

YELLOWS AGAINST REDS

Campesino Anticommunism in 1960s Ayacucho, Peru

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Abstract: Peasant activists affiliated with the Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP) seized the Pomacocha hacienda in Ayacucho in 1961. The invasion triggered over a decade of serious conflict between those peasants who supported local CCP activists and those who opposed them. The campesinos who challenged Pomacocha's CCP activists did so using the rhetoric of anticommunism, and they were in turn derided as "yellows," or conservatives. Peasant anticommunism stemmed from conflicts over money, religion, participation, and especially political rivalries, as the staunchest anticommunist peasants in the community belonged to the rival APRA party. The Pomacocha case shows that landowning elites, the church, government officials, and the military had no monopoly on the Cold War rhetoric of anticommunism; peasants likewise mobilized counterrevolutionary discourses to further their own interests. Ultimately, anticommunism allowed campesinos to pierce through the political neglect that characterized indigenous peasants' relationships with the twentieth-century Peruvian state.

In an urgent telegram to Ayacucho's prefect in May 1963, three indigenous peasant men declared that the "known communist Alberto Izarra" was instigating the residents of the Pomacocha hacienda to kill them on the grounds that "we don't obey communist orders."¹ The target of their complaint was a young law student born on the hacienda who was serving as secretary of press and propaganda for the Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP), the Peruvian Peasant Confederation. Two years earlier, Izarra had helped organize the successful invasion of the hacienda, and the rural estate remained in peasant hands when these three campesinos sent their telegram. The May 1963 telegram was only one of countless accusations of communist activity in Pomacocha over the course of the 1960s. Those accusations led to the arrests of dozens of Pomacocha campesinos and three militarized invasions of the community by police. Importantly, many of these allegations came from campesinos like the men quoted above, as Pomacocha's residents were deeply divided over the actions of local CCP activists. Political animosities inside the community not only led to Pomacocha's formal division into two separate communities but also resulted in the deaths of four

I thank Alicia Carrasco for research assistance and Gladys McCormick and the anonymous *LARR* reviewers for their tremendously helpful suggestions. Research for this article was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

1. Archivo Regional de Ayacucho (hereafter cited as ARA), Ex-Prefectura, telegram from Teobaldo Zanabria, Silvestre Palomino, and Marcelino Mallqui, May 17, 1963. All translations that appear in this article are my own.

Latin American Research Review, Vol. 50, No. 2. © 2015 by the Latin American Studies Association.

campesinos.² This article explores how and why indigenous peasants mobilized the Cold War rhetoric of anticommunism, challenging the work of local CCP activists in their community.

The pages that follow use the Pomacocha example to answer historian Gilbert M. Joseph's recent call (2007, 16, 19) for a rethinking of the Latin American Cold War "from within," working toward a social and cultural history that explores the "grassroots dynamics and meanings of the Latin American Cold War" (emphasis in original). Far removed from Moscow and Washington, the Peruvian countryside was not a famous theater of Cold War strife. Yet Cold War conflicts over ideology, power, and justice mattered deeply inside rural communities. Many indigenous peasants took up Cold War rhetoric and accusations to further their own personal, economic, and political interests, and many of their neighbors suffered significantly as a consequence. Indeed, the sharpest acts of state repression inside Pomacocha came as a result of local peasants' denunciations of communist activity.

Historian Sandra McGee Deutsch (1999) has noted that conservative, anti-revolutionary, and right-wing parties, groups, and movements inside twentieth-century Latin America have received scant academic attention despite their obvious power and prominence in the region. Deutsch's own work has done much to correct this imbalance, as have recent works by Margaret Power (2002) and Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta (2002). These fine studies, however, focus primarily on what Greg Grandin (2004, 8) deems the "counterrevolutionary coalition" of landowning elites, church leaders, industrialists, and the military. Although elites held no monopoly on counterrevolutionary sentiment, scholarship on anticommunism among popular sectors remains fragmented. Several historians have noted the prominence of anticommunism within Latin America's labor organizations (Carr 1992; Colistete 2012; Drinot 2012) and student movements (Grandin 2004). Turning attention to the countryside, a handful of scholars have explored concerted peasant opposition to revolutionary projects in Cuba (Guerra 2010), Mexico (Purnell 1999), and Nicaragua (Brown 2001; Hale 1994). This article builds on these studies of popular counterrevolutionary activity, examining why some peasants made the ideology of anticommunism central to their political lives.

Campesino anticommunism inside Pomacocha grew from serious disputes over money and religion and from intensely personal conflicts between community members. Anticommunist rhetoric and actions were also deeply rooted in politics: Pomacocha's most vocal anticommunist peasants belonged to the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), a party that had long competed with, and fought against, the Peruvian Communist Party. Historian Paulo Drinot (2012) has provided a groundbreaking discussion of the APRA's "Creole anti-Communism" during the 1930s, aptly noting that anticommunist sentiment among *apristas* and within Peru's labor movement was not a simple parroting of either United States foreign policy or Peruvian elites' views. This article extends

2. Prominent Bandera Roja activist Aracelio Castillo (1974) wrote about the Pomacocha case as did CCP activist and Pomacocha resident Pelayo Oré (1983), and the community's history is well known inside the department of Ayacucho.

Drinot's argument by shifting the gaze from the urban to the rural, showing the importance of grassroots anticommunism in Peru's countryside. Aprista peasants shared their party's strong anticommunist opinions and mobilized sharp anticommunist rhetoric to further their own local interests. Far from reverting to long-outdated formulas that cast peasants as inherently reactionary actors, careful consideration of campesino anticommunism allows us to see the complexity and diversity of peasants' political strategies. A focus on campesino anti-communism also responds to Grandin's (2010, 23) recommendation that scholars "acknowledge the dynamic nature of counterrevolution," exploring its appeal, power, and flexibility.

THE SEIZURE OF POMACOCHA

On October 12, 1961, peasants from the Ayacucho hacienda of Pomacocha forcibly evicted the administrators who lived on the estate. They took over the hacienda's main house, seized the warehouses, and took control of the cattle and pastures. These campesinos also expressed their unwillingness to do any work for—or pay any money to—the Santa Clara convent that owned the estate.³ The dramatic invasion followed nearly two decades of major disputes between the convent and the indigenous peasants who worked its estate, including a failed effort by campesinos to purchase the hacienda.⁴ The men and women who had lived and worked on the Pomacocha hacienda for generations believed themselves the rightful owners of the land, and they were unwilling to suffer further exploitation and abuse by the convent and the hacienda's administrators. Pomacocha's campesinos were not alone in their sentiments: the early 1960s witnessed wave after wave of rural land invasions by Peruvian peasants. The actions of these campesinos made land reform a reality, pushing President Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1963–1968) and the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (1968–1980) to introduce agrarian reform projects that ultimately dismantled the hacienda system in Peru.

