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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Peruvian Peasant Women and Revolutionary Movements: La Convención's Classist Revolution

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Abstract

This article examines the crucial yet underexplored role of indigenous peasant women in the struggle for agrarian reform and peasant liberation during the second half of the twentieth century in Latin America. Focusing on and re-examining the peasant movement of La Convención (Peru) and employing historical and anthropological methods, it argues that these women were far from peripheral actors. They actively engaged in unions, collective actions and even armed militias, performing both traditional and non-traditional gender roles to challenge the exploitative hacienda system and gender hierarchies. The article also analyses the impact of the Cold War on their rhetoric, alliances and broader struggle for social justice.

Keywords: women's history; Peru; Latin American politics; peasant indigenous women; revolution

Introduction

In July 1961, hundreds of peasants from La Convención province travelled to the city of Cusco to protest their oppressive working conditions in the haciendas. When they arrived at the city's main square, military troops surrounded and aimed their weapons at them. One frightened peasant fled, leaving behind a Peruvian flag. Carmela Giraldo, a peasant leader, unionist and Communist, took the flag and wrapped it around herself. Followed by other women, who were also protesting, she confronted the troops and forced them to drop their weapons, allowing the protestors to continue marching to the prefecture, where they presented their complaints.[1]

[1]Author's interview with Carlos Morillo, former supporter of the Revolutionary Left Movement (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, MIR), unpublished fieldwork notes, La Convención, 30 Oct. 2019.

Alongside local and national leftists and unionists, Carmela Giraldo spoke out to demand agrarian reform, justice and peasant liberation in rallies and protests during the 1950s and 1960s. Like Carmela Giraldo, other women and men joined the peasant movement to fight abusive *hacendados* and end the poverty, exclusion and subordination faced by indigenous peasants.[2] Cosme Huamán – a comrade of Carmela Giraldo and one of the leaders of the La Convención uprising – described this movement as the 'Classist Revolution', a term used by some leaders of this movement to signify the moment 'when peasants defeated *hacendados*.'[3] However, the experiences of peasant women like Carmela Giraldo are largely absent from the historiography of the La Convención uprising and the Peruvian Left, and the case has not been integrated into the growing scholarship on women, gender and revolutionary projects in Latin America.[4]

Thus, to trace peasant women's everyday battles and crucial contributions to the revolutionary history of twentieth-century Latin America, I examine why, how and to what extent peasant women built La Convención's Classist Revolution.[5] I also aim to analyse how global revolutionary projects influenced peasant indigenous women's rhetoric and alliances within the Cold War's Communist and anti-Communist rationale, and how this rationale shaped their daily fights against the state and the elites.[6] This article aims to expand on what we know about peasant women's participation in revolutionary projects and the political history of women in Peru and Latin America.

The vast literature on the La Convención peasant movement has examined the economic, political and social factors behind peasant mobilisations but has largely overlooked women's roles in this movement. For Eric Hobsbawm, the archaic forms of class domination and land tenure system in an expanding capitalist market prompted the rebellion.[7] Eduardo Fioravanti, also from a Marxist perspective, agreed but underlined the Communist influence in creating peasant unions as strategies of struggle. He, along with Hugo Neira and Victor Villanueva, stressed the role of Hugo Blanco, a Cusco university student and Trotskyist who arrived in the province in late 1958

[2] Although my informants identify as peasants, not mestizas or indigenous, I use the term 'peasant indigenous women' as an analytical term since it highlights the intersection of class, ethnicity and gender and sheds light on the impact of enduring subordination and discrimination on their lives.

[3] Author's interview with Cosme Huamán, former peasant leader, unpublished fieldwork notes, La Convención, 30 Oct. 2019.

[4] In contrast, the literature on rural politics, indigenous struggles and peasants' uprisings in Latin America is vast; some recent examples include Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Javier Puente, *The Rural State: Making Comunidades, Campesinos, and Conflict in Peru's Central Sierra* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2023).

[5] I understand revolution as a process in which oppressed people become historical and political subjects by defying and defeating an oppressive system to build a new one. See Enzo Traverso, *Revolution: An Intellectual History* (London: Verso, 2021).

[6] On this topic, I draw on Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph's long-term perspective of Communist and anti-Communist politics in Latin America. See Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph (eds.), *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[7] Eric Hobsbawm, 'A Case of Neo-Feudalism: La Convención, Peru', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 1: 1 (1969), pp. 31–50.

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and, by 1962, had organised peasant militias.[8] Wesley Craig, however, challenged the heroic portrayal of Blanco, stating that the movement was a collective action.[9] Blanco later published his own version of events, and this became the 'official' – and one-sided – version of the uprising.[10] Recent studies by Jan Lust and Rolando Rojas place the movement within a broader Peruvian revolutionary struggle, with Rojas emphasising the role of peasants in defeating *hacendados*.[11] While Fioravanti noted that women convinced their husbands to join the unions, he did not explain the significance of their roles in the movement.[12]

This article also builds on the extensive scholarship on women's involvement in revolutionary movements, guerrilla groups and leftist armed groups in Latin America and the Caribbean. Scholars have debated the motivations behind women's participation, their level of engagement, the roles they undertook and the lasting impacts of their involvement.[13] While some argue that women joined these movements for similar reasons to men, such as fighting dictatorship and social injustice, others highlight the diverse and multifaceted motivations driving women's participation and their situation in post-revolutionary contexts.[14] Scholars have also explored the gendered dynamics within revolutionary movements, with differing perspectives on whether revolutionary movements reinforced traditional gender roles, since men fought while women prepared meals, washed clothes, cleaned the camps and cut firewood, or challenged these roles by involving women in combat and other non-traditional roles.[15]

[8]Fioravanti, *Latifundio y sindicalismo agrario en el Perú: el caso de los valles de La Convención y Lares (1958–1964)* (Lima, 1974: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos); Hugo Neira, *Cusco: tierra y muerte* (Lima: Populibros Peruanos, 1964); Víctor Villanueva, *Hugo Blanco y la rebelión campesina* (Lima: Librería Editorial Juan Mejía Baca, 1967).

[9]Wesley Craig, 'El movimiento campesino en la Convención, Perú: La dinámica de una organización campesina', Documentos Teóricos Series, No. 11, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Lima, 1968.

[10]Hugo Blanco, *Tierra o muerte: las luchas campesinas en Perú* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1972). Blanco acquired legendary status in 1962 when Germán Alatrista, a journalist for the conservative *La Prensa* newspaper, went to La Convención and reported that 'Hugo Blanco was the Peruvian Fidel Castro'. See José Tamayo Herrera, *Historia social del Cusco republicano* (Lima: Tall. Industrial Gráfica, 1978), p. 224.

[11]Jan Lust, *La lucha revolucionaria: Perú, 1958–1967* (Barcelona: RBA Libros, 2013); Rolando Rojas Rojas, *La revolución de los arrendires. Una historia personal de la reforma agraria* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2019).

[12]Fioravanti, *Latifundio y sindicalismo agrario*, p. 179–80.

[13]Among others, see Jane Jaquette, 'Women in Revolutionary Movements in Latin America', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 35: 2 (1973), pp. 344–54; Karen Kampwirth, *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba* (Pennsylvania, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2002); Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan and Gabriela Cano (eds.), *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Michelle Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952–1962* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

[14]Kampwirth, *Women and Guerrilla Movements;* Julie Shayne, *The Revolution Question: Feminisms in El Salvador, Chile, and Cuba* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Maxine Molyneux, 'Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua', *Feminist Studies*, 11: 2 (1985), pp. 227–54.

[15]Nikki Craske, *Women and Politics in Latin America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999); Linda Reif, 'Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movements: A Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Politics,* 18: 2 (1986), pp. 147–69.

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The case under analysis will show that women in the Convención movement both adhered to and transformed traditional gender dynamics. These dynamics, culturally constructed through the lens of perceived biological differences, have historically positioned men and women in gendered roles that perpetuate power relations. However, women's participation in the Convención movement reveals the complexities of gendered experience. Their actions reflect the ongoing negotiation of power, identity and social roles. By examining their involvement in the peasant uprising, I illustrate how gender functioned to reinforce and challenge existing hierarchies. This analysis highlights the importance of understanding gender as a social construct that shapes, and is shaped by, the broader political and cultural contexts in which it operates.[16]

The limited literature on peasant women's involvement in Latin American revolutionary movements highlights their roles as combatants and providers of logistical support. In revolutionary Mexico during the 1910s, many women fought alongside soldiers, even earning military ranks. However, by the 1920s and 1930s, the new regime removed women from the army, but they continued organising.[17] Jocelyn Olcott argued that while women did not gain the right to vote in presidential elections until 1953, rural women supported the revolutionary state through the Ejército de Mujeres Campesinas (Army of Peasant Women), but this organisation framed women's roles mainly as mothers and wives.[18] Still, women expanded their traditional gendered roles in society and politics, broadening their sense of citizenship and political participation. In Chile, while Patricia Richards and Florencia Mallon have examined support for Mapuche communities in socialist and revolutionary movements, they have not specifically focused on the roles of Mapuche women in these projects.[19]

In the Peruvian case, although peasant men and women created and joined peasant unions and federations and engaged with left-wing parties aspiring for revolution, it is the stories of men that predominate in accounts of these uprisings. When women do appear, it is only as supporters of collective action. Four reasons explain this silencing of women's participation in the many Peruvian revolutionary projects. First, scholarly work on the failed guerrilla groups of the mid-1960s, from which women were absent, has yet to examine the gendered processes involved in these groups. Second, the literature on the Peruvian New Left parties, where accounts of heroic revolutionary men prevailed, has primarily examined these parties' ideological splits and conflicts while ignoring women's participation. Third, left-wing documents and archives have

[16] Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review,* 91: 5 (1986), pp. 1053–75; Raewyn W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,' *Gender and Society,* 19: 6 (2005), pp. 829–59; Gwen Hunnicutt, 'Varieties of Patriarchy and Violence Against Women: Resurrecting "Patriarchy" as a Theoretical Tool', *Violence against Women,* 15: 5 (2009), pp. 553–73.

