of Puno are protesting against this situation and these injustices. [07:18]<sup>47</sup>

Covering the first *Marcha por la Paz*, Onda Azul interviewed those who gathered in the departmental capital to express their political claims (see above, Audio 3). In their comments on the ongoing developments of the event, including the slogans carried on banners and the arrival of new groups, the presenters allowed the audience to closely follow the event by sharing their observations of the sounds and speeches, but also the visual aspects of the gathering. According to Belgian priest José Loits, who officially closed the gathering in the early hours of the afternoon, participants had arrived from “rural parishes, urban parishes, [...] popular organizations [and] *comunidades*”, emphasizing that the *Marcha por la Paz* breathed new life into the ancient tradition of the Christian procession, for a modern context.<sup>48</sup> Of particular interest to the radio moderators were the participants from the parish of Azángaro, who reported about the military presence in their province and the “tense situation” they had experienced since the arrival of the armed forces in early 1986.<sup>49</sup> In the following months and years, Onda Azul covered multiple events and demonstrations which, just like the first *Marcha por la Paz*, offered a forum for religious organizations, peasant movements and community representatives to express their collective rejection of violence.<sup>50</sup>

At the 1987 departmental strike meeting, also broadcast on ROA, the intervening speakers emphasized the need for a common front against political violence. A representative of the Central de Mujeres notably decried the “lies of the authorities” misrepresenting the rapidly escalating situation in Azángaro and Melgar:

I believe that it is said that in the department of Puno there is no militarization. What is happening in the province of Azángaro? What is happening in Ayaviri, comrades? Are there not mothers crying for the murder of their sons, the murder of their husbands? [...] At this moment, I want to ask the people of Puno, that in this way, united in an organized way, we must always be together to say stop the repression, stop the militarization, comrades!<sup>51</sup>

47 ROA Archives, “Marcha por la paz (IV),” Audio cassette.

48 ROA Archives, José Loits, “Mensaje Final a la marcha por la paz y la vida,” 10.05.1986.

49 ROA Archives, “Marcha por la paz (IV),” Audio cassette.

50 Apart from the departmental strike in July 1986 and the Forum ‘*Puno quiere la paz*’ in August 1986, the ROA Archives also include audio files on the *Congreso teológico* in September 1987, the ‘*Encuentro departamental por la justicia, vida y la paz*’ (1987) and the ‘*Encuentro departamental por la vida*’ (1989).

51 ROA Archives, “Mitin paro 17 de julio II,” Audio cassette.

In the same vein, a subsequent interlocutor denounced the military presence, and in particular the counterinsurgent agencies who “entered the houses of the *campesinos* to steal their radios and appliances.” In response to this situation, he called upon the “organized *pueblo*”, including peasantry, workers, commercial agents and domestic employees, to mobilize “as one sole force to defeat this type of [political] regime.”<sup>52</sup>

In multiple recordings, Onda Azul strongly endorsed this collective engagement of the *pueblo*, supported by the Catholic and secular actors and organizations, for peace. Reproducing the prevalent pastoral discourses, the radio broadcaster appealed for an alliance between those actors who opposed the growing attacks against the *campesino* movements and the church. In the aftermath of the previous departmental strike in April 1986, an Onda Azul moderator had already declared that “sectarianism has died in this popular experience”, which saw different organizations unite to “bring Puno forward”. The continuation of this popular unity, after all, constituted “the most dearest wish” of the radio in its “permanent commitment to [its] people.”<sup>53</sup> For this commitment, ROA had unsurprisingly been subject to criticism and attacks. In 1984 a *puneño* parliamentarian, Hugo Carbajal Dueñas, claimed that ROA “supported communists” and should thus be renamed “Onda Roja”.<sup>54</sup>

In August 1986, the Diocese of Puno organized a forum Puno Quiere la Paz, which assembled well-known representatives from the Peruvian Catholic Church to discuss the prospects of conflict and the church’s response.<sup>55</sup> The conversations taking place at the forum, recorded and transmitted by Onda Azul, emphasized the need to avoid reproducing the “cruel experience of Ayacucho”, anticipating that the declaration of a state of emergency in Puno could lead to further human rights violations. A human rights lawyer present at the forum warned that the violence of Sendero “is an element for legitimization for state violence”, which, in turn, risked destroying “the very nuclei of democratic accumulation”, most notably the existing political associations and movements. In Ayacucho, he for instance emphasized, the *campesino* organizations had been completely destroyed due to the conflict.<sup>56</sup>

In a statement published after the forum, the bishops of Puno hence not only condemned both the armed insurgency and anti-subversive violence, but notably called for “the preservation and strengthening of democracy and the rule of

52 ROA Archives, “Mitin paro 17 de julio II,” Audio cassette.

53 ROA Archives, “HORIZONTE - Lucha de Puno, 13 marzo 1986,” Audio cassette.

54 “Diputado Carbajal: Radio ‘Onda Azul’ apoya a comunistas,” *Correo*, 06.04.1984.

55 Francisco Paca Pantigioso, “Ni terrorismo ni privilegiados acallarán la voz de la Iglesia,” *La República*, 26.08.1986.

56 ROA Archives, “Forum Puno quiere la paz 1986,” Audio cassette.



law”, especially the political representatives and organizations of the peasantry.<sup>57</sup> According to Gustavo Gutiérrez, who also participated in the forum, it was the responsibility of the church to “denounce the different forces of death”, in spite of the attacks against certain parishes. In line with the news coverage of the event by the newspaper *La República*, “neither terrorists nor the privileged will silence the voice of the church.”<sup>58</sup> Put differently, church representatives in Puno were to neither support those proclaiming bloodshed and revolution nor those who continued to ignore the rightful aspirations of their parishioners.

Ultimately, the success of this third path depended not only upon the collaboration of the political forces opposing the violence perpetrated by both Sendero Luminoso and the state counterinsurgency, but also on the solution of what still remained the most contingent issue in rural politics: the ownership and redistribution of land. Only by advocating for a viable path of rural restructuring and future development could the church’s preaching of liberation compete with Sendero’s preaching of radical destruction. And only by accompanying their rural parishioners on this path could the church prove that its option for the poor translated into concrete actions in support of grassroots agency.

57 “Declaración del seminario Puno quiere la paz” (August 1986) in Gallego, *La señal de cada momento*, 253–55.

58 Francisco Paca Pantigioso, “Ni terrorismo ni privilegiados acallarán la voz de la Iglesia,” *La República*, 26.08.1986.

# 8

## Land of Communities

As in most of rural Latin America, in Puno controversies of landownership were marked by conflicting ideologies underpinning the proposed reorganization of the countryside. The liberal development discourses of the 1960s envisioned the rapid modernization of the countryside through technological progress and the abolishment of semi-feudalism. The subsequent agrarian reform abolished the hacienda system only to replace it with cooperative structures responding to the revolutionary rhetoric of a collective mobilization of the peasantry. The end of military reformism marked the beginning of a period of contingent discussion and political dispute on how land was to be distributed and owned. As the *Batalla por Puno* reached its most tense phase, pursuant to Rénique, the department became a battleground for competing ideologies and ideas:

Puno was, at the end of the 20th century, perhaps the last living frontier of that indigenous Peru that the literati of a century beforehand had conceived as the launching pad for a crusade to re-found the nation. Its variegated communal world, the still pending struggle for land, its vast landscapes uninhabited by the hand of the state, its unguarded international border, among other factors, prefigured it as an ideal territory for dreams of insurgency and revolution.<sup>1</sup>

It was not only for the liberal government to determine a cohesive agrarian policy, but, more importantly, for the mobilized peasantry to successfully defend their claims to land. Different projects of more or less radical reform, defended by peasant organizations, political parties, the Maoist insurgency or the central government, corresponded to diverging ideas of (rural) tradition and modernity,

1 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 317.

(liberal) development and liberation. The same discourses eventually undergirded the increasingly violent land conflict across the southern highlands.

The Catholic Church, whose religious and social activism across the countryside had gradually increased since the early 1960s, defended its own vision for rural development. The bishops of Puno and Ayaviri, in their contributions to the 1979 CELAM conference in Puebla, had already reiterated their respective support for the *pueblo* who “wants its values, traditions and customs to be recognized”. Following the ideal of a grassroots-led transformation of the countryside that defied state tutelage, the church emphasized not only the historical claim to land of its rural parishioners, but also their right to “organize [themselves] according to [their] own models.”<sup>2</sup> Put differently, new forms of landownership had to respond to the aspiration of those working, but in most cases still not owning, the land. In a letter sent to the new President Belaúnde Terry in 1980, the bishops demanded the “respect of the peasant communities”, including their “communal structure” and their “own organization experiences”.<sup>3</sup>

The church’s emphasis on community – when referring to the types of an organization, social structure and cultural tradition proper to the peasantry – also echoed intellectual contributions to debates on the rural question. Given widespread disillusion with what was once hailed as an “irreversible march on the paths of modernity”, Alberto Flores Galindo argued that the challenge consisted in “imagin[ing] a development model that does not imply [...] the ruin of peasants” but which also allows for cultural pluralism and the respect of traditional practices and knowledge.<sup>4</sup> In a 1982 contribution to *Allpanchis*, he and his colleague Manuel Burga wondered whether a synthesis of tradition and modernity would be possible in the southern *sierra*, or whether such objectives would simply result in “impossible rebellions” based on the “desperation of the vanquished”.<sup>5</sup> The corporative ideals which inspired the 1969 agrarian reform still remained influential among many intellectuals and activists after the demise of the military regime. Questions regarding the viability of land redistribution and the beneficiaries of these efforts continued to focus on future of cooperative and communal management of land, seen as a constitutive part of the social organization in the Andean countryside. In the same volume, sociologist Rodrigo Sánchez criticized this dualistic vision of Peruvian society, which presumes a fixed opposition between the

2 “Documento de la diócesis de Puno,” “Documento de la prelatura de Ayaviri,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 24, junio 1978, 55, 69.

3 AOP, Carpeta 12 Cristianos en Lucha, IV Encuentro de Cristianos en Lucha, 1980; “Los obispos del Sur Andino al Presidente Belaúnde,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 32, octubre 1980, 67–70.

