

Dear Agrarian Studies Readers:

This paper summarizes the main arguments of two chapters in which memories of the Shining Path's violence are situated in the framework of longer historical memory and state-making from 1920s to 1960s. Beyond the immediate past, land insecurity and conflict, the politics of articulation, and government as idea, political language and identity, shape people's memory, as well as the position assumed by the communities in the context of the 1980s violence.

The book manuscript I am working on explores memories of violence at different levels: I emphasize the production of silences and secrets as the central dynamic in the production of memory on the Shining Path's Peru. This immediate past is framed in the longer historical memory, the politics of articulation and state-making. Finally, the historicity of memory and violence is seen in memory places, landscape and nature, insofar as those were not outsiders to the violence. I analyze narratives about the power of the mountains and their present weakness, which seems to be the case in the context of melting ice. The environmental change provides another window into communities' experience of natural and social vulnerability in the context of the state pressure and expansion throughout the twentieth century. This multilevel subjective, political and historical experience of the highland communities of Ayacucho, Peru, not only shapes local politics and culture but also exposes the relation between the process of nation-state formation and transformation, and of colonialism as a global process of domination, which lies at the heart of twentieth-century politics in Peru and many other countries of Latin America.

I would be grateful for any suggestions on this particular paper as well as on ideas that can help to better integrate these different parts.

All the best,

Ponciano Del Pino H.

“In the name of the government”:

Community Politics, Violence and Memory in Modern Peru

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Don Melchor Huicho’s ancestors had come from the distant region of Huancavelica to work the lands of Vilcatoma de Inga, in the highland area of the present-day provinces of Huanta and La Mar.¹ They had walked the entire distance, carrying their belongings, for almost a month. On the way there, as they sat on the top of the last mountain drinking and chewing coca leaves and encouraging each other to make the last steps, one of them made a comment about the pain on his legs that contained a pun about the family name, which translates as calf or shank: *Huichochalla, huicho, huichuncha, pobre moqun tullu huicho*. “Darling little calf, calf, my little calf, poor knee and calf bone ...” Highlighting this story in his historical narrative, don Melchor presents a moral debate in which this foundational story is an argument for his family’s rights over the land, as it embodies the sacrifice his family made to make this place their own. The story stands out, moreover, because it is embedded in his very name, tying his ancestors’ sacrifice to acquire land, with his and his descendants’ identity.

When Melchor was but an infant, “hateful people” started taking the land. Some came from outside, others were members of the community. Some would buy one or two plots to work them. But others bought from many, here and there, taking land “from the ignorant people” and amassing large properties. That is how the *hacendados* (hacienda owners) came into being. They were the *qullqichayukuna*² (the people with money). Under false pretenses, they got “their little pieces of paper, their will.” That is how the hacendado came, the *munayniyuq patrón* (greedy boss). Don Melchor was eight years old when his family, along with the community of Ccanccao, and most of the communities in the area, lost their land. This process continued “until the area was full of haciendas... the jungle. Everywhere.”

Ever since then, landless people had to work for the *patrón* as peons in order to continue living there. He “made people cry, he lorded himself over all; that is how he became the boss.” People lost their peace, their tranquility, “we could no longer sit and chew our coca. We couldn’t even sleep soundly.” When they tried to defend themselves, to fight back, “the police was sent against us, to imprison the leaders.” In the early 1940s, community members chose don Melchor to carry forward the struggle against the hacienda. Despite the fact that he was illiterate and a monolingual Quechua speaker, they valued his charisma, wisdom and leadership skills. Melchor knew the hacendados cultivated fear and fragmented the communal organization, he knew that some families backed the hacendados. Nobody could imagine winning against the hacendados in court: “How could an ignorant person beat a rich one?”³ So, why did people decide to fight under such uneven conditions? Don Melchor had his doubts about assuming this leadership. “I won’t be able [to do it]; *mikukuruwaptinqa*, “they can eat me alive.” As fellow community members pushed him to accept, he demanded from them to not forget him as they sent him off to the battleground: *nina sansaman huchaman hina qaykuykuwaspaykichiqa* (throwing me into a well of burning ashes). These figurative and religious images, of being “swallowed” by the hacendados’ power or being “thrown into the ashes,” reveal the deep fear felt by Melchor and the community before the prospect of fighting the “hacendados’ law.”

This paper explores the memory of violence of Ayacucho’s highland communities as it was framed in a longer historical memory in which people’s ideas of the state and the government play a central role. Instead of depicting indigenous communities at the frontier of the legal order—a racialized misrepresentation in a country where social, cultural and linguistic hierarchies have been constructed and projected in spatial terms—I want to show how *indígenas* have been historically debating the meaning and space that the government has in their own history and identities.⁴ The clearest moment of this took place in the meeting held in

Uchuraccay on the morning of February 12, 1983, with the Special Commission created by President Fernando Belaúnde and headed by Mario Vargas Llosa to investigate the assassination of eight journalists two weeks earlier. Then, community members said that it was a mistake that they had made in their desire to “defend the government” and in support of the “president.” This political representation of a struggle in the name of the government makes sense in a broader political process and deeper historical memory. Relocating the immediate past of the violence and its aftermath within a longer historical memory, we will see how “government” as idea and action was constructed throughout the twentieth century in a process of communal land appropriation, the struggles against the hacendados who seized the land, and articulation as action and political language. In the 1960s, President Fernando Belaúnde and his administration endorsed indigenous mobilization and struggles for land, resulting in the massive repossession of communal properties in many regions of the country. This was a critical moment, as the political *entity* of “government” became a political *identity* for people of the highland communities who regained the land and Belaúnde secured a place in the people’s memory.

1. Shining Path’s violence and memory

This ethnographic and historical investigation is centered in the highland communities of Huanta and La Mar situated at an altitude on and above 10,500 feet. According to Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report, these were the two provinces most affected by the armed conflict that wracked the country, in terms of the number of incidents and attacks; the number of victims; and the percentage of population that was displaced. Shining Path’s presence in the area responded not so much to political priorities, as to guerrilla warfare tactics: there were virtually no access roads in the area, no police stations, and very little infrastructure of any kind, which gave small guerilla units an advantage over the military

in terms of movements and ease of action. It was in these communities where the population first defied and resisted Shining Path, late in 1982.

The highland population's response to Shining Path was decided through multi-communal agreements which included nearly a dozen communities, something which became known after the assassination of seven Shining Path guerrillas in the community of Huaychao on January 21st, 1983. Five days later, eight reporters that had gone to investigate this incident were killed by the *comuneros* (community members) of Uchuraccay, an event that created a national scandal and made Uchuraccay an emblematic code name for the violence, particularly for the "savagery" and "ignorance" that reigned unchecked in the highlands. The national and international attention generated by the event pushed President Fernando Belaúnde to name an independent commission to investigate, and internationally renowned Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa was selected to preside over it, granting it unquestionable legitimacy. The report written by the Commission is well-known among Peruvianists and Andeanists alike, as dozens of studies have analyzed the prejudices and misconceptions that it reproduces in a country where "indianness" is still strongly, and almost openly, repudiated.⁵

Less analyzed than the Commission's official report, the transcripts and audio recording of the meeting held in Uchuraccay on February 12, 1983 are one of its most valuable contributions to the study of communities' experience of the violence in the region.⁶ Compared to the report, moreover, the transcript reveals glaring blind spots in commission members' analyses and conclusions that can only be explained by the strength of the members' preconceived notions regarding indígenas' behavior and "character." In the meeting, Uchuraccaínos described the environment of growing hostility in the area since their decision to combat Shining Path, especially after the January killings. In many of their interventions explaining their actions and the reasoning behind the massacre, Uchuraccaínos said that they had killed the journalists thinking that they were Shining Path guerrillas "on

behalf of the government;” and that their struggle against Shining Path was to “defend the government” and “in support of the President.” The commissioners’ report includes the description made by the Uchuraccainos of the circumstances of the massacre, underlining how out of ignorance they took the journalists to be guerrillas, but it does not address the motivations for the comuneros’ armed resistance against Shining Path. The idea that they did it indeed to defend the government was interpreted as an attempt to generate sympathy and indulgence. The possibility that communities acted from a space of political articulation in which they saw themselves as government agents was not taken into account.

After the killing of the journalists in Uchuraccay in January 1983, Shining Path’s repression against the population in the entire area intensified. Upon suffering the murders of dozens of leaders and members in each community and having lost their livestock and crops, most of the population fled the area by late 1984. Very few communities remained: less than ten out of one hundred. Huaycho was one of these, and since my first visit in 1996 I was very interested in knowing why its members had decided to stay and face Shining Path’s deadly incursions, without proper weapons to defend themselves and having to live in hiding, spending their nights in the puna hills at altitudes of over 14,000 feet. Everybody spoke of their bravery and tenaciousness, and their desire to stay in their place and die instead of having to go live on *tierra ajena*, others’ land. But such idealist reasons seemed insufficient motivation in the face of the suffering and misery that the community experienced: almost a third of its members were killed, and they lost almost everything they had, their animals, their crops, and their homes, which were burnt to the ground. Thinking that perhaps in the economy of the region, I would find clues to their obstinacy, I conducted polls about families’ livestock and agricultural production, but my findings offered no relevant information.

