

Introduction



Resting two newly polished rifles against his shoulders as he spoke, Don Isaac Escobar looked at the ground and then at me. “Those were years of crying, miss,” he told me, “a life of crying.”¹ An indigenous man from rural Ayacucho, Don Isaac was speaking of Peru’s 1980 to 1992 civil war, a war fought by Maoist Shining Path (PCP-SL) rebels, Peruvian state forces, and Andean peasants. According to the final report of Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this conflict left over 69,000 people dead, the overwhelming majority of whom were indigenous men and women from rural Andean communities. One of the most troubling of the Truth Commission’s findings was its allocation of blame: PCP-SL militants were responsible for the majority (54 percent) of these deaths, having enacted violent punishments, public executions, and massacres against the very same oppressed peoples they claimed to be liberating through their revolutionary struggle. Still more troubling is the fact that most of the individuals filling the PCP-SL’s ranks were themselves of rural Andean origins: They were the recently urbanized sons and daughters of indigenous peasants.²

Much has been written about the Shining Path—the *Partido Comunista del Perú—Por el Sendero Luminoso de Mariátegui* or the Peruvian Communist Party—For the Shining Path of Mariátegui—so much so that studies of the party and its war have become popularly known as “Senderology.”³ Attempting to make sense of the Maoist party and its incredibly violent insurrection, early studies of the PCP-SL placed emphasis on late-twentieth-century economic crises, failed state reform efforts, and radical Maoist party leaders. The very best of these early studies extended a detailed analysis of the PCP-SL’s origins and founders.⁴ The very worst of these studies wrongly cast the PCP-SL’s armed struggle as a millenarian uprising of the Inkaic masses. Many of these works—and particularly those by North American scholars—received

sharp criticism for misconstruing popular support for the PCP-SL in the countryside, overstating Sendero's popularity and understating the party's horrifying punitive violence against indigenous campesinos.⁵ Such shortcomings were perhaps inevitable: The civil war violence consuming the Andean countryside rendered impossible the kind of direct investigation and observation, as well as the slow and careful reflection, that became possible once the war ended. I am one of several scholars who has had the luck and the privilege to take advantage of this changed historical and political moment.⁶

This book attempts to make sense of Shining Path by looking backward in time, tracing eighty-five years of historical processes that prefaced the party and its war. I use a combination of archival research and oral history interviews to turn attention away from the standard emphases on the economic and political crises of the 1970s. I instead interpret the PCP-SL as the last and most extreme of a series of radical political movements that garnered strength in Peru's countryside during the twentieth century. Focusing on the Andean department of Ayacucho, this book examines the political history of a rural indigenous district from 1895 until the 1980 launch of the Shining Path's insurrection. This study thus represents an active response to historian Steve J. Stern's call for scholars to move "beyond enigma," to get past their dismay at the Shining Path's frequently bizarre and incredibly cruel uses of violence by thoroughly contextualizing the PCP-SL and its war.⁷

The work of historicizing the PCP-SL began well before I put pen to paper. Breaking the path for a historical consideration of the party, Carlos Iván Degregori brilliantly situated the PCP-SL inside a long history of local provincial elites. Like the nonindigenous rural elites who preceded them, PCP-SL militants (or *Senderistas*) melded genuine concern for the plight of indigenous peasants with violence and authoritarianism.⁸ Although the pages that follow depart from Degregori's arguments in significant and sometimes forceful ways, this study's intellectual debt to Degregori is unmistakable. Iván Hinojosa also helped anchor the PCP-SL in historical time, tracing the long and complicated political genealogy of the Peruvian left.⁹ Marisol de la Cadena similarly placed PCP-SL militants inside a lengthy historical trajectory of provincial "insurgent intellectuals," who advocated Peru's sociopolitical transformation while they remained mired in their own racial prejudices.¹⁰ Florencia Mallon drew subtle connections between the making of an exclusionary political order in nineteenth-century Peru and the Shining Path's emergence a century later.¹¹ Lewis Taylor, in turn, ably connected the rise and development of the APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) party in Cajamarca with the PCP-SL's emergence in that de-

partment.¹² My work echoes many of these scholars' findings and builds on them by casting the PCP-SL as one of numerous political efforts undertaken in rural Ayacucho from the 1920s forward.