4 Alberto Flores Galindo, *Buscando un Inca*, Historia Ed. Horizonte (Lima: Ed. Horizonte, 1994), 342–43.

5 Alberto Flores Galindo and Manuel Burga, “La utopía andina,” *Allpanchis* XVII, no. 20 (1982): 97–98.

peasant economy and capitalism, “*lo andino*” and modernity. In Sánchez’s view, these interpretations reflected the prevalent “idealization” and “mystified vision” marking contemporary understanding of the peasant community defended by many groups and intellectuals of the political left.<sup>6</sup>

But to what extent did this ‘mystification’ of the peasant community indeed reflect ideological bias? The “rhetorical opposition between *ayllus* and Indians, on one hand, and modernity and the West, on the other”, following anthropologist Mary Weismantel, can only be understood “in the context of its intellectual history and the political aims of those who invoke it.” The peasant community – often referred to as either the (distant) successor or the embodiment of the *ayllu* – has indeed been subject to continuous reinterpretation, reification and abandonment by social scientists. It is against the backdrop of these controversial discussions that one needs to critically analyze the corresponding political rhetoric reclaiming communities, be they “real” or “imagined”, as vectors for rural development in the department of Puno during the 1980s.<sup>7</sup>

The “(almost) eternal love story” between anthropologists and peasant communities, which finds its origins in the *indigenismo* of the early 20th century, is also an uneasy relationship. The classic studies of Hildebrando Castro Pozo, Luis E. Valcárcel and José Carlos Mariátegui outlined certain characteristics of community (i.e. communitarianism, ritual, solidarity and reciprocity) that inspired and intrigued anthropologists over the following decades.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the accelerated social transformation of rural Peru during the agrarian reform, the dualist principles elaborated by the early *indigenista* writings – opposing modern and traditional, coast and highlands, Andean and occidental – still informed many historical and anthropological studies. Despite its popularity in social-scientific research, however, the concept of (indigenous or peasant) community has never benefitted from a congruent and widely accepted definition. Therefore, community can be framed as an “entity in a ceaseless process of definition and redefinition” as its structures and organization were being negotiated among its members, political and religious actors alike.<sup>9</sup>

6 Rodrigo Sánchez Enríquez, “La teoría de ‘lo andino’ y el campesinado de hoy,” *Allpanchis* XVII, no. 20 (1982): 255.

7 Mary Weismantel, “Ayllu: Real and Imagined Communities in the Andes,” in *The Seductions of Community: Emancipations, Oppressions, Quandaries*, ed. Gerald W. Creed (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2006), 80–81, 97.

8 Jaime Urrutia, “Comunidades campesinas y antropología: historia de un amor (casi) eterno,” *Debate Agrario*, no. 14 (September 1992): 1–4.

9 Karl Yambert, “Thought and Reality: Dialectics of the Andean Community,” in *Land and Power in Latin America: Agrarian Economies and Social Processes in the Andes*, ed. Benjamin S. Orlove and Glynn Custred (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 78.

Despite this burgeoning critical research on peasant communities,<sup>10</sup> José Luis Rénique argues the socialist and *indigenista* visions delineated by Castro Pozo, Mariátegui and Valcárcel remained popular and barely challenged by the early 1980s.<sup>11</sup> *Allpanchis*, for instance, had a number of volumes dedicated to themes like myths, peasant movements, communities, regionalism, agrarian economy and, indeed, the political thought of Mariátegui. At the same time, these regional studies had not yet produced any comprehensive accounts of the functioning of peasant economies by the early 1980s. In particular, there still existed no consensus with regard to how capitalism affected the internal organization of peasant communities.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in response to the lack of scholarship on the *puneño* countryside and following similar tendencies in other provincial universities, the Universidad Nacional del Altiplano opened Puno's first anthropology department in 1982.

Another reason why the 'mystifying', "radical Peruvian tradition" remained prominent is the fact that 'lo andino' as a distinct social category remained widely used to describe the peculiarity of social phenomena related to the inhabitants and society of the *sierra*. Alberto Flores Galindo, who remained director of *Allpanchis* until 1983, aimed to advance the history of mentalities. His articulations of an "Andean Utopia" as a project responding to colonial domination and social fragmentation, however, was criticized for perpetuating the localisms and essentialisms he himself had previously condemned.<sup>13</sup> Both Flores Galindo and his colleague Manuel Burga followed the footsteps of early anthropological work which outlined related notions of territory and culture. Their elaborations on the "[Andean] cultural area", in particular, lent implicit support to the idea that "cultural boundaries are territorial boundaries and the borders between culturally diverse groups are marked by strong ecological differences."<sup>14</sup> The criticism, and the more notorious rebuttal of "Andeanism" a few years later, reflect the revisionist tendencies which, during the 1990s, reviewed and discussed earlier community studies.<sup>15</sup>

More fundamentally, one can argue, the "radical" writings of Valcárcel, Castro Pozo and Mariátegui still influenced the agenda for rural development in the southern *sierra*. During the 1950s and 1960s, the influence of these writers often

10 Pajuelo, "Imágenes de la comunidad. Indígenas, campesinos y antropólogos en el Perú," 157-63.

11 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 313.

12 Roxana Barrantes Cáceres, "Aproximación a un balance sobre campesinado y descampesinización en el Perú," *Allpanchis* XIX, no. 22 (1983): 169-70; Adolfo Figueroa, *Capitalist Development and the Peasant Economy in Peru*, Cambridge Latin American Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1.

13 Avila, "Entre archivos y trabajo de campo: La etnohistoria en el Perú," 195-97.

14 Marisol de la Cadena, "De utopías y contrahegemonías: El proceso de la cultura popular," *Revista Andina* 8, no. 1 (July 1990): 67.

15 Orin Starn, "Missing the Revolution: Anthropologists and the War in Peru," *Cultural Anthropology* 6, no. 1 (1991): 66.

led the development policy to translate into a “reinvention of community” according to the perceptions of the mostly foreign actors to the altiplano environment.<sup>16</sup> Early transnational development projects, including the previously discussed Andean Indian Program, were accompanied by anthropologists studying the reception and acceptance of these ‘reinvention’ measures. Many of these programs articulated the objective of an “ideal community” which however differed from the existing structures and, therefore, required the intervention of state and non-state agents.<sup>17</sup> In the mid-1950s, François Bourricaud tellingly complained about the fact that the “term community was used in such a vague manner” that it applied to many distinct social structures in Puno.<sup>18</sup>

Despite these contrasting perceptions, the *comunidad* remained the principal axis for rural development for the numerous grassroots support organizations and their projects during the 1970s and 1980s. The objective of “community development” was as multifaceted as the many programs that aimed to promote modernization and literacy in the *puneño* countryside. A review of these projects from the time underlined that “peasant communities suffer from distorted perceptions” since “all public and private institutions try to organize them”. Whether it was for matters of functionality, economic concerns of decision-making processes, actors with an often limited understanding of communal organization advanced “models and organizational charts”, sponsored “committees and promoters” and often, in so doing, subjected the residents to plans they had little influence on and were not responsible for.<sup>19</sup>

The 1970 *Estatuto Especial de Comunidades Campesinas* probably constituted one of the most far-reaching of these attempts at restructuring. Complementing the 1969 agrarian reform, the statute reorganized peasant communities along cooperatives lines, with new administrative bodies restricted to those members who could read and write Spanish. The introduction of new membership criteria, the replacement of old communal juntas and the appropriation of private lands into cooperative management, unsurprisingly, disregarded existing customs for governance and agrarian practices.<sup>20</sup> As a result of this new legislation, the num-

16 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866–1995*, 184.

17 For an overview of development practices focusing on highland communities in Peru, see Susan Vincent, *Dimensions of Development: History, Community, and Change in Allpachico, Peru* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 50–58.

18 Bourricaud, *Cambios en Puno: Estudios de sociología andina*, 65.

19 Juan Palao Berastain, *Programas, proyectos, micro-regiones y desarrollo rural: el caso de Puno, 1947–1987* (Lima: Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 1988), 34–41.

20 Susan C. Bourque and David Scott Palmer, “Transforming the Rural Sector: Government Policy and Peasant Response,” in *The Peruvian Experiment*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 189–90; Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 232.

ber of officially recognized peasant communities rose from 167 to 460 during the course of the 1970s.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to the large associative enterprises, with whom the neighboring *comuneros* and *comuneras* often entertained a tense relationship, however, peasant communities in Puno hardly benefitted from the Velasco reform. They had initially been promised a lot, but ended up receiving but 2.5% of the restructured hacienda lands and were among the sectors of society most affected by the economic crisis during the last years of the military regime.<sup>22</sup>

On entering the 1980s, the peasant community remained an object of fascination and scrutiny: a ‘mystified’ structure often (re)constructed in intellectual and political discourse, idealized by development agents yet increasingly questioned by scholars. It was ultimately upon vague, oft-romanticized descriptions of these *comunidades* that many parties to the land conflict developed their political platforms. The Catholic Church in Puno, as historians Ethel del Pozo-Vergnes and José Luis Rénique have noted, also formed part of the network that “mystified the community” and hence mobilized the ideas of intellectuals of the political left.<sup>23</sup> Whereas both authors rightly locate the practices and discourses of pastoral agents within a much larger intellectual heritage, they do not provide an account for *why* and *how* certain religious and lay actors construed the (peasant) community as a new ideal of rural development. Some questions remain open for investigation. How did pastoral endorsement of communal organization differ from contemporary intellectual debates on rural development? And in what way did pastoral agents develop a discursive strategy appropriating ‘*lo andino*’ in their preaching of liberation?

## Communities of Resistance

The agrarian law advanced by the second government of Belaúnde Terry in 1980 was, from the outset, subjected to severe criticism with regard to its impact on the rural economy. Whereas he was in favor of agrarian reform, albeit carried out timidly, during his first presidency, he aimed to dismantle the cooperative sector and liberalize the land market during his second term in office.<sup>24</sup> The liquidation of associative enterprises risked exacerbating rural poverty. According to regional studies, the small-scale production of the *campesinado* could hardly compete with domestic and foreign agroindustry benefitting from a liberalized market. In other

21 Rodrigo Sánchez, *Organización andina, drama y posibilidad*, Serie Estudios sociales (Huancayo: Ediciones Fondo Editorial IRINEA, 1987), 182.

22 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866–1995*, 204–05, 212.

23 Rénique, 255; Del Pozo-Vergnes, *De la hacienda a la mundialización*, 152.

24 Mayer, *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform*, 28–30.

words, “capitalist development in Peru has [always] been anti-rural and anti-peasant” because it risked converting the peasantry into a (cheap) labor force for the growing demands of urban centers.<sup>25</sup>

In their reaction to the 1980 agrarian promotion law, church representatives expressed their fear that the civilian government would thoroughly reverse the agrarian reform and further disadvantage its supposed beneficiaries. In a meeting on the “campesino question” in Lima in 1981, religious and lay actors criticized the promotion of private landownership. Although attendees at the meeting concurred that the agrarian reform had not resolved many of the pressing problems the countryside faced, they nevertheless commended the previous military government for recognizing the “social function” of land through the establishment of associative enterprises. If the latter were to be dismantled and sold, meeting attendees feared that the old landowning class would reclaim their lost property and that land would, once again, only serve for individual economic benefit.<sup>26</sup> In their view, economic liberalization thus positioned the private interests of capital in opposition to the collective interests of impoverished rural workers and, most notably, the peasant community. In March 1981, sixty pastoral agents from across the southern Andes denounced the new agrarian law for not “offering a solution to bring Peruvian agriculture out of stagnation and alleviate popular hunger” as the projected reforms would not allocate to peasant communities the “land they needed to live”.<sup>27</sup>

Within the context of public disputes over the restructuring of the agrarian system, opponents of the liberal reform projects affirmed the fundamental role of peasant communities. The alternative reform program elaborated by the Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP) in 1981, for instance, asserted that the *comunidades* must constitute “the principal vehicle of agrarian development in the Andean region.” Among other recommendations, the CCP suggested that the state guarantee the peasant communities’ access to land, energy resources, financial support and basic infrastructure.<sup>28</sup> A group of (anonymous) social scientists who contributed to the proposal expressed their concerns that the government’s law and framework for rural development would contribute to the disappearance of traditional forms of social organization. Notably, they also warned that the “widespread diffusion of Spanish makes it possible to introduce the ideology

25 Adolfo Figueroa, “Esquema para un programa de desarrollo campesino en la sierra del Perú,” *Allpanchis* XX, no. 23 (1984): 10-11; Adolfo Figueroa, *La economía campesina de la sierra sur del Perú* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1989), 133-35.