Perhaps there simply are no answers that can satisfactorily explain the resisting communities’ strength. But when one frames their decision and their actions within longer

historical processes, the significant relationship that this population had with their land as property and place acquires a greater clarity. Communities still remembered all too clearly that these lands had been recovered from the hacendados, after much struggling and suffering in legal and political battles. It was that memory which Adrian Ñawpa, leader of Purus, recalls to explain why they had confronted Shining Path, a new, authoritarian force in the region: after having lived struggling against the hacendados for most of the twentieth century, why would they want to accept another “master”?

I went back to these communities in 2005, after having researched the land conflicts, peasant mobilization and agrarian reform that took place in the region from the 1920s to the 1970s. What most surprised me was how the fear and mistrust towards the state that persist today was obviously colored by a long historical memory which many scholars, myself included, had not taken into account in our analyses of community politics and violence in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2005 and 2006, when I interviewed the leaders regarding these “old” land issues, I thought that their answers would be invariably sidetracked by stories of the recent past of violence that still held a central place in people’s memory. But the memories of the appropriation of communal and family lands by powerful hacendados and their struggles to recover this land held a surprising currency. Given the precarious presence of the state in this region, these issues, which seemed so distant in time, are nonetheless constantly reinscribed and brought to life. In 2005, the government was campaigning for the signing of a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, and rumors about possible nefarious consequences upon communal land permeated the political environment. Such threats found echo in a deep historical memory that was brought to bear upon the present revealing this population’s doubts regarding the security that the state offers them.

2. The “hacendados’s law”

In the early twentieth century, the topography of power in the highland communities of Ayacucho changed dramatically. A process of hacienda expansion paradoxically coincided with the constitutional recognition of “indigenous communities” as special entities in 1920, since most of these communities and families could not prove their ownership under the new modern system established by the Peruvian state. This process of virtual communal land expropriation experienced in Ayacucho was repeated under similar and different forms in other regions of Peru and the rest of Latin America since the late 19th century to facilitate the advance of the growing market economy.⁷

Between 1897 and 1906, the province of Huanta had 61 registered tributary rolls, 14 of which belonged to the highland area. Although there is no information on the size of these rural properties, all 14 had an altitude of over 9,800 feet and were dedicated to the more locally oriented commerce of livestock raising, especially sheep, and tuber production. There were few haciendas in the highland area—11, to be exact, by 1906.⁸ Most of those had been adjudicated late in the colonial period, such as the hacienda Uchuraccay, Cunya, Chaca, Palleca, Guancayoc, and Culluchaca. Of the 33 tax-paying properties on Huanta’s tributary rolls, only 9 were haciendas in 1782.⁹ Most of the lands in the highland area belonged to indigenous communities or were *tierras realengas* (crown land—land that did not belong either to haciendas or communities), and which eventually became the de facto property of the families that used it. This composition changed dramatically in the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1970s, the agrarian reform registered the expropriation of 70 properties in the area, haciendas whose extension varied from 50 to 3,000 hectares.¹⁰

The state asserted its authority in the first decades of the twentieth century to facilitate commercial transactions of land in a more modern framework, but this policy merely served to allow arbitrary land seizures via illegitimate sales and fake registrations. Although indigenous communal land was declared inalienable in the 1920 Constitution, many outsiders

appropriated plots of communal land by having fraudulent sales and purchases certified by friendly (and dishonest) notaries.¹¹ Moreover, not all communities were legally recognized as such by the state, and even those who were suffered land loss at the hands of unscrupulous notaries and authorities due to their lack of clearly delimited property titles. The sale of a small plot would be registered as the sale of a much larger area that effectively left many families landless; with the connivance of the local authorities, three or four such sales were enough to dispossess a community. These procedures were not subject to legal controls, and the people from the communities were clearly at a disadvantage. Notaries thus often altered information on size and ownership through their signature, giving legal value to a “little piece of paper” that was entirely illegitimate. People’s memory of this arbitrary legal practice is still fresh: they refer to it as an “engaño” (deceit) perpetrated by a “mano negra” (black hand).¹²

The notion of *engaño* explains how the hacendados took advantage of “people’s ignorance.” Juana Gavilán, a leader who fought against the hacienda of Rodeopampa in 1962, explains with sarcasm and laughter how hacendados gave people “pretty dresses” and “sweet things” and asked them to tell the notaries, “yes, we received money in our ponchos, a lot of money, like coca leaves.”¹³ But as this very explanation indicates, hacendados’ power and use of a “mano negra” are only one side of the story. In many cases, families themselves were active participants, selling plots of their land and paving the way for haciendas’ intrusions. Why some families sold their plots is unclear. Some of the older folk remember that not all sales were the product of hacendado deceit: there was also “envidia” (envy) among neighbors. A culturally pregnant notion, “envidia” means much more than simple “jealousy”: it is associated with power, conflict, and magic, and points to dissatisfaction with unequal access to or enjoyment of community resources. As long as some families had large plots and others had small ones, tensions between dissatisfied and more “privileged” families were channeled through the opening land market. Selling was like an invitation to counter the internal social

differences –to affect an inconvenient or prosperous neighbor. For many of those who were leaving the countryside for the city, selling was thought of as an opportunity.

Through either deceit or envy, land loss was a fact. In the case of Iquicha, ten of its sixteen *pagos* (hamlets or small villages subject to a large town's jurisdiction) became haciendas after 1920, such as Iquicha of Oswaldo Tutaya (318 has.); Qarasenqa of Oswaldo Tutaya (26 has.); Rodeopampa of Eduarda La Torre (750 has.); Ccatupata of Abelardo Cárdenas (1001 has.); Rumiormasqa of Juana Aybar Valdez (1325 has.); and Occoro of Maximiliano Chávez (120 has.). The Tutaya family took advantage of this process of legal expropriation. Oswaldo Tutaya Vivanco, who inherited the position of notary from his father Victorino Tutaya Ascarza, signed many contracts of land purchases in the province of Huanta in this period. In the 1920s he himself bought small plots of land that later became haciendas: Iquicha and Qarasenqa. One decade later, his sister Zoraida Tutaya and José Arguedas, who inherited the hacienda Uchuraccay from Victorino Tutaya, appropriated more land using the same devious methods from the hinterland of Aranzhuay, San José de Santillana. Those then became the haciendas of Ccochacc, Ccachir and Sañocc.

Most new hacendados came from middling sectors outside the highlands, especially small traders from the region. In a few cases, indigenous families from their own or another community built or bought haciendas. Some of these came from traditional landowning families such as Tutaya and Aybar; others had acquired money through trade between the jungle and Huanta, especially of coca leaves. In the process of reconfiguring land property, most of the haciendas from the colonial period changed ownership, as happened with Bramadero, Chaca, Huaychao and Huayllay. Unlike in other parts of Peru, Junín, Arequipa and Puno for instance, where the highland haciendas were articulated into the international wool circuits, hacienda expansion in this region did not bring about economic modernization,

and it in fact produced the re-archaization of social relations between landowners and the families that lost their land.

This new system of power and legality is described by Mauro Huaylla Romero, leader of Occoro, as *hacendadupa ley* (the hacendados' law), in allusion to the exceptional power that hacendados reached "having the law on their side."¹⁴ The idea of living as a "slave" under this new power is still a common reference now, spoken of as living as refugees in their own territory in clear parallel with the situation of the 1980s. Heads of household—that is, men—had to pay rent to keep living in their own land by providing free labor for the hacendados, both agricultural work in the hacienda and domestic services at the hacendados' home in the city a week or two at year, becoming identified as *semaneros*. This experience is remembered by former *semaneros* as humiliating, not only because of the bad treatment that they received but also because they came from a traditional patriarchal society where domestic labor was women's work.

3. *Memory, politics and "government"*

During the 19th century, the highland indigenous population of the region was fully active in the national political process, especially in the context of the Independence (1824-1828) and Pacific Wars (1879-1884). Their willingness to combat their rivals then, contrasts with the lack of physical resistance against the hacienda expansion processes launched in the 1920s. The reason lies in the military repression led by the state against this population in 1896 and 1897 and the deep-seated mistrust of the state that such experience produced.