Across the twentieth century, rural Andean men and women denounced the grave abuses perpetrated by their neighbors and rued chronic government inattention to their concerns. These men and women also advanced a series of creative political projects designed to overhaul local and national systems of power. Those projects included the Tawantinsuyo indigenous rights movement of the 1920s, promotion of the populist APRA party in the 1930s and 1940s, support for Trotskyism and the reformist *Acción Popular* party in the 1960s, and cooperation with Peru's progressive military government in the 1970s. Although these political projects took different shapes and attracted varying levels of popular support, all of them proposed to transform Peru's grossly unequal distribution of political, economic, and social power. And all of them proved unable to realize that transformation. Those failures came not for lack of effort but instead because of the Peruvian state's policies of repression and malign neglect and because of the unremitting force of racial and class denigration at the national, regional, and local levels.

This context of prolonged political frustration and failure helps explain the initial attraction of the PCP-SL in the countryside. Historically unable to transform their country's systems of power, many young Ayacucho men and women eagerly joined the PCP-SL because that party promised to raze those systems entirely. Yet for all their determination to create a new order inside Peru, Shining Path militants remained trapped in the tight grasp of racism and class prejudice that had long shaped politics inside Peru. Members of the Shining Path thus reproduced the very same race and class hatreds that their People's War aimed to defeat, perpetrating violent acts of cruelty against the humblest sectors of Peruvian society.

The PCP-SL's violence was so terrible, and the Peruvian military's punishment of Senderista supporters (both real and assumed) so extreme, that many rural Ayacuchanos have understandably minimized their early sympathy for the PCP-SL. Both during and after the war, Ayacucho campesinos regularly cast themselves as straightforward victims who were caught between Shining Path militants and the Peruvian military. Scholars like Kimberly Theidon, Ponciano del Pino, and Caroline Yezer have provided thoughtful analyses of Ayacuchanos' traumatic postwar memories, showing how and why those memories obscure campesinos' early involvement with the PCP-SL.¹³ This study comes at the issue of campesino participation in the PCP-SL's ranks from a different angle, showing that the Shining

Path was part of a long historical course of political thought, action, and reaction inside rural Ayacucho communities.

SITUATIONS IN SPACE AND TIME

The 1895 start of the Aristocratic Republic represents an ideal entry point into this study, as this period of reconstruction following the disastrous War of the Pacific set the stage of political exclusion, repression, and neglect that shaped rural Ayacucho's history across the twentieth century. From the end of the Aristocratic Republic, I trace the next sixty years of Ayacucho's history, exploring the changing dimensions of campesinos' interactions with state, regional, and local authorities and with each other. This study's chronologically organized chapters reflect the book's political focus. The first chapter examines the late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century circumstances that conditioned the political projects that emerged after 1919. Chapter Two considers the Tawantinsuyo movement of the 1920s, while the next chapter treats the emergence and growth of the populist APRA party in the 1930s. Chapter Four considers the struggles I deem "literacy politics"—conflicts over the uses and abuses of education during the 1940s and 1950s. Chapter Five explores the promise and problems of Trotskyism and the reformist Acción Popular party in the 1960s, while Chapter Six examines the military reformism of the early 1970s. The final chapter focuses on the rise of the PCP-SL during the late 1970s. I close this book in 1980, the year that Shining Path militants declared the start of their People's War.