26 AOP, Comisión Episcopal de Acción Social, “Cuestión campesina e Iglesia en el Perú de 1981”, n.d.

27 AOP, “Agentes pastorales se pronuncian sobre la Ley de Promoción y Desarrollo Agrario,” IPA, Cuzco, 13.03.1981.

28 III Consejo Nacional de la Confederación Campesina del Perú, “Proyecto alternativo de Ley de Promoción y Desarrollo Agrario,” *SUR*, no. 44, noviembre 1981, 34-35.



of progress” as well as “individualism as an essential capitalist trait”.<sup>29</sup> Notions of progressive (development) ideology and individualism, in their view, clashed with what they identified as the traditional values of the peasant community: communitarianism and solidarity.

Many clerics, women religious and laypeople in Puno increasingly sympathized with those contemporary intellectuals defending the *sui generis* nature of peasant communities and their role in the reorganization of the agrarian system. In 1978, for instance, Louis Dalle lamented that the “complex of the colonized” continued to haunt Peru and Latin America in its pursuit of “submission to the dominating power” and the “mania of imitation”. In his view, the *pueblo* “longed for authenticity” in its defense of tradition and in its opposition against abuses committed by colonial rulers or *gamonales*.<sup>30</sup> The same year, the bishops of Cuzco and Puno reaffirmed the importance of “popular struggle against oppression” in a pastoral letter. In particular, they recognized that the peasantry aimed to “conserve the traditions of their ancestors in the face of attempts by dominant cultures to destroy them” as well as “defend proper forms of social organization” like the peasant community.<sup>31</sup>

When rejecting economic liberalism as a (foreign) imposition, religious and lay actors not only drew inspiration from the communitarian ideals elaborated by *indigenista* intellectuals or organizations like the CCP. Neither did they, in reference to Eric Hobsbawm, merely invent a localist tradition. Rather, as this chapter argues, religious and lay actors developed a discursive strategy in defense of a supposedly authentic, historical form of ‘community’. As partly evidenced by Dalle and his fellow bishops, pastoral agents sought to (re)interpret and appropriate ‘Andean’ social and religious customs as an intrinsic longing for liberation. Church representatives, in other words, mobilized their own reading of tradition (past and present) as a source of legitimacy for what they considered ‘ideal’ communities. In line with Mary Watkins and Helen Shulman, the communities endorsed in pastoral discourse could be framed as “communities of resistance”, that is, communities “where justice and peace on a small scale are possible” and which “resist the dehumanizing forces present in the dominant [capitalist] culture.”<sup>32</sup>

The reports of a 1982 workshop on land struggle illustrate how religious and lay actors in Puno renegotiated their (historical) understanding of peasant communities. Pastoral agents of the diocese, including Ronald Llerena and Luis Jesús López, argued that the subdivision of associative enterprises into individual land

29 “El problema agrario y los objetivos de un programa alternativo,” *SUR*, no. 44, noviembre 1981, 13–14, 20.

30 Luis Dalle, “Ayaviri: aporte al document de la Iglesia surandina,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 36–38.

31 “Acompañando a Nuestro Pueblo” (September 1978) in Gallego, *La señal de cada momento*, 55.

32 Watkins and Shulman, *Towards Psychologies of Liberation*, 209.

parcels could not constitute a viable option for rural development. Notably, they evoked values like solidarity and the “forms of communal resistance” which had once helped the peasants defend against colonialism, and in their view, would continue to do so against capitalism.<sup>33</sup> Further advancing this argument, their fellow missionaries in Ayaviri developed their own vision of “Christian ethics in the struggle for land”. They argued that many of the “ethical-cultural values” of the contemporary peasant community were accordant with the “universal values of pre-capitalist civilization” described in biblical writings. The participants praised the sacred relationship between peasants and land, and underlined how the peasants’ struggle can be understood through their reading of the book of Exodus:

Like the history of the people of Israel, the history of the Andean people is characterized by its continuous struggle for land since its right to land had continuously been threatened or denied. Facing the voracious appetite for land of the Incas, Spanish captains, *encomenderos*, *gamonales*, or the state, peasant communities of the altiplano, resisted, retracted many times, rebelled: active or passive resistance, legal or violent battle to reclaim their land.<sup>34</sup>

Through their *longue durée* perspective, the delegation from Ayaviri inscribed the contemporary peasant mobilization as part of a continuous conflict between oppressors and those *comunidades* striving for their eventual liberation. The Bible, as discussed in the previous chapter, could thereby serve as an important inspiration for both pastoral agents and parishioners in their commitment to solve the ongoing agrarian crisis.

The reinvention of the peasant community as a historic community of resistance also manifested in the curriculum at the IER Waqrani. Agronomists and pastoral agents resorted to a historicized reading of social organization and included the “history of community” in its courses (lesson shown in Figure 16). In July 1981, the IER hosted a course on the organization of communal production in which future models of landownership were discussed. Based on a brief analysis of precolonial and colonial history, the course material noted how both *ayllus* and later *comunidades* occupied a small, marginal space in a rural economy that had been successively dominated by the Spanish crown, haciendas and associative enterprises. Facing these continuous aggressions and the disappointment of the Velasco reforms, the peasant community had been forgotten and marginalized, lacking land as well as technical and financial support. The course guide warned that if communal lands were to be fully subdivided among individuals, its mem-

33 AOP, Taller teológico del Sur Andino (1982), Texto de discusión no. 1: “La tierra en el proyecto andino de liberación,” Aporte del grupo de Puno.

34 AOP, Taller teológico del Sur Andino (1982), Texto de discusión no. 3, “Ética cristiana en el trabajo / lucha por la tierra,” Aporte del grupo de Ayaviri.



16. Cursillo de orientación 'Labores Agrícolas', IER.  
 Álvaro Villarán, Instituto de Pastoral Andina

bers would lose communal ties and could thus not mobilize for more lands or better educational and health services anymore.

Notwithstanding growing internal divisions among community members, the course manual emphasized that the peasant communities still maintained important communitarian traditions like *faenas* and religious *fiestas*. With their vision for a peasant community-led future as the “sole alternative” to unequal, capitalist expansion, the course concluded, it was time “to show the exploiters that *campesinos* are capable of working the land in benefit of the entire community.”<sup>35</sup>

Following a similar historical perspective, popular religion also constituted a cultural practice of resistance for *comuneros* and *comuneras*. As an example, one missionary and theologian researching religion in the southern highlands, Diego Irarrázaval, distinguished between a modernizing and a liberating dynamic among rural parishioners.<sup>36</sup> Writing in 1980, he observed that capitalist values had increasingly infiltrated “traditional religion” through the influence of certain privileged groups. This “dominating culture”, Irarrázaval feared, risked “undermining the peasantry’s ethos of reciprocity and morality of defiance” and thus fostering “subordination to the leadership of *mistis*.” In contrast to the modern - and “evangelic” - emphasis on individual salvation, popular religious practice consolidated the unity among community members. Through the celebration

35 AHPA, s/n, “Curso: organización de la producción comunal,” IER Waqrani, 02-05.07.1981.

36 Piedra Valdez, *La misión andina*, 151-53.

and appropriation of religious *fiestas* and symbols, for instance, rural parishioners could strengthen reciprocity and their “non-conformist identity”. In so doing, the peasants “not only reproduced their traditions, but rethink them in opposition to the dominant culture.”<sup>37</sup> Following Paraguayan theologian José Luis Caravias, the Quechua vision of *Pachamama* was indeed “much closer to the biblical message than the materialistic Western conceptions of [rural] development.”<sup>38</sup>

The reinterpretation and valorization of popular religion was a response to ongoing reforms and theological debates within the continent at the onset of the new decade. The episcopal conference in Puebla had already in 1979 expressed the need for the church “to not only evangelize individuals, but cultures as well”. In particular, religious actors were called upon to respect and value the (ever-changing) popular religious beliefs and practices, and incorporate them in their work. Pastoral agents should notably recognize the values of popular religiosity and role of lived faith in the creation of a collective conscience.<sup>39</sup> The accompaniment preconized by the bishops in Puebla was thus not limited to social transformations, but first and foremost also the continuous development of a distinct popular religion.

From the late 1970s onwards, the evangelization of cultures propagated by the bishops in Puebla translated into a renewed emphasis on popular religion in many parishes of the *Sur Andino*. As discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, religious and lay actors aimed to offer new, liberating perspectives on some religious customs previously considered alienating and subject to numerous anthropological studies. Many parish teams developed new approaches to religious *fiestas* by seeking to foster the awareness-raising and communitarian aspects of local celebrations. Recognizing the values of what their predecessors often dismissed and criticized for the abuse of alcohol, pastoral agents aspired to understand the meaning of these celebrations for the peasant communities as well as their role in reproducing a collective identity.

The *Fiesta de los Difuntos* can be taken as an illustrative example. Pastoral agents in the province of Azángaro sought to mobilize the “liberating aspects” of the cult to the dead without “imposing content that [was] alien to the life and culture of the *pueblo*”. In their view, this *fiesta* notably expressed the parishioners’ admiration and respect for their ancestors, whose souls were said to maintain close ties to their living relatives. From a “liberating perspective”, however, these celebrations also revealed the often-avoidable deaths and often-unfulfilled aspirations of the peasantry. In their sermons, pastoral agents sought to address the “true causes” of the death of many (young) parishioners, in particular the prevailing social con-

37 Diego Irrarázaval, “Cambios en la religión del campesinado,” *Páginas* 5, separata, no. 30, julio 1980, 3-5.

38 José Luis Caravias, *Luchar por la tierra: inspiraciones bíblicas para las comunidades campesinas* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1983), 17.