Nicolás de Piérola's victory against the regime of General Andrés Avelino Cáceres in 1895, the heroic leader of the highland resistance against the Chilean army invasion of 1883-1884, changed the Peruvian political landscape, inaugurating the so-called Aristocratic Republic. Piérola's administration sought the modernization of the country, and two of the policies implemented included liberalizing the land market and creating new taxes. In the

province of Huanta, a new tax on salt was implemented in 1896. On September 26, 1896, more than two thousand highland comuneros (primary sources shown by Luis Cavero say four or six thousand) went down to the city to demanding the abolition of this tax. Their demands went unheeded, and the population responded with the double murder of the subprefect and mayor of the city, both members of the Piérola's Civil Party. A week later, Piérola sent an "Expedición Pacificadora" of eight hundred soldiers into the province under the command of coronel Domingo Parra.¹⁵

With the experience of having resisted the Chilean army in the region ten years earlier, the leaders of more than 30 highland communities organized the resistance against Parra's expedition. But the military incursion of the Expedition was not like that of the Chilean army: it was there to stay; it did not have the whole of the population against it, in fact, it had the support of hacendados and other sectors in the region; and its purpose was specifically to destroy the indigenous population's capacity to rise again. "Pacification" turned into a seven month-long military occupation during which Expedition soldiers violently repressed the population, killing more than 400 people, many in public executions in the town squares and in the city.¹⁶ Such a fate met the leaders of Culluchaca, Carhuahuran, San José, Putis, Ichpico, Yerbabuena, Occochaca, Patasucro, Cedropata and Mio.¹⁷ In addition, many of the villages were burned down, their livestock killed, which prompted Luis Cavero to describe this as a "time of extermination and devastation." The repression sought not only to cancel the support that Cáceres still had in the region, but, again, to end the public and active political participation of the indigenous population.¹⁸

Fear, violence and repression become part of people's memory through different experiences and temporalities, and are communicated through different means. Although each experience leaves particular traces on the multiple layers of memory, time condenses these into an accumulative frame that influences present emotions and decisions while making it

sometimes difficult to separate distinct originating events. In terms of remembered events, the repression of that last indigenous rebellion of the late 19th century left vague signs circulating in local tales, such as the “Tawa Ñawi,” a dark “place” in the jungle where Parra’s soldiers and bad hacendados went after they died, condemned to remain in a liminal sphere between life and death. Luis Cavero registered an early version of this story in the 1930s and 1940s; in the late 1970s it was recorded by anthropologist José Coronel; I heard it in the interviews I did in 2005 and 2006.¹⁹ However, despite the seemingly minor space that the event took up in communities’ historic memory, it succeeded in changing communities’ politics on the ground, eliminating their capacity to use force to resist unwanted policies or to influence political outcomes. A new political culture was installed as a result of the Expedition, one in which communities shunned politics and avoided addressing the state for decades. Although political articulation to the state became the main locus of struggle against the hacendados from the 1930s through the 1940s, people’s mistrust of the state never fully disappeared, shaping the ambivalent relation of these communities with the state, as Melchor Huicho’s story reveals.

After deciding to lead his community as its “*personero*” (communal leader legally recognized by the state) or “*cabecilla*” (as they were called in the community), Don Melchor started traveling to the offices of the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas in Ayacucho and Lima in the late 1940s. Although he met with government authorities, he was unable to bring justice and rights to the communities by making the government return the communal land.

Hacendados’ naked power continued until, according to Melchor, the government finally spoke and “extinguished the hacienda”: “there will no longer be haciendas, *carajo*! There will be no buying and selling of land. We will live in equality. We will work together. There will no longer be petty hatreds, enemies, fights, no more of that!’ They spoke well. I thought: what will that be like? So you see, with the President, there are no more haciendas, not even in the jungle.” Upon the question, which president, Don Melchor immediately replies that “it was

Belaúnde, the first one, *machu* Belaúnde (the great, or old Belaúnde), because remember he had a son who was also president.”

Architect Fernando Belaúnde Terry was president twice, first from 1963 to 1968, when the military coup of Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado cut his mandate short, and then again from 1980 to 1985. The fact that Melchor Huicho mistakenly identified Belaúnde’s second term in office as that of his son, who was never president, reveals the extent of the difference in policies between the two terms. In the 1960s, the community had found a supportive government in their fights against the haciendas; in the 1980s, they suffered indiscriminate repression in the context of the Shining Path insurgency. Alejandro Portelli talks about “misremembering” —“missmemory” in his own words— to describe these “mistakes” in people’s memory.²⁰

Melchor Huicho’s testimony offers the aesthetic texture of the sense and the intensity of the experience – what it meant to live through it, and what it still means today. His historical narrative seems a lineal and secular one, taking into account his leadership and intellectual position. However, it involves a complex and layered frame of senses and meanings from a subjective, personal, communal and political position. The process of getting “government” support was not easy: it took years of resistance, traveling tirelessly to the state’s offices in Ayacucho and Lima, meeting with the authorities, neglecting his own family and work at times. Taking his case out of the local courts and administration, the office of the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas in Lima became the main battleground. In his many trips he had to deal with unpredictable forces and threats, among them “the lost and bad souls.”

In many ways, Melchor Huicho’s narrative is almost a synthesis of the 20th century history of the highland communities of Huanta and La Mar and many other regions throughout the country: land loss, regression towards more archaic social relations, community’s struggles against these, and political articulation through a “search for the government.” It was a

surprise to me to hear that Belaúnde takes central place in communities' memories as the president who supported their rights and returned their land. This narrative contrasts with the national narrative and memory in which the social and political transformation of the countryside is associated with Velasco's agrarian reform of 1969. The historical memory in the narrative of Melchor Huicho and other leaders challenges us to rethink and rearticulate the historicity of the national memory. From these communities' perspective, the more important social transformation in the countryside is politically and emotionally associated to Fernando Belaúnde's first government rather than General Juan Velasco Alvarado's reforms.

Finally, don Melchor's political journey was not an exceptional experience. It was part of a long and larger journey that involved hundreds of indigenous personeros. It was a journey that turned into a powerful political culture of political participation through the demand of state support and recognition of the country's "indigenous communities" and their rights. It was, therefore, a journey for political articulation. Although this kind of journey was not new, given that it happened with the *caciques* in the colonial period—they also denounced abuses by local authorities and *encomenderos* to the central state and went as far as writing to the Crown—the particularity of this process was the systematic and massive level of articulation.

4. Law, political articulation and the construction of the public sphere

"I have come to Lima with the hope of garnering the support of the Government and I have justly asked for justice with the rest of the commissioners in my community, and we have received nothing... since 1923, no government authority has listened to us."²¹

The opening fragment is part of the letter that Manuel Huahualuque Condori sent to the director of the Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas on April 8, 1949 after his first trip to the capital. He was in Lima for a second time two years later, "obliged to ask the Government for justice." This journey to the capital was part of a legal and political battle against hacendado Lucas Carpio, who had taken land from his family and his community in 1923. Manuel Huahualuque was 75 years old, a native of Hilata-Santa Rosa de Huayrapata, district

of Inchipalla, department of Puno. As community representative, he demanded the intervention of the “Supreme Government” to provide the “amparo y protección” (shelter and protection) that it owed them.

The claim to governmental “shelter and protection” is a language that stands out in the hundreds of letters sent to the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas. Indígenas’ claims had found an institutional space in the legal recognition of the entity of “comunidad de indígenas” as a subject of rights and special governmental protection in Article 58 of the 1920 Constitution.²² Created that same year, the Dirección was supposed to address the claims and complaints of indigenous communities. However, the language of “shelter and protection” has deep historical connotations: we can see it in the letter written by Guaman Poma de Ayala to Phillip III, the king of Spain in 1613, appealing for “good government.”²³ Given its constitutional status, it might seem that indigenous leaders were simply following legal logic by invoking such language, but its use goes far beyond a legal procedure. It is a powerful vocabulary of rights with which people have demanded in word and action that the government fulfill its duties and follow its own laws. Laura Gotkowitz finds a similar vocabulary in indigenous claims in Bolivia in the 1940s, where they demanded “amparo y garantía” (protection and guarantees). As she points out, “a legal structure —a primary “effect” of the state— did not exist as an abstract formal arrangement in prerevolutionary Bolivia; there was not the slightest illusion that the law existed above social practice, that it stood separately from society as part of the state.”²⁴

In their journeys to Lima, personeros or cabecillas attempted to articulate their entitlement to actual government support.²⁵ This “pilgrimage” in search of government protection started a couple of years after the constitutional recognition of indigenous communities in 1920. According to the records of the Dirección of Asuntos Indígenas, the first personeros arrived in Lima in 1922, and most came from Cusco, Puno and Junín. In Cusco and

Puno, the Comité Tahuantinsuyo, the Patronato de la Raza Indígena and *indigenista* intellectuals were very active in the denunciation of the inhuman treatment of “*indios*” under “*gamonal*” power, so it is not surprising that the first leaders came from this region.²⁶

A second attempt at articulation began a decade later, following the new Constitution of 1933. Unlike the first, when communal recognition and complains against hacendados’ abuses and illegitimate expropriations were the main demands, in this second moment there were also claims for state support for community planning, schools and supplies, roads, police patrols against cattle rustling, etc. Many personeros went to settle conflicts between comuneros; between a community and an hacienda; or between comuneros and an authority, in the “conciliation office.” They came from communities across the country, but especially from the central and southern highlands, where the hacendados’ power had become hegemonic.