[17] Andrés Reséndez, 'Battleground Women, Soldaderas and Female Soldiers in the Mexican Revolution', *The Americas,* 51: 4 (1995), pp. 525–53; Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2013).

[18] Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

[19] Patricia Richards, 'The Mapuche Movement, the Popular Unity, and the Contemporary Left', *NACLA Report on the Americas,* 46: 3 (2013), pp. 34–8; Florencia Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailío and the Chilean State, 1906–2001* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

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not recorded women's participation because of the clandestine nature of leftist activism and the tendency to document only the actions of men. Lastly, academics studying the radical Maoist party Shining Path, in which women were prominent, have overlooked the participation of other women in other revolutionary groups.

Drawing on these studies, I examine Peruvian peasant women's motivations for joining the 'Classist Revolution', arguing that their involvement was driven by various factors, leading to diverse relationships with politics and power dynamics. The article highlights, in particular, earlier traditions of Communist organisations dating back to the 1920s, the examples provided by singular and determined leaders like Carmela Giraldo, and different tactics in diverse phases of social struggle that opened limited but meaningful opportunities for women to adopt new public and combative roles.

Researching women's participation in the La Convención uprising sixty years after the event posed methodological challenges. Thus, I combined historical and anthropological approaches. I examined national and local newspapers, including *El Comercio* at the Riva-Agüero Institute and the National Library in Lima, to understand the political context of the 1950s–70s. For insights into Cusco and La Convención, I studied *El Sol de Cusco, El Comercio de Cusco* and documents from the Regional Archive. I also analysed institutional and private archives, including those of the Confederación de Campesinos del Perú (Peasants' Confederation of Peru, CCP). However, the absence of women's experiences and voices in these sources led me to conduct fieldwork in Cusco and La Convención, and to create 'profiles' of deceased leaders based on a combination of interviews with their relatives and comrades, newspaper reports, and local archives. I interviewed four of the few surviving participants of the movement (one woman and three men), seven relatives of former leaders (of which four women) and five supporters of the movement who had backed the uprising from Cusco (two women).[20] To reach these interviewees, I contacted the leaders of the FEPCACYL (Federación Provincial de Campesinos de La Convención, Yanatile y Lares) and experts on the history of La Convención. I also used the snowball technique, which helps access informants who might have been overlooked, as each subject provides the researcher with the names of additional subjects, creating a chain of connections.[21] All interviews were conducted in Spanish as my informants spoke both Quechua and Spanish. While in La Convención and Cusco, I also attended meetings, commemorations and activities that deepened my understanding of key events and leaders from the 1960s and 1970s.[22]

[20] The intersection of individual and collective memory processes clarifies how peasant women's roles in La Convención's uprising were portrayed in the past and are evoked in the present. On the elaboration and narratives of memory, see Elizabeth Jelin, *Los trabajos de la memoria* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2012); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Redford City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[21] Rowland Atkinson and John Flint, 'Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategy', *Social Research Update,* 33: 1 (2001), pp. 1–4.

[22] This research was part of my PhD, funded by a UCL scholarship and research funding from the Institute of the Americas. Some information on Cusco comes from a project on women's participation in peasant movements, funded by the Dirección de la Gestión de la Investigación del Vicerrectorado de Investigación of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. I thank Rolando Rojas, Karina Pacheco and Rosmary Roca for providing me with information to contact some of these leaders.

I begin the article explaining the social and political dynamics that underpinned the La Convención peasant movement. By analysing the nature of the hacienda system in La Convención province, it is possible to understand why peasants created unions and used them to strike out at the hacienda owners. I then examine the participation of peasant indigenous women in La Convención's Classist Revolution by dividing it into four phases; each phase is defined not only by time but also by women's roles in peasant unions, collective actions, armed militias and agrarian reform. In the concluding section, I argue that La Convención peasant women's everyday actions against the hacienda system in favour of agrarian reform deeply shaped the processes, nature and outcomes of this peasant movement, not only during the radical 1960s but also since the creation of the first peasant union in La Convención in the 1940s.

La Convención

Arbitrary exploitation of land resources has defined the history of La Convención.[23] Before the colonial era, the Machiguenga indigenous people lived in the region and cultivated coca. After 1541, Spanish colonisers, including soldiers and religious orders, received land as *encomiendas*,[24] displacing or enslaving natives and establishing the hacienda system. Following Peru's independence in 1821, the Republican state expanded Amazon colonisation, granting land to military and state officials. When La Convención became a province in 1857, the hacienda system grew, and despite laws limiting land concessions to ten thousand hectares, some families acquired more.[25] After the abolition of African slavery in 1854, *hacendados* relied on the *enganche* system to secure a permanent, low-cost workforce from the Cusco highlands.[26]

By the early twentieth century, Peru's state- and nation-building process was rooted in the marginalisation of highland indigenous peoples. Driven by the Creole elites' beliefs that indigenous peasants had little to contribute to progress,[27] this process

[23] La Convención valley is located ninety miles northwest of the city of Cusco amid the subtropical forest of the Andes. It is the largest province of the Cusco region and has a varied climate owing to altitudes ranging from 500 to 4000 meters above sea level.

[24] The *encomienda* was a Spanish colonial institution that allowed conquerors and officials to collect tribute and labour from indigenous communities. Intended to ensure their protection and Christianisation, it instead became a system of coercion and exploitation that contributed to the decline of indigenous societies and the consolidation of Spanish power. It was later replaced by other forms of labour organisation, such as *repartimientos* and *haciendas*. See Peter Klarén, *Peru: Society and Nationhood in the Andes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 41.

[25] See the analysis of the laws which ruled Amazon areas in Andrew Gray, *Indigenous Rights and Development: Self-Determination in an Amazonian Community* (New York: Berghahn, 1997).

[26] Fioravanti, *Latifundio y sindicalismo agrario,* p. 20. The *enganche* system was a mechanism of labour recruitment, a form of debt bondage in which creditors (landlords, merchants, moneylenders) provided loans in cash or kind, repaid through compulsory labour by the debtors (peasants or landless workers) and members of their families. Workers, whether permanent, seasonal, migrant, or local, could not freely sell their labour until debts were cleared, making this arrangement a form of unfree labour. See Tom Brass, 'The Latin American Enganche System: Some Revisionist Reinterpretations Revisited', Slavery and Abolition, 11: 1 (1990); Ralph Shlomowitz, 'The Latin American Enganche System: A Comment on Brass', Slavery and Abolition, 12: 3 (1991), pp. 217–24.

[27] Klarén, *Peru*.

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allowed landowners – most of whom were white and mestizo – to expand their power. Although the *indigenista* movement, the first left-wing parties like the APRA and the Communist Party,[28] and the government of President Augusto B. Leguía (1919–30) sought to integrate indigenous peoples into the nation-state, their attempts failed due to conflicting views on the so-called 'Indian problem.'[29] All in all, *hacendados* gained control over land, the indigenous population and the surrounding communities, with the central state supporting their dominance in the highlands.[30] In La Convención, in particular, *hacendados* further consolidated their economic and political power.

Highland peasants came to La Convención believing that it was 'the promised land'. They were drawn there by the lack of agricultural plots in their places of origin and the exploitation they had suffered in the highland haciendas. Largely illiterate, these peasants received between one and thirty hectares of land, generally in areas with poor soil within the haciendas, in exchange for unpaid work and rent. Because of their tenant status, they were known as *arrendires* (land tenants). Merchants and state functionaries also arrived in the La Convención Valley, opening new shops and creating a local council. Around the same time, the government built the railway from Cusco to Macchu Picchu (1928), extended it to the Santa Teresa district in La Convención (1933) and constructed a highway to Cusco, which replaced the mule transport system. These improvements enabled new trade opportunities and an urbanisation process after construction workers established work camps and brought their families.[31]

In the 1930s, a malaria epidemic set back this progress. It killed many inhabitants and caused numerous others to flee. Scholars estimate that between 1930 and 1934, 85% of the La Convención population died – a catastrophic situation that mainly affected *arrendires*. By 1940, the epidemic had been controlled after public health measures were implemented to contain its spread.[32] A second wave of highland peasant migration tripled the province's population. In 1940, it had 27,243 inhabitants, and in 1960 it had 61,901. By 1965, less than one third of the people living in La Convención had

[28]The American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), founded in 1924 by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre to oppose US imperialism, evolved into the Partido Aprista Peruano (PAP) in 1931. 'APRA' is now used interchangeably with the PAP, and its members are called *apristas*. The Communist Party of Peru (PCP) emerged in 1930 from the Socialist Party, after the death of its founder, José Carlos Mariátegui. For more on the APRA see Martín Bergel, *La desmesura revolucionaria: cultura y política en los orígenes del APRA* (Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, 2019). On Mariátegui's legacy, see Jaime Hanneken, 'José Carlos Mariátegui and the Time of Myth', *Cultural Critique,* 81 (2012), pp. 1–30.