Ayacucho is the best theater for a study of the political preludes to the Shining Path War; it was the department where PCP-SL militants initiated their People's War, and it was the region that suffered the most war deaths. The department is also one of the most impoverished and indigenous areas of Peru. Together with Apurímac and Huancavelica, Ayacucho ranks as the poorest of Peru's two dozen departments, and it forms part of the country's so-called *mancha india* (Indian stain).¹⁴ A focus on Ayacucho department therefore brings issues of racism and structural neglect into sharp relief.

Negotiating the difficult balance between analytical depth and breadth, I focus my analysis on the eastern Ayacucho district of Carhuanca in the province of Cangallo.¹⁵ Shining Path militants prioritized work in eastern Ayacucho in the years immediately before the 1980 launch of their armed struggle, and their party realized considerable success in Carhuanca. Several Carhuanca residents (*Carhuanquinos*) formally joined the PCP-SL, assuming leadership positions within the move-

ment and promoting the party inside the district. More Carhuanquinos offered tacit support, aiding the rebels or joining as fighters. Most Carhuanquinos simply fled the district, leaving Carhuanca for Lima to live as refugees in the capital. The PCP-SL was then able to gain total control of Carhuanca for two entire years.

Carhuanca was (and remains) geographically remote. Located in the easternmost corner of central Ayacucho, Carhuanca was approximately fifty kilometers from the city of Cangallo and over one hundred kilometers away from the Ayacucho capital. Without a highway connecting Carhuanca to either of these cities until the end of the 1960s, Carhuanca had few connections to urban Ayacucho. Indeed, Carhuanca's articulation to urban Ayacucho was so weak that most of the Carhuanquinos who migrated out of the district traveled all the way to the nation's capital of Lima. Because of its small size, its lack of a highway until the late 1960s, and its geographic location at the province's easternmost edge, Carhuanca was relatively unimportant to Cangallo province's political and economic life.

Carhuanca's economic marginality was a consequence of both geography and local land tenure patterns. Until 1940, Carhuanca was home to three haciendas, but those estates were all confined to the district's lower valleys on the Río Pampas. These haciendas were distant from the district capital of Carhuanca town, and they covered only a small portion of district land. While these haciendas grew produce like sugar, *tuna* (prickly pear), and oranges, they were also prisoner to the opposing problems of drought and flooding. These haciendas were not especially lucrative; their owners usually marketed their produce only inside Carhuanca itself. Nor were these haciendas particularly enduring. Carhuanca's church-owned Champacancha estate was the district's lone well-established hacienda, and Carhuanca residents purchased the hacienda in 1940. Carhuanca's Encuentro and Virán haciendas, in contrast, took shape only in the late nineteenth century, and the owners of these unprofitable haciendas abandoned them in the mid-1940s. Carhuanca's peripheral hacienda presence along the Río Pampas was far overshadowed by campesino smallholdings at higher elevations. The 2,301 individuals who lived in Carhuanca in 1940 typically owned several tiny private plots of familial land, usually well under one hectare in size, and eked out their livings from these holdings.¹⁶

Close attention to a district like Carhuanca allows a degree of analytic depth and complexity impossible to achieve with a broader regional or national analysis. Looking at one district allows us to trace the political triumphs, failures, hatreds, and allegiances of specific individuals and families across time. Although the specific details of its past are unique

to Carhuanca, the district's history resonates with other districts in the easternmost zones of Cangallo, districts that today form the province of Vilcashuamán (created in 1984).¹⁷ The Truth Commission notes that these areas were "marked by an extremely weak articulation as much to the state as to the market."¹⁸ Like Carhuanca, these districts had twentieth-century histories rife with conflict. The Truth Commission reported that these easternmost districts were home to fights between neighboring communities and heated litigation over community borders. The Truth Commission also established that in these districts wealthy community members, mayors, governors, justices of the peace, and community presidents assumed the role of abusive local strongmen in the absence of a significant hacendado class. And, as in Carhuanca, it was in these eastern districts that the PCP-SL realized many of its greatest successes.¹⁹