39 Piedra Valdez, *La misión andina*, 38.

ditions (e.g. malnourishment, lack of medical care) and political conditions (e.g. social inequality, marginalization). Furthermore, they insisted that peasants were to continue the historical struggles for social transformation that their forebears, family and friends could not, due to their untimely death. Pastoral agents called upon parishioners to remain “faithful to their forefathers” and continue to “fight for better living conditions” and “a more just society” in which their children could lead healthier (and longer) lives.<sup>40</sup>

Over time, then, pastoral agents in certain parishes had hence come to consider the peasant community and popular religion, respectively, as social structures and social practices that perpetuated traditions of resistance. Reclaiming and appropriating these traditions as a distinctively ‘Andean’ praxis of liberation, they engaged in a discourse that strategically positioned rural parishioners in opposition to forces of oppression and (capitalist) exploitation. Or, in the terms of Enrique Dussel, they equated *Andinidad* with “popular culture”, framing it as the lifestyle “least contaminated by the ruling classes”, as such constituting “the radiative nucleus of resistance to the oppressors by the oppressed”.<sup>41</sup>

Through its attribution of specific, ‘liberating’ values to these ‘communities of resistance’, however, this type of pastoral discourse ignored the dynamics of internal differentiation. In the view of many religious and lay actors, it was supposedly cohesive, solidary and harmonious *comunidades* who mobilized these practices of resistance. Thus, claimed scholarly critics, pastoral agents had misrepresented many rural parishioners whose communal organization barely corresponded to the envisioned ideals of collective action and reciprocity. A study on landownership in Puno published in 1969, for instance, had already noted that a “high degree of individualism” existed within peasant communities, thus disqualifying the existence of a “mystical communal solidarity”.<sup>42</sup> The same year, poet and novelist Juan Alberto Cuentas also criticized the fact that politicians in Lima misunderstood communities, claiming that the *campesinado* was “contrarian to agrarian collectivism” and that only private ownership could offer “progress, independence, justice and liberty”.<sup>43</sup> Burgeoning scholarship on rural Peru which emerged during the early 1980s would partly confirm this criticism, for instance by emphasizing

40 Agentes pastorales de Azángaro, “Pastoral de la Fiesta de los Difuntos,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 26, noviembre 1978, 49-55.

41 Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985), 93; Michael R. Candelaria, *Popular Religion and Liberation: The Dilemma of Liberation Theology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 15.

42 Christian J. L. Bertholet, *Puno rural* (Lima: CISEPA, Inst. afiliado a la Pontificia Univ. Católica del Perú, 1969), 237.

43 J. Alberto Cuentas, “Reforma agraria: la comunidad es una unidad territorial, falsa,” *Los Andes*, 15.09.1969.

that the peasant communities were in an “advanced phase of internal fragmentation.”<sup>44</sup>

Simultaneous attempts to create ecclesial base communities further illustrate how pastoral agents sought to impose their ‘ideal’, (Christian) community in the countryside. Although significantly less widespread than in Brazil, these *comunidades de base* had constituted a method for evangelization in many regions of difficult terrain or inaccessibility. In the Prelature of Ayaviri, the parish priests of San Juan del Oro were among the first to experiment with the organization of such communities, which were to help parishioners to critically reflect upon their situation. However, Nicolas Castel and a woman religious from the local girls’ school struggled to communicate their model of communal prayers, biblical lectures and social collaboration. In fact, the communities of local *comuneros* and *comuneras* differed drastically from the pastoral agents’ ideal of a *comunidad de base*. In the sector of Chunchusmayo, they tellingly had to take several days to “make [parishioners] understand what a community is.”<sup>45</sup>

All told, the different examples discussed in this section demonstrate how many religious and lay actors in the Prelature of Ayaviri and the Diocese of Puno developed a distinctively Christian perspective on land struggle by the early 1980s. Based on their endorsement of ‘communities of resistance’, pastoral agents actively supported peasant organizations reclaiming the restructuring of associative enterprises. Ultimately, this was a crucial moment for many pastoral agents to prove that their option for the peasantry would indeed translate into the envisioned accompaniment of rural parishioners.

## Democratic Restructuration of Land

In multiple articles during the early 1980s, the magazine *SUR* warned its readers about the “return of *gamonales*” and arbitrary abuses of power by local authorities. In the district of Coaza, for instance, the owners of a hacienda unaffected by the agrarian reform harassed local *comuneros* and attacked their property rights.<sup>46</sup> Since the agrarian policy of the Belaúnde government seeking to liberalize land-ownership risked being detrimental to the claims of peasant communities, nascent *campesino* organizations had to respond in defense of their interests amid an increasingly turbulent situation across the landscapes of rural Puno.

44 Fernando Eguren López and Diego García Sayán, *Agro: clases, campesinado y revolución* (Lima: DESCO (Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo), 1980), 65–66.

45 ASCF, Nicolas Castel, “S.O.S. Sur les Andes,” circulaire, décembre 1981.

46 “Gamonales al acecho en Coaza,” *SUR*, no. 20, 1979, 18–19; “Poder local en Puno. El caso de Carabaya,” *SUR*, no. 33–34, 1980, 54–56. “Poder local y retorno de gamonales en Puno,” *SUR*, no. 43, 1981, 30–33.

The largest of Puno's rural unions and peasant organizations that were created in the late 1970s and early 1980s adhered to the *mariateguista* orientation of the CCP. José Carlos Mariátegui served - together with Mao Tse-Tung - as the great doctrinal leader for the peasant movements emerging in that time. The issues Mariátegui once discussed became part of the claims of the mobilized peasantry, including the struggle against semi-feudality, *gamonalismo* and the reinvigoration of the peasant community.<sup>47</sup> The Federación Campesina del Departamento de Puno (FDCP), the regional umbrella organization founded outside the town of Azángaro in late 1978, also symbolically acknowledged important leaders of anti-colonial resistance (e.g. Túpac Amaru, Pedro Vilca Apaza and Rumi Maki) as honorary members. The federation leaders, however, named the first congress of the organization after Mariátegui in recognition of the "value of the gran maestro of the Peruvian *pueblo* and proletariat." Providing support to its members in opposition to landowners, administrators of associative enterprises and the Belaúnde government, the FDCP assumed a *campesino* and grassroots identity, reflective of then prevalent reinterpretations of the work of maestro Mariátegui.<sup>48</sup> The political left in Puno, which principally defended *campesino* interests and land claims, also drew their ideology from Peru's most famous Marxist intellectual. In 1984, they founded the regionalist Partido Unificado Mariateguista (PUM) as one of the leading forces of the 'third path'.<sup>49</sup>

Simultaneous efforts to establish ethnic federations in the southern highlands had not proven successful. In 1979, a first *Encuentro de Nacionalidades* took place in Cuzco, seeking to reunite peasant organizations - considered Quechua or Aymara "nations" - as well as social organizations from the Amazon region as representatives of "national minorities". During the debate, many participants substantiated the rhetoric of the nationalist project under the military government. To them, it was unfair to differentiate between ethnic groups as exploitation and domination could also affect non-indigenous peasants and the working class. Put differently, according to *SUR*, they raised the question "how [can they] liberate [themselves] if all of Peru is oppressed?"<sup>50</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the competition between those organizations embracing a class discourse and those defending a distinctively ethnic identity was only short-lived. By 1982, both the Congreso de Nacionalidades and the Federación Aymara Túpac Katari, ethnic organizations respectively competing with the CCP and

47 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 314.

48 "Campesinado puneño: Ratifica acuerdos del V Congreso de la CCP," *SUR*, no. 12, enero-febrero 1979, 14.

49 For a more detailed analysis of party politics in Puno and the role of PUM in the land conflict of the 1980s, see Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1866-1995*, 329-52.

50 "El encuentro," *SUR*, no. 22, diciembre 1979, 16-17.

FDCP, had failed to consolidate as movements with broad grassroots support. The peasant organizations, in turn, were excluded from attempts to coordinate indigenous movements across Latin America. The organizers of the first *Encuentro de Organizaciones Indias de América del Sur* – also held in Cuzco – barred Peruvian organizations because they identified as peasants and thus “expressed their rejection of the specific characteristics of Indian culture and tradition.”<sup>51</sup>

In contrast, organizations and committees defending the interests of peasant women experienced relative success. In 1982, a first assembly of rural women from across Puno called for the establishment of a class-based organization of *campesinas* in support of land redistribution. The participants discussed the multiple forms of discrimination affecting *mujeres campesinas*, as they were subject to discrimination due to both their gender and their class. Despite their important contributions to the peasant economy, moreover, they still had little influence on communal decision-making.<sup>52</sup> By this time, the Catholic Church had reformed its pastoral work from an early focus on promoting home economics through *clubs de madres*. After numerous priests and missionaries had struggled for several years to respond to the specific forms of oppression faced by women, the topic of women’s political participation gained significantly more prominence towards the mid-1980s.<sup>53</sup>

Overall, the greater strength of *campesino* organizations from the department of Puno, found through mounting female support, among other means, also had reverberations at the national level. In January 1982, the village of Santa Rosa (Melgar) hosted the fourth national council of the CCP in preparation for its sixth national congress. At said national congress, the *puneño* peasantry constituted the largest participant group from any department, representing almost a third of delegates and base members. The numerous delegations from Puno critically discussed the shortage of land in the altiplano districts where associative enterprises still dominated a large part of the agrarian system. Ultimately, however, the delegation from Puno was not only there to “bring problems”, as *SUR* intimated, but rather, they also suggested an alternative solution to the agrarian crisis. This came

51 Archivos CCP, “I Encuentro de las organizaciones indias de América del Sur,” 27.02-03.03.1980, Cuzco.

52 “Pronunciamiento del primer encuentro de mujeres campesinas del departamento de Puno,” *SUR*, no. 56, 1982, 72-75; Sarah A. Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood, “Viva”: *Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*, International Studies of Women and Place (London: Routledge, 1993), 214-16.