[29]On the *indigenista* movement in Peru, see Gerardo Leibner, 'Radicalism and Integration: The Tahuantinsuyo Committee Experience and the Indigenismo of Leguía Reconsidered, 1919–1924', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 9: 2 (2003), pp. 1–24; Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cusco, Peru, 1919–1991* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2000); Luis Glave, 'Los campesinos leen su historia: un caso de identidad recreada y creación colectiva de imágenes', *Revista de Indias,* 50: 190 (1990), pp. 809–49.

[30]José Luis Rénique, 'State and Regional Movements in the Peruvian Highlands. The case of Cusco. 1895–1985, unpubl. PhD diss., Columbia University, 1988.

[31]Craig, 'El movimiento campesino', p. 282.

[32]Marcos Cueto, *El regreso de las epidemias: salud y sociedad en el Perú del siglo XX* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1997).

been born there; the majority had come from highland provinces in Cusco, such as Urubamba, Calca, Anta, Acomayo and Espinar.[33]

In this new context, *hacendados* resumed the *arrendire* system but introduced new obligations. These obligations, known as conditions (*condiciones*), required from the *arrendires* several workdays planting cacao, tea, sugar cane, grazing cattle and building irrigation ditches, roads, or bridges. Their average number of workdays per month was fourteen and, in some cases, twenty, making it impossible for them and their families both to fulfil their *condiciones* and work their assigned land.[34] To diversify their incomes, *arrendires* planted coffee trees and obtained loans from intermediaries who extended credit in exchange for future sales of their crops. Despite these efforts, the *arrendires* were unable to fulfil their duties to the *hacendados* and repay the intermediaries.

This critical situation led *arrendires* to set up a complex work system that subdivided their lands and social structure. They had to hire other highland peasants (most often their relatives) to assist them in fulfilling their obligations. Known as *allegados,* these peasants received small pieces of land in exchange for their work for the *arrendires* and were also subject to some conditions. These *allegados,* in turn, had to hire *suballegados* to be their farmers. Although these arrangements procured more labour, the province's market-oriented agricultural economy required even more people. Thus, *hacendados* and *arrendires* updated the old *enganche* system to hire the *habilitados*, a form of temporary wage labour.[35] In sum, about 11,000 peasant families worked unpaid in exchange for single plots on one of the 176 haciendas in the province. This complex labour system intersected with a weakened state government, meaning *hacendados,* as members of the elites who ruled the country, could control the local authorities and thus reinforce the status quo.

Hacendados acted in highly arbitrary and often violent ways in La Convención. They prohibited *arrendires* from speaking Quechua, from selling or buying products outside the haciendas and from building adobe houses; peasants were only allowed to have houses made of cane and straw. Arguing that peasants should maintain their 'inferior' social status, *hacendados* prohibited them from abandoning traditional dress, wearing shoes or new clothes.[36] They banned schools and education for peasants and their children and arbitrarily evicted those who disobeyed these rules. On numerous occasions, *hacendados* raped women with total impunity and verbally and physically abused other peasants. For instance, Alfredo Romainville, a powerful landowner, beat one woman's hands so hard that they got infected – due to the lack of medical attention – and then had to be amputated. The same *hacendado* beat peasant Cosme Huamán for being late and fractured one of his legs. Romainville also hit an 11-year-old child in the face with a whip, causing the loss of one of his eyes.[37] In response, peasants established

[33]Craig, 'El movimiento campesino', p. 282.

[34]Blanco, *Tierra o muerte*, p. 20.

[35]María Delgado and Edelmira Huamán, 'El movimiento campesino de Hugo Blanco Galdós y su repercusión en el Perú', unpubl. BA thesis, Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco, 2011, p. 21.

[36]Fioravanti, *Latifundio y sindicalismo agrario*, p. 79.

[37]Rojas, *La revolución de los arrendires*.

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a movement through which they could rebel against these abuses and the economic, social and political subordination to which the *hacendados* subjected them.

Peasant Women in the Classist Revolution

Understanding women's participation in the Classist Revolution requires revising the story of the peasant movement in La Convención and underlining peasants' everyday struggles. Therefore, I divide La Convención's Classist Revolution into four phases.[38] In each of these phases, women played different roles in response to their unions' strategies. The first phase started in 1948 when *arrendires* created the first unions. The second phase began in 1958 when the union leaders formed the Federación Provincial de Campesinos de La Convención, Yanatile y Lares (FEPCACYL), which became a key organisation for unionised peasants resisting *hacendados* in La Convención. The third phase (1962–5) witnessed the FEPCACYL's fracture and the armed activities of Hugo Blanco, the peasant militias, and the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). In the fourth phase (1965–9), internal and external factors contributed to the defeat of the *hacendados*.

The First Phase: Women's Fronts within the First Unions

Around early 1947, peasants from Maranura, a town a few kilometres south of Quillabamba, the capital of La Convención, 'secretly and fearfully' gathered to discuss and denounce the abuses of the local hacendados. One of them suggested asking for support from the Federación de Trabajadores de Cusco (Federation of Workers of Cusco, FTC), the leading labour organisation in Cusco.[39] All present welcomed his idea and agreed to send a commission to Cusco. Later, on 20 April 1947, Emiliano Huamantica, Bernardino Carloto and Simón Herrera, all well-known Quechua-speaking FTC leaders and Communists, arrived in Maranura to create the Maranura Peasant Union. Its creation was a significant event not only because it was the first peasant union ever created in La Convención but also because its executive committee included a Women's Labour Secretariat.[40] The Maranura peasants created this position to incorporate women into rural syndicalism, even as Peruvian women were still forbidden from voting.[41]

Initially, the Women's Labour Secretariat of the Maranura union promoted women's participation in struggles for better working conditions. However, the leaders of the union elected a man, Erasmo Loayza, to lead the Secretariat. In later years, new peasant unions and women participating in these unions challenged this contradiction. The

[38] Jack Goldstone's idea that revolutions have a trajectory (though not necessarily a linear one) comprised of an origin, process and outcome, and are not sudden detonations of explosive events that last weeks or months, was useful to characterise these phases. See Jack A. Goldstone, 'Rethinking Revolutions: Integrating Origins, Processes, and Outcomes', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 29: 1 (2009), pp. 18–32.

[39] Vilma Quispe and Nora Candia, 'Movimiento campesino de Maranura y su repercusión 1947–1970', unpubl. Bachelor thesis, Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco, 2000, p. 72.

[40] Maranura Union's Creation Act, quoted in Quispe and Candia, 'Movimiento campesino de Maranura'.

[41] In 1955, literate Peruvian women gained the right to vote, and universal suffrage was granted in 1979.

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union in the town of Mandor, created in July 1952, elected a woman to lead its Women's Affairs Secretariat. Then, around 1958, taking advantage of the political opening during the democratic government of President Manuel Prado (1956–62), *arrendires* from the rural settlements of Pachac Grande, Santa Rosa and Chaupimayo formed new unions. I found that women gradually joined and, in some cases, went on to lead these unions. However, the records and oral histories I collected could not provide further details about their specific roles during this first phase.

In my research into the archival sources, I found no explanation as to why these first unions of the La Convención chose women as leaders or why women joined these pioneering unions. However, it is possible that their close links with the Cusco Communist cell and the FTC inspired peasants from La Convención. Women played vital roles in the early years of Communism in Cusco (1920–30). Julio Gutiérrez highlights the contributions of Concha Ramos, Estela Bocangel, Concepción Rivero, Corina Latorre and Rosa Augusta Rivero as the first women of the Communist cell who wrote manifestos, protested for university reform and travelled around Cusco promoting Communist ideas.[42] Their middle-class origins and family connections to the cell's founders facilitated their active political involvement. Later, between 1949 and 1959, Agripina Zuñiga led the Women's Front on the FTC's executive board, joined in 1950–1 by Cecilia Flores.[43] In the 1960s, four more women from indigenous backgrounds, including María Loayza (wife of Huamantica), became delegates representing market unions in the city of Cusco. Appointing women to leadership roles in Cusco and La Convención unions was a continuation of a practice started by the FTC's predecessors, the Federación Obrera Departamental del Cusco (Departmental Worker's Federation of Cusco, FODC), which had a similar secretariat since the mid-1930s.[44] This practice reflected the influence and confluence of indigenism, syndicalism, Communism and the early feminism that developed in Peru in the 1920s.[45]

In Peru, the first Communist cell was created in Cusco in February 1927. As in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay, its creation is related to early industrial expansion and the presence of a workers' movement.[46] As Jose Luis Rénique notes, the Cusco Communist cell had two currents: the *indigenista* and the class-based factions.[47] When Eudocio Ravines, José Carlos Mariátegui's successor as party leader, changed the party's name, strategy and agenda and established the Communist Party

[42]Julio G. Gutiérrez L., *Así nació el Cuzco rojo* (Lima: Tárea, 1986).