To temper my discussion of Carhuanca and to show a different face of rural Ayacucho's twentieth-century history, I offer comparative considerations of Luricocha district in Huanta, the district that Don Isaac Escobar called home.²⁰ Unlike Carhuanca, Luricocha was a district defined by haciendas. Several large haciendas, including Huayllay, Atalambra, Atocpuquio, Pampay I, Pampay II, Iribamba, Huanchacc, Vado, Cedro Huerta, and Meccayra, dominated Luricocha's land tenure system, leaving only a few scattered campesino smallholdings free from hacienda control. Most of these haciendas were held in usufruct; hacendados divided their estates among campesino tenants who worked the land in exchange for a yearly rent paid in cash and/or in kind. Luricocha district included warm, well-irrigated valley haciendas like Pampay and Iribamba and higher, cooler haciendas like Huayllay. On valley haciendas, fruits like oranges, lemons, and avocados grew, while higher-elevation estates grew crops like potatoes, barley, and tubers. The 6,337 men and women who resided in Luricocha at the time of the 1940 census lived in a district characterized by the presence of haciendas.²¹

A second difference between Luricocha and Carhuanca involves geography. Whereas Carhuanca was extremely isolated geographically, Luricocha was relatively close to two major urban centers. Located only seven kilometers from Huanta city and thirty kilometers from the departmental capital, Luricocha was tightly articulated with these urban centers. Luricocha hacendados usually lived and even worked in these cities, visiting their haciendas only occasionally, and Luricocha's campesinos were able to sell some of their agricultural produce in these cities. The district of Luricocha was also relatively close to Huanta's jungle (*selva*) regions, and, like most Huanta campesinos, Luricocha's peasants regularly migrated to the jungle for seasonal agricultural labor.

These differences of land tenure and geography situated Luricocha and Carhuanca in somewhat opposing positions in relation to provincial and departmental power structures. So closely connected to the city of Huanta, Luricocha was tied into that city's vibrant political and economic life. One observer noted in 1924 that Huanta was home to a "first-rate commercial plaza," visited by merchants from urban Ayacucho and especially from the city of Huancayo, to buy coca, coffee, *chancaca* (solidified sugar), and other goods.²² The city's commercial importance and geographical proximity to the city of Ayacucho, combined with the fact that most of the province's landlords chose to reside in urban Huanta, meant that the city of Huanta became a bastion of regional power, second only to urban Ayacucho within the larger department.²³

Luricocha's connections to the Shining Path were also different from—but no less complex than—those of Carhuanca. The PCP-SL's second-in-command, Augusta La Torre Carrasco or Comrade Norah, was the daughter of a Luricocha hacendado and the wife of Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, the founder of the Shining Path. Augusta La Torre, Guzmán, and other PCP-SL leaders transformed the La Torre family's Iribamba hacienda into one of their first military training schools. But while the La Torre example is striking, it was also unusual inside Luricocha. The indigenous peasants who formed the vast majority of Luricocha's population proved largely disinterested in the Shining Path. Only a few Luricocha peasants sympathized with the PCP-SL, and fewer still actively joined the party. In addition, Shining Path militants met staunch resistance from Luricocha residents (*Luricochanos*) who actively fought the rebels through civil defense patrols, or *rondas campesinas*. Don Isaac Escobar had those two rifles with him precisely because he was a member of one such patrol; he was taking the just-repaired rifles back to his home community in Luricocha.²⁴

One of this book's central assertions is that the PCP-SL's emergence and actions inside rural Ayacucho had historical precedents and historical explanations. The PCP-SL's first killings in the district of Carhuanca reflected animosities that stretched back decades. The past suggests other patterns, too. Throughout the twentieth century, men and women in Carhuanca joined diverse political movements and parties, hoping to transform local and national power relationships. There was an established tradition of party politics and affiliation inside Carhuanca, meaning that it was not historically unusual for Carhuanquinos to embrace a political party like the PCP-SL. That assertion holds true even though the Shining Path was far more extreme than any of the numerous political parties that preceded it inside Ayacucho's countryside.