53 See Rosario Valdevellano, “Trabajo con mujeres campesinas,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 6, octubre 1974, 22-23; AOP, “7 años de trabajo con mujeres organizadas en el Surandino,” Taller de asesoras, Sicuani, 17-20.04.1990.



about through their demands for the restructuration of the associative enterprises and the establishment of so-called “communal enterprises”.<sup>54</sup>

According to Ricardo Vega, then president of the IER Waqrani, the communal enterprise (*empresa communal*) was conceived as an alternative agrarian structure in the early 1980s, after several years of debate across the department on how to organize communal agrarian production. These structures still adhered to the cooperative ideals of the Velasco reform, but relied on the voluntary participation of members of the peasant community. The communal enterprise, he claims, could hence be defined as a “peasant community that organizes itself entrepreneurial-ly.” Despite its dependence on the market economy – where most of its produce was to be sold – the enterprise was to “respect the life of the community”, as decisions regarding planting, harvest and commercialization on the communal lands were to be made collectively. In its organization, Vega claimed, the communal enterprise thus “values Andean culture and identity” and fosters a sense of belonging as a foundation for both social cohesion and productivity.<sup>55</sup>

The Catholic Church, most notably the clerics, lay agents and agronomists directly cooperating with peasant organizations, strongly supported these communal enterprises. In their 1986 pastoral letter, *La Tierra: Don de Dios, Derecho del Pueblo*, the bishops of the *Sur Andino* reiterated their support for the peasant community as the “axis for a program of authentic rural Andean development”. Referring to offerings to *Pachamama*, the bishops claimed that land – “from an Andean perspective” – was “both sacred and [a] source of life”. The redistribution of land, the central claim of the peasant organizations, was hence intrinsically connected to the perseverance of the peasant community:

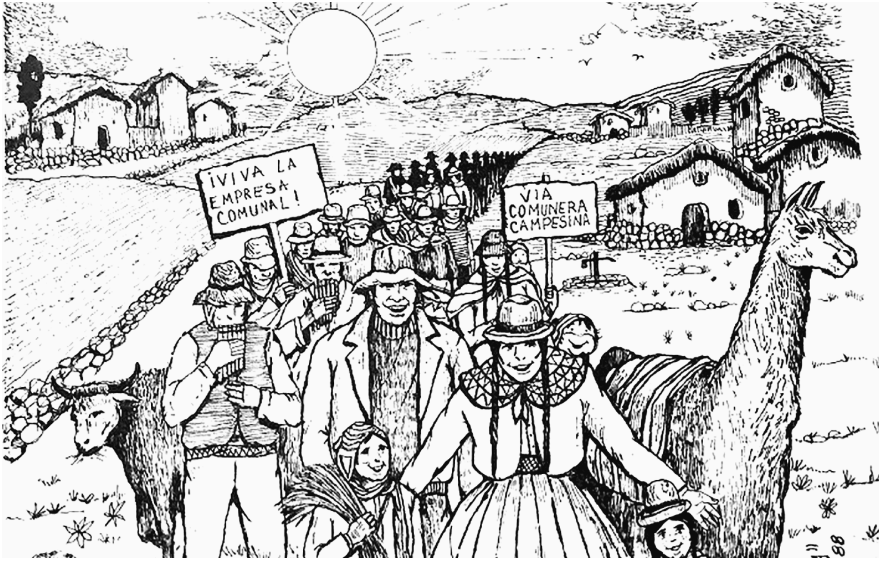
The land is also the foundation of a way of life. The community is strengthened and made aware of its identity in the permanent struggle to make the land productive, to work in common, to defend its possession and to recover it when it is taken away from them by outsiders. The community expresses itself in bonds of coexistence, mutual help and forgiveness that make us discover a religious attitude towards the rights of the person. We believe that the Andean values guarantee a society that is more and more humane and, therefore, more and more free, in which the Christian ideal of fraternity and solidarity can be lived.<sup>56</sup>

In other words, land was necessary to “revitalize the culture and values of the Andean world” as it promoted cohesion within the peasant communities, rather than

54 “Los informes de los bases,” *SUR*, no. 53-54, agosto-septiembre 1982, 29-30; “Trabajo de comisiones: la búsqueda de alternativas,” *SUR*, no. 53-54, agosto-septiembre 1982, 71, 93.

55 Ricardo Vega, “Empresa comunal y vía campesina comunera: Apuntes desde la experiencia de Puno,” *Allpanchis XXI*, no. 33 (1989): 125-27, 130-31.

56 “La tierra, don de Dios, derecho del pueblo” (March 1986) in Gallego, *La señal de cada momento*, 224, 232.



### 17. Viva la Empresa Comunal

[Archivo IBC, Vicaría de Solidaridad Puno, 'Como avanzar en la empresa comunal', Serie Via Campesina Comunera No. 3]

disputes or injustice.<sup>57</sup> Not only did the communal enterprise respond to the concerns regarding the social function of land, but it more importantly also respected and fostered communitarian traditions. Echoing their appropriation of 'lo andino' in opposition to 'dominant society', religious and lay actors ultimately supported an initiative that allowed for the continuity of two intertwined, collective practices, in their view: that of a liberating faith, and that of 'Andean' resistance.

The utopia of liberation, while still projected towards the future, reinvigorated forms of supposedly traditional social organization. It was within these social structures - or an idealized version thereof - that Catholics could liberate themselves from oppressive structures and foreign impositions. It was from reclaimed and communally administered lands, moreover, that the peasants could begin to reclaim their identity, nurture traditional beliefs and practice a liberating faith. Pastoral agents could hence construe communitarianism as an essential trait of *campesino* identity, with the rural *pueblo* belonging simultaneously to both a distinctively 'Andean' and Christian community.

Peasant movements - embodying the "autonomous organizations of the people" often invoked by pastoral letters - found important allies in religious and lay actors. Following Rénique, the church even "cleared the path the CCP [had] consol-

57 Gallego, 240.

idated".<sup>58</sup> The FDCP, in fact, gathered most of its support and membership in the provinces that contained many clerics and laypeople advocating an 'option for the peasantry'. Many parishes and diocesan institutions across the altiplano closely cooperated with local unions and *campesino* organizations, albeit not in an institutionalized manner. For example, leaflets and bulletins created under the auspices of the diocese and prelature (Figure 17) promoted communal enterprises as viable alternatives for the restructuration of land, bishops were invited to partake in regional peasant congresses and, most notably, the IER Waqrani constituted an important forum for capacity-building and the mobilization of the peasantry in the north of the department. According to Luis Jesús López, for instance, the Spanish missionaries in Asillo not only supported the political education of their *animadores* and encouraged them to attend the IER in neighboring Ayaviri, but initially also hosted the headquarters of the local peasant union in the parish building.<sup>59</sup>

In the province of Melgar, the cooperation between pastoral agents and peasant organizations was indeed particularly fruitful. In June 1981, the *campesinado* of the province founded the Federación Unitaria de Campesinos de Melgar (FUCAM) based on previously existing peasant federations, unions and agrarian leagues. Rejecting the new agrarian reform policy, the members of the federation called for the restructuration of associative enterprises while "defending and respecting forms of associative labor in local enterprises and communities."<sup>60</sup> Three months later, the IER offered a workshop supporting the FUCAM with regard to the restructuration of associative enterprises. Participants, including among others parish priests from Asillo, Azángaro and Ayaviri, were to discuss the principles of restructuration together with the economist Alberto Figueroa. Participants agreed that through the creation of communal enterprises, the restructuration of associative enterprises would strengthen "the communal structure and its developments" as a means to promote social justice despite inequalities existing within each community.<sup>61</sup>

Later the same year, the IER Waqrani officially became the technical committee of FUCAM. It thus constituted a forum through which peasant organizations and the Prelature of Ayaviri further strengthened their relationship. It provided information on the patterns of landownership and a space for strategic negotiations on peasant mobilization, and assisted in concretizing plans for restructur-

58 Rénique, "Apogee and Crisis of a 'Third Path': Mariáteguismo, 'People's War' and Counterinsurgency in Puno 1987-1994," 311.

59 Luis Jesús López, interview by author, Calca, Peru, 17-18 June 2017.

60 "Melgar: la unidad del campesinado," *SUR*, no. 45, diciembre 1981, 56-58; "Melgar: Formación del FUCAM," *Andenes* 13, marzo 1982, 9-10; Archivos CCP, Congreso de Unificación del Campesinado de la Provincia de Melgar, "Moción sobre la Ley de Promoción y Desarrollo Agrario y las alternativas al problema de la reestructuración de las empresas," Ayaviri, 20.06.1981.

61 AHPA, s/n, "Seminario interno. Problema de la reestructuración," septiembre 1981.

ation. Under the leadership of Ricardo Vega, the Instituto continued to advance the interests of peasant communities as the protagonists and main beneficiaries of the restructuring process - in line with the then predominant discourse of the regional bishops.

The support of peasant movements, however, also subjected priests and lay agents to attacks and threats from those who deemed such actions to constitute an inappropriate political interference. Local authorities and the owners of rural estates arguably felt threatened by the activism of those “subversive agents” they considered a driving force for the rising militancy among peasant organizations.<sup>62</sup> With increased presence of Sendero Luminoso in northern Puno, many critiques accused clerics and laypeople of secretly supporting the armed insurgency. To them, liberation theology was but a Marxist ideology in religious disguise. In late 1982, for instance, an *animador cristiano* from Umachiri had been imprisoned by the police because of suspected terrorism as he was “carrying leaflets of the priest, leaflets of the *izquierda*”.<sup>63</sup> A letter sent to the editor of the newspaper *El Observador* a few weeks later claimed that “Sendero [Luminoso] is found disguised [...] in some Catholic priests of Umachiri, Ayaviri and Asillo.”<sup>64</sup> In an increasingly hostile environment across the altiplano, many religious and lay actors hence became the targets of slander, from different parties to the conflict. American journalist Tina Rosenberg, when visiting Ricardo Vega in Ayaviri, described how he was an enemy figure for all competing factions, as “Sendero [...] and managers of the big farms hated him” while, in addition, “the army, the antiterrorist police and the paramilitary squads of the government considered him a Senderista.”<sup>65</sup>

## Land Invasion and Redistribution

The drought that affected Puno in 1982 and 1983, as well as the torrential rainfall and ensuing floods experienced from 1984 to 1986, further exacerbated the unresolved tensions surrounding the claims for land redistribution. The criticism notably focused on the inaction in Lima, where political leadership still seemed to care little about the fate of the peasantry in Puno. In line with the invitation to the second departmental congress of the FDCP in August 1983, the Belaúnde government approved additional financial cuts to the emergency aid program and

62 AHPA, Melgar-Historia, “Comunicado del vicario capitular de la prelatura de Ayaviri,” 16.12.1982.

63 AOP, “Testimonio de un animador cristiano de Umachiri,” 03.12.1982.

64 AHPA, Melgar-Historia, Alfredo Quiroga Ponce, “Opinión sobre Sendero,” *Observador*, 12.01.1983.

65 Tina Rosenberg, *Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 209.

rejected any funding for development support of the *puneño* agroindustry, thus aggravating the “impoverishment of the countryside.”<sup>66</sup>

The electoral victory of Alan García of the anti-imperialist Peruvian Aprista party in 1985, a self-proclaimed *presidente comunero*, could not appease the tensions across the southern highlands. In contrast to his predecessor, García sought to increase public spending to promote growth and fight the ongoing economic crisis, among other things also by aiding the agrarian sector with subsidies, price support and access to credit.<sup>67</sup> More than political dialogue with community leaders or policies to fight rampant inflation, however, FUCAM demanded that the new president respond to the calls for the redistribution of landownership if he did not also want to further aggravate the abandonment of the *puneño* countryside. After multiple years of unsuccessful petitions, demonstrations and negotiations, the regional *campesino* movement arguably lost its patience with the central government that appeared to ignore the long-standing grievances of the peasantry. The organization therefore announced that if no governmental action was taken within sixty days, they would launch land invasions throughout the province of Melgar.<sup>68</sup>

Through their claim for a “democratic restructuration”, the leaders of FUCAM and the IER staff aimed to reduce the size of associative enterprises founded by the Velasco reform for the benefit of adjacent peasant communities. The democratic element in this restructuration process, Vega noted, was how it responded to widely supported claims for a redistribution of land and how this would be decided upon by members of both peasant communities and associative enterprises. Whereas a draft piece of legislation on land restructuration was submitted to parliamentary debate, certain associative enterprises resolutely objected to any claims for reform. The Empresa Rural de Propiedad Social (ERPS) Kunurana was one of these enterprises in the province of Melgar subject to criticism from the IER. In fact, the associates of the ERPS Kunurana had significantly more (and better-quality) land at their disposal, yet produced less livestock and provided less produce to the regional markets than adjacent communities. Vega thus denounced the gross mismanagement of the ERPS Kunurana and called for its urgent restructuration.<sup>69</sup>

66 Archivos ROA, Convocatoria al Segundo Congreso Ordinario Departamental en agosto 1983 en Puno, FDCP, abril 1983.

67 Mayer, *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform*, 30; Zapata, *Lucha Política y Crisis Social*, 327.