[43]In Peru, in the early and mid-twentieth century, unions that included women in their organisation initially created the *Frentes Femeninos* and later, in the 1980s, they changed the name of these fronts to *Frente de Mujeres*. Here, I opted to translate them as Women's Fronts.

[44]See María Escalante, 'Emiliano Huamantica y el movimiento sindical en el Cusco', unpubl. PhD diss., Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco, 1974, p. 69.

[45]Mercedes Crisóstomo, 'Women in the Peruvian Revolutionary Left: Militancia and Post-Militancia in Cusco and Ayacucho,' unpubl. PhD diss., University College London, 2022.

[46]On the history of Communism in the Americas, see Rollie E. Poppino, *International Communism in Latin America: A History of the Movement, 1917–1963* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). On the history of Communism in Peru, see Michael Löwy, 'Communism and Religion: José Carlos Mariátegui's Revolutionary Mysticism', *Latin American Perspectives,* 35: 2 (2008), pp. 71–9.

[47]These class-based factions advocated only for the working class's rights and demands. See Rénique, 'State and Regional Movements'.

of Peru (Partido Comunista Peruano, PCP), Communists from Cusco adhered to it. Following the 'class against class' strategy, they maintained a degree of autonomy, continued with their student–worker alliance and sought to include peasants in their cell.

La Convención's first peasant unionists initially did not make radical class-based demands. As Fioravanti has argued, they only requested that the Labour Inspection Office oversee and enforce their labour rights (an eight-hour working day, payment and better wages) and called for education and housing rights.[48] Supported by the lawyers of the FTC, they sent numerous complaints to the *hacendados*. Most were ignored or only partially addressed . After making some gains, the rise of a new wave of authoritarian rulers (particularly during the military regime of Manuel Odría, 1948–56) led to a decline in their activism until the late 1950s. During this time, *hacendados* echoed the anti-Communist rhetoric, took advantage of the political context and imposed arbitrary evictions, started judicial procedures against their tenants and formed the Chamber of Commerce, among others, to fight 'Communist syndicalism' and control the lucrative coffee trade.[49]

The Second Phase: Women in Collective Actions

In December 1958, unionised peasants created the FEPCACYL, which, unlike traditional unions, demanded not only labour rights but also social justice, freedom from oppressive *hacendados*, access to land, and schools. Although the FEPCACYL followed syndicalist strategies,[50] it practised a peculiar form of syndicalism because it was composed of atypical union actors: peasants. Because some leaders of the FEPCACYL were sympathisers – and in some cases members – of the Communist Party of Peru, they viewed their daily struggles through the lens of Marxism. Rejecting the term 'Indio' as derogatory, they self-identified as peasants.[51] The FEPCACYL was neither a party organisation nor just a union. In the absence of intermediary institutions to negotiate with local powerholders and the state, unions were a mixture of both. Within these unions, peasants made their voices heard, voted, made decisions and discussed their future. From 1958 to 1962, FEPCACYL members organised new unions, organised strikes, rallies, protests and land seizures, and advocated for agrarian reform. These new strategies and demands worried the powerful local *hacendados* and the national authorities.

[48]See a discussion of these inspections and their role in arbitrating labour disputes in Paulo Drinot, *The Allure of Labor: Workers, Race, and the Making of the Peruvian State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

[49]Fioravanti, *Latifundio y sindicalismo agrario*, p. 170.

[50]Each union had an executive committee comprised of General, Organisational, Defense, Minutes, Economy and Finances, Cooperatives, Press and Propaganda, Technique and Statistic, Women's Front, Sport and Culture and Treasure Secretariats, all elected in an assembly by show of hands.

[51]In 1967, the FEPCACYL refused to participate in the commemoration of the Week of Cusco, arguing that the organisers used the term 'indigenous' to refer to peasants. They underlined: 'in La Convención and all the country there are no "Indios", there are peasants or agricultural workers'. Henceforth, they celebrated the Day of the Peasant. See *El Sol de Cusco (El Sol),* 'Campesinos rechazan el vocablo indígena', 21 June 1967, *El Sol*, p. 5.

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Demands for agrarian reform, however, mobilised guerrillas, leftists and peasants, as well as the elites and conservative sectors. After all, the agrarian reform was part of the United States' Alliance for Progress, aimed at preventing Cuban-style revolutions.[52] Some elites saw land reform as a better way to contain insurgency than violent repression.[53] In 1959, the so-called Beltrán Commission proposed a limited land reform with compensation to the *hacendados*, but it failed to gain parliamentary support.[54] In 1962–3, the military junta passed the first agrarian reform law, the Law of Bases for the Agrarian Reform, whose primary function was to appease unrest in La Convención. A year later, Fernando Belaúnde of Acción Popular – president between 1963 and 1968 – enacted the second agrarian reform, which, in contrast to the first one, had a national scope and allowed the expropriation of all types of agricultural units but offered concessions to the more prominent *hacendados*.[55] The third agrarian reform enacted in 1969 by the revolutionary regime of Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–75) is considered the most radical in the Americas since it changed the structure of Peru's agrarian economy.[56] However, feminist scholars note that land ownership in Peru has been gendered, with men as primary landholders and women often excluded from formal property rights. These agrarian reforms overlooked how patriarchal norms shaped both the allocation of land and women's labour within agrarian economies.[57]

The failure to implement the first two agrarian reform laws generated peasant mobilisations in the country. In La Convención province, following the first agrarian reform law, the military junta sent a commission to set up collective contracts regulating wages, working conditions, and eliminating all forced work.[58] However, these contracts were arbitrarily applied. In response, peasants went on strike again. Similarly, after Belaúnde enacted the second agrarian reform, the Ministry of Agriculture declared that the haciendas in La Convención were to be confiscated and the land redistributed. Both *hacendados* and peasants opposed the law. The 'Agropecuaria' (the Departmental Agricultural Society, formed by Cusco's powerful landowners) asked for the annulment of all measures in La Convención and a delay to the reform.[59] Meanwhile, the peasants felt betrayed because the law allowed *hacendados* to divide their estates

[52] Gerardo Rénique, 'People's War,' 'Dirty War': Cold War Legacy and the End of History in Postwar Peru,' in Grandin and Joseph, *A Century of Revolution*, pp. 309–37.

[53] Anna Cant, 'Representations of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform 1968–75', unpubl. PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2015.

[54] Klarén, *Peru,* p. 315.

[55] Luis Pásara, *Reforma agraria: derecho y conflicto* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1978).

[56] For recent historiography on Velasco's agrarian reform, see Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot (eds.), *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2017); Anna Cant, *Land Without Masters: Agrarian Reform and Political Change under Peru's Military Government* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2021); Mercedes Crisóstomo, 'Experiencias de independencia y alteridad en la reforma agraria de Juan Velasco Alvarado,' in Alejandro Diez and María Luisa Burneo (eds.), *Nuevas miradas sobre la reforma agraria peruana* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2022), pp. 101–24.

[57] Carmen Diana Deere, *Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

[58] *El Sol*, 'Explotación y pobreza hay en La Convención', 1 Nov. 1962, *El Sol,* p. 4.

[59] *El Sol*, 'Burocracia en reforma agraria', 3 Jan. 1966, *El Sol,* p. 3.

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to avoid expropriation and exempted those who could show that their estates were productive.[60]

In the meantime, through the FEPCACYL, women's participation in unions increased in urban and rural settings in the province. The archives of the Cusco Prefecture, where peasants were required to register their unions, the names of their leaders and their union statutes, show that in 1960, the Union Manahuañuncca from the hacienda Mandor included Victoria Herrera and Saturnina Mora in the Women's Front Secretariat.[61] The Market Union of Quillabamba went further, including women in the Cooperatives, Organisation, Social Assistance and Women's Fronts.[62] Women's roles in unions drew the attention of the local press. On 8 June 1960, the Cusco daily newspaper *El Sol* announced the formation of the San Pablo Union and noted that Asunta Jeri was the head of its Women's Front.[63] Overall, participation in the FEPCACYL's Women's Front enabled women to be heavily engaged in the unions' strategies, including strikes and protests.