History also helps explain the course of the Shining Path war in Luricocha, where a hacienda-owning family produced a leading PCP-SL militant and where indigenous peasants chose partnership with the Peruvian military over affiliation with the Shining Path. For most of the twentieth century, party politics were hacendados' domain. Luricocha's landlords joined a broad variety of political parties and movements, advancing political agendas that ranged from radical to conservative. The district's campesinos, in contrast, shied away from membership in political parties and repeatedly stressed their allegiance to the Peruvian state. That was true in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1960s, and it was true in the 1980s. It was also true across the entire province of Huanta: Anthropologist Kimberly Theidon and historian Ponciano del Pino have each established that Huanta campesinos defined themselves as patriotic defenders of the Peruvian homeland and government.²⁵ My argument is not that the past predetermined the course of the Shining Path War or that the insurgency was inevitable or predictable. Instead, this book asserts that, by looking at the long historical course of political engagement inside communities, we can contextualize a devastating war that might otherwise seem utterly incomprehensible.

THE POLITICS OF POLITICS

Across its seven chapters, this book demonstrates that politics—understood here as efforts to maintain, reform, or overhaul systems of power—suffused rural Ayacucho life. Historians like Florencia Mallon, Cecilia Méndez, Mark Thurner, and Charles Walker have shown the manifold ways that rural, indigenous men and women shaped the course of nineteenth-century nation building in Peru.²⁶ This book serves as a coda to those fine studies, for the twentieth century was characterized by popular efforts to overhaul the resultant economic, political, and social structures. Just as the nineteenth century was a time of nation-state formation, the twentieth was a time of nation-state *transformation*. Much as Laura Gotkowitz has shown for Bolivia and Marc Becker has shown for Ecuador, this study demonstrates that women and men living in Ayacucho's countryside embraced a variety of political parties, movements, and opportunities, by turns eager and desperate for political change.²⁷

The assertion that political parties and projects were central to rural Ayacuchanos' lives from the 1920s onward is surprisingly novel for the Peruvian case. While scholars have recognized that the 1920s Tawantinsuyo Committee had both urban and rural branches, no one has yet studied how the organization affected political life in rural in-

digenous communities or examined the local consequences of the national government's concerted repression of the Tawantinsuyo movement. Similarly, while the academic literature on the populist APRA party is considerable, scholars have focused almost exclusively on APRA sympathy in urban settings and on industrialized sugar plantations, leaving APRA's place in the indigenous countryside largely unstudied. I make similar considerations of the *Acción Popular* party, demonstrating how the party generated considerable local enthusiasm and hope. Read together, these projects show that politics sat at the very core of rural Ayacucho society.

Inside areas like Carhuanca, rural Ayacuchos carried out their political projects in a context of malign state neglect, a condition of (mis)governance I deem "rule by abandon." *Abandon* is in some ways an imperfect term, as it necessarily implies an earlier historical moment when the state acknowledged, remembered, and tended to now-orphaned regions. Yet *abandon* is the term Ayacuchos themselves mobilized to describe their twentieth-century political condition, and so I take up their label.²⁸ Rule by abandon implies governance that operates on a principle of intentional and detrimental neglect instead of dominance or hegemony and that reinforces state rule through sporadic bursts of punitive violence. Rather than creating situations of political autonomy and sovereignty, rule by abandon fostered a culture of impunity within much of rural Ayacucho. Given that culture of impunity, grave crimes like homicide, arson, and robbery frequently went unpunished by the courts, and regional authorities rarely heeded popular complaints about abusive local authorities. Due to the fundamental lack of recourse against these local authorities, there was a consistent perpetuation of abuses at the district level. Often the only remaining tool against such authorities or local strongmen was physical violence. The absent state did not perpetrate this violence, but its policies of neglect fostered it.