68 Archivo CCP, Acuerdos y resoluciones, Segundo Congreso Provincial de la FUCAM, Ayaviri, 07.08.1985.

69 AOP, Ricardo Vega Posada, La reestructuración democrática en las empresas asociativas en Puno, 21.10.1985; Del Pozo-Vergnes, *De la hacienda a la mundialización*, 138.

After a prolonged impasse of negotiations on its subdivision, Kunurana was the first associative enterprise to fall victim to land invasions. In late October 1985, Francisco d'Alteroche, the new prelate of Ayaviri, led a "march of sacrifice" onto the enterprise's domain, accompanied by members of neighboring peasant communities as well as representatives of *campesino* organizations. In his speech, he strongly criticized unjust land redistribution, which forced many peasants to live off infertile lands on the hilltops while the rich lands of the associative enterprises remained underused. He therefore assured his rural parishioners of the continued support of the clergy of Ayaviri, who had made a historical commitment to the "progress of the peasantry [and] the progress of the communities."<sup>70</sup> Despite attempts at mediation and further negotiations on behalf of d'Alteroche, nine peasant communities bordering Kunurana invaded its territory and took possession of up to 10,500 hectares of land in December 1985.<sup>71</sup>

The escalation of the land conflict provoked further criticism of the active involvement of representatives of the church, which often specifically targeted foreign missionaries. Since many clerics of the Ayaviri prelate did not hold Peruvian citizenship, they were accused of unjustly interfering in domestic politics. Already in 1977, the bishop of Puno had signed a declaration in defense of his foreign colleagues by emphasizing that "the fact that they were not born in Peru does not prevent them from knowing our situation or having the same feelings as all Peruvians."<sup>72</sup> In reaction to the land invasion, the administrators of ERPS Kunurana also condemned the role of the missionaries in support of the land invasions. Leaflets denounced "the deviant religion", accusing collaborators within the IER of working as "mercenaries" and the Ayaviri priests as "foreigners trafficking with the belief in God."<sup>73</sup>

The land invasions in Melgar, coinciding with a departmental strike occurring the same day, raised questions with regard to the processes of land distribution and repossession in the future agrarian economy of Puno. According to the FDCP, the new governmental directives recognizing the necessity of land restructuring issued in early 1986 constituted a "partial victory". Whereas the García government appeared to agree on the principle of dismantling associative enterprises, it sought to do so in an "authoritarian and bureaucratic manner" and had, after one year in power, still not responded to the most pressing demands formulated

70 Francisco d'Alteroche, "En el Altiplano, para vivir se necesita tierra" (October 1985) in Gallego, *La señal de cada momento*, 191-94.

71 Centro de Capacitación Campesina de Puno, *La lucha por la tierra en Puno: Las tomas de Macari y Santa Rosa 1985-2005* (Puno: Editorial del Pacífico, 2005), 40; Del Pozo-Vergnes, *De la hacienda a la mundialización*, 139.

72 Jesús Calderón, "Aclaración," *Páginas* 3, no. 11-12, septiembre 1977, 10.

73 AOP, "Al pueblo de Ayaviri," n.d.

by the departmental *campesino* organizations.<sup>74</sup> These claims were reaffirmed once again in August 1987, when the FDCP coined its struggle for restructuration as the “*via campesina comunera*”, consisting in creation of communal enterprises and the consolidation of peasant communities as the political support bases of the *puneño* government.<sup>75</sup> At a regional eucharistic congress held the following month, Luis Jesús López gave a presentation in which he expressed his confidence that the democratic restructuration would “open perspectives for life and peace for the peasantry”. Asked about the risk that all the lands would be subdivided and thus that *minifundismo* would prevail across the countryside, López insisted that this was the “wrong path”. Once the land, “where Andean culture originated” was reclaimed, he argued, “this culture [would be] recreated with greater vitality and in better conditions and possibilities” through the reinvigoration of the peasant community and its own agrarian cooperative.<sup>76</sup>

In the face of mounting economic and political instability, important questions remained about whether and how communal enterprises were to succeed as the principal basis of the rural economy in Puno. The formation of communal enterprises could prevent neither the growing urbanization nor the ongoing exodus from rural areas to the city. As much as (the ownership of) land was considered integral to peasant identity, it was also a resource with increasingly less value by this time. Regional commercial centers like Juliaca and Arequipa indeed entailed new visions of progress. Although pastoral agents could seek to diminish the allure of the city for their rural parishioners, the offer of paid labor proved irresistible to many (soon-to-be erstwhile) *campesinos*.

Ultimately, despite the successful peasant mobilizations, for communal enterprises, as a means to continue the cooperative models established by the agrarian reform (yet under *comunero* leadership), success was only short-lived. During its first stage, the number of legally recognized *comunidades* in Puno more than doubled from 1986 until the mid-1990s.<sup>77</sup> According to a publication by the Centro de Capacitación Campesina de Puno commemorating the 1985 land invasions, however, communal enterprises “in a great majority declined from 1996, due to internal contradictions between the business management and its communal organization”, as well as due to the neoliberal agenda of President Alberto Fujimori, who aimed to fully privatize the remnants of the agrarian reform.<sup>78</sup>

74 Archivos ROA, Convocatoria al III Congreso Departamental de la FDCP, Puno, julio 1986.

75 Archivos CCP, “La lucha por la tierra en Puno y la reestructuración del agro puneño,” FDCP, Moción al VII Congreso de la CCP, agosto 1987.

76 Luis Jesús López, “La tierra: camino de paz y vida,” *Pastoral Andina*, no. 63, septiembre-octubre 1987, 9.

77 Juan Valero and Carlos López, “Uso y tenencia de la tierra en Puno: Titulación y registro de la propiedad rural,” *Debate Agrario*, no. 27 (March 1998): 32–33.

78 Centro de Capacitación Campesina de Puno, *La lucha por la tierra en Puno: Las tomas de Macarí y Santa Rosa 1985–2005*, 111.

The success of the ‘third path’, or the religious involvement therein, however, can not only be measured against the backdrop of the rural reorganization in Puno. Pastoral agents also sought to promote an alternative path addressing the grievances of their rural parishioners who, particularly in the wide plains of northern Puno, risked falling prey to Sendero Luminoso. The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission acknowledges that religious and lay actors played a decisive role in containing the spread of insurgent groups and preventing systematic human rights violations that had “occurred in other places without the same ecclesiastical presence.” Based on its examination of pastoral letters and pronouncements, the same report claims that the “progressive and dynamic” church in Puno contributed to “a new feeling of belonging among thousands of peasants”.<sup>79</sup>

This sense of belonging was ultimately not only forged through the reinvigoration of the peasant community or the ecclesial community writ large, but notably through the fact that the central government was forced to respond to the demands of the mobilized peasantry. Even if the oft-cited ‘abandonment’ of Puno did come to a sudden end as a result, pastoral agents actively contributed to finding a peaceful solution to the widespread historic grievances about land redistribution. In so doing, they also affirmed the place of the rural altiplano districts on the political map of Peru - as landscapes in the process of a dynamic, grassroots-led transformation.

79 CVR, *Informe final*, 3.2. La Iglesia Católica y las Iglesias evangélicas, 2003, 431.





# Conclusion

The dialectics of oppression and liberation that have long provided theologians with a (biblical) basis for their articulations of liberating praxis also serve as a metaphor for the church and pastoral reforms they envisioned in Latin America. Pastoral agents had to prophetically denounce the poverty, discrimination and structural violence that their poor parishioners suffered from, while accompanying them in the construction of a new society. The modern understanding of agency of many liberation theologians transcends their writings. In particular, they continuously reiterated their unabated beliefs in the emancipatory potential of humanity: the people of God could become the authors of their destiny even amidst the most adverse of circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

During the latter half of the 20th century, pastoral agents in rural Puno engaged in constant renegotiations of their theological understanding and pastoral commitment: not only of what old order/s they wanted to overcome, but, in particular, of the circumstances through which a new order could be constructed. A central tenet of this process was the building of a church that rejected the imbrication of Catholicism and colonial injustices (in the past up until the present) and attempted to form a community of believers that reconciled Christian faith with liberating praxis. Pastoral agents accommodated, accompanied and often contributed to socio-political and religious changes over the period of three decades as they redefined their own role across the southern highlands.

These reforms were not exempt from ambiguity, as the preceding analysis has shown. In many instances, pastoral agents developed new ideas and ideals of evangelization and social transformations, as well as the relationship between the two. Based on their reading of global Catholic reform and understanding of the

1 Vázquez, *The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity*, 230-31.

socio-political context, they adopted pastoral approaches that subscribed to both their objectives, of mission and development. Their attempts to promote rural activism and mass evangelization methods illustrate how pastoral agents negotiated how they, respectively, could address the grievances of their rural parishioners while involving them in their religious mission. The respective discourses surrounding liberation and the creation of a distinctively local church reflected the persistently asymmetrical power relations inherent within pastoral work: it was for pastoral agents to conceptualize and decide on both how their parishioners were to live their Christian faith and how they ultimately related to the church. The ideal of accompaniment thus translated into discourses and practices that - at once - encouraged grassroots agency, and reaffirmed pastoral guidance; defended '*lo andino*', while promoting evangelization; questioned the universality of the church yet struggled to find consensus on alternatives.