The legal claims in this context came together with the repossession of the haciendas in some parts of the country. The Constitution of 1933 contained an ambiguous article that encouraged the factual repossession of land. According to Gavin Smith, “legal recognition was the precondition for repossessing lost land, but de facto occupancy was a precondition for establishing legal recognition in the first place.”²⁷ This process for recognition started with an official ocular inspection of the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas’ functionaries in the area of conflict. This legal procedure encouraged community members and *colonos* (labor tenants on haciendas) to take action and prove the factual possession. Gavin Smith shows how this process took place in Huasicancha, a community in Junín in conflict with the haciendas Tucle, Río de la Virgen, Antapongo, Laive and Ingahuasi. Starting in 1939, communities started taking over hacienda land using the law as well as claiming prior possession in what amounted to a progressive land repossession.

The colonos of haciendas Chincheros, Ccaccamarca and Carhuanca in the province of Cangallo, and La Compañía in Huamanga, Ayacucho, had undergone a similar situation. The 1933 Constitution included a section about “Indigenous Communities” with six articles regarding the state’s duties and the communities’ rights. Using especially Article 211, colonos demanded state intervention and the expropriation and repossession of “abandoned” haciendas to help communities with land scarcity problems.²⁸ But the process was not straightforward, as the following case shows. On June 23, 1934, the colonos of Chincheros, in the southern Ayacucho province of Víctor Fajardo, succeeded in obtaining a ministerial resolution in which landowner Amador Ortega was compelled to sell the hacienda to the state. Months later, the “technical commission” of the Ministerio de Fomento intervened to secure a sales agreement between the hacendado and colonos. However, the local functionaries let Ortega set the price and conditions for the sale at a level which colonos could not afford, and in the end there was no expropriation.

Since 1922, when Amador Ortega had bought the hacienda, he had accumulated influence over legal and political processes in the region, so instead of giving up, colono leaders of Chincheros decided to take the case to the higher authorities in Lima. After fifteen days of traveling, the delegation of sixteen community members—including one woman and two youths—arrived in Lima on December 1935, one of the first delegations from Ayacucho to go to the national capital. All of them met with the Prime Minister in the Government Palace, denouncing “the lack of guarantees on the part of the authorities” and accusing the hacendado of forcing them to work under terrible conditions, including frequent beatings, lack of pay or food, and a refusal to set schools for their children. The leaders had come to the Palace “to claim our rights and demand ample guarantees of the Supreme Government,” and they left having received the Prime Minister’s promise of a solution to their problems.²⁹

However, that promise did not turn into action, and as late as 1951, the leader of Chincheros' colonos went back to Lima, this time asking for Congressional intervention.

This process of state articulation and pressure on hacienda land intensified in the 1940s, pushing the government of Manuel Prado (1939-1945) to create the Procuraduría Gratuita de Indígenas to offer legal support to the personeros arriving "constantly and in great number."³⁰ Although land conflicts were the most frequent and significant issues, Prado's government launched a national literacy campaign for the indigenous population, sending "brigadas de culturización" (brigades of cultural education) to the countryside. In addition, using the Ley Orgánica de Educación Pública, the administration tried to push large landowners (*terratenientes* and *latifundistas*) to build schools and provide teachers for their workers' children. However, this "duty that does not get carried out" in the countryside continued to be disregarded.³¹ What did work was the resolution to lower the bureaucratic requirements for official communal recognition, which still carried with it special state support and the inalienability of collective land. Instead of requiring an original land title, which most communities did not have, the government accepted an "authenticated copy or proof of domain," and 446 communities throughout the country finally acquired recognition, more than ever before.³² In the end, however, these legal initiatives and palliative measures were not enough to improve indígenas' situation and end abuse and conflict in the countryside. But the change in the political environment of the 1940s and 1950s was enough to make some landowners in most of the regions organize into Sociedades Ganaderas y Agrícolas, and travel to Lima, demanding protection and guarantees from the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas against the invasion of "their property" by emboldened indígenas.

Although Article 211 encouraged people to campaign for the expropriation and redistribution of hacienda lands, in practice there was very little change of land ownership in the Peruvian countryside. According to a speech given by senator Alberto Arca Parró in

Congress on August 2, 1963, the inefficient labor of the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas and the dead letter of the Constitution had left indígenas' situation unchanged.³³ From 1933 to 1950, the state bought and redistributed only two haciendas in the country, one in Junín and the other in Lima. This was less than the number of haciendas bought by the communities in the same period, at least six officially registered by 1951.³⁴ The case of Chincheros' legal limbo was one of the 1661 complaints filed by indigenous communities that were still awaiting resolution in the Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas in July 1963. Of these 1661 cases, approximately 60% corresponded to the same type of conflict, that is, 800 to 900 complaints were about land ownership ("el mayor derecho de dominio y sobre reivindicación de tierras"). According to the 1940 census, there were more than 4,000 indigenous communities in the country but only 1,668 had legal recognition.³⁵

Senator Arco Parrá was not the first to criticize the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas. In 1945 Senator Ramiro Priale complained about the "extreme slowness in the transaction of cases." In a letter to the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas he said that "we have been receiving, quite frequently, the visit or reiterated claims of commissions of indígenas who come to the capital from the communities."³⁶

The state's ambiguous attention to community rights is evident throughout these years, embodied especially in the 1920 and 1933 Constitutions and their lack of implementation. Despite the constitutional "intention" to protect indígenas, the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas did not offer real protection and guarantees; on the contrary, by the 1960s many complaints were filed against its personnel in provincial offices. However, this ambiguous attention and lack of protection by the Dirección, rather than discouraging communities, pushed leaders to look for other state channels. The sending of petitions and complaints to Congress via specific congressmen, the use of political networks, especially the active networks of immigrants in Lima since 1940, and those created where progressive professional and political activists, and

Apra, one of the more popular-oriented political parties in Peru founded in the 1920s by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, had a strong presence.

It might sound naive to celebrate communities' use of these other state channels when they apparently brought no results. However, just the fact that these offices heeded and repeated their demands was a significant achievement. Although it had been precisely the mis-institutionalization of legal land ownership what had limited communities' rights by separating them from their land, the institutionalization of legal procedures and modern republican politics, however partial, opened new spaces and opportunities to push for their rights by partaking in these new politics. The massive political pilgrimage of indigenous leaders to Lima during these years can be read in this way, and as such, it constituted a new public sphere for Peru's indigenous population. To counter the illegitimate and hegemonic influence that hacendados held in the provincial governments and municipal spaces, indigenous communities sought to enlist the central office of the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas, the country's legislators, and, if possible, the president himself. But more than an expedient maneuver, this was a very conscious step in a process of articulation into the state. In addition to mediating between indigenous society and the state, personeros' journeys encouraged a space of debate about the state's disregard of the highlands by bringing into the light the archaic relations in the countryside and indigenous community rights and their "state of abandonment." By having their claims and demands circulate among state offices, and via the newspaper *Sierra: Vocero Fajardino*, communities indeed created a public sphere where they made their voice public using the written word, and the visibilization of repeatedly being in the country's center of power, Lima.³⁷

One of the first delegations from Ayacucho to arrive at the capital, in December 1935, was from Chincheros and had the support of brothers Pedro and Ascención Aedo, priests of the town of Canaria.³⁸ A month later, in January 1936, the first number of the bi-monthly

journal *Sierra: Vocero Fajardino* opened with a headline denouncing the “tyranny” of *gamonalismo* in the province of Víctor Fajardo and including a report on the abuses that the indigenous colonos of Chincheros had travelled to Lima to denounce. “Gamonalismo in the province extorts our Indian and threatens collective property” was the name of the article in which the paper made public the illegal and abusive methods used by the hacendado as well as the local political authorities against the indígenas.³⁹

Although this newspaper sought to acquire a regional character, most of the news were circumscribed to Víctor Fajardo and the center south provinces of Ayacucho. Denouncing *gamonalismo* in the province as well as complaining about the “abandonment” suffered by the region at the hands of the state took central place in the journal. The newspaper director and many peasant leaders from the province were affiliated with, or were sympathetic to, Apra,⁴⁰ so it is not surprising that the journal became a voice of denunciation against gamonales and hacendados there. Unlike in Víctor Fajardo and Cangallo, Huanta Aprismo included most hacendados from the highlands.⁴¹ This explains in part the lack of reports in the newspaper about *gamonalismo* in Huanta and La Mar, the worst in the region.

In Huanta the public sphere was occupied by different cultural and intellectual circles organized around the Comité Pro-Progresista Local and Sociedad Unión y Progreso.⁴² Most of the members of these clubs and centers were “distinguished families,” which in most cases meant hacendados besides urban middle and upper sectors. Despite their supposed modernity and progressiveness, these centers did not make public statements about *gamonalismo*. Their discourse of “progress” had concrete results in the 1940s with the modernization of the city of Huanta, building roads to the districts, and the beginning of the irrigation project which would bring water from the Rasuwillca mountain lake to the Huanta valley. Their project of modernization, a main political claim and identity, was imagined far away from, and *against*, the upper highland population.