Wanting to change this condition of state abandon, rural Ayacuchos took up a tremendous number of distinct political projects. Politics appealed across rural lines of class and race. Inside the district of Carhuanca, richer and poorer peasants alike embraced parties, movements, and political alliances. But if the pull of politics was general, the specific paths were not. The appeal of a given political party or current usually depended on a campesino's social and economic standing. The Tawantinsuyo movement of the 1920s attracted Carhuanca's humblest, most "Indian" peasants, whereas the *Acción Popular* party of the 1960s won support from the district's wealthiest residents.

Politics were equally significant, and equally diverse, in Luricocha. District hacendados were a surprisingly complex set of political actors,

straying far from the stereotype of reactionary feudal lords. Luricocha's landlords joined conservative, populist, and even Marxist parties and movements, looking to participate in national political life. As Aaron Bobrow-Strain has argued for Chiapas, landlords did not always act in the ways we might expect of rural "bad guys."²⁹ Luricocha peasants were also politically engaged; they lobbied for better social, economic, and political conditions. But these campesinos did so largely outside the realm of formal parties and organizations, purposefully abstaining from a political course that government officials might deem radical.

The Luricocha case also establishes the conceptual limits of "rule by abandon." Because of Luricocha's geographical proximity to the major economic, social, and political center of Huanta city and because of Huanta's own proximity to urban Ayacucho, provincial, departmental, and even national authorities kept nervous watch over the district. State attention to Luricocha—and to the province of Huanta in general—was all the sharper because of a powerful, racialized stereotype of Huanta's indigenous peasantry as inherently prone to resistance and rebellion. Cecilia Méndez's invaluable work on Huanta's early republican history traces the rise and evolution of this stereotype—a stereotype that hardened with the events of the late nineteenth century.³⁰ What emerged by the last years of the nineteenth century, then, was a system of "rule by reaction." Even the slightest hint of political protest or mobilization by Luricocha's indigenous peasants brought either the threat or the display of military force, often accompanied by inflammatory denunciations of looming "race war." The combination of bloody military repression and threats to resume that repression led most Luricocha campesinos to pursue an extremely staid course of political moderation, shying away from engagement with political parties and movements and seeking only modest reforms for their communities. All the while, these campesinos stressed their loyalty to the Peruvian state. One biting irony of "rule by reaction" in Luricocha was that government repression and invective targeted at indigenous peasants actually left unchecked the much more radical and aggressive political activities of nonindigenous Luricocha landlords.

Local differences of class and race were easy to spot in areas like Luricocha, where a set of nonindigenous hacendados owned the lands on which indigenous peasants labored. But racial and class differences proved equally relevant in places like Carhuanca, where haciendas were only a peripheral presence. Inside Carhuanca, class disparities emerged between a wealthier, literate set of peasants and their poorer, less educated neighbors. Richer campesinos were easily identifiable inside the district. They self-defined as "local notables" and dominated appointed positions of political power in the district. These local notables had the

most plots of land, the best-quality land, and the largest extensions of land. Although affluent campesinos' wealth was reflected in the quality and quantity of their holdings, their lands' yields were rarely the primary source of their wealth. Almost none of Carhuanca's production was sold outside the district, and richer campesinos derived their wealth instead from salaries paid them as local schoolteachers, wealth inherited from relatives, money sent from relatives in Lima, and/or income from the sale of land itself. Affluent campesinos' wealth showed, too, in the number and size of their homes, the presence of tile instead of straw roofs, and whitewash over their homes' adobe bricks. It need be remembered, though, that most of these local notables were still dreadfully poor. They regularly lost their babies in infancy; they lacked potable water, sewage removal, and electricity; and while they had enough food to fill their stomachs, their food was not sufficiently varied to provide good nutrition. These local notables were "rich" only in comparison to their poorer neighbors, who suffered a more extreme poverty. Those poorer campesinos sometimes lacked food and almost always lacked the money needed to travel out of their district, adequately educate their children, or pay for lawsuits and notaries.