These reforms of pastoral discourses and practices resulted from transnational dynamics inherent to the renewal of the Catholic Church throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Missionaries, women religious and laypeople from North America and Europe arrived in Peru in increasing numbers in support of a church lacking personal and financial resources. Priests from France, Spain and Switzerland, in particular, spearheaded reforms in rural parishes across the northern altiplano. Peruvian clerics and lay agents, too, gained increasing international exposure through their studies abroad and participation in theological debates and (transnational) networks of progressive pastoral agents.<sup>2</sup> Together with their European colleagues, they negotiated new ideals of mission and development by questioning their insertion into the religious and socio-political milieu of Puno. The transformation of the local church ultimately thrived thanks to the collaborative efforts of many individuals who, irrespective of their nationality, dedicated their time and resources to the common cause of liberation.

Attempts to forge new bonds with rural parishioners, however, preceded the embrace of liberation theology. From the late 1950s onwards, the Catholic Church expressed its concern for 'the social question', which, in the Peruvian highlands, equated to an indigenous and rural question. Pastoral agents aimed to address the material conditions which were seen as impeding a successful evangelization campaign. If 'empty stomachs could not hear', then religious and lay actors had to re-define their pastoral practice primarily in material rather than in spiritual terms. In their mission for development, they aimed to provide humanitarian relief and advance the modernization of a volatile landscape in the process of rapid socio-political change. In so doing, as exemplified by the *indigenista* projects of prelate Metzinger, many missionaries became important agents of regional development in their own right.

2 Luis Pásara, *Radicalización y conflicto en la Iglesia peruana* (Lima: Ed. El Virrey, 1986), 65.

Following mounting criticism directed at the widely practiced *desarrollismo*, religious and lay actors questioned the pastoral system of the so-called ‘modern church’ and its interrelation with global political-economic structures promoting progress and modernity. Up until the 1970s, according to the account of Jean Berthelot, the Catholic Church embodied the religion of (colonial) domination whose promise of salvation was nurtured by the resources it could provide to religious intermediaries and rural parishioners. In the parish of Putina, Swiss missionaries started contemplating how their popularity among rural parishioners was conditioned by their generous distribution of financial aid. Together with the parish teams of Asillo and Azángaro, they rearticulated their pastoral orientation in response to the aggravating agrarian crisis across the rural province through awareness-raising activities and the support of autonomous peasant organizations. In so doing, however, they also had to critically engage with their own role, which – despite the priests’ attempts to frame it differently – often remained one of (spiritual) leadership.

Forms of ecclesial activism in favor of the communal enterprise were the culmination of over two decades of political and social engagement in the *puneño* countryside. From the establishment of Christian unions to the embrace of an ‘option for the peasantry’, many religious and lay actors had sought to facilitate and accompany processes for the restructuration of land before, during and after the 1969 agrarian reform. During the land conflicts of the 1980s, this religious engagement eventually led to the endorsement of a new form of communal production. According to the director of the IER, clerics and laypeople “first discovered what the peasant community is [...] prior to eventually becoming fully committed to the problems of the communities.”<sup>3</sup>

The last part of this book has sought to critically trace how community was ‘discovered’ and eventually integrated in a mobilizing platform for land restructuration. Inspired by Peruvian intellectuals of the radical tradition, religious and lay actors were not invested in revealing some ‘hidden’ social structure, but rather in supporting a new ideal of social organization claimed by both political actors and peasant organizations. The rationale underlying this rural activism, however, could indeed be described as a process of discovery: it was about finding Christian values in ‘*lo andino*’, reinterpreting practices of faith, and locating resistance and liberation in regional tradition. In so doing, pastoral agents drew inspiration from an often romanticized understanding of peasant communities as cohesive communities of resistance to the incursion of liberal capitalism. The values of the latter, including individualism, greed and exploitation, were not only incompatible with the supposedly communitarian traditions of rural parishioners, but also

3 Vega, “Empresa comunal y vía campesina comunera: Apuntes desde la experiencia de Puno,” 133.

contradicted the liberating gospel and its emphasis on solidarity, collective action and social justice.

“*Tierra o Muerte*”, the slogan coined by Hugo Blanco in the 1960s mobilizations in the Convención Valley of neighboring Cuzco, appropriately describes the hostile environment reigning in Puno in the 1980s. Conflict over land, which to that point had been unsuccessfully appeased by the agrarian reform, was resurgent, as peasants expressed their rejection of the associative enterprises and the feared return of *latifundismo*. In fact, the church faced two opposing models of development that resembled the disagreement between the brothers Don Fermín and Don Bruno in José María Arguedas’ *Todas las Sangres*: the industrial modernization of the countryside or, respectively, the continuity of the colonial neo-feudal system that provided certain paternalistic protection to the peasantry.<sup>4</sup> Echoing what an ILO program officer noted three decades earlier, pastoral agents debated to what extent the ‘white man’s way of life’, the capitalist logic of modernization and progress they had thus far often propagated, would not exacerbate poverty among those who could not benefit from the liberalization of the peasant economy.

Throughout the period of analysis, different ideas and ideals of a third path – as an alternative to the dichotomy of capitalism and socialism – were mobilized on behalf of political leaders and church representatives alike. By negotiating forms of development most appropriate for Peru writ large, and the predominantly agrarian economy of Puno in particular, these actors sought to formulate a response to the *Perú Problema* – the lack of a national synthesis – outlined by historian Jorge Basadre in 1931. While embracing ideas of *desarrollismo*, dependency theory and liberation theology, religious actors attempted to address the grievances and claims of their rural parishioners by supporting forms of rural development that were rooted in the distinct socio-political and religious context of the southern highlands.

In endorsing the communal enterprise, pastoral agents from northern Puno opted for a path that reflected the framing of pastoral care as accompaniment: religious and lay actors, figuratively and literally, marched alongside *campesino* movements. It was during a period of mass mobilization and violent conflict that they could prove their pastoral commitment to the cause of the poor peasantry, and their opposition to those they deemed forces of death. In a context where different ‘old’ and ‘new’ orders were subject to debate and confrontation, they could furthermore spread their message of liberation and reaffirm their ethical-moral influence in the discussions on the future rural economy of the department. However, this activism also came at a cost. In June 1988, already for the second time, the transmission towers of Radio Onda Azul were the victim of a bombing attack,

4 Irina Alexandra Feldman, *Rethinking Community from Peru: The Political Philosophy of José María Arguedas*, *Illuminations: Cultural Formations of the Americas* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 52–53.

paralyzing the work of the Catholic broadcaster. Almost a year later, in May 1989, Senderista forces violently entered the IER and left but a trace of destruction behind.<sup>5</sup>

Only a few weeks after the incident, pastoral agents commemorated the creation of two of emblematic institutes of the Iglesia del Sur Andino. Francisco d'Alteroche recalled how the IER, since its foundation twenty-five years prior, had supported the peasantry "by valuing their culture, their human, communitarian and spiritual qualities." Commending the services the church had provided to thousands of peasants across the northern provinces of Puno, he acknowledged the work of many religious and lay agents who had selflessly engaged in the cause, overcoming significant obstacles, countering mounting criticism and tense defamation. Despite the destruction of the prelature's agrarian school, d'Alteroche affirmed that pastoral agents would continue their work for the liberation of the *puneño* peasantry.<sup>6</sup> One week later, pastoral agents gathered in Sicuani to remember and celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the creation of IPA. The bishop of Puno, Jesús Mateo Calderón reviewed the history of the institution, which initially responded to the aspirations for a more comprehensive knowledge of the "unknown [Andean] world". Since its foundation, IPA hosted courses, workshops and lectures on the social, religious and political 'reality' of the region. Drawing inspiration from these events, foreign and local religious and lay actors negotiated and adapted their pastoral care. Refuting criticism that the church was "manipulating people", Calderón applauded the strong bonds that pastoral agents had forged with their parishioners, who respected and believed them in turn. Now that parishioners were creating independent organizations, the church simply had to accompany them further along an "uncertain path".<sup>7</sup>

Gustavo Gutiérrez, who often attended the workshops and courses held at IPA throughout the 1970s and 1980s, adopted a more critical stance on these ideals of a local church accompanying the peasantry. In a 1986 interview with Radio Onda Azul, he acknowledged that the Iglesia del Sur Andino offers a very interesting testimony of pastoral work among "the most oppressed in our country" and that the bishops have "a great sensitivity for concrete problems [...] of the poor in this area." Reflecting upon his attendance at a gathering of pastoral agents, however, Gutiérrez argued that the church still had to further its efforts to understand and manifest its presence among the poor. More specifically, he lamented that there could not be an "authentic" local church without the significant collaboration of

5 Francisco Paca Pantigoso, "Dinamitan radio del obispado en Puno," *La República*, 08.07.1988; Francisco Paca Pantigoso, "La Iglesia seguirá trabajando con los campesinos de Puno," *La República*, 31.05.1989.

6 AHPA, Ayaviri, Homilia Mons. Francisco d'Alteroche por los 25 años del IER, Ayaviri, 15.06.1989.

7 AOP, Conversatorio por los 20 años del Instituto de Pastoral Andina, Sicuani, 12.06.1989.

local laypeople. In his view, it was urgent for the church to promote lay participation as, thus far, most tasks and responsibility had remained in the hands of (foreign) religious actors. Referring to the conclusions of Vatican II, he insisted that “if inside the church we do not have an active laity taking part [...] there is not really a People of God.”<sup>8</sup>

These concerns for the ‘authenticity’ of the pastoral reform process however applied not only to the incorporation of lay actors, but also, ultimately, to the role of religious actors within the church. Discussing recent developments within the ecclesiastical landscape in Peru on ROA in 1988, Luis Jesús López argued that the pastoral reform process had recently faced an impasse. Over the previous two decades, the embrace of the reform spirit emanating from Vatican II and Medellín had altered the curricula in seminaries, contributed to the presence of pastoral agents in rural and marginalized areas and led them to accompany emerging social movements. However, many pastoral agents, he lamented, still did not feel part of these historic developments and simply “took on a project” for their parishioners. “*Ser pueblo*”, López emphasized, does not mean “to be illiterate or to wear sandals”, but to “identify with a popular project [...] value this culture [and] enter into the historical dynamic of this people.”<sup>9</sup> The ongoing processes of reform and conversion, in his view, were yet to lead pastoral agents to feel part of the *pueblo* the same way they expected the people to feel part of the church.

The increasingly violent attacks against the church, however, also underlined the limits of this process of conversion with regard to the Christian commitment and partisanship. In the aftermath of the incidents at ROA and the IER Waqraní, both institutions were subject to criticism for what was seen as their political involvement in a context where the discourses and practices of so many Catholic actors resembled the *mariáteguista* organizations and political parties they had so often cooperated with. The attempts by the PUM, still the major political faction behind the land restructuration movement, to develop armed self-defense forces to oppose Sendero Luminoso could no longer be reconciled with the bishop’s call for demilitarization and peace, however.<sup>10</sup> As illustrated by the attempts of the radio to distance itself from a partisan position in the early 1990s and the fact that the IER was not immediately rebuilt, eventually the ‘militant church’, too, opted for a less public profile, and stepped away from its previously endorsed path to liberation.