5. 1960s: movement for land and insurrection of memory and knowledge

The 1962-63 agrarian mobilization of Huanta, one of the most significant and massive mobilizations in 20th century Peru, is part of the long political journey begun in the 1920s by the indigenous communities of the country's highland areas under an ambiguous state policy of protecting and ignoring indigenous community rights. In this juncture, president Fernando Belaúnde, unwittingly or not, played an important role in establishing a political identification with the government at least for the indigenous communities of Huanta and La Mar.

The clearest evidence of the success of the Expedición Pacificadora in squashing indigenous political participation in the region lies in the fact that the communities of Huanta and La Mar did not attempt to garner state support by going to Lima until the 1940s, twenty years after regions such as Cusco and Puno started sending their personeros. The first of these leaders, all of them from *pagos* (hamlets) in Iquicha, were Manuel Romero, from Occoro; Pío Urbano, from Qarasenqa; Mariano and Alejandro Auccatoma, from Mio; Vicaña and Tello from Iquicha; and Melchor Huicho from Ccanccao, all of them illiterate, monolingual Quechua speakers. Beginning as an isolated experience, the struggle begun by these leaders became an example to follow, and by the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, most of the leaders of the communities in the area knew how to deal with the different state levels, and the struggle against the hacienda became a central issue.

Legal fights continued throughout, but from 1961 the highland of Huanta became a battleground. Without renouncing the legal struggle, the leaders in places like Rodeopampa, Huaynacancha, Aranhuay, and others, started pushing the hacendados out by other means. This process of repossessing was happening in other parts of the region as well, in the haciendas Pomacocha, Chinchero and Ccacamarca in Cangallo; Onqoy in Andahuaylas; and throughout the country, in Cusco, Junín, Pasco, Puno, and Huaraz.⁴³ In each region and province, indigenous communities, peasants and colonos, often with the mediation of young

Leftist lawyers from the surrounding cities, were trying to build their own peasant federations. Jorge Moya in the province of Huanta is a case-in-point. Born to one of Huanta's distinguished families –his grandfather had commercial locales in the city and lands in the highlands, including hacienda Choqewichqa, in Carhuahuran- he left the province to work and study law in the University of San Marcos in Lima, and returned as a promising lawyer in 1961.⁴⁴ In Huanta, Moya soon became involved in the land conflicts, defending these communities as their lawyer, and then organizing the peasant federation in the province with Jesús Soto Porras, personero and *asesor* (adviser) of many highland communities.

Instead of uniting under (or being absorbed by) a centralized, national-level federation, each of these federations worked together with one another, as well as with the immigrant networks and the student movement in the capital. The mediation of young radical lawyers and Leftist political activists gave the peasant movement in some areas an ideological orientation. The circulation of ideas and people's political experiences between cities, including Lima and mining centers in Junín, with the communities, helped to build strong peasant federations, especially in Cusco, Junín and Pasco. In 1961, peasant unions in Cusco took over a major hacienda in La Convención and Lares province. Cusco's peasant federation had been founded in 1958, and by 1960 it had 130 member unions, one of the strongest in the country, in part, undoubtedly, to one of its major supporters, Hugo Blanco, a Trotskyite leader. La Convención movement influenced the course of the Peruvian peasant mobilization, for news of its success spread like wildfire, generating a profound impact at the national level and becoming a main reference for restless communities.

The meeting organized by the Federación de Campesinos de la Provincia de Huanta on September 25th, 1963, attracted between three to four thousand indígenas who came down from the highlands to the city of Huanta. Such mobilization was the first in six decades after the Huanta rebellion of 1895. Marching in a long line, they entered the central plaza of the city

with signs and flags that demanded labor rights in haciendas, communal recognition, and agrarian reform. This meeting launched the First Congress of the Peasant Federation, organized by Jesús Soto and Jorge Moya, both of them sympathetic to Hugo Blanco. The Congress gathered for four days with more than one hundred delegates from thirty-eight communities and haciendas. Of these thirty-eight, twenty-one were from the highland area, among them Ccachir, Culluchaca, Pampalca, Pultunchara, Huaynacancha, Huayllay, Mio, Iquicha, San José de Secce, Canrao, Ccarhuahuran, Pera, Irquis, and Huaychao. All of these were enmeshed in conflicts with various hacendados. Five of the eight coordinators of the Congress were *cabecillas* from the highlands: Crispín Morales Gómez from Rodeopampa, Abraham Santiago Huamán from Huaynacancha, Esteban Garay from Pacchancca, Humberto Loayza from the hacienda Mio, and Benigno Crispín from Usmay, this last one located in the “ceja de selva,” where the Andes meet the jungle.⁴⁵

One of the resolutions of the Congress was to express public support for recently elected President Fernando Belaúnde. A letter to the president was written in which the indigenous people’s situation of poverty and exploitation was described, demanding agrarian reform to change it.⁴⁶ On October 15th, 1963, less than a month after the Congress, a large number of delegates from these communities traveled to Lima to meet with the president, in response to the presidential “call to communities.” Jesús Ccente Huamán, *cabecilla* of Huaychao, remembers the meeting with the president as a great event, especially since this was the first time community representatives from the area had ever successfully met with any president.⁴⁷ Although with this “call” Belaúnde was trying to persuade community leaders to stop the land invasions which were taking place throughout the country, for leaders such as Jesús Ccente the meeting encouraged people from the highland to fight and recover the land from the haciendas. Don Jesús remembers that when they went back to their communities and talked about the meeting with the president, it moved people to take action, even people who

had supported the hacendados before were now willing to fight them. Although the legal and illegal battle against the hacienda was already a central issue in many parts of the country by that time, the Belaúnde administration took the process to levels which it could no longer contain.

The process of forcefully taking back the land that haciendas had illegitimately appropriated was seen as rightful and fair by communities, peons, and their supporters. The fate undergone by haciendas established in the late colonial period reveals this. Haciendas like Uchuraccay, Cunya, Pallcca, Chaca, retained a measure of legitimacy in the eyes of the population, and these hacendados held power and social standing even after the agrarian reform of 1969. On the contrary, haciendas constructed after the 1920s faced problems of authority and legitimacy by the early 1960s, and most had been re-appropriated by the end of the decade. According to a complaint filed by Teófilo Arnulfo Andia, owner of the fundo Allpachaca (600 has.), to achieve the recovery of their land, leaders “have said that that is what the supreme leader Fernando Belaúnde Terry has ordered, and that they are obliged not to recognize the bosses, and to take control of their lands and goods.”⁴⁸ That explains why in Polanco, Allpachaca, Iruquis, and elsewhere in the Huanta highland, many indígenas took over hacienda lands soon after Belaúnde took power.

Perhaps for the first time since the War of the Pacific, indigenous communities and individuals felt attachment to the government, touched by President Belaúnde’s apparent concern for their well-being and their legitimate rights. In the great public meetings and mobilizations in Cusco leaders named “Huiracocha Belaúnde.”⁴⁹ In Pasco, a month after Belaúnde took power, twenty-four haciendas totaling 144,621 hectares were taken by comuneros and colonos between August 6th and September 4th.⁵⁰ In Junín, on July 28, while Belaúnde was swearing the presidency, the community of San Pedro de Cajas was taking the hacienda Chinchausiri; weeks later, other four communities took over four other haciendas

organized under La Sociedad Agrícola Ganadera Algolan S.A. Those were large properties: the hacienda taken by the community of Ninaca alone covered 15,215 has. The same happened with haciendas Yanamarca and El Diezmo. According to Handelman, the total number of land invasions may well have been between 350 and 400, and nearly 300,000 peasants took part in the unrest throughout the sierra. “The peasant mobilization of the early 1960’s was unquestionably one of the largest peasant movements in Latin American history.”⁵¹

Thus, without directly supporting land repossession, the Belaúnde government legitimated people’s right to take action regarding issues of land ownership and development. Undoubtedly, the words and actions of Belaúnde even as candidate had an enormous impact in these places in the provinces where presidential candidates seldom campaigned. In 1956 Belaúnde had founded Acción Popular, highlighting the discourse of communal cooperation as a moral and historical value present in the communities, as well as condemning the centralism of the Peruvian state and its tendency to forget and abandon the countryside. That was the beginning of his “town to town” travels (“pueblo por pueblo”), where he spoke of providing economic and technical support to communities and peasants; he condemned *gamonalismo*; and he promised agrarian reform.⁵² He visited Huanta twice, in April 1962 and May 1963; and Tambo and San Miguel once each, among many other provinces and districts of Ayacucho and other parts of Peru. In his first speech as president, Belaunde reiterated his promise of agrarian reform, and he made his aforementioned “call to communities” (llamado a las comunidades). Taking immediate action against gamonalismo, local authorities and police were called into an “Operación Anti-Explotación Indígena.” His administration tried to bring the central state closer to the provinces and communities through “Cooperación Popular,” a government office inaugurated in Chincheros, Andahuaylas, that sent engineers to the countryside and encouraged the construction of schools and roads.⁵³

The context of land mobilization activated local and familial memories and knowledge which were powerful tools for constructing alternative political imaginaries. Just like Melchor Huicho's narrative about his family's sacrifice in the foundation of their community of Ccanccao, the Huaylla family retained their rights over the land called Huayllapata in Occoro, and the Huachaca family emphasized their status as the nephews of Navala Huachaca, an indigenous leader who fought against the republic after Independence and became locally renowned.⁵⁴ In recovering land that had been part of the community, community members recalled community history and reinforced communal identity. And in engaging the state in an unprecedented level of political articulation while confronting hacendados and corrupt local authorities through direct action, communities tied their histories and identity, their historical memory, to a moral language and political sense of rights and citizenship. This was a spiraling and self-reinforcing process, as the language of rights, citizenship and ethnicity, activated memories of past struggles which informed contemporary community politics.