Many of Carhuanca's local notables gained their initial economic leverage inside the district through migration: Their families came into Carhuanca in the late nineteenth century as priests or as would-be farmers, settling in the district because they were able to purchase plots of land. These migrants soon initiated a process of land commoditization inside Carhuanca. Carhuanca's weak articulation to regional and national economic markets meant that the primary commodity sold from and to Carhuancuinos was land itself. Valuable much less for its market production capacities than for its centrality to peasants' subsistence and its connection to local prestige and power hierarchies, land was the most precious commodity inside Carhuanca. Buying and reselling district land, and sometimes stealing land for resale or private use, Carhuanca's more affluent peasants amassed significant profit and numerous tracts of land. Without goods to sell and without ready opportunity to sell their labor, campesinos needing cash often had little choice but to sell their holdings to their neighbors. Because land was such a treasured commodity, neighbors fought neighbors over boundaries with astonishing frequency, while crop theft, fraudulent sales, and land invasions were commonplace. Deep and enduring enmities came as a result.

Those enmities had many political repercussions. Local notables wrestled continuously for power and control of the district, fighting bitterly with one another. Their fights were often materially motivated, but Carhuanca's local notables also sought power for power's sake.

Geographically distant from any urban center, the district's wealthier peasants made Carhuanca the focus of their political aspirations and intrigues. Political fights between wealthy campesinos existed alongside poorer campesinos' protests against these more affluent and frequently abusive local notables. But poorer campesinos also sought out allies among wealthier Carhuanquinos, using those partnerships to fight against their equally impoverished neighbors. Within this district context of heated political and economic conflict, political parties and movements flourished. Richer and poorer Carhuanquinos alike looked to a broad range of political movements, parties, and alliances to transform their local and national political worlds and to gain ground against their district rivals.

Crucially, these local divides of class mapped onto local differences of race. Carhuanca's peasant notables typically described themselves as "not indigenous," defining themselves in opposition to the district's poorer, more Indian masses. That self-definition came even though the phenotypical differences between these two groups were often slight and even though many of these local notables spoke Quechua before they learned Spanish. During our weeks together in Carhuanca, my research assistant Alicia Carrasco and I heard many commentaries about race from elderly local notables. One Carhuanquino told me that "the Indian" was "lazy, miserable, and gluttonous," and he defined an Indian as a man who stole a widow's bread from the mouths of her fatherless children.³¹ A Carhuanca woman, in turn, explained to me that she was "not of the same race" as indigenous Carhuanquinos, as her parents had been born in the city of Ayacucho. She informed me that her husband was "not of the Carhuanquino race," either, as he had been born elsewhere and had very straight, angular nose.³² One Carhuanquino man went beyond these comparisons when he learned of my German heritage. He leaned in toward Alicia and me and confided his opinion that Hitler had been right to kill the Jews, opining that "we Spaniards should have killed the Indians."³³ Had the Spaniards done so, he explained, Peru would not be suffering the poverty and violence experienced today. The documentary record offers equally inflammatory statements about race. Carhuancuina Manuela Quijana requested the subprefect's guarantees on her properties against encroaching indigenous peasants, explaining the problem through implicit reference to her own whiteness and explicit reference to her enemies' Indianness. Worried that these campesinos would not only steal her land but also kill her and her husband, she reminded the authorities that "because Indian people are like savages, they could increase their demands, as they are so accustomed to doing."³⁴ Humbler Carhuanquinos also invoked the concept of race,

casting themselves as stereotypically weak and defenseless Indians who were ruthlessly exploited by whiter community elites.³⁵