The Confederación Campesina del Perú claimed the 1961 invasion as a victory won by both Pomacocha's campesinos and the CCP. The periodical *Bandera Roja* proclaimed that Pomacocha campesinos, "oriented by the Confederación Campesina del Perú and after prolonged struggles, freed themselves from centuries of exploitation and servitude."⁵ The connection between Pomacocha campesinos and the CCP began in Lima in 1959, just as the CCP was resuming its work after a decade of political inactivity.⁶ That year, Pomacocha men and women living in the country's capital formed a migrant association to safeguard and promote the interests of Pomacocha campesinos still living on the hacienda.⁷ One of those migrants was Alberto Izarra, a young law student at the University of San Mar-

3. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, report from David Malaga Jara, February 28, 1962, p. 2.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Bandera Roja* 4, May 1966, p. 7.

6. The CCP formed in 1947, but the onset of dictatorship the following year led to the CCP's functional disappearance until the end of the 1950s.

7. ARA, Subprefectura Cangallo (SC), Institutos Armados (IA): Oficio (Of.) no. 60, January 30, 1960.

cos. "Out of necessity," Izarra explained, "we linked ourselves with the Confederación Campesina del Perú."⁸ That association began largely because of Izarra's own connection to the lawyer Saturnino Paredes, the legal advisor to the CCP and the paramount figure within the peasant organization. As a law student, Izarra spent a great deal of time in Paredes's Lima law office, working as an apprentice lawyer. Izarra assumed an active role in the CCP, serving as secretary of press and propaganda, and inside Pomacocha, Izarra helped establish a local peasant union that would lead the 1961 land invasion.⁹

Izarra was not the only one in Pomacocha to develop close ties with the CCP. Pelayo Oré was invited to the CCP's second congress in 1962, and there, the teenage Oré was named secretary of youth.¹⁰ Another young Pomacocha man soon became involved in the organization: Pastor Palomino affiliated with the CCP when he returned to Pomacocha after completing his obligatory military service.¹¹ Izarra, Oré, and Palomino became key leaders in Pomacocha's struggles during the 1960s. As we will see, authorities and local opponents routinely singled out these three men, blaming them for nefarious leftist activities on the invaded hacienda. These men also worked closely with Manuel Llamojha Mitma, an indigenous peasant activist from Ayacucho who became secretary general of the CCP in 1962. There were, however, many other Pomacocha peasants who struggled alongside Izarra, Oré, and Palomino and who were similarly accused of communist activities. Although these individuals were not official members of the CCP, they were certainly sympathetic to its work.¹²

The October 1961 invasion triggered much outrage, and angry denunciations by Santa Clara nuns, provincial authorities, and members of the civil guard flooded departmental and national government offices. These denunciations almost always featured accusations of communist activity. Writing to the minister of state, Santa Clara's nuns called for state intervention against the campesinos who had seized the Pomacocha estate "by force, under the direction of communist elements." The nuns blamed the invasion on Alberto Izarra, Pastor Palomino, and six other campesinos who were "carrying out the directions of communist elements from Lima, Cuzco, and this city." The nuns also urged the minister to arrest the men and "to transport them to distant places, to avoid the unwholesome campaign of the contamination of communism."¹³

The provincial subprefect likewise built his criticisms around accusations of communism. The subprefect labeled Pomacocha campesinos "addicts of communism" in his August 1965 report to the director general of government and municipalities. He added that CCP secretary-general Manuel Llamojha Mitma, "who is of the communist partisan tendency," was actively involved with "those of the

8. Alberto Izarra, interview, September 28, 2011, Lima. The interviews with Alberto Izarra and Pelayo Oré were conducted by Alicia Carrasco, utilizing scripted interview questions I had prepared in advance.

9. Izarra interview.

10. Pelayo Oré, interview, August 11, 2011, Lima.

11. Pastor Palomino, interview by author, June 25, 2011, Lima.

12. Oré interview.

13. Proyecto Especial de Titulación de Tierras (PETT), Pomacocha, February 27, 1963.

communist tendency located on the Pomacocha hacienda.¹⁴ Members of the civil guard used similar language. One civil guard lieutenant spoke of Pomacocha's "red extremists," while a lieutenant commander denounced the community's CCP leaders as having "communist ideas" and "communist tendencies."¹⁵ Following a 1962 visit to Pomacocha, a civil guard lieutenant reported that local peasant activists had painted hammers and sickles, along with the words "POMACOCHA COMUNISTA," on walls and eucalyptus trees that faced the road leading out of the area.¹⁶

These accusations of communism from landowners, civil guards, and government authorities hardly amount to proof of communist activity inside Pomacocha. These kinds of denunciations were often spurious, as elites across Latin America routinely mobilized the specter of communism to discredit peasants' social justice struggles, regardless of whether or not the accused peasants actually belonged to, or worked with, a communist political party. In the Pomacocha case, however, there were some significant, if indirect, connections between local CCP activists and the Peruvian Communist Party. Although none of Pomacocha's CCP activists—with the exception of Pelayo Oré—expressly self-identified as Communists in documents or in our interviews, the links between the CCP and the Peruvian Communist Party were strong.¹⁷ The CCP was not officially affiliated with the Peruvian Communist Party, but the CCP's legal advisor, Saturnino Paredes, was a prominent member of the Peruvian Communist Party, and when the organization split into pro-China and pro-Soviet parties in 1964, Paredes served as the leader of the Maoist party, the Peruvian Communist Party–Bandera Roja. While Paredes did not officially lead the Confederación Campesina, he dominated the peasant organization, and many Peruvian political activists felt he tacitly controlled it (Ranque 1992).¹⁸

Several of Pomacocha's CCP activists also had ties to the Frente de Liberación Nacional (FLN), the National Liberation Front. The FLN was a political entity that emerged in 1962, after the Peruvian Communist Party recommended the creation of a moderate electoral front to unite Peruvian progressives. Although the connections between the FLN and the Peruvian Communist Party were muted, those ties were clear: the FLN's secretary general was also a member of the Communist Party (Ranque 1992). The strongest Pomacocha tie to the FLN came from CCP secretary-general Manuel Llamojha Mitma, who helped organize Pomacocha's peasants. Although Llamojha maintains that he was never a member of the Communist Party, he did run for the Peruvian Chamber of Deputies in 1962 as a candidate for the FLN. The Lima newspaper *Expresso* reported that Pomacocha leader

14. ARA, SC, Prefectura, August 20, 1965.

15. ARA, SC, Fuerzas Armadas, Informe 18, October 1, 1967; ARA, SC, IA, Informe 17, November 28, 1962.

16. ARA, SC, Vilcashuamán, Of. 6, March 6, 1962.

17. Oré interview.

18. The CCP broke into three rival factions in 1973: one that remained loyal to Paredes, one controlled by Vanguardia Revolucionaria, and one led by Manuel Llamojha Mitma. For a brief period between 1973 and 1975, members of the Peruvian Communist Party–Shining Path participated in the CCP faction led by Llamojha Mitma.