This process is not only evidenced in family narrative; it is also hinted at by the social and ethnic character of the leadership of the Huanta Peasant Federation. This leadership combined elements of the modern politics that led to the constitution of the federation in the first place, with elements of communities' traditional hierarchy and governance. The great majority of them were monolingual Quechua speakers who had not gone past the first few years of primary school, if at all. However, like Crispin Morales from Rodeopampa and Abraham Santiago from Huaynacancha, they were recognized by their fellows as *umayuqkuna*, "people with heads," for their experience, knowledge and initiative. In some cases, leaders had attended military service in Huancayo and Lima, like Juan Huicho from Ccanccao, Mariano Huaraca from Marcobamba, Enrique Huachaca from Culluchaca. This gave them a particular edge in dealing with non-indigenous authorities as well as exposition to experiences beyond those of their communities. Most of these leaders were also *varayoc*, or

staff-holders, the civic and religious authorities instituted in the colonial period that still constituted community government up to the 1960s. It was as varayoq that many were named delegates to the first Congress, including those from Huaynacancha, Huaychao, Chaca, and Culluchaca.

Through local and family networks, these men led the 1960s mobilization, informed by their grandparents' memory of the past in which communities were the rightful owners of the land, a memory which they referred to and reinforced; as well as transmitting to their communities the notion that they had the president's support and "authorization" to repossess the land.⁵⁵ Again, the self-reinforcing cycle that tied historical memory and community tradition, with modern political articulation and a language of rights and the state. But this social organization came to an end with Velasco's reforms to modernize the countryside in the 1970s.

Communities' struggles to recover their land therefore constituted the mobilization of memory and knowledge — a true "insurrection of subjugated knowledge" in which memory and the local means of critique turned into a political force.⁵⁶ Indeed, this struggle for land involved economic-productive objectives as well as subjective relations with very specific places, where erudite knowledge and local memories were embodied and from which they could establish a historical knowledge of struggles and emerge as a force for visualizing a new political imaginary, new spheres of political action.⁵⁷

On the other hand, political articulation itself also shaped people's identity and historic memory. The search for the protection and guarantee of community rights; the state's ambiguous responses, and the close relationship, both real and imagined, established with President Belaúnde, defined a notion of "government" that was intertwined with communal self-representation. It fashioned a political identity that was recalled by Uchuraccaíno comuneros in the meeting with the Vargas Llosa commission in 1983; and by someone from

Huaychao in his testimony to the Truth Commission two decades later: When the guerrilla arrived and asked people to join the struggle against Belaúnde's government, "the authorities of Huaychao, [such as] the *teniente gobernador* (lieutenant governor), the *varayocc* (indian mayor) and *agente municipal* (municipal agent), started arguing [with the *senderistas*] saying that they were members of the government and they couldn't be against it;"⁵⁸ and by Melchor Huicho, Jesús Ccente, and the other leaders from the region that I interviewed.

This notion of government as a political identity to a certain extent shaped the position assumed by communities in the context of the 1980s violence. It explains why these communities became the first line of resistance against Shining Path insurgency; and why other communities did not, particularly those where demands had gone unmet for decades. In some of these latter communities, land conflicts had been resolved early, and their unmet claims were mostly related to education, health, infrastructure, etc.; in others, no claims had ever been *satisfactorily* resolved. This was the case of the Chincheros colonos and comuneros in Victor Fajardo and others for whom recognition was not attained even during the Belaúnde administration. On the contrary, in some places as Onqoy, Andahuaylas, the repression against the peasant movement came soon, October 1963, as well as imprisoning many leaders of the peasant federation from many parts of the country. The sense of being in a "state of abandonment" and "forgotten" by the state configured a position that was critical of the government. In the communities of the Victor Fajardo province, this was expressed early on in discourses elaborated and made public in the journal *Sierra*.⁵⁹ Such self-representation—those whom the state has abandoned and forgotten—turned subversive in the context of radicalization, especially in communities from Cangallo and Víctor Fajardo where social and generational change through education was intertwined with an identity constructed through the memory of failed articulation. These communities were the social base where Shining Path found echo, especially among teachers and young students.

Conclusion

Conducting interviews about people's experience and memory of the period of extreme violence that razed the Ayacucho countryside in the 1980s, one thing became clear: the reasons for behaviors then, like the keys to understanding the narratives and silences of violence, were given by an older history, an older past. The diverse range of actions taken by different communities during the period was marked by the weight of their historic memories and the identities that these configured. In the historical and ethnographic experience of communities, the double meanings of communal land, as property and place, were central to the present and to each set of circumstances that seemed to point to probable futures. Embedded in their spaces and bodies, memories of political articulation also defined identities in relation to the government and the state.

Memories of the oppressive and unjust "hacendado's law" are not just stories taught or reminisced: they perpetuate a sense of insecurity and vulnerability that reappears each time a similar threat is perceived. And such threats have more than one side: they include an outside force that seeks to subjugate comuneros and seize their resources, and a complacent government that does nothing to stop this. That currency of the past is at the heart of the conflicting tensions between the politics of articulation into the state, and the politics of autonomy from it that characterize community dynamics.⁶⁰ Although they seem to be opposing, these goals persist in a precarious equilibrium that feeds into the ambivalent state-community relation.

In Eric Wolf's classic studies on communities, articulations were constructed via networks of family, migration, and the market. Politics as initiatives, decisions, actions and identities, were settled in "revolutions."⁶¹ But the Andean experience shows a different method and character of articulation. The long journeys undertaken by indigenous leaders who crossed the Andes "in search of the government" —some since the 1920s, others, like the

highland communities of Huanta, since the 1940s— have a central role in the political history as well as the identity and memory of the communities. And it is the specific experience of articulation —successful, partial, and/or failed— what configures communities’ political position in the agrarian mobilizations of the 1960s and in the war launched by Shining Path. Thus, it is necessary to locate ourselves within this longer temporal frame to understand the demography and geography of Shining Path’s deadly violence. In the highland communities of Huanta in the early 1980s, most mortal victims were local leaders who had played an important role in the land mobilization in the 1960s and during the agrarian reform.⁶² Although Shining Path did not achieve power, its people’s war was a partly successful “policide:”⁶³ it targeted this political leadership for systematic physical and social elimination on behalf of the revolution, to cut the intergenerational transmission of memory, experience, and knowledge that would have spoken of political articulation. Victims were not “random indígenas” but historically significant leaders; and yet it is too often that scholars fail to position their victims and communal and social memory in the long historical process from which to better understand that violence is seldom gratuitous but filled with intentionality. Shining Path perhaps sought to cancel communities’ historic memory in which the government was seen as inherent to communities’ identities by eliminating those who best embodied it; scholars must repossess and repoliticize memory, for it is usually because of its political content that victims are produced at all.

But not all communities, and not all families within communities, operated from a political identification with the government: many claims brought before the state remained unfulfilled, and for those who held on to them, there was a cultural awareness and self-representation of being forgotten by the state. Although Belaúnde reached legitimacy under a political culture of redressing abandonment, such claims metamorphosed during the 1980s’ violence in his second term in office. The journalists’ massacre in Uchuraccay and the Vargas

Llosa report pointed to the supposed irrationality and backwardness of Uchuraccaínos—and by default, indígenas in the upper highlands—whose abandonment by the state condemned them to act outside legality and beyond the proper norms of civilization.