When the state of emergency was declared in several altiplano provinces in 1990, the ‘third path’ had already entered a crisis it could no longer recover from. After the oft-successful mobilizations of the previous decade, the movement suf-

8 ROA Archives, “Entrevista a Gustavo Gutiérrez (1986),” Audio cassette.

9 ROA Archives, “Situación eclesial (Luis Jesús López, ‘88), Lado A y B,” Audio cassette.

10 Rénique, “Apogee and Crisis of a ‘Third Path’: Mariáteguismo, ‘People’s War’ and Counterinsurgency in Puno 1987-1994,” 308, 323-25.

ferred from increasing fragmentation propelled by debates over how to respond to the increasing political violence. Notwithstanding the military presence and the end of a cohesive regional political movement, Puno did not turn into a 'second Ayacucho'. Rather, the population collaborated with the armed forces to put an end to the terrorist insurgency and thus avoided a protracted conflict situation similar to the central highlands.

## The Ever-changing Landscapes of Puno

In the late 1950s, residents of Nuñoa and Patambuco complained about the abandonment of their villages. As briefly outlined in the introduction, they felt left out from the currents of progress and modernity circulating in other parts of the country, and notably concentrating in the wealthy suburbs of Lima. Without financial and technical resources, they lacked the necessary infrastructure to counteract their supposed abandonment. Consequently, the villagers expressed their criticism of the lack of a sense of belonging to the Peruvian state, where the promises of development and prosperity only became a reality for the select few.

Over the course of the following decades, the villagers of Nuñoa could hardly claim that its abandonment persisted. In the early 1960s, in the heydays of scientific *indigenismo* and 'Andean' studies, the district located at 4,050 meters above sea level drew the attention of international researches. A team part of the International Biological Program established a laboratory in Nuñoa, where they examined the physical anthropology of the altiplano peasantry and their adaptation to the local climate.<sup>11</sup> In the early 1970s, the agrarian reform radically altered the rural landscape of Nuñoa by collectivizing regional haciendas in an associative enterprise. However, the supposedly revolutionary nature of these reforms did not reflect the aspirations of the local peasantry and hardly gained any popular support. The following decade, the district of Nuñoa became a battlefield for terrorist subversion and unresolved land claims. As a result of the often conflictive parcellation of lands of the larger corporate structures established by the military government, many regional peasants finally became owners of the lands that they worked. The division of the large livestock enterprises however came at the cost of agrarian productivity. As many landowners lacked the resources previously at the disposal of the associative enterprises, both the quantity and the quality of the cattle in the Nuñoa district decreased.<sup>12</sup> The historical development of the village of Nuñoa, in many instances, thus epitomizes the transformation that the rural landscapes of northern Puno underwent from the early 1970s until the late 1980s.

11 Paul T. Baker, *Man in the Andes: A Multidisciplinary Study of High-Altitude Quechua*, US/IBP Synthesis Series (Stroudsburg: Dowden Hutchinson and Ross, 1976).

12 Del Pozo-Vergnes, *De la hacienda a la mundialización*, 171.



It was also in this period that pastoral agents in Puno spearheaded pastoral reforms and therefore shaped the memory-making of Catholic rural activism. In retrospect, many pastoral agents positively recall their social and political engagement during the period of land occupations and the early years of political violence. Ronald Llerena, for instance, emphasized his great personal satisfaction in having worked in Azángaro: “to be present with the organizations, marching, the joy of celebrating some land takings, all were unique moments” he remains proud of.<sup>13</sup> These moments arguably forged close bonds between many pastoral agents who, despite having since retired or abandoned their ministry, still remain in close contact and organize yearly gatherings in Lima. According to René Pinto, Llerena’s colleague in the parish of Azángaro, “we are still very united by our experience, by our way of thinking, by the [same] image of the church”. He thus describes their perspective, unchanged by recent developments, as a “yearning to be faithful to what we learned together.”<sup>14</sup>

The Catholic Church in Peru a significant counter-reform after the abdication of Juan Landázuri Ricketts as archbishop of Lima and president of the Peruvian episcopacy. As evidenced by the testimonies of many former collaborators of IPA, this process provoked significant criticism on the part of those actors embracing church reforms during the period of land conflict of the 1970s and 1980s. While rural activism lost its momentum in the following decade, the change in ecclesiastical leadership – notably the appointment of bishops from Opus Dei or Sodalitium – in the new millennium led many ‘progressive’ pastoral agents to leave, or be forced to abandon the region altogether.<sup>15</sup> Luis Jesús López claims that the replacement of bishops indeed changed entire dynamics in a region where the topics they had once mobilized for, notably questions of land and political violence, grew less important. Unsurprisingly, he is thus very critical of the pastoral work of the priests currently working in his former parish of Asillo.<sup>16</sup> Otto Brun, who until 2016 continued his mission in Ayaviri, recalls how the then bishop, Kay Martin Schmalhausen, accused him and other pastoral agents of his generation of only “having practiced politics” in the past. By criticizing the legacy of the Iglesia del Sur Andino and dismantling regional cooperation (IPA was eventually shut down in 2018), Brun argues that the bishops aim to rewrite regional church history.<sup>17</sup>

In light of the developments of the past three decades, the former collaborators in Azángaro also questioned their lasting legacy in the region. López argues that they were somewhat blinded by their belief in further Catholic renewal that they did not consider that, under the papacy of John Paul II, the church “would go

13 Ronald Llerena, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 25 August 2017.

14 René Pinto, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

15 Fitzpatrick-Behrens, *The Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru, 1943–1989*, 237–39.

16 Luis Jesús López, interview by author, Calca, Peru, 17–18 June 2017.

17 Otto Brun, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

backwards”. In his view, they had “lost their battle”, in particular, through insufficiently promoting their way of reading the Bible among the future clergy of the region.<sup>18</sup> From an even more critical perspective, Pinto claims that many former priests “feel a sense of regret” for having “given their lives, their existences [...] yet not being understood”. Liberation theology, he argues, is primarily an intellectual current that remained difficult to understand or assimilate outside certain reform-oriented sectors within the Catholic Church. Furthermore, for them, as foreigners to the altiplano, it was difficult to translate these ideas into their sermons and practices in order for them to be understood. Repeating a well-known criticism of the writings of Gutiérrez, Pinto argues that liberation theology was, after all, the result of European theological debates. Given that “the poor of Peru are preferring Keiko [Fujimori] over other world views”, he thus wondered “how far has our way of thinking come, in the world of the poor?”<sup>19</sup>

If not for liberation theology, religion and politics remain closely intertwined in Peru up until this day. The evangelical leader of the fundamentalist Agricultural People’s Front of Peru, Ezequiel Ataucusi Gamonal, was venerated like a prophet by the followers of his movement founded in 1989. Two decades after his death in 2000, the party received 8.9% of votes at the congressional elections on a platform against (predominantly rural) poverty, gaining as many seats as Fujimori’s Fuerza Popular. During the protests following the failed self-coup of President Pedro Castillo in late 2022, the parish priest of Pucará, Luis Humberto Béjar, drew the attention of politicians and national media with his support for the demonstrations, calling among other things for the dissolution of congress and elections. If former Bolivian president Evo Morales publicly congratulated Humberto Béjar for his involvement, other commentators have been less welcoming of the political pronouncements from the pulpit. The fact that an “Argentinian priest”, underlining his foreign nationality, “likes to intervene in domestic political matters of Peru” was subject to criticism by conservative media outlets.<sup>20</sup> The bishop of Puno has subsequently asked Humberto Béjar to resign from the parish and sent him on sabbatical leave.

Alongside transformations of the public – and still political – role of religion, the department of Puno has also undergone significant changes since the height of the popular church under scrutiny in this book.<sup>21</sup> Despite the peasants’ signif-

18 Luis Jesús López, interview by author, Calca, Peru, 17–18 June 2017.

19 René Pinto, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

20 “Julia: Sacerdote argentino se entromete en política peruana,” Canal N, 10 January 2023 <<https://canaln.pe/peru/julica-sacerdote-argentino-pidio-renuncia-dina-boluarte-y-nuevas-elecciones-n457091>> (last consulted 12.01.2023).

21 I would like to thank Pablo Vilca, who pointed out these changes when discussing the recent developments in Puno at a meeting in Lima in August 2017. See also Paulo Vilca, “Tiempos de cambio en la última frontera,” in *La batalla por Puno: Conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos*, ed. José Luis Rénique (Lima: La Sinistra Ensayos, Universidad Nacional de Juliaca, 2016), 483–511.

icant land gains during the 1980s, the *puneño* countryside has since lost many of its inhabitants. When Luis Jesús López returns to the rural communities outside of Asillo, he encounters “but old people and women” as the schools had closed, and young men have gone to work either outside Puno or in regional mining towns or urban centers.<sup>22</sup> Otto Brun recalls how, when he worked in La Rinconada in the early 1970s, “there were only small houses of the few miners”. Today, the highest town on Earth hosts several thousand inhabitants drawn by the allure of gold in the (informal) mining sector.<sup>23</sup> Patambuco – the other village complaining about its abandonment – has since lost many of its inhabitants to the neighboring mining centers. Juliaca, the commercial hub of the region, too, has seen its population increase more than tenfold since the early 1960s. As a center for cross-border trade and smuggling with little state control, its exponential growth reflects how the regional economy is fueled by unrestricted neoliberalism. All told, the principal problems affecting Puno today are no longer related (or restricted) to matters of landownership, but rather environmental contamination, unfettered urbanization and the continued centralization of power in Lima. As evidenced by the decline of the rural economy in Nuñoa, agriculture had lost much of its significance by the turn of the millennium.

Coincidentally, what is probably the most significant recent change for the ecclesiastical landscape of Puno mirrors some of the developments analyzed in the initial chapters. In April 2019, Pope Francis announced the creation of the Prelature of Huancané in northwestern Puno. Redrawing the boundaries of all three existing jurisdictions, the new prelate covers the provinces of Huancané, Moho, Sandia and parts of San Antonio de Putina. Like the Sagrados Corazones had once been for Ayaviri (and the Maryknoll for Juli), the new prelate has been entrusted to a (foreign) religious congregation.<sup>24</sup> The new bishop, Maltese cleric Giovanni Cefai of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, hence carries forward the pastoral work of the clerics, women religious and laypeople discussed in this book – those who, five decades earlier, began their journey in an uneven landscape, at once ancient and exceedingly new, in the name of liberation.

22 Luis Jesús López, interview by author, Calca, Peru, 17–18 June 2017.

23 Otto Brun, interview by author, Arequipa, Peru, 27 July 2017.

24 “Papa Francisco erige nueva prelaturo en Perú y nombra a su primer obispo,” *Aciprensa*, 03.04.2019, <<https://www.aciprensa.com/noticias/papa-francisco-erige-nueva-prelaturo-en-peru-y-nombra-a-su-primer-obispo-26638>> (last consulted 03.04.2019).

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