Pastor Palomino was likewise a member of the FLN, and a Pomacocha peasant activist named Teobaldo Zanabria was also a member of the front.¹⁹ These connections all suggest that while Pomacocha's CCP activists may not have been formal members of the Peruvian Communist Party, they were only a few political steps removed from that organization.

CAMPESINO ANTICOMMUNISM

The actions of Pomacocha's CCP activists certainly enjoyed broad approval inside the community. Pastor Palomino remembered that "hundreds and hundreds" of campesinos participated in the seizure of the hacienda, and Pomacocha's CCP activists won enthusiastic and enduring support from many campesinos during the difficult years that followed the invasion.²⁰ To give just one example, in June 1968, dozens of Pomacocha campesinos protested against the repeated casting of local CCP activists as communist wrongdoers. Their handwritten letter stressed that these "true sons of our *pueblo*" were citizens of an "impeccable moral solvency" who had "always worried for the progress and uplift of our pueblo; all of this always done within legal norms."²¹

But although support for the CCP's local activists was significant inside Pomacocha, it was far from complete. Many of the campesinos who worked on the Pomacocha hacienda were deeply opposed to the CCP-sponsored invasion and subsequent efforts to organize the community. That opposition was present from the very day of the invasion. CCP activist and Pomacocha leader Pelayo Oré remembered that a group of campesinos was particularly loyal to the hacienda. He explained, "We declared them *amarillos* [yellows]. We dressed the traitor men in women's clothes, and made them go around the main plaza as a public punishment."²² Alberto Izarra offered a similar description of those who objected to the work of Pomacocha's CCP activists. He explained, "You know that in every movement, not everyone is united, there are dissidents. They were called yellows. Those people didn't want the revolutionary peasant movement of agrarian reform without payment. And for that reason, they tried to avoid and undermine the organization."²³ Both Oré and Izarra utilized the political label "yellow," invoking a term that Peruvians have used to signify conservative political actors since at least the 1930s, as was done in Europe and in other Latin American countries (Arnold 1999; French 1992, 25).²⁴

Pomacocha's "yellow" campesinos opposed the community's CCP activists for several reasons, and while they routinely deployed accusations of communism, their motives were not always strictly ideological. Economics drove much of this campesino anticommunism. The indigenous campesino Ponciano Bautista, for example, was serving as one of the hacienda's administrators at the time

19. *Expreso*, March 27, 1962, p. 9. Zanabria's membership in the FLN is noted in Degregori (2010, 12).

20. Palomino interview.

21. ARA, Corte Superior de Justicia Cangallo Penal (CSJCP), 1968, legajo (leg). 40, #75, folio (fol.) 44.

22. Oré interview.

23. Izarra interview.

24. I thank Paulo Drinot for this insight.

of the 1961 invasion. He earned a living partly from his work for the hacienda, and it is not surprising that he quickly became one of the most outspoken critics of Pomacocha's CCP activists (Oré 1983, 53). Other economic concerns stemmed from local CCP activists' demands for money and their aggressive threats of retaliation if that money was not forthcoming. Many of these concerns came from peasants who labored on the hacienda's lands but lived in the neighboring community of Vilcashuamán. The treasurer of Vilcashuamán's campesino association protested that just three days after the Pomacocha invasion, he received word that Pomacocha's CCP leaders expected the hacienda's Vilcashuamán tenants to provide 5,000 *soles* (Peru's monetary unit) to help offset expenses linked to the invasion. Should Vilcashuamán tenants fail to provide that money, Pomacocha's campesinos would prevent the Vilcashuamán tenants from planting their Pomacocha terrains and would seize their cattle.²⁵

These disputes over money—and the threats linked to nonpayment—continued for months after the invasion. On February 11, 1962, several Pomacocha peasants penned a letter to the Vilcashuamán peasant committee. The signatories explained that they were united in their displeasure at the Vilcashuamán committee's "lack of cooperation in our struggles, nonattendance at assemblies, lack of cooperation in economic expenses and others." They agreed that if the Vilcashuamán committee did not "complete its duties," then Pomacocha's local peasant organization would "proceed to recover all the plantings and the lands."²⁶ A few days later, Alberto Izarra and approximately eighty Pomacocha peasants marched into the Vilcashuamán central plaza shouting "Land, liberty, death!" Once a group of Vilcashuamán peasants had gathered, the political display began. "Knives up!" Izarra shouted. The Pomacocha campesinos complied, punching the air with their knives. "Sticks up!" and the sticks shot up; "slingshots up!" and up they went. The threatening display prefaced a demand for payment of 10,000 soles to cover costs incurred by Pomacocha's peasant leaders in Lima.²⁷ Vilcashuamán campesina Eufrosina Medrano Munaylla remembered these events, and she testified that the Pomacocha peasants also threatened to "take ownership of their women" should Vilcashuamán campesinos fail to pay.²⁸ Several Pomacocha campesinos also blocked the bridge over the local river, thus shutting down access to the provincial capital of Cangallo. These actions led the governor of Vilcashuamán and several representatives of Vilcashuamán's peasant committee to petition the minister of government and the national director of police. These men explained that Pomacocha's campesinos were threatening their lives and material interests as retribution for Vilcashuamán campesinos' failure to endorse the "mindlessly destructive attitude [and] illicit appropriation of the hacienda."²⁹

25. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, *manifestación* de Siviriano Flores, February 20, 1962.

26. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter to the President of the Subcommittee of the Campesinos of Vilcashuamán, February 11, 1962.

27. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, report from David Malaga, February 28, 1962, p. 4.

28. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, *manifestación* de Eufrosina Medrano, February 20, 1962.

29. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Meza Palomino, Delgado Quispe, Octavio Baez and Antonio Aguilar, February 11, 1962.

Without question, local CCP activists' coercive demands for money generated much campesino opposition and anger.

Religion likewise drove campesino anticommunism. Not only did many campesinos associate communism with atheism, they also saw the seizure of the convent-owned Pomacocha hacienda as a slight against the Catholic Church. Florencio Huamanchao, a Pomacocha peasant serving in the Peruvian military, got into a fistfight with local CCP activist Pastor Palomino in September 1963. Huamanchao reported that he had been assaulted by Palomino, punched in the nose, knocked to the ground, and kicked while down, all while Palomino said, "*vivas* to the communists, to Castro, and to Cuba." As Huamanchao described it, the fight began over issues of masculinity and religion: Palomino "vociferated that he was very manly as the president of the Pomacocha Society, that God didn't exist."³⁰ Predictably enough, those loyal to Palomino offered a decidedly different portrayal of the events, but they too noted the place of religion in the fight. One such witness testified that an inebriated Huamanchao accused Palomino of being a thief who did not believe in God and did not respect priests.³¹

Personal animosities also factored into peasant accusations of communism. A campesina named Tomasa Fernández accused two of her neighbors of burning one of her fields after she refused to let them into her home, as the men "always come to my house to disrespect me." She stated that those two men "always join up with the renegade communists Luis Delgado Crisóstomo and Pastor Palomino Salvatierra." She added that the night of the fire, there was a party in "the home of the communist Luis Delgado," and she speculated that Delgado and his "comrades" had agreed to set the fire at that party.³² Disputes over local misdeeds also fueled much anger and often spiraled into heated accusations of communism. Pomacocha campesino Luis Delgado insisted that several of the men who labeled him a communist did so only because they themselves stood accused of stealing money from Pomacocha's pro-CCP peasant union.³³ The ever-shifting loyalties, friendships, and animosities so common inside small communities also help explain the urgent telegram that opened this article. The same men who accused local CCP activist Alberto Izarra of communism and death threats in 1963 were closely allied with Pomacocha's CCP activists at other moments in time.³⁴

Without question, the most heated anticommunist words and actions from Pomacocha campesinos had a pointed political basis: loyalty to Peru's American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, or APRA, party. A significant number of Pomacocha's indigenous campesinos considered themselves apristas and adopted their party's anticommunist ideas and rhetoric. Communists and apristas had a long and bitter history of antipathy and rivalry throughout Peru, stretching all the way back to the 1920s, when APRA founder Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre

30. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Florencio Huamanchao, September 25, 1963.

31. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, manifestación de Hernán Vega, October 19, 1963.

32. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Tomasa Fernández, July 2, 1967.

33. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, manifestación de Luis Delgado, May 20, 1967.

34. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, telegram from Teobaldo Zanabria, Silvestre Palomino, and Marcelino Mallqui, May 17, 1963.

began critiquing Soviet communism (Drinot 2012, 3).³⁵ The tensions between the parties heightened during the 1930s and 1940s as the two organizations struggled for control over the Peruvian labor movement and for local political power (Balbi 1980; Drinot 2012; Heilman 2012). APRA, which was once an important populist and anti-imperialist party, had grown decidedly conservative by the 1960s. While the animosity between the two parties is well known, the literature on aprista-communist struggles has focused almost exclusively on Peru's cities and the urban labor movement. Yet apristas and communists also competed in the countryside through rival peasant organizations. The APRA's FENCAP, or National Federation of Peasants, challenged the communist-dominated CCP for national influence among campesinos, and leaders of both organizations sharply denounced each other.³⁶ The two parties' rivalry for political power and influence in the countryside reached down to the local level, with both aprista and CCP activists forming unions inside various Peruvian peasant communities (Craig 1967, 44). Pomacocha itself was home to both an aprista peasant union and a pro-CCP union.

The Pomacocha case further reveals that the struggle between apristas and Communists in the countryside was about more than just ideology or a contest for local power. The struggle also involved starkly different visions of agrarian reform. Pomacocha CCP activist and self-professed communist Pelayo Oré explained that "the problem was that, for our part, we posited that it should be an authentic agrarian reform, without payment. A revolutionary struggle driven by the organized masses. But the other sector of Pomacocha itself, they were very loyal, close to the hacienda, and they divided us, led by the aprista movement, explaining that even if it was just a small piece of land, it had to be paid for."³⁷ One of those aprista peasants—former hacienda administrator Ponciano Bautista—likewise stressed differing visions of agrarian reform as the basis of the conflict. He explained that he and his allies wanted the expropriated Pomacocha lands to be divided into individual parcels, but that their local enemies opposed such parceling "as a consequence of their communist line," wanting the land to instead be worked and shared communally.³⁸ As Bautista's words reveal, Pomacocha's apristas were not opposed to the basic concept of agrarian reform. After political tensions led to the killing of one of their allies in 1969, these men called for formal land reform as a way to end the violence. As they explained it, official adjudication of the invaded land would put an end to the "trite 'Land or Death, We Will Win!' slogan" that has been a "battle slogan for those who only want to sow chaos and general disorder."³⁹

The fact that apristas challenged the process and shape—but not the ulti-

35. The Peruvian Socialist Party formed in 1928 and changed its name to the Peruvian Communist Party in 1930.

36. *Bandera Roja* 1, no. 3 (December 2, 1963), 2.

37. Oré interview. Oré was the only Pomacocha CCP activist to assert his active involvement in *Bandera Roja* during our interviews.

38. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 58, #107, fol. 21.

39. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Ponciano Bautista, Telésforo Palomino, and Evaristo Palomino, August 27, 1969.

mate goal—of agrarian reform is crucial. Deutsch (1999, 3) notes that, contrary to popular belief, members of Latin America's diverse right-wing movements did not always wholly oppose the poor's struggles for better economic lives. Instead, rightists staunchly disapproved of the violence and upheaval associated with those struggles. Pomacocha's apristas wanted agrarian reform, but they wanted a reform that was controlled and orderly. They also wanted an agrarian reform that would best suit their personal economic interests: a reform defined by private parcels of individually held land, rather than the communal ownership championed by the CCP and the Peruvian Communist Party.

Inside Pomacocha, political tensions between apristas and CCP supporters spiked in 1966, with the arrival in Pomacocha of an aprista peasant named Andrés Calderón Vizcarra. Invited into the community by two local apristas, Calderón moved to Pomacocha from the northern province of Trujillo and married into the community. Alberto Izarra explained Calderón's arrival in Pomacocha, stating that "the APRA sent a *búfalo* [thug]. . . . They brought him so that they could persuade the campesinos, claiming that there was communism in Pomacocha."⁴⁰ Other Pomacocha campesinos described Calderón as a "mercenary agent, provocateur, trained in the shock schools of APRA, that is, a paid killer."⁴¹ Even the local district governor blamed much of Pomacocha's political tensions on Calderón, commenting that Calderón "is the one who foments divisionism, hatred, and tends to propagate his politics (APRA) through fights and arrogance."⁴²

The animosity between Pomacocha's apristas and local CCP activists led to heated political denunciations. An aprista campesino named Isidro Oré, for example, testified that he had not earlier reported a theft of community funds "for fear of being tortured, because at that time, [the community] was dominated by agitators," and he "assumed that they had used said money to purchase arms for the militias they wanted to form." He also stressed that he wanted those agitators brought to justice, for they had "tortured various residents of Pomacocha for not uniting with their politics of violence."⁴³ A campesino named Máximo Palomino made a similar accusation, while local aprista leader Andrés Calderón accused Pomacocha's CCP activists of communist activities and participation in the ranks of guerrilla forces that had launched armed struggle in Peru in 1965.⁴⁴ Pomacocha's apristas also became the subjects of complaints. Eighty-eight Pomacocha campesinos who belonged to the local pro-CCP peasant union charged that local aprista leaders "insulted, provoked, hit, and threatened residents. In this way, these few elements introduced disquiet, division, fights, and violence among the peaceful residents."⁴⁵

The conflicts between apristas and those loyal to the CCP grew so severe that Pomacocha literally split in two. Because local apristas had their strongest base of support in an area of the community historically known as Upper Pomacocha while CCP activists had the support of campesinos living in the area known as

40. Izarra interview.

41. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 58, #107, fol. 175.

42. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Diomedes Ayala, August 20, 1968.

43. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 31, #82, fol. 2.

44. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 43, #110, fol. 31.

45. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, "Denuncia atropellos y muertes," Pomacocha, March 5, 1969.

Lower Pomacocha, and because the conflicts between the groups had reached severe proportions, a commission from the Ministry of Labor and Communities officially divided Pomacocha in 1966.⁴⁶ Subprefect Eitel López explained that the “grave conflicts” between the residents of the upper and lower neighborhoods had brought “fatal consequences” and had created “serious problems for the government,” requiring police intervention to maintain order. The subprefect further noted that formal division of Pomacocha was “the only way to stifle disorder.”⁴⁷

The division formalized a long-standing split in the community: pre-Inka communities throughout Peru had often divided into upper and lower sectors, reflecting notions of intrinsic complementarity, and Pomacocha was no exception.⁴⁸ There was also a history of animosity between upper and lower sectors of Pomacocha, with conflicts dating back to 1950, if not earlier.⁴⁹ There is no question, however, that the 1966 division of Pomacocha into upper and lower communities was based on political disputes. A number of Upper Pomacocha residents labeled their community *aprista*, and others explained that the sectorization owed to their desire “to avoid the serious troubles that were taking place with Pomacocha’s lower sector because this lower barrio was led by some communist leaders.”⁵⁰ Lower Pomacocha campesino and CCP sympathizer Luis Delgado, in turn, explained that Pomacocha had suffered division based upon “political criteria” and “ideological discrepancy,” labeling Upper Pomacocha staunchly *aprista* and claiming (strategically) that Lower Pomacocha was loyal to then-president Fernando Belaúnde’s *Acción Popular* party.⁵¹

The 1966 division failed to reduce tensions between the two Pomacochas. Disputes between Upper and Lower Pomacocha residents over land and resources continued apace, leading the district governor to report that the official divide had “created even greater divisionism and separation” and that “the pueblo of Pomacocha finds itself in constant distress and fights.”⁵² Making the difficult situation even more problematic, there were many campesinos living in Upper Pomacocha who sympathized more with local CCP activists than with the *apristas* who dominated their community.⁵³ As Pelayo Oré explained it, “the majority of the pueblo wanted their land. But the others, they always brought us to the police, they denounced us, everything was linked to them, the yellows.”⁵⁴

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANTICOMMUNISM

Anticommunism—from both inside and outside of Pomacocha—had serious ramifications for Pomacocha campesinos. At the most basic level, many Poma-

46. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Jesús Palomino and Víctor Palomino, August 18, 1967.

47. ARA, SC, Prefectura, Informe 19, June 12, 1972.

48. Izarra interview.

49. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Paulino Quispe, December 11, 1950.

50. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 43, #110, fol. 41–42; ARA, CSJCP, leg. 47, #1, fol. 7.

51. ARA, CSJCP, leg. no. 40, #75, fol. 28.

52. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Diosmedes Ayala, August 20, 1968.

53. ARA, SC, Fuerzas Armadas, Informe 18, October 1, 1967.

54. Oré interview.

cocha peasants found themselves accused of communist activity at a historical moment when such accusations carried the risk of imprisonment. Pomacocha peasants Gerónimo Huilca and Ismael Palomino made this point in a 1971 letter, pressing for their release from prison. They insisted that the only thing Pomacocha campesinos struggled for was to “*recover and work the lands that always belonged to us, for respect for our rights, justice, and progress of the pueblo*” (emphasis in original). But, these two men explained, the authorities never listened. “On the contrary, they labeled us ‘guerrillas’, ‘agitators’, ‘communists’ or ‘invaders’, they sent guards, to jail us and pursue us.”⁵⁵

Accusations of communism also brought sharp curtailments of peasants’ ability to organize. Worried about communist activity in Pomacocha, the provincial subprefect instructed civil guards to dissolve any meetings inside Pomacocha that did not have his express permission, justifying his decision on the basis of long-standing laws that forbade meetings by indigenous peasants unless formally authorized by regional or national authorities.⁵⁶ Ayacucho’s prefect used this same rationale to prohibit the planned First Convention of Campesinos from Cangallo Province, scheduled to take place in Pomacocha on March 25, 1962. According to a flyer, the planned convention aimed to “search for a solution to the multiple problems that confront our pueblos and . . . denounce all of the abuses, outrages, and exactions contrary to justice.” Convention organizers also planned to use the convention to establish a “Provincial Federation of Campesinos of Cangallo,” which would then be affiliated with the national CCP.⁵⁷ Acting on advice from an Ayacucho congressional deputy, the department prefect prohibited the planned convention, issuing a resolution that outlawed the convention on the grounds that its organizers had not received authorization for the meeting from the Ministry of Labor’s Bureau of Indian Affairs.⁵⁸ The prefect further justified the prohibition, asserting that “the Indians of Pomacocha” were falsely invoking claims about rural betterment when, in fact, their “ends are purely demagogic and of a political character.”⁵⁹

The cancelled 1962 convention was not an isolated example. Indeed, provincial and departmental authorities worked to stifle almost all organizational efforts by Pomacocha campesinos. Authorities quashed Pomacocha peasants’ plans for a rescheduled provincial convention, despite the congress organizers’ attempts to seek official authorization from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.⁶⁰ Officials even tried to block routine meetings by Pomacocha peasants. Pomacocha campesino Luis Delgado, for example, was questioned by civil guards in May 1967 and accused of “carrying out clandestine meetings, with the end that people rebel against every principle of authority, that they should appropriate the terrains and the crops.”⁶¹ Delgado countered that the gatherings were strictly

55. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 43, #110, fol. 475.

56. ARA, SC, IA 1962, Of. no. 21, March 14, 1962.

57. ARA, SC, IA 1962. Undated flyer “Comunicado a los pueblos de Cangallo.”

58. *Expreso*, March 27, 1962, p. 9.

59. ARA, SC, Prefectura, March 21, 1962.

60. *Sierra*, año 26, no. 524, April 1962, p. 4.

61. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, manifestación de Luis Delgado, May 20, 1967.

apolitical, and that participants always notified the civil guard post before proceeding with the meetings.⁶² Civil guards also made numerous visits to the hacienda to monitor peasants' political activities.⁶³ Anticommunism in effect led to significant restrictions on peasants' ability to organize or even just gather together.

Accusations of communism also led to militarized intervention in Pomacocha. In November 1964, over a dozen civil guards—known colloquially as *rangers*—stormed into Pomacocha “at the point of submachine guns,” as Pelayo Oré remembered.⁶⁴ Alberto Izarra explained that the “rangers came to repress and destroy the organization. They committed abuses against the women, against the men, there were so many arrests.”⁶⁵ Crucially, the 1964 raid happened because of accusations of communist activity from Pomacocha campesinos themselves. Pastor Palomino explained that the repression came because of an unsigned report “saying that there were guerrillas there, that there were abuses against people’s individual rights. Always, in every organization there is no shortage of traitors. They are the ones who made this denunciation.”⁶⁶ Pelayo Oré made the same claim, writing that “the yellows sent a denunciation to the Chamber of Deputies” accusing Pomacocha’s leaders of trying to “organize and train the campesinos in a ‘guerrilla war.’”⁶⁷ The national newspaper *La Prensa* offered a similar story. The paper warned that “armed communists have taken over the Pomacocha hacienda . . . and are subjugating the campesinos using violence, without allowing any liberty at all.” The story also explained that the Chamber of Deputies had launched an investigation, spurred on by “the numerous denunciations of peasants who fled the area.”⁶⁸

Although the rangers soon retreated from Pomacocha, continuing accusations of communist activity from local campesinos brought renewed arrests and interventions.⁶⁹ Peasant denunciations, for example, led to the arrest, imprisonment, and torture of Pomacocha CCP activist Pastor Palomino in April 1966. Palomino recalled, “The torture came every night. . . . Interrogating me. Where are the weapons? [Claiming] that I had organized guerrillas there. Totally false. It was totally false. It was slander from my enemies.”⁷⁰ A few weeks after Palomino’s arrest, civil guards returned to Pomacocha. On May 18, 1966, fifty police stormed into Pomacocha, taking more than twenty campesinos prisoner. According to *Bandera Roja*, the “signal for combat” was an aprista congressional deputy’s parliamentary denunciation of the “terrible ‘communist’ threat” posed by Pomacocha *comuneros*.⁷¹ Following the arrests, civil guards remained in Pomacocha, turning the commu-

62. *Ibid.*

63. PETT Pomacocha, November 28, 1962, Informe 17-SS.

64. Oré interview.

65. Izarra interview.

66. Palomino interview.

67. Oré, “Reforma Agraria Revolucionaria,” 64.

68. *La Prensa*, año 62, no. 26675, July 15, 1965, p. 17.

69. Civil guards retreated from the community when faced with concerted opposition from local campesinos. Oré interview.

70. *Ibid.*

71. *Bandera Roja* 4, July 1966, p. 5.

nity's girls' school into their base.⁷² Two pro-CCP Pomacocha campesinos further reflected on the ties between apristas in Pomacocha and Lima, lamenting that because apristas in Congress and in the newspaper *La Tribuna* had labeled them "communists, guerrillas, etc." they were facing "banditry, assault, violence, abuse, [and] outrages" from "a miniscule group of thugs" inside Pomacocha who were guided by Lima apristas.⁷³ In 1966, as in 1964, aprista campesinos' denunciations of communism found sympathy from APRA politicians in Lima, just as Lima apristas' anticommunist denunciations inspired and emboldened Pomacocha's aprista peasants.

National authorities' attention to campesinos' denunciations of communism broke with standard practices of rule inside Peru. Elsewhere I have shown that indigenous peasants in twentieth-century Peru suffered under state policies of abandon and neglect; regional and national authorities usually left campesinos' constant complaints unheeded (Heilman 2010). Yet the same was not true with campesino accusations of communism in Pomacocha: APRA congressmen listened to those accusations and pressed for swift action. With anticommunism, peasants found a political language that captured the attention of state officials and brought quick and dramatic intervention in their community. It is not surprising, then, that numerous Pomacocha campesinos used the discourse of anticommunism so readily. Unlike so many of campesinos' other political pleas, demands couched in anticommunist rhetoric actually worked.

State officials' attention to campesinos' anticommunist charges contrasted sharply with their continuing inattention to complaints made by Pomacocha's pro-CCP peasants. That inattention, in turn, sparked dramatic vigilante justice. Many Pomacocha campesinos filed bitter complaints about the civil guard presence established in their community after the 1966 raid, arguing that the police aided local aprista campesinos in their misdeeds and actively impeded communal labor.⁷⁴ Those complaints, however, brought no changes and pushed Pomacocha's pro-CCP peasants to make their own justice. Hundreds of pro-CCP campesinos thus tore down the building set to become the new civil guard post, taking the adobe bricks to the local cemetery.⁷⁵ And when civil guards beat one of Pomacocha's most prominent CCP activists, Pelayo Oré, campesinos actually forced the guards out of the community. On a Thursday afternoon in June 1968, a civil guard commander began beating Oré during an interrogation. When Oré's mother tried to intervene, one of the civil guards shoved her away and she was severely injured as a consequence.⁷⁶ Soon thereafter, approximately three hundred Pomacocha peasants stormed the civil guard post, forcing the police to flee the community.⁷⁷

Pro-CCP campesinos saw the retreat as a victory; Pomacocha's aprista peas-

72. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 48, #1, fol. 1; Oré, "Reforma Agraria Revolucionaria," 69.

73. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, letter from Esteban Fernández and Ismael Palomino, October 11, 1966.

74. *Ibid.*

75. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 38, #50.

76. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 48, #1, fol. 1.

77. ARA, CSJCP, leg 58, #107, fol. 21.

ants saw the police withdrawal as a disaster.⁷⁸ The community's most outspoken aprista anticommunists, Andrés Calderón and Ponciano Bautista, complained that because the "auxiliary forces of the civil guard have retreated, we are seeing the abuses of brute force that those from Lower Pomacocha employ, urged on by reds or communists."⁷⁹ Their concerns were prescient; a few months later, pro-CCP campesinos murdered Andrés Calderón.

Calderón's murder was prefaced by three campesino deaths, all products of the tensions between local apristas and CCP supporters. A campesina named María Cerda died in August 1966 after being beaten by local apristas; the beating caused the pregnant Cerda to go into premature labor, and she died during childbirth. Eugenio Pomasoncco was killed two years thereafter. Returning home after working in the fields, Pomasoncco and several other campesinos were ambushed and attacked by local apristas. Pomasoncco died of his injuries. Another death soon followed. In February 1969, nine men from aprista-dominated Upper Pomacocha, including Pomacocha aprista leaders Andrés Calderón and Ponciano Bautista, attacked a group of campesinos who were watching the local carnival festivities, assaulting them with slingshots, sticks, and stones. One stone hit a campesino named Hilario Yucra in the head. The wounded Yucra tried to escape, but the aprista attackers kicked him to the ground and then beat him to death.⁸⁰

Whatever the actual motivations behind these killings, Pomacocha's pro-CCP peasants read these deaths as political acts. Responding to the deaths, Pomacocha's pro-CCP peasant union wrote to the Ayacucho prefect to denounce the "yellows" of the local aprista peasant union. The letter described the killings and stressed that the "evil, divisionist, and treacherous labor of these subjects has come to sow death among us."⁸¹ Aprista leaders Andrés Calderón and Ponciano Bautista were briefly jailed over accusations that they had orchestrated Eugenio Pomasoncco's murder, and they too stressed the role of politics in the case. From their spot in prison, Calderón and Bautista dismissed the charges against them as communist slander.⁸²

For many Pomacocha campesinos, one of the most upsetting aspects of these deaths was the impunity enjoyed by the attackers. Although Calderón and Bautista were imprisoned for Pomasoncco's murder, they both won quick release. Signatories of a letter from Pomacocha's pro-CCP union complained that the Cerda and Pomasoncco killings "were opportunely denounced before the police and judicial authorities, but no justice at all has been done." Worse still, their letter continued, "We see these criminals passing freely among us, and emboldened they continue plotting and causing damages and even new crimes, as their impunity makes them more audacious and aggressive."⁸³ An even more egregious example of impunity followed Hilario Yucra's killing. Not only did Yucra's attackers evade punishment, but the men who had been watching the carnival festivities

78. *Ibid.*

79. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 36, #8, fol. 10.

80. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, "Denuncia atropellos y muertes," Pomacocha, March 5, 1969.

81. *Ibid.*

82. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 36, #8, fol. 10.

83. ARA, Ex-Prefectura, "Denuncia atropellos y muertes," Pomacocha, March 5, 1969.

alongside Yucra—and who themselves were attacked with slingshots—were imprisoned for his murder. Members of Pomacocha's pro-CCP union charged that, "instead of catching the guilty, [the authorities] want to launch a case against us, those attacked and hurt by the yellows." The signatories closed their letter by urging the prefect to bring the local *aprista* peasant union to justice.⁸⁴

But justice did not come. And so, facing this situation of impunity, nearly two hundred *campesinos* levied their own punishment. On August 22, 1969, Ponciano Bautista and his wife, his fellow *aprista* leader Andrés Calderón Vizcarra, and four lunch guests sat in Bautista's home. Peering outside, Bautista and his guests noticed groups of pro-CCP *campesinos* seated near his house. Some carried sticks, others had ropes, and still others had slingshots and shovel handles. Bautista's wife rushed to secure the home's door with a padlock, while Bautista and Calderón hurriedly hid. Their efforts were of no use. Several *campesinos* pried open the lock and burst into the home; others climbed onto the roof and tore through it, quickly locating Bautista and Calderón. Bautista later testified that six men "furiously threw themselves against Calderón," beating him with sticks and adobe bricks until he lost consciousness. The attackers then dragged Calderón out from the house; two men placed a rope around his neck and pulled it from both ends. As these men strangled Calderón, others punched him and two women hurled stones at his body. And while the attack on Calderón proceeded, other *campesinos* beat Bautista, whipping, kicking, and punching him. They then dragged him to a nearby home, locking him inside. A couple of men called for Bautista's assassination, but intervention by civil guards from the nearby town of Vischongo spared Bautista that fate.⁸⁵

From the first moments after Calderón's killing, Pomacocha's pro-CCP peasants labeled his murder retributive justice. Bautista testified that Calderón's killers walked through Pomacocha proclaiming that they had killed Andrés Calderón "in an act of popular justice."⁸⁶ A flyer produced to support those subsequently charged with the killing stated, "The only crime that we the pueblo of Pomacocha have committed is to have made our own justice against the undesirable and salaried agent Andrés Calderón. This criminal assassinated our brother *campesinos* in agreement with the police."⁸⁷ Decades later, Pomacocha's leading CCP activists remembered the killing in the same terms: as an understandable act of retribution.⁸⁸ Peasants' turn to *vigilante* justice reinforces arguments made by Orin Starn (1999, 49–52) and Miguel La Serna (2012, 24): the unresponsive and ineffective Peruvian police and judicial systems pushed *campesinos* to enforce the law themselves.

The influential periodical *Sierra* interpreted the killing in starkly political terms, arguing that Calderón died because of political rivalries and threats from "extremists," as Calderón "was opposed to hard-working and tranquil peasants

84. *Ibid.*

85. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 58, #107, fol. 1, fol. 20.

86. ARA, CSJCP, leg 58, #107, fol. 20.

87. ARA, CSJCP, leg 58, #107, fol. 233.

88. Izarra interview; Oré interview.

being instruments of the Pekingese." *Sierra* labeled the murder a "monstrous crime" and stressed that "a heavy hand for the criminals and their intellectual authors is urgently needed."⁸⁹ That heavy hand was not long in coming. Civil guards entered Pomacocha on April 9, 1970, pulling eighteen campesinos from their beds and forcing them into waiting vehicles at gunpoint. Those arrested were not permitted to dress or even collect their shoes; many later complained that the guards had brutally beaten them. An additional eighty-five campesinos faced orders for arrest.⁹⁰ CCP activist Pelayo Oré was arrested shortly after the raid, even though he had been away from Pomacocha since July 1968, over a year before the killing, enrolled as a student in Lima's San Marcos University. That fact did not matter to police, and Oré spent the next sixteen months in prison.⁹¹

Surprisingly, Calderón's murder and the ensuing arrests marked the end of staunch campesino anticommunism inside Pomacocha. As Pelayo Oré remembered it, "With the disappearance of the yellow leader, aprista Andrés Calderón Vizcarra, the campesinos who doubted disappeared, too."⁹² While Pomacocha residents still made occasional anticommunist complaints during the 1970s, Peru's changed political circumstances shifted many Pomacocha peasants' political strategies. The progressive Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces seized power in 1968 and introduced a sweeping agrarian reform project the following year. Throughout the 1970s, most of Pomacocha's campesinos directed their energy toward working with the military government in order to take full advantage of the official agrarian reform. As a first step toward gaining recognition as an official peasant community and thus becoming a potential beneficiary of agrarian reform, residents of Upper and Lower Pomacocha met in a general assembly in May 1973 and agreed to seek the formal reunification of their pueblo.⁹³ Two years later, the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces officially recognized Pomacocha as a peasant community. That same year, the military government used its agrarian reform law to declare Pomacocha's peasants the legal owners of the hacienda lands they had seized back in 1961.⁹⁴ The opportunity to cooperate with, and benefit from, the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces and its agrarian reform trumped the possible advantages of continued anticommunist rhetoric and claims.

The ebb of anticommunism in Pomacocha also owed to several notable absences from the community. The aprista leader Andrés Calderón was dead, and by the early 1970s, all of Pomacocha's leading CCP activists had left the community to pursue their careers in the cities of Ayacucho and Lima.⁹⁵ Without the presence of these activists, the CCP's profile in Pomacocha faded. With those activists most associated with communism gone from the community, tensions eased. Indeed, when the Confederación Campesina del Perú chose Pomacocha as

89. *Sierra*, año 33, no. 606, August 1969, p. 4.

90. ARA, CSJCP, leg. 43, #110, fol. 475.

91. ARA, CSJCP, leg 58, #107, fol. 317; Oré interview.

92. Oré interview.

93. ARA, SC, Varios, June 15, 1973.

94. Palomino interview.

95. Palomino interview; Oré interview.

the site for its 1978 national congress, proudly hosting two representatives from communist Albania, the event failed to generate significant complaints from once staunchly anticommunist Pomacocha peasants. Even provincial and departmental officials paid the event little attention.⁹⁶ The campesino anticommunism of the 1960s had faded inside Pomacocha by the 1970s. But tragically for Pomacocha, and for rural indigenous communities across Peru, community debates about communism resumed with added urgency in the 1980s, when the absolutist violence of the Peruvian Communist Party–Shining Path and the Peruvian state’s brutal counterinsurgency once again made peasants’ political loyalties a matter of major local, regional, and national concern.

CONCLUSIONS

Mapping out new historical approaches to the Cold War in Latin America, Joseph (2010, 29) has pushed scholars to begin with ordinary individuals and think through the ways that the struggle between global superpowers shaped average people’s lives. This article heeds Joseph’s call for a grassroots focus by considering why some indigenous peasants embraced anticommunism. Just as Latin American states used Cold War frameworks to solidify their power, secure their interests, and justify repression (Joseph 2010, 5), humble Latin American citizens sometimes did much the same. The Pomacocha case shows that campesinos used accusations of communism to further their economic interests, bolster their power at the community level, and galvanize police forces into action.

Perhaps most important, anticommunism allowed campesinos to pierce through the political neglect that characterized indigenous peasants’ relationships with the twentieth-century Peruvian state. Pomacocha’s anticommunist campesinos found sympathy and support for their complaints from staunchly anticommunist aprista congressmen. Acting on those congressmen’s appeals, and driven by the Belaúnde government’s desire to contain peasants’ radical political activities, state officials repeatedly sent civil guards into Pomacocha to arrest those accused of communism. That anticommunism was a crucial political tool in a context of political neglect is perhaps best established through comparison. Unlike their anticommunist neighbors, the Pomacocha peasants accused of communism did not find the Belaúnde government nearly so receptive to their complaints. When their repeated denunciations of major abuses and violence by anti-communist community members went unanswered by the Peruvian state, these peasants felt compelled to resolve their problems through extra-legal means: they killed the most vocal anticommunist in Pomacocha. Vigilante justice seemed the only available means to check local abuses.

This article’s consideration of campesino anticommunism also reveals that the well-known conflict between APRA and the Peruvian Communist Party played out not only in the diatribes of party leaders or in the struggle for control over the urban labor movement but in the countryside as well. Both parties had national

96. Oré interview. The faction of the CCP that hosted the 1978 event in Pomacocha was affiliated with Saturnino Paredes, who had switched his loyalties from China to Albania at the outset of the 1970s.

peasant organizations—APRA's FENCAP and the communist-dominated Confederación Campesina del Perú—and as was true of CCP activists, aprista peasant leaders played major roles in land recuperation efforts in places like Junín and Cuzco (Smith 1989; Craig 1967). These aprista efforts to win land and press for peasants' rights were sincere. As Robert Holden (2008, 495) reminds us, we are remiss to cast anticommunism "as a simple, one-dimensional ideology," as sometimes the same individuals who denounced communism also criticized social and economic injustice. Yet although apristas and communists may have shared a desire to improve peasants' lives, they had dramatically different visions about what agrarian reform should look like and how it should be accomplished. Pomacocha was not the only rural area where the consequent fights between aprista peasant leaders and those whom they deemed communists turned deadly. In Cuzco's La Convención Province, the peasant who led the region's aprista campesino unions was killed during a 1962 dispute with Trotskyist peasants (Craig 1967, 44).

The Pomacocha case also draws much-needed historical attention to the land recuperation movement in 1960s Peru, complicating our understanding of the mobilizations. An estimated 300,000 Peruvian campesinos participated in the efforts to recover hacienda land in this period, and their efforts pushed the successive Belaúnde and Velasco governments to enact agrarian reforms. Historian Gerardo Rénique (2010, 320) deemed this peasant movement, and simultaneous protests by urban workers, "the most important democratic mobilization in modern Peruvian history." Yet for all the movement's importance, few scholars have studied individual mobilizations in close detail, offering instead broad overviews of the movement in its entirety (Flores 1978; Handelman 1975; Hobsbawm 1974; Huizer 1972). Those macrohistorical views are crucial, but they can obscure the kinds of internal contention, debate, and division that characterized peasants' attitudes toward land invasions.⁹⁷ Pomacocha was not the only Peruvian community where such divides emerged during the 1960s. In the Junín community of Huasicancha, campesinos vigorously debated tactics, strategies, and leadership choices in their decades-long struggle to acquire hacienda land (Smith 1989, 198, 202). Similarly, in Peru's most famous land recuperation mobilization, the La Convención peasant movement, campesinos argued intensely about strikes to withhold their labor from haciendas, about the appropriate leadership for their struggle, and about the wisdom of taking up arms as guerrilla fighters (Blanco 1964; Craig 1967; Fioravanti 1974). Even with the shared goal of winning land, peasant solidarity did not come easily.

Lastly, this consideration of campesino anticommunism helps situate the counterrevolutionary violence of Peru's 1980–1992 Shining Path war in its full historical context. The anticommunist collaboration between Pomacocha peasants and the Peruvian state prefaced similar cooperation in the years of Shining Path violence. Encouraged by the Peruvian state, and often acting on their own initiative, many peasant communities formed *rondas campesinas* (peasant patrols) to defend their communities against incursions by militants of the Pe-

97. For a careful consideration of peasant attitudes toward land invasions during the 1970s, see Malton 1998.

ruvian Communist Party–Shining Path, and the rondas were central to Shining Path's defeat in the countryside (Degregori 1996). In the 1980s, as in the 1960s, anticommunism won peasants the attention and support of otherwise negligent government officials. It is also true that the rondas campesinas were responsible for thousands of deaths during the violent civil war (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación 2003). The Pomacocha case reveals that decades before the onset of the Shining Path war, peasant anticommunism had bloody consequences: inside Pomacocha, fights between anticommunist campesinos and those whom they accused of communism led to the violent deaths of four peasants and to dozens of arrests. Campesino anticommunism was at once politically useful and terribly devastating.

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