Within this permanent political process of articulation, “government” is in fact a concept that expresses the specific manifestation of the state in time and space, and that reflects the lack of the state’s deep structuring in that part of the country. It is a concrete presence in a particular moment that often conflicts with the state’s partial presence and untrustworthy character, and shapes the contradictory, ambiguous and conflictive relationship between the state and the indigenous communities throughout the twentieth century. The state is an ambivalent construct in these communities. However, government is something palpable—a real, symbolic and imagined manifestation embodied in particular politicians, policies, and personnel—that influences people’s hopes and beliefs in the state. Communities’ memories regarding the two most important peasant mobilizations in the country—first against landowners in the 1960s and then against Shining Path in the 1980s—frames them as political processes deeply connected with the “government.” This opens up a new and needed perspective: the margins are not only essential to understanding the state, but the inconclusive presence of the state—as government—is essential to understanding the identity of the margins.⁶⁴

The historical memory that records the ambivalent relation with the partial and inconclusive presence of the state reveals an important aspect of how Shining Path’s violence in the 1980s has been contextualized in the communities. Rather than de-historicizing and depoliticizing human experience in the universal language of human rights, peoples’ narratives demonstrate how their individual and communal rights fall within structural injustices and historical oppression. Memories related to the immediate past, however extreme or extraordinary, are inscribed in both longer historical memories and deeply ingrained

sociopolitical structures of inequalities and injustices, as well as in cultural practices in daily life. Although the brutality of the repression of the 1980s found no place or point of reference in communities' recent historical memory, it was underscored by a sense of insecurity and fear that is similar to the one brought to the surface in the present by the Free Trade Agreement and other "neoliberal" policies. New dangers and circumstances are faced by communities from a dense web of historicity that frames daily life, and that has done so throughout the century, undergoing, of course, its own transformations.

Notes:

¹ The following description attempts to reproduce the narrative structure of my first interview with Melchor Huicho, Ayacucho, October 1, 2006. I interviewed him twice again, on December 28, 2006, and July 27, 2007. Don Melchor makes no reference to when his ancestors arrived in the area. According to Cecilia Méndez, this area was populated sometime during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Cecilia Méndez, *The Plebeian Republic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

² The Quechua words used by don Melchor do not show respect or subordination to these powerful hacendados, but irony, revealing that in his eyes, wealth alone does not confer legitimate power or authority.

³ This is an idea that most of the interviewed leaders highlight about their experience of struggle against the hacendados.

⁴ I use the term *indígena* in Spanish because there is no English noun equivalent other than the problematic term "Indian."

⁵ Mario Vargas Llosa, et al, *Informe de los sucesos de Uchuraccay* (Lima: Editora Perú, 1983). For a critical view of the Commission's report, see Enrique Mayer, "Peru in Deep Trouble: Mario Vargas Llosa's 'Inquest in the Andes' Reexamined." *Cultural Anthropology* 6 (4) (1991): 466-506.

⁶ I want to thank Phil Bennett for giving me the manuscript and audio recording of this meeting. Bennet is writing a book on the killing of the eight journalists in Uchuraccay.

⁷ For the Peruvian case, see Nils Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition: The Peruvian Altiplano, 1780-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For Nicaragua, see Jeffrey Gould, *To Die in this Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). For Guatemala, see Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). For Chile, see Florencia Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood. The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailió and the Chilean State, 1906-2001* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). And for Bolivia, see Laura Gotkowitz, *A Revolution for Our Rights. Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880-1952* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁸ There were eleven haciendas registered in the "matrícula de contribución predial" of Huanta (ARAY, Sección Municipalidad, Leg. 131, 1862-1906, "Matrícula de contribución predial rústica del distrito de Huamanguilla, Huanta y Luricocha"). See also, José Coronel, "Huanta: poder local, mistis e indios, 1870-1899" (Tesis, UNSCH, 1986), 45.

⁹ Méndez, *The Plebeian Republic*, 119.

¹⁰ This information comes from three archives: Archivo de la Corte Superior de Justicia de Ayacucho: Sección Juzgado Agrario; Archivo Regional de Ayacucho: Sección Juzgado Agrario; Sección Juzgado de Tierras, Fuero Común Agrario y Fuero Privativo Agrario, and Archivo del Proyecto de Titulación de Tierras-Ministerio de Agricultura: Sección de reconocimiento de comunidades campesinas.

¹¹ In 1854, some 30 years after independence from Spain, the state abandoned its specific indigenous policy of forbidding the sale of Indian lands while at the same time eliminating the indigenous tribute. At this time the indigenous began to lose their lands. María Isabel Remy, "The Indigenous Population and the Construction of Democracy in Peru," in *Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Donna Lee Van Cott (New York: Inter-American Dialogue, 1994), 107-30; 111.

¹² Although I did all the interviews in Quechua, the reference they made to the “mano negra” or “black hand” was in Spanish. Acting with a “black hand” meant illegitimately using the Law, or applying it in a backhanded way, something which the hacendados did by having the notaries, lawyers and judges on their side.

¹³ Juana Gavilán, interview by author, Rodeopampa, July 8, 2006.

¹⁴ Mauro Huaylla Romero, interview by author, Huanta, December 27, 2006.

¹⁵ For a basic reference of these events, see Luis E. Cavero, *Monografía de la provincia de Huanta*. t. II (Lima: s.e., 1957); Juan José del Pino, *Las sublevaciones indígenas de Huanta 1827-1896* (Ayacucho: s.e., 1955); and Antonio Ferrúa, *Recuerdos históricos de Huanta. Un testimonio acerca de las revueltas campesinas y acontecimientos bélicos durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIX y comienzos del XX. Memorias de Don Antonio Ferrúa Lozano* (Huanta: s.e, 2005).

¹⁶ There is no accurate information regarding the number of people killed by the “Expedición Pacificadora.” Although some speak of “thousands”, Antonio Ferrúa, who was a member of “Columna Huanta,” a unit that helped the Expedition, says the victims numbered more than 400. Ferrúa wrote his memoir the year after the repression had taken place. See Ferrúa, *Recuerdos históricos de Huanta*, 94.

¹⁷ Cavero, *Monografía de la provincial de Huanta*, t. II., 87-88.

¹⁸ For an analysis of the linkages between the indigenous participation in the War of the Pacific, the Huanta rebellion, and the Pacifying Expedition, see especially Nelson Manrique, *Las guerrillas indígenas en la Guerra con Chile* (Lima: Centro de Investigación y Capacitación, 1981); Coronel, “Huanta: poder local, mistis e indios;” Patrick Husson, *De la guerra a la rebelión. Huanta siglo XIX* (Cusco: Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 1992); Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation. The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Jaymie Heilman, “By Other Means: Politics in Rural Ayacucho Before Peru’s Shining Path War, 1879-1980” (PhD diss, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 2006).

¹⁹ Cavero, *Monografía de la Provincia de Huanta*. t. II, 203-7; José Coronel, “Tahua Ñawi: Un caso de sanción ideológica del campesinado a los terratenientes (Huanta y Acobamba).” Paper presented at the conference V Congreso Peruano del Hombre y la Cultura Andina, 1985. Literally, Tawa Ñawi means “four eyes”, but the use of the term “eye” may also refer to hole, as in, the eye of a cave. Other than being the name of this dark, scary place/non-place, I could obtain no more information on this notion from my interviewees or the documents, including Cavero’s monograph.

²⁰ See Alejandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991).

²¹ Archivo de la Nación (AN)-Asuntos Indígenas (AI), Leg. 3.13.2.15, Resoluciones Supremas, Lima, 8 de abril, 1949.

²² *Constitución de 1920. Título IV. Garantías Sociales. Artículo 58. El Estado protegerá a la raza indígena y dictará leyes especiales para su desarrollo y cultura en armonía con sus necesidades. La Nación reconoce la existencia legal de las comunidades de indígenas y la ley declarará los derechos que les corresponden.* The State will protect the indigenous race, dictating special laws for its development and culture that are in harmony with its needs. The Nation recognizes the legal existence of indigenous communities, and will develop laws that will declare the rights that accrue to them.

²³ Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, “El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno.” An online facsimile of the original letter is available online at the website of Det Kongelige Bibliotek, which holds the actual manuscript. See <<http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm>>.

²⁴ Laura Gotkowitz, “‘Under the Dominion of the Indian.’ Rural Mobilization, the Law, and Revolutionary Nationalism in Bolivia in the 1940s,” in *Political Cultures in the Andes*, ed. Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 137-58; 140.

²⁵ José María Arguedas, an important Peruvian indigenista intellectual, decided to honor this struggle in the dedication of his 1969 anthology *Cuentos del pongo* by addressing the labor of Santos Ccoyocosi Ccataccamara, “school commissioner” of the community of Umutu, province of Quispicanchis, Cusco. Don Santos Ccoyocosi traveled to Lima six times, meeting with the Minister of Education and two Presidents. An illiterate, monolingual Quechua speaker, he was 60 years old when he decided to journey to Lima for the first time. Every time he returned to Umutu, he carried on his back donations of school supplies that he collected from the different government offices.

²⁶ See Luis Miguel Glave, “Personero o cabecilla”, *Debate Agrario* (June-Sept.,1992), 55-73; Manuel Burga, “Los profetas de la rebelión, 1920-1923”, in *Estado y naciones en los Andes: hacia una historia comparativa: Bolivia, Colombia, Perú*, ed. Jaen Paul Deler y Saint-Geours (Lima: IFEA – IEP, 1986); José Luis Rénique, *La batalla por Puno. Conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos*. (Lima: IEP – CEPES, 2004); and Annalyda Alvarez-Calderón, “‘Es justicia lo que esperamos de su Excelencia’. Política indígena en Puno (1901-1927)”, in *Más allá de la dominación y la resistencia. Estudios de historia peruana*, ed. Paulo Drinot y Leo Garofalo (Lima: IEP, 2005), 312-41.