Strikes in La Convención not only interrupted agricultural work but also included pickets to block roads, close schools, and prevent all types of social and economic activities.[64] Under labour legislation, peasants had to notify the Prefect of their strike reasons. To amplify their voices, they also notified the local press. For example, in June 1960, Masapata Union workers argued: '[We peasants went on strike] because of the tremendously savage circumstances created by [the *hacendados*], which make our lives impossible.'[65] On another occasion, in December 1961, fearing for their lives and safety, these peasants from the Masapata Union reported receiving threats of death and eviction and complained about the violent language used by the landowners: '[They said to us] "miserable Indians", "We will kill you … like dogs", "Our floors are dirtied by you setting foot on them," and other grievous insults.'[66] In May 1960, *El Sol* printed the FEPCACYL's list of grievances and the state's failure to address their demands.[67] A month later, the same newspaper reported another FEPCACYL manifesto, in which the Federation argued: 'Those responsible for the current situation of the peasants in La Convención are not only the *hacendados* but also the Ministry of Labour authorities who have allowed them to override the laws that protect peasant labour.'[68]

Reports in the local press about the imprisoned leaders provide evidence of women's participation in the strikes. For instance, in December 1960, a report suggested that after their lawyers' pointless efforts to liberate them, some peasants intensified their fighting methods by announcing a hunger strike. Inocencia Quiñonez, Rosa Tapia and Flora Tapia (with her young child), among others, went on strike, arguing that 'our

[60] Cant, 'Representations of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform', p. 32.

[61] Peasants did this after the Supreme Decree of 23 March 1936, enacted by President Oscar Benavides (1933–9) to control syndicalism.

[62] Prefectura de Cusco, Comunicaciones 1961 and 1962, Cusco Regional Archive.

[63] *El Sol,* 8 June 1960, *El Sol*, p. 3.

[64] Blanco, *Tierra o muerte,* p. 39.

[65] This account was issued as an antecedent of a denunciation presented in November 1961, see Prefectura de Cusco, Comunicaciones, Oficio s/n 23 Nov. 1961, File 46, 1961, Cusco Regional Archive.

[66] Prefectura de Cusco, Comunicaciones, Oficio s/n 23 Nov. 1961, File 46, 1961, Cusco Regional Archive.

[67] *El Sol*, 'Huelga campesina en cadena', 8 June 1960, *El Sol*, p. 1.

[68] *El Sol*, 'Señalan falta de energía a Inspección de Trabajo', 13 June 1960, *El Sol*, p. 1.

brothers will not die alone.'[69] Later, Zaragosa Ordoñez, the wife of one imprisoned leader, joined the hunger strike.[70] Although the actions of these women emphasised the traditional notion that a woman's duty is to support her husband, they also achieved a new public visibility and asserted their capacity to act independently of their brothers and husbands.

The courageous actions and leadership of women in protests and rallies were also decisive. The surviving leaders of this movement, whom I interviewed in La Convención, narrated the compelling episode that began this article, highlighting Carmela Giraldo's crucial leadership in the uprising. Similarly, on 20 August 1961, the FEPCACYL members gathered to create the Oath of Mandor, a symbolic and political ritual that inspired successive peasant uprisings and epitomised their determination to defeat the hacienda system. Written by FTC Cusco lawyer Estenio Pacheco and a commission led by Carmela Giraldo, the oath was performed in a symbolic ritual. As the oath document stated:

> At the moment of sunrise, with an incision on the fingertip … [peasants] poured [their] blood onto huge banana leaves already spread on the ground … in an overwhelming silence like a balm … of unwavering determination to bring forth … freedom and justice … the precious chalice of blood was copiously covered with fresh coca leaves, wrapped to form an immense bundle, and placed in a deep hole in the ground.

Then, one by one, the peasants swore to fight for agrarian reform, justice and liberty. To conclude the ritual, by unanimous decision, Carmela Giraldo, 'with her head held high and very excited,' took the oath of the Federation's leaders, who then shouted 'Land or Death.'[71] These accounts illustrate Carmela Giraldo's resolution not only to challenge the military and local authorities but also her skills in drafting union statutes. In the following years, she continued to demand agrarian reform, justice and peasant liberation, alongside prominent local and national leftists and unionists.

Carmela Giraldo was born in the early 1920s in the highland Ollantaytambo district in the Urubamba province of Cusco. Literate and fluent in Quechua and Spanish, in her early twenties, she arrived in La Convención with her parents and siblings and began work as an *arrendire*. By the 1950s, she was a young widow with a child. During this decade, she became a unionist and Communist, perhaps as a result of the beliefs and ideas she shared with Emiliano Huamantica and other FTC leaders. In the 1960s, alongside her involvement in leading rallies, marches, strikes and land seizures within the Huadquiña union and the FEPCACYL, she endorsed the campaign of the Frente Democrático Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Front, FDN), a front created

[69] *El Sol*, 'Cuatro campesinos más entraron huelga hambre [sic]', 4 Dec. 1961, *El Sol*, p. 2.

[70] Due to the lack of sources about these strikes, I cannot offer evidence of how long the hunger strikes lasted or their outcomes.

[71] Oath of Mandor, 1961, private collection of Estenio Pacheco, Cusco. This translation of the ritual account is part of the 'Oath of Mandor'. I thank writer and anthropologist Karina Pacheco, Estenio Pacheco's daughter, for giving me a photocopy of the original document.

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in the 1940s and later reactivated to participate in the national elections of 1962.[72] The enfranchisement of literate women in 1955, coupled with the emerging democratic environment permitting previously proscribed organisations such as the PCP, bolstered Carmela's political activism and support for the FDN.

In my interviews and ethnographic work in La Convención, Carlos Morillo, a former MIR supporter, described Carmela as a 'born Communist' with a strong personality who was hated by *apristas*, who accused her of being a prostitute.[73] Cosme Huamán recalled her as '*macha*' (a term used to denote a woman who is as brave as a man), capable of discussing and defining 'new strategies to fight against the *hacendados*.'[74] Although Cosme praised Carmela's activism, he compared it to men's standards. Both her supporters and opponents used such labels to either promote or undermine her public activism. These reactions highlight that Carmela was an unusual political figure, as most women were involved in more traditional gender roles, such as cooking, caregiving, or supporting the men in their activities. Currently, in La Convención, collective memory depicts her as a heroic and iconic political figure for her endeavours and leadership in the Classist Revolution.

Both the march in Cusco and the creation of the Oath of Mandor show women's increasing participation in unions and the unions' new strategies and agendas. Notably, the oath document reveals that by the early 1960s, peasant demands included agrarian reform. Hugo Blanco argued that peasants from La Convención engaged with this proposal because of his influence, which began around 1958. Scholars have repeated this claim. However, the FTC had been advocating land reform and leading strikes in Cusco before Blanco arrived in La Convención.

Demanding agrarian reform, peasants embarked on land seizures after the strikes failed to bring about the expected results. Oral history and newspaper reports reveal that women were among those who led these invasions. In September 1962, unionists Rosario Baca and Natividad Cusipaucar were jailed for their involvement in these invasions.[75] Although available sources provide little information about them, I found that the police later accused these two women of leading 150 peasants who invaded, sacked and destroyed the haciendas of Alfredo Romainville and Serapio Anaya, two powerful *hacendados*.[76] In October 1962, huge numbers of peasants simultaneously invaded other haciendas and expelled their owners. At the Huadquiña hacienda, men and women – led by Carmela Giraldo, Francisco Noguera and Santiago Rivas – evicted the peasants supporting the *hacendado*, opened the main house doors and took the hacienda's cattle.[77]

The police arrested all peasants, men and women, who had led these land seizures. Carmela Giraldo was jailed in the Belén prison in Cusco. From there, she sent a letter

[72] Klarén, *Peru*, p. 287.

[73] Author's interview with Carlos Morillo, unpublished fieldwork notes, La Convención, 29 Oct. 2019.

[74] Author's interview with Cosme Huamán, 30 Oct. 2019.

[75] *El Sol*, 'Decretará paro general la Federación Campesina', 22 Sept. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 7.

[76] *El Sol*, '150 campesinos asaltaron una propiedad', 25 Sept. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 9.

[77] *El Sol*, 'Policia hizo evacuar caserio de Huadquiña'; 'Colonos se apoderaron del fundo Paltaybamba', 20 Oct.1962, *El Sol*, p. 3.

to the newspaper *El Sol*, which said:

> I am not a criminal … I did not commit any crimes. On the contrary, the police raided my house, took my old father prisoner, stole clothes, and punished a domestic servant of mine … [I] will die protesting the abuses and cruelties that poor peasants suffer, and [I] will proclaim it even if [I] am hanging from the gallows.[78]

In this letter, Carmela denied being a criminal and instead portrayed herself as a protector willing to die defending peasants from the *hacendados*' oppression. Unfortunately, there is little information on how long she spent in prison. Based on the interviews I conducted with her relatives and former leaders of the FEPCACYL, it appears likely that the FTC provided her with a lawyer who helped free her. Subsequently, she returned to La Convención.