Although Carhuanquinos participated in a court system that based race on phenotype, with court documents listing litigants' physical traits like skin and hair color, along with more bluntly racialized traits like lip size, hair texture, and nose shape, Carhuanquinos did not make a priority of phenotype in their local racial classifications. Instead, Carhuanquinos employed a highly specific and also highly racialized trait to clarify who was Indian and who was not. That trait was literacy. Certainly, literacy and education were signposts of class. For most of the twentieth century, education was a luxury that only Carhuanca's wealthiest campesinos could afford, as only those families with an above-average quantity of livestock, productive lands, and access to cash were able to send their children to school. As such, literacy was as important to a campesino's class standing as were the number of animals and number of hectares he owned. But it must be understood that literacy was also central to a Carhuanquino's racial identity. As Marisol de la Cadena showed so well in her study *Indigenous Mestizos*, ideas of culture are central to ideas of race inside Peru, with education being the primary tool of "de-Indianization."³⁶ Baldly put, to be poor and illiterate within Carhuanca was to be Indian; to be rich and well educated was to be non-Indian. This construct of race existed as much in the legal realm of the state as it did in everyday popular consciousness. Florencia Mallon's book *Peasant and Nation* demonstrates that Peruvian lawmakers' late-nineteenth-century decision to disenfranchise illiterates was a decision that aimed to exclude Peru's indigenous population from the nation.³⁷

Literacy's centrality in local experiences of race underscores another of this book's central arguments: A painful ambivalence toward education overshadowed and informed political life in rural Ayacucho. Without question, indigenous peasants prized education. They sacrificed to send their children (especially their sons) to school, and they flooded government offices with requests for dedicated, competent teachers.³⁸ Yet just as campesinos longed for education, they also denounced the abuses perpetrated inside their communities by the educated. Wealthier and poorer peasants alike criticized their educated neighbors for using their literacy to cheat, steal, and manipulate for their own private advantage. During the 1920s, ambivalence over education helped fuel the local Tawantinsuyo movement. In that movement, humble campesinos called for more and better schools while they simultaneously protested against the crimes of "those who could read and write." In the 1940s and 1950s, contradictory attitudes toward literacy propelled *tinterillos*—literally "users of little ink pots"—into the center of district

political life. Often translated as “shyster lawyer,” but better translated as “shyster scribe,” a tinterillo was someone who manipulated the written word to his private benefit, composing (and sometimes forging) letters of protest, petitions, and official documents, usually to his own economic or political gain. Tinterillos very rarely had formal legal training or clout; they were simply men who took full advantage of their literacy, resources, and ambition to the detriment of others. Rural Ayacucho men and women lambasted tinterillos for their abuses, but they continued to depend on these scribes to pen the letters and documents they needed. Contradictions about education again came into the foreground in the 1970s, when a young generation of teachers inspired by Maoism began work in Carhuanca schools. Those young educators taught alongside an older generation of decidedly nonrevolutionary teachers firmly ensconced inside the ranks of the district’s local notables. Fights were not long in coming. Those fights reflected local differences of class and race, but they also reflected the vibrancy of district political ideas, passions, and agendas. Much was at stake. Tragically, even more was lost.

A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

Although based primarily on archival documents, this study also draws substantially on oral history interviews I conducted in communities throughout the districts of Luricocha and Carhuanca. Together, my research assistant Alicia Carrasco and I conducted approximately two dozen formal and informal interviews in Carhuanca, complementing the dozen interviews I conducted alone or with friends in Luricocha communities. Alicia and I also conducted several additional interviews in the cities of Huanta, Ayacucho, and Lima. These interviews gave details and insights absent from the archival record, and the process of sharing documents with Luricochanos and Carhuanquinos allowed me to give considerable nuance to my archival findings. With their permission, I have included the names of a few of my interviewees. Usually, these were men with prominent reputations at the departmental and national level, and pseudonyms would do little to disguise their identities. In the majority of cases, however, I have changed my interviewees’ names to provide anonymity. Names that appear in archival documents are left unchanged as they are a matter of public record, but in a few cases I have changed these names and withheld the specific documentary references to help protect the individuals involved.