²⁷ Gavin Smith, *Livelihood and Resistance. Peasant and the Politics of Land in Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 172.

²⁸ *Constitución de 1933. Título XI. Comunidades de indígenas. Artículo 211. El Estado procurará de preferencia dotar de tierras a las comunidades de indígenas que no las tengan en cantidad suficiente para las necesidades de su población, y podrá expropiar, con tal propósito, tierras de propiedades particular, previa indemnización.* “The State will procure lands for indigenous communities that do not have enough to cover their population’s necessities, and for this purpose it may expropriate privately held lands after appropriate compensation.” Article 208 committed the State to guaranteeing the integrity of indigenous community property.

²⁹ Archivo del Convento de San Francisco (ACSF), *Sierra: Vocero Fajardino*, Periódico Quincenal. Lima, enero de 1936, pp. 1-2. There are also many documents of this community’s proceedings in the AN-AI and the Archivo Regional de Ayacucho (ARAY).

³⁰ “The state has imposed onto itself the duty of protection of the native element, guaranteeing that these measures are available to all, respecting their rights and freedom to coexist... within the democratic organization of the country. One of the measures consists of facilitating advice and practical procedures to avoid the continuing exploitation of ignorant indígenas by outsiders. *They are leaders that constantly and in great number came to the capital of the Republic.*” ARAY, Sección Subprefectura, Leg. 02. Oficios Recibidos. Ayacucho, 18 de febrero de 1942.

³¹ ACSF, *Sierra: Vocero Fajardino*. Lima, 1ra quincena de mayo, 1944, p. 4.

³² ARAY, Prefectura: Oficios Recibidos, Circular N° 03. Leg. 74. Lima, July 18, 1945.

³³ AN-AI, 1963-1964, Leg. 3.13.2.5., transcription of Senator Alberto Arca Parró’s speech, Lima, August 29, 1963. Arca Parró was born in Ayacucho and became senator for Lima as member of APRA. He was a prestigious statesman who organized the national census of 1940.

³⁴ AN-AI, 1951-1959, Leg. 3.13.2.3, different documents: list of communities officially recognized; list of haciendas expropriated by the state for the indigenous communities; and list of haciendas bought by community members or colonos. Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Indígenas, Lima, 10 de septiembre, 1951.

³⁵ Arca Parró’s speech.

³⁶ AN-AI, 1940-1951, Leg. 3.13.2.2, Oficio No. 517 al Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo, Lima, 15 de Septiembre, 1945.

³⁷ Geoff Eley offers an alternative view of the public sphere, placing the concept in specific historical contexts and autonomous forms of expression, especially regarding this particular context where most of the population and leaders were illiterate. See, “Nations, Public, and Political Culture: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 289-339. I would like to thank Florencia Mallon for pointing to me the relevance of this reference and see also her work, “El Siglo XX Mapuche: Esferas públicas, sueños de autodeterminación y articulaciones internacionales” (forthcoming).

³⁸ AN-AI, 1926-1939, leg. 3.13.2.1, Lima, 19 de mayo, 1936. In 1933, Pedro Aedo was accused by the governor of Huancapi, Victor Fajardo, as member of Apra (ARAY, Subprefectura, s/n, oficios 19895-1996).

³⁹ ARAY, *Sierra: Vocero Fajardino*, Lima, enero 1936.

⁴⁰ Heilman, “By Other Means.”

⁴¹ Gavin Smith shows the different positions among Apra members in Junín regarding *gamonalismo*, especially between landowners and worker and peasant leaders. See Smith, *Livelihood and Resistance*, especially chapter 7.

⁴² Ricardo Urbina Ascarza, lawyer and owner of the hacienda Uchuraccay, was the first director of the Sociedad Unión y Progreso in 1941. For the intellectual circles and cultural production in the city of Ayacucho, see Luis Miguel Glave and Jaime Urrutia, “Radicalismo político en élites regionales: Ayacucho 1930-1956,” *Debate Agrario* 31 (Agosto, 2000).

⁴³ See Hugo Blanco, *Tierra o muerte. Las luchas campesinas en Perú* (México: Siglo XXI editores, 1972); Hugo Neyra, *Los Andes: tierra o muerte* (Santiago: Editorial ZYX, 1968); and Howard Handelman, *Struggles in the Andes Peasant Political Mobilization in Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), Eric Hobsbawm, “Peasant Land Occupation,” *Past and Present* No. 62 (Feb., 1974), 120-52.

⁴⁴ Some of the main supporters of indigenous peasants and colonos in Pomacocha, Chincheros and Caccamarca, in Cangallo, were also young Law graduates from the same university. See for the case of Pomacocha, Cangallo, Michael Chuchón, “Presencia de los Partidos Políticos en Pomacocha, un estudio de caso (1945-1975)” (Ayacucho: Tesis UNSCH, 2009).

⁴⁵ Fermín Rivera, “El movimiento campesino en la provincia de Huanta” (Ayacucho: Tesis UNSCH, 1970).

⁴⁶ Antonio Cartolín, leader, founder and president of the Federación de Campesinos de Ayacucho, interview by author, Huanta, January 30, 2006.

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- ⁴⁷ Jesús Ccente Huamán, interview by author, Huanta, October 4, 2008 and October 8, 2008.
- ⁴⁸ Archivo Suprefectura de Huanta: Solicitud de garantías de Teófilo Andía. Huanta, 7 de enero de 1964. Also, ARAY: Juzgado de Tierra, Fuero Común Agrario, Legajo 10, Cuaderno 03, 08 y 18, Vidal Andía contra Antonio Ramos, Miguel Santiago y otros, arrendatarios del fundo Allpachaca. Huanta, noviembre de 1964.
- ⁴⁹ See Neyra, *Los Andes*, 137.
- ⁵⁰ AN-AI, 1963-1964, Leg. 3.13.2.5, Cerro de Pasco, 7 de octubre, 1963.
- ⁵¹ Handelman, *Struggles in the Andes*, 121.
- ⁵² Fernando Belaúnde, *Pueblo por pueblo* (Lima: Editorial Minerva, 1995).
- ⁵³ One of the traces that Cooperación Popular left in people's memory is the widespread use of the term "engineer" to identify all professionals, including academics such as myself.
- ⁵⁴ For a historical understanding of this movement and leadership, see Méndez, *The Plebeian Republic*.
- ⁵⁵ In all the interviews that I did with the leaders, there is a clear connection between the movement to recover the land, and the government. Most of the leaders from the 1960s are dead, many of them killed by the Shining Path at the beginning of the 1980s. I have been interviewing those that still are alive, visiting these communities several times since 2005. For others regions, Handelman suggests that "Belaúnde owed his victory to the southern sierra, where the indigenous communities gave him great support." Handelman, *Struggles in the Andes*, 86.
- ⁵⁶ Michael Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 81.
- ⁵⁷ I emphasize this idea because in the scarce literature of the 1960s mobilization, the focus was put in political mediation. See Neyra, *Los Andes*; Handelman, *Struggles in the Andes*; Hobsbawm, "Peasant Land Occupation."
- ⁵⁸ Centro de información para la memoria colectiva y los DDHH - Defensoría del Pueblo, testimonio 201700, comunidad de Huaychao, June 2002.
- ⁵⁹ Heilman warns that the notion "state of abandonment" was often used as a political claim in "By Other Means." See also Glave and Urrutia, 29.
- ⁶⁰ Benjamin Orlove explores this political tension in a different level, in the tension between the fear to be forgotten and the fear of state expansion at the expense of local authorities and authority. Orlove, *Lines in the Water. Nature and Culture at Lake Titicaca* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2002), 13-16.
- ⁶¹ See Eric wolf, *Peasants* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966); *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).
- ⁶² Among these were Alejandro Huamán Leandro from Uchuraccay; Dionisio Huachaca Sulca from Iquicha; Nemesio Peña Aguilar and Mariano Lapa from Orcohuasi; Alberto and Máximo Martínez Ccoriñawpa from Ingahuasi; Ismael Durand Asurza from Ccochacc-Aranhuay... in fact, too many to name in this paper. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, 21% of the people killed by Shining Path were local authorities. TRC, "Los rostros y perfiles de la violencia," *Informe Final*, T. I, 168-69.
- ⁶³ The "policide" concept denotes a systematic project to kill specific targeted groups and destroy an entire way of doing and understanding politics and governance. I take this idea from Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile. On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 180-81.
- ⁶⁴ This perspective goes in a different direction from Veena Das and Deborah Poole's, for who the margins are essential for understanding the state. They explore what contents of the state are present in the margins in their Introduction to *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 4: "An anthropology of the margins offers a unique perspective for the understanding of the state, not because it captures exotic practices, but because it suggests that such margins are a necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is a necessary component of the rule."