The government responded violently to these land takeovers. On 21 October 1962, the police used teargas bombs in La Convención for the first time.[79] Later, two military aeroplanes arrived from Lima, bringing assault guard personnel who 'got off the plane heavily armed with rifles, backpacks full of tear gas, and state-of-the-art machine guns.' They landed in La Convención with forty members of the civil guard 'to safeguard public order and private properties.'[80] The FEPCACYL leaders protested this militarisation, which led to police incursions in their meetings. They stressed the disproportionality between the police's heavy firearms and the peasants' weapons, mainly sticks and stones.[81]

These events happened at the same time Latin America became a battleground in the Cold War. Thus, Cold War rationality shaped how the state sought to undermine uprisings. For instance, through the Investigation Police Office (Policía de Investigaciones del Perú, PIP), successive governments persecuted the leaders of the FEPCACYL, the FTC and their allies in the capital city of Cusco, including the Federación Universitaria de Cusco (University Federation of Cusco, FUC) and the Federación de Campesinos de Cusco (Federation of Peasants of Cusco, FDC), accusing them of being very well-known agitators and supporters of Cuba. Many of their leaders were tortured and incarcerated in the Sepa and Frontón prisons.[82] Even their lawyers were detained. Confidential police papers from the early 1960s suggest that the police believed they were collaborating with extremists and preparing terrorist acts in Cusco.[83] Likewise, state security police officers spied on their meetings. Assuming they were hiding Communist and subversive propaganda, they regularly raided and closed the offices of the FTC, the FDC, the FUC and the FEPCACYL.[84]

[78] *El Sol*, 'Desde su prisión', 27 Oct. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 7.

[79] *El Sol*, 'Ayer explotó la primera lacrimógena', 22 Oct. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 1.

[80] *El Sol*, 'Llegan guardías de asalto y nuevo jefe de policía', 22 Oct. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 3.

[81] On 27 June 1962, *El Sol* published pictures of police officers collecting the picks that peasants from Echarate used to protect themselves.

[82] Including Melquiades Huamán, Florencio Lazarte, Fortunato Vargas, Eduardo Sumire, Vladimiro Valer, Enrique Miota.

[83] Prefectura de Cusco, Comunicaciones, Oficio 2112-S, Reservado, File 4, 10 Dec. 1963.

[84] Prefectura de Cusco, Comunicaciones, Nov. 1961. See diverse documents in File 46, 1962.

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Women spoke out against these repressive measures using Marxist rhetoric and praising the Cuban Revolution. For instance, in their thesis about the history of the Maranura Union, Vilma Quispe and Nora Candia report that on 20 July 1961, representative leaders from the union, like Carmela Giraldo, alongside leaders from the FTC, like Emiliano Huamantica, spoke in Quechua in the main plaza of Cusco and denounced 'the government, the Beltrán Cabinet, the Judicial Power, and the landowners.'[85] According to these authors, Huamantica and Giraldo argued that '[a revolution like] the Cuban Revolution and Communism is the only way to save the peasantry'. Although no more information is given, it is clear that Carmela had strong ties with the FTC, to Communism, and the public denunciations against *hacendados*. Speeches by Giraldo and Huamantica illustrate how they connected local and global struggles to frame their aspiration for social change.

Women also fought the hacienda system by performing traditional gendered roles, including supervising food provision, preparation and distribution. Ernesto Quispe, a former legal adviser of the FEPCACYL, recalled the role of María Luisa Bedoya, a 'committed and very active' *arrendire*, leader of the Women's Front of the FEPCACYL and the market unions. She attained such prominence that, in 1961–2, she went to Lima as part of a commission petitioning the government to accelerate agrarian reform.[86] In Cusco and La Convención, she called for agrarian reform and condemned the subordination of peasants.[87] Neptalí Canal, María Luisa's son, described how she used to prepare and serve coca drinks before giving her speeches.[88] In her speeches, delivered in Spanish and Quechua, she stressed peasants' suffering at the hands of the *hacendados* and encouraged peasant women to rebel and protest.[89] Other women protested and went to prison carrying their small children on their backs. They had to take their children because their husbands were either already imprisoned, working or underground. Some did not have any relatives to take care of their children.

Peasant women also participated in confrontations with the police. Sitting on the land she gained after participating in the uprisings of the 1960s, Eva Romero, an eighty-year-old peasant woman I interviewed while doing fieldwork in La Convención, told me that, on various occasions, the men of the unions hid in the jungle to avoid arrest while women faced police raids of their homes. Eva proudly said, '[In these situations], women had to fight the police to defend themselves and their properties.'[90] She also told me: 'We [the women] blocked the bridge. Then, the *sinchis* arrived bearing guns.[91] Those weapons were awful. That was the first time we saw them. They also came throwing teargas bombs. But in the fight, there is no fear … Yes, some women escaped, but the strongest of us stayed there. When we were [face-to-face] with the police on the bridge, we threw ashes mixed with hot pepper into their eyes. Others threw urine mixed with pepper.' Eva mainly wanted to underline the women's courage and determination,

[85] Quispe and Candia, 'Movimiento campesino de Maranura,' p. 91.

[86] Author's interview with Ernesto Quispe, former advisor of the FEPCACYL, unpublished fieldwork notes, La Convención, 30 Oct. 2019.

[87] *El Sol*, 'Hubo mitin en Quillabamba', 16 Nov. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 1.

[88] Author's interview with Ernesto Quispe, 30 Oct. 2019.

[89] Author's interview with Neptalí Canal, son of María Luisa Bedoya, unpublished fieldwork notes, La Convención, 31 Oct. 2019.

[90] Author's interview with Eva Romero, unpublished fieldwork notes, La Convención, 29 Oct. 2019.

[91] The *sinchis* were a special counterinsurgency police force.

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saying, 'We were brave … On other occasions, we carried stones in our skirts … or previously put them in specific places to throw them at the *sinchis*. We believed that dying today or tomorrow is the same, but we would die fighting. We used to shout, "Land or Death. We will win."'[92]

Women's differing roles within the unions and the FEPCACYL distinguished the leaders from the rank and file. Those women who knew how to read and write and were fluent in Spanish and Quechua were elected as the leaders, thinking that these skills would enable them to better advocate for the needs and rights of their unions. By leading marches and protests, these leaders aimed to empower other women. This was the case of Carmela Giraldo, who, in her speeches, publicised what she learned in the Communist training carried out by FTC leaders when arriving at La Convención. She not only supported the FDN in the 1962 election, but she was also the general secretary of the FDN's Women's Front in her province, where she spoke out against the *hacendados* and imperialism. Although in the same year, she resigned from the FDN after disputes over candidates for the election, her trajectory shows that she remained Communist.[93] Eva and Carmela's actions shed light on women's struggles against capitalist, patriarchal and racialised systems based on their heterogeneous interests and strategies and their bonds to their communities, politics and the state.

The Third Phase: Women in Armed Militias

In 1962, due to differing strategies for land access, two factions emerged within the FEPCACYL. One group, following the FTC and the FEPCACYL alliance, focused on union-based tactics like strikes, marches and presenting demands for agrarian reform. The other, led by Hugo Blanco, organised peasant militias and land seizures. The FTC–FEPCACYL leaders accused Blanco of arming peasants and dividing the unions.[94] The impact of this conflict on daily union activities is unclear, as there is little direct information aside from Blanco's epic account. What is certain is that peasants (men and women) continued to mobilise, with many following Blanco, including unions from Chaupimayo, Santa Teresa, Paltaybamba and Lares.[95] Blanco referred to these unions as 'Trotskyist centres' and the 'vanguard' of the peasant militias, combining unionism with political and military activity.[96] In early 1962, Blanco and the militias proclaimed themselves the armed wing of the unions.

El Sol newspaper reported on the peasant militias and women's participation in armed actions in an article titled 'Men and Women Learned to Handle Carbines'. By using photographs of peasant women carrying rifles, the newspaper emphasised the uniqueness of the image. According to the article: 'For women to take up arms and decide to train themselves in their handling, as can be seen in the photos we publish, there must be deep despair, deep resentment due to the indifference of those who are

[92] Author's interview with Eva Romero, 29 Oct. 2019.
[93] *El Sol*, 'Dirigente campesina renuncia al FDN', 1 March 1962, *El Sol*, p. 4.
[94] *El Sol*, 'Comunicado de prensa de campesinos de Paltaibamba', 22 Dec. 1961, *El Sol*, p. 9.
[95] Fioravanti, *Latifundio y sindicalismo agrario,* p. 195.
[96] Blanco, *Tierra o muerte*, p. 26–30.

obligated to listen to their claims and do them justice. It is only in such fertile ground that extremist agitators can have the acceptance evidenced by the images.'[97] Blanco similarly noted that 'as it was not the custom for women to hunt, the mere photograph of a peasant woman from the zone with a carbine in her hand raised the spirits of the peasants in other unions.' (See Figure 1)[98]


Nº 17448 Cuzco, Viernes 4 de Mayo de 1962 EDICION DE 12 PAGS. PRECIO UN SOL

Guerrilleros en La Convención

Hombres y mujeres aprendían manejo de Carabinas

Figure 1. Cusco Newspaper Frontpage. The title reads: 'Guerrillas in La Convención. Men and Women Learned to Handle Carabines'
Source: *El Sol*, 'Guerillas en La Convención', 4 May 1962, *El Sol*, p. 1.

Although Blanco underscored the importance of this image in motivating peasant militias in his book *Tierra o muerte* (*Land or Death*), he did not acknowledge the role of women in the struggle. This omission may have been to protect them due to the high levels of persecution at the time, or because his narrative focused on his own military actions. Despite this limitation, his book remains the only published source on women's participation in the militias. Women are mentioned four times in the book. First, Blanco mentions that Carmela Giraldo was part of the revolutionary unionists who regularly assembled to plan actions against the *hacendados*.[99] Second, in different chapters, he states that Blanca Labarrera, his first wife, a member of the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Front, FIR), ran political night schools from July until November 1962, when the police detained her. Third, without naming her, Blanco recalls that the Chaupimayo union's Women's Front leader, a 'combative comrade,' returned from one strike wearing a police officer's cap and carrying a rifle on her shoulder like a 'bandit' (*bandolera*).[100] Finally, he says that peasant women provided food and shelter to the militias.

As Blanco's depiction confirms, when it comes to peasant women's roles in political and revolutionary projects, there is a tendency to represent them as obeying orders, as being part of the masses, and as acting like 'bandits' but not revolutionaries. Blanco

[97] *El Sol*, 'Guerrilleros en La Convención', 4 May 1962, *El Sol*, p.1.
[98] Blanco, *Tierra o muerte*, p. 62.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

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writes about women as part of the masses, usually without giving their names or acknowledging their roles. The local press was similar. In 1963, *El Sol* accused Carmen Candia of being Hugo Blanco's agent and protector. This report implied that she kidnapped her opponents at gunpoint following Blanco's instructions.[101] As this suggests, the idea that Carmen Candia could act on her own, or that she could have her own motivations for such actions, was inconceivable to the journalists of *El Sol*.

In contrast, when women can voice their experiences, they offer a different perspective. In the 2000s, historians María Delgado and Edelmira Huamán interviewed Victoria Candia Quiñones for their co-authored Bachelor's thesis, during which Victoria revealed that she was the leader Blanco referred to as a 'bandit' in his book.[102] Detailing her role in these militias, she portrayed herself as a brave combatant, noting that women took over leadership when men were arrested. She recalled: 'The situation started to get complicated because only women remained, while most of the male leaders were imprisoned. We women had to defend ourselves and fight for our rights'. Victoria also mentioned capturing a police officer: 'We took his gun and I put on his cap.'[103] Women's participation in the militias is still underexplored, but Victoria's participation in these militias highlights a critical gap in official and academic narratives that tend to focus on the revolutionary leadership or urban men, overlooking both women and men from peasant backgrounds. Victoria's narrative shows that when women speak, they can also produce heroic accounts and redefine the political history of peasant women.

As part of their political and military actions during early 1963, the militias took over and redistributed the *hacendados*' cultivated and uncultivated lands and crops. They told the less powerful *hacendados* in the valley that 'the revolution was not against them', only against the more oppressive landowners.[104] They wounded and disarmed police officers in three armed confrontations, and Blanco killed one police officer and injured another. Later, in May 1963, the police detained and tortured every member of Blanco's group. Available sources do not provide information on whether women were among the detainees. Blanco was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison and only avoided the death penalty thanks to an international campaign. In the 1970s, General Juan Velasco pardoned and then deported him to Mexico.[105]

In La Convención, the authorities responded to the peasant militias with indiscriminate repression.[106] Reports about injured and dead peasants and police officers made the front page of the national and local press. The Prefect of Cusco suspended constitutional guarantees across the entire department, meaning that the police could imprison

[101] *El Sol*, 'No soy comunista, he sido engañado', 15 Feb. 1963, *El Sol*, p. 4.

[102] The Bachelor thesis of María Delgado and Edelmira Huamán is unpublished and kept at the Library of the Social Science Faculty at the Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad de Cusco. See Delgado and Huamán, 'El movimiento campesino de Hugo Blanco'.

[103] Interview with Victoria Candia Quiñones quoted in Delgado and Huamán, 'El movimiento campesino de Hugo Blanco', p. 122–3.

[104] Blanco, *Tierra o muerte,* p. 72.

[105] Klarén, *Peru*; Rojas, *La revolución de los arrendires*.

[106] In contrast to most of the literature, Rojas argues that the Ricardo Perez Godoy government responded with 'controlled repression' and social investment (building roads, health centres, schools and state agencies) to avoid the increase of radicalism. See Rojas, *La revolución de los arrendires*, p. 122–3.

peasant leaders and seize their houses.[107] The police accused the militias of mounting a subversive Communist plot and presented pamphlets and photos as evidence. In response, the FEPCACYL–FTC sent letters to *El Sol* denying its participation in the militias and claiming that peasants organised in unions to defend themselves from the *hacendados*' exploitation and had not participated in unions with 'subversive' purposes, but only 'for social [justice] aims'.[108] However, while denying their politicisation, they criticised the land expropriations, instead demanding land confiscation – one of the main proposals of the Communist Party of Peru.

In the 1960s, the situation in La Convención was complex. To weaken the message and the legitimacy of the peasant uprisings, other groups used social and political activities to maintain the status quo or to enable only minor change without profound reforms. *Hacendados* created the Defence Committee of La Convención (Comité de Autodefensa de La Convención) to oppose the FEPCACYL and even formed civilian security forces to help the police maintain order in Quillabamba.[109] Claiming that the 'peasant masses' were being exploited by leftist leaders, this Committee accused unionised peasants of being subversives, vandals and Communists.[110] Further, during 1963–4, the Committee created 'free' unions that opposed the FEPCACYL and backed the government's agrarian reform policies.[111]

Adding to the tense political atmosphere, Peace Corps volunteers, perceived by many in Peru and elsewhere as key actors in the United States' anti-Communist strategy, arrived in continuous waves in Cusco and La Convención. According to Peace Corps director Robert Sargent Shriver, these volunteers were to help the development of indigenous communities and to improve the living conditions of the shantytowns.[112] As part of their food and nutrition plans, they delivered a daily glass of milk and serving of bread to school students from the rural settlements of Cusco, including Pisac, Anta and Urubamba. From 1964 to 1965, many Peace Corps members lived in La Convención.[113] Suspicions about their true aims arose among the many political and social organisations that strongly opposed their work.[114]

In 1965, the MIR added more fuel to this tense situation. Supported by Cuban revolutionaries, the MIR began military actions in La Convención.[115] Its leader, Luis de la Puente Uceda, had arrived in the province in 1962 to garner support, but few peasants

[107] *El Sol*, 'Tranquilidad en La Convención', 29 Dec. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 1.

[108] *El Sol*, 'Revolución de campesinos es fantasía de La Prensa', 11 May 1962, *El Sol*, p. 7.

[109] *El Sol*, 'Se formó Comité de Defensa de la Provincia de la Convención', 4 Dec. 1960, *El Sol*, p. 1.

[110] *El Sol*, 'Maniobras de explotación a masa de campesinos denuncian', 12 Jan. 1960, *El Sol*, p. 3.

[111] On peasants in other Latin American counterrevolutionary projects, see Carlota McAllister, 'A Headlong Rush into the Future: Violence and Revolution in a Guatemalan Indigenous Village', in Grandin and Joseph (eds.), *A Century of Revolution*.

[112] In Peru, they were in Ancash, Ayacucho, Puno, Arequipa, Lima and Cusco. The Peace Corps Bulletin stated that by July 1963, Peru had 232 volunteers, increasing to 419 in Nov. 1964. See Peace Corps, *3rd Annual Report* (Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1964).

[113] Wesley W. Craig, *Autobiography*.

[114] For more on this, see Fernando Pucells and Marcelo Casals, 'Espacios en disputa: el Cuerpo de Paz y las universidades sudamericanas durante la Guerra Fría en la década de 1960', *História Unisinos,* 19: 1 (2015), pp. 1–11.

[115] Dirk Kruijt, *Cuba and Revolutionary Latin America: An Oral History* (London: Zed Books, 2017), p. 81.

joined his guerrilla actions after the dramatic overthrow of the peasant militias.[116] In October 1965, La Convención was again under a state of emergency and curfew. The Armed Forces showed off their helicopters and asked the population to collaborate in capturing the guerrilla members.[117] Soon afterwards, the police and the military killed the MIR members and sent many peasants to prison. Rojas argues that peasants joined the MIR, but the number of peasant casualties is unknown because their bodies were never found after the army's prolonged occupation of the zone.[118]

There is no evidence of peasant women's involvement in the MIR's armed actions in La Convención or within the MIR itself. This does not mean that the MIR did not attract support from peasant women. On 15 October 1962, *El Sol* reported on a rally described as 'the biggest peasant demonstration ever held [in La Convención]', where around 10,000 peasants gathered to welcome pro-Fidelista MIR leader Luis de la Puente Uceda.[119] Leaders from the FTC, the FEPCACYL and the University Student Federation participated, with Carmela Giraldo being the only woman to speak at the rally. According to this report, she criticised the APRA and the government, demanding agrarian reform and the liberation of Hugo Blanco. Although Carmela's participation in welcoming de La Puente is not an indication of her participation in MIR military actions, it shows that some peasant leaders (men and women) viewed the MIR in a positive light.

The Fourth Phase: The Velasco Regime and the Consolidation of the Classist Revolution

'The primary outcome of the peasants' rebellion in La Convención was the defeat of the *hacendados*', a defiant Cosme Huamán told me when I talked to him in the FEPCACYL office.[120] In fact, Cosme and his peasant comrades' uprisings helped create the conditions for the passage of the first Peruvian agrarian reform (1962), which changed the land tenure system in the province, ordering land redistribution amongst peasants and the elimination of pre-capitalist labour relations. However, it was arbitrarily implemented. Although this first agrarian reform did not fulfil peasants' expectations or needs, it diminished the *hacendados*' economic and political power, which then disappeared entirely in 1969 when the revolutionary government of Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–75) passed a more radical agrarian reform. Both reforms allowed the creation of agrarian cooperatives, which brought economic and social dynamism to peasants because they could finally work their land and trade independently of the *hacendados*. As these cooperatives became politically and economically powerful, peasants and *arrendires* of La Convención included them as FEPCACYL affiliate organisations. Today, the FEPCACYL remains the emblematic organisation of La Convención.

[116] *El Sol*, 'Diez mil en mitin campesino', 15 Oct. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 1.
[117] *El Sol*, 'Toque de queda hay en la provincia de La Convención', 6 Oct. 1965, *El Sol*, p. 5.
[118] Rojas, *La revolución de los arrendires*.
[119] *El Sol*, 'Diez mil en mitin campesino', 15 Oct. 1962, *El Sol*, p. 1.
[120] Author's interview with Cosme Huamán, 30 Oct. 2019.

Women's aspirations for radical change in La Convención did not end with the defeat of the *hacendados*. Aiming to finally eliminate haciendas from the province, they backed Juan Velasco Alvarado's revolutionary government. In the main square of La Convención in October 1970, Carmela Giraldo, as a member of the FEPCACYL and on behalf of the Committee for the Defence of the Peruvian Revolution (Comité de Apoyo a la Revolución Peruana), praised the socio-economic transformation carried out by the Velasco regime. Carmela became a supporter of this regime because her loyalty was to peasant liberation, which Velasco had explicitly proposed. Her endorsement was not difficult or controversial because, after the division of the PCP into pro-Soviet and pro-Maoist factions, she had remained in the pro-Soviet PCP, which backed Velasco.[121]

In its effort to include women in the Velasco revolution, the military bureaucracy also created a Provincial Women's Committee for the Defence of the Peruvian Revolution, and it appointed Mary Miranda Valdivia as mayor of the Maranura district.[122] The available sources do not offer more information about who she was or why the regime appointed her to that position. In a letter she sent to *El Sol* newspaper, she thanked the revolutionary government for entrusting her with the position, arguing that as a 'revolutionary *militante*', she acted for the benefit of others.[123] This is the only information we have on her activities. Her letter shows, however, that by this time in La Convención, women from different backgrounds and diverse positions, such as Carmela Giraldo and Mary Miranda, were supporting the revolutionary government and aspiring to consolidate radical gains.

Still, a radical change in the status of indigenous peasant women had yet to be achieved.[124] As Carmen Deere and Magdalena Léon argue, although women fought for land, the agrarian reform did not grant land ownership to all.[125] Moreover, although women were granted the right to vote in 1955, this law only applied to literate women. Due to historical exclusion and poverty, most indigenous women were illiterate, meaning they remained excluded from official citizenship until 1979 when the new constitution introduced universal suffrage, evidence that the Peruvian nation-state had marginalised peasant indigenous women because of their class, race and gender.[126]

[121] *El Sol*, 'Recordaron aniversario de la revolución peruana', 7 Oct. 1970, *El Sol*, p. 5.

[122] Juan Valencia, 'Informe Practica Profesional', unpublished professional report, Instituto Superior de Educación Pública Quillabamba, 2012.

[123] *El Sol*, 'Solicitada', 16 Jan. 1971, *El Sol*, p. 3.

[124] On Velasco's reforms oriented to address the oppression of indigenous peasant women, see Marco Barboza, 'La liberación de la mujer en el Perú de los 70's: una perspectiva de género y estado', unpubl. MA diss., Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2013.

[125] Carmen Deere and Magdalena Léon, 'Mujeres, derecho a la tierra y contrareformas en América Latina', Paper prepared for the 20th Latin American Congress of the Association of Latin American States (LASA) held in Guadalajara, Mexico, between 17 and 19 April 1997.

[126] Sarah Radcliffe, 'Indigenous Women, Rights and the Nation-State in the Andes', in Nikki Craske and Maxine Molyneux (eds.), *Gender and the Politics of Rights and Democracy in Latin America* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 149–72.

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Conclusion

Looking at indigenous peasant women's everyday routines helps us to understand that the combination of their revolutionary and gender-traditional roles was vital to their liberation from the hacienda system and to their engagement in politics. Like women in Mexico, Nicaragua and Cuba, women in La Convención engaged in revolutionary actions by performing traditional and non-traditional gender roles. By engaging in unions, collective actions and armed militias, as well as fighting, striking, protesting, marching and providing logistics, peasant indigenous women challenged the exploitative hacienda system, contributed to the consolidation of their movement and expanded their roles in politics and society. While they did not make explicit feminist demands, their actions suggest a broader struggle for inclusion and recognition in the political sphere.[127] In La Convención, peasant women joined syndicalism to change their oppressive social structure, thereby inserting themselves into a Latin American revolutionary generation that aspired to transform the status quo in the entire continent.

Women's participation in La Convención's Classist Revolution provides elements to reflect the history of Latin America within global revolutionary projects and the Cold War. However, it is essential to underline that La Convención's peasant movement was not only prompted by external factors such as the Cuban Revolution or Communist and Trotskyist leaders. In Cusco, indigenous peasants had a tradition of rebellion that dated back to the uprising of Túpac Amaru II (1780) against the Spanish colonisers. This historical legacy, together with the Communist organisations of the 1920s and 1930s, facilitated the formation of a revolutionary temper as well as women's political activism. Likewise, the national and international revolutionary context of the 1960s reinvigorated their radical aspirations and provided crucial organisational and political insights, discourses and networks, a process in which crucial roles were played first by Communists and then by Trotskyists and men and women from peasant backgrounds.

By looking at peasant indigenous women's participation in the Classist Revolution, this article demonstrates that this revolution was not a monolithic movement, only driven by one leader or strategy. It shows that peasant indigenous women, alongside other prominent labour unionists, worked together to promote unions and demand agrarian reform. In contrast to male-centred accounts of this peasant movement, this article shows that through the FEPCACYL, Emiliano Huamantica, Hugo Blanco and Cosme Huamán, as well as Carmela Giraldo, María Luisa Bedoya, Victoria Candia Quiñones and other lesser-known and still unknown leaders, both men and women, inspired, led and embodied the Classist Revolution.

Unlike other revolutionary contexts where women's contributions were more explicitly recognised, the women of La Convención often remained marginalised in historical accounts. Thus, this article not only reveals how indigenous women's contributions shaped the trajectory of the La Convención uprising but also allows us to question

[127] Peasant indigenous women began to advocate for gender-based agendas in the 1980s. See Sarah Radcliffe, 'Multiple Identities and Negotiation over Gender: Female Peasant Union Leaders in Peru', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 9: 2 (1990), pp. 229–47.

the representation of this movement as a project of only men from urban and mestizo backgrounds. This version has meant local peasant leaders were rendered invisible and never received their deserved recognition. It has erased women from this history – a paradox since this was one of the few processes from below that Peru experienced during the twentieth century in which oppressed peasants challenged and eventually defeated the oppressive hacienda system. In conclusion, recognising women's roles in La Convención's Classist Revolution enriches our understanding of peasant movements in Latin America and reveals new insights into the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity and class in twentieth-century revolutionary projects.

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Mujeres campesinas peruanas y movimientos revolucionarios: la revolución clasista de La Convención

Este artículo examina el papel crucial, aunque aún poco explorado, de las mujeres campesinas indígenas en la lucha por la reforma agraria y la liberación campesina durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX en América Latina. Enfocándose en el movimiento campesino de La Convención (Perú) y usando métodos históricos y antropológicos, el artículo plantea que las mujeres campesinas de La Convención estuvieron lejos de ser actoras periféricas. Por el contrario, ellas participaron activamente en sindicatos, diversas acciones colectivas e incluso milicias armadas, desempeñando roles de género tradicionales y no tradicionales para desafiar el sistema explotador de las haciendas y las jerarquías de género. El artículo también analiza el impacto de la Guerra Fría en su retórica, sus alianzas y su lucha más amplia por justicia social.

Palabras clave: historia de las mujeres; Perú; política latinoamericana; campesinas indígenas; revolución

Mulheres camponesas peruanas e movimentos revolucionários: a revolução classista de La Convención

Este artigo examina o papel crucial, porém pouco explorado, das mulheres camponesas indígenas na luta pela reforma agrária e pela libertação camponesa durante a segunda metade do século XX na América Latina. Concentrando-se e reexaminando o movimento camponês de La Convención (Peru) e empregando métodos históricos e antropológicos, argumenta-se que essas mulheres estavam longe de ser atores periféricos. Elas se engajaram ativamente em sindicatos, ações coletivas e até mesmo em milícias armadas, desempenhando papéis de gênero tradicionais e não tradicionais para desafiar o sistema explorador de fazendas e as hierarquias de gênero. O artigo também analisa o impacto da Guerra Fria em sua retórica, alianças e luta mais ampla por justiça social.

Palavras-chave: história das mulheres; Peru; política latino-americana; mulheres indígenas camponesas; revolução

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