

Between Indian Law and Qullasuyu Nationalism

Gregorio Titiriku and the Making of AMP Indigenous Activists, 1921-1964

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Abstract

In 1921, when hard-line Liberal regimes ended in Bolivia, Gregorio Titiriku, an Uru-Aymara Indian from the shores of Lake Titikaka (La Paz), started 50 years of Indian intellectual activism among the *Alcaldes Mayores Particulares* (AMP), a 450 cell network of indigenous intellectuals. Titiriku struggled against internal colonialism and was a crucial participant in the making of AMP subaltern nationalism. Titiriku's ideas became a crucial part of AMP discourse, known during this time as Indian Law. This discourse promoted the worship of *Pachamama* (mother earth) and *Achachillas* (the spirit of the grandparents in the high hills of the Andes). AMP discourse sought to rename the nation of Qullas (currently known as Aymara-Quechuas). Titiriku was especially good at creating ideas for mobilization among the AMP, such as *qullasuyun wawapa* (the children of the Qulla tribes) in order to promote *jaqi* pride (indigenous peoples' pride), and *bayeta camisas* (people who dress in "bayeta" in order to promote an Indian dress-code as part of a politics of identity). These ideas provide us with a privileged field for understanding of the relationship between alternative modernities and public spheres. Titiriku thus used AMP discourse to contest segregation policies and to resist mainstream civilization projects. The particularities of Indian Law and its strategic nationalism reveal the existence of alternative discourses of modernity largely forgotten in Bolivia. The analysis of AMP discourse helps us understand the longstanding presence of struggle for autonomy

and hegemonic projects in Bolivia and provides us with a better comprehension of how internal colonialism and public audiences interact historically.

Keywords

Achachila, Alcaldes Mayores, Alcaldes Mayores Particulares, Ayllu, Cholo, Escuelas Particulares, Indian Law, Jilaqatas, Pachamama, Qullasuyu, Qullasuyu Nationalism, Republic of Qullasuyu, School of Warisata

Resumen

En 1921, cuando concluyó el periodo de gobiernos liberales en Bolivia, Gregorio Titiriku, indio uru-aymara originario de las orillas del lago Titikaka (La Paz), inició cincuenta años de activismo intelectual indio entre los Alcaldes Mayores Particulares (AMP), red de intelectuales indígenas que agrupaba alrededor de 450 participantes. Titiriku luchó contra el colonialismo interno y tuvo un rol fundamental en la construcción del nacionalismo subalterno de los AMP. Sus ideas fueron cruciales para la construcción del discurso de los AMP, conocido en ese tiempo como la Ley India. Se trataba de un discurso que promovía el culto a la Pachamama y a los Achachilas y se proponía renombrar la nación de los qullas (conocidos como aymara-quechuas). Titiriku fue particularmente efectivo generando ideas para la movilización de los AMP, por ejemplo la idea de *qullasuyun wawapa* (los hijos de los pueblos *qulla*) llamados a promover el orgullo *jaqi* y las bayeta camisas (a fin de legitimar un código de vestuario indígena como parte de una política de identidad). Este ideario nos proporciona un campo privilegiado para la comprensión de las relaciones entre modernidades alternativas y esferas públicas. Titiriku utilizó el discurso de los AMP para desafiar políticas segregacionistas y ofrecer resistencia a los proyectos de la civilización dominante. Las particularidades de la Ley India y su nacionalismo estratégico revelan la existencia de discursos alternativos de modernidad por mucho tiempo olvidados en Bolivia. El análisis del discurso de los AMP nos ayuda a entender la larga presencia de lucha por proyectos de

autonomía y hegemonía en Bolivia y proporciona una mejor comprensión de cómo el colonialismo interno y las audiencias públicas interactúan históricamente.

Palabras claves

Achachila, Alcaldes Mayores, Alcaldes Mayores Particulares, Ayllu, Cholo, Escuela de Warisata, Escuelas Particulares, Jilaqatas, Ley India, Nacionalismo del Qullasuyu, Pachamama, Qullasuyu, República de Qullasuyu

The Making of an Activist Intellectual

The formulation of the AMP Indian Law is linked to the history and contradictions of the town of Jach'aqhachi (Achacachi) where the founder of the Qullasuyu Nationalism, Gregorio Titiriku, lived and developed his Aymara activism. From the 1920s to the 1940s, Jach'aqhachi underwent many changes and developed a strong network of *Alcaldes Mayores*, that starting in the early 1910s, worked throughout the Altiplano under the leadership of Santos Marka Thula.¹

The relationship between countryside and cities strongly shaped Gregorio Titiriku's discourse from 1920 to 1950. He was born in Jach'a Q'axiata in 1890 on the shores of Lake Titikaka, in the department of La Paz. His family enjoyed a privileged position due to good relationships with various *Alcaldes Mayores* and *Apoderados*, a fact that would shape his activism. Titiriku became aware of the work of the *Mallkus Apoderados* beginning in his teenage years. His father, *jilaqata* of his community, collaborated with the principal *Apoderados* of Janquaimes and in 1905 sent the young Titiriku to live with Juan Mamani, *Apoderado* of the region of Janquaimes (María Titiriku 9-12).² Titiriku became an assistant to the important *Apoderado* of Umasuyus, a common type of

¹ Santos Marka T'ula was the most well-known indigenous activist coming from *Ayllu* background, and he created the largest network of indigenous authorities in the 1920s.

² All translations of texts originally written in Spanish are mine.

relationship in which Indians worked for both white and *mestizo* bosses, as well as for priests and powerful Indians (Choque 1993, 150-238; and 2003, 130-270). Since there were no schools for Indians, Titiriku's father believed that this was a good opportunity for his son to become literate. Titiriku kept records and was surrounded by people who knew how to read Spanish. He always remembered this time in which "he learned to recognize the alphabet" by learning what he described as "the dancing of letters between them." He also had a chance to learn some Castilian Spanish during his frequent trips to Jach'aghachi, helping the *Mallku* Juan Mamani with paperwork for the Janqulaimes communities (Manuel Titiriku 3-5). In both processes, Titiriku became involved with the problems the communities faced and especially with the usurpation of the community lands of Zamora and Turrini by the *mestizo* provincial elite (see Titiriku, "Memorial de Gregorio Titiriku en defensa del despojo que sufren las comunidades de Zamora y Turrine" 1-4).

However, this process suddenly stopped in 1915 when Titiriku's father called him home to help with fieldwork. Titiriku then married María Sarsuri, from his own community. The wedding was arranged by the parents of both groom and bride, which was customary in the *ayllu*. Titiriku's father could no longer serve in the local *ayllu* because of his age, so Titiriku assumed his father's post and was appreciated by his *ayllu* because of his understanding of the communities' problems, thanks to the experience he had gained in helping Mamani. Titiriku served for more than ten years at the local and regional *ayllu* levels, and during this time he made frequent trips to Jach'aghachi (Manuel Titiriku 2, 4).

By the early 1920s, Titiriku had expanded his network of *Alcaldes Mayores* beyond the Janqulaimes and started to attend the meetings of *Apoderados* of *ayllus* in the city of La Paz. During this time, the *Mallkus* of Umasuyus, among them Rufino Willka and Carlos Panti Pati, requested that Titiriku move to La Paz, and he willingly accepted (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Andrés Titiriku. Marzo 1923). The *Mallkus Apoderados* needed someone to stay more frequently in Chukiawu (indigenous name for La Paz) to take care of their paperwork, to "collect newspapers," and to acquire other legal resolutions. This position included the coordination of paperwork for lawyers and *escribanos*. As compensation, Dionisio Paxipati promised to help Titiriku find seasonal jobs, and other *Apoderados* promised to bring him food and supplies. The idea was that Titiriku would help for one full year and would return occasionally to his

community, especially during harvest time. He retained this post for about eight years (María Titiriku 9-12).

In 1920s La Paz, Titiriku saw the segregated racial system in its full effect. Indianness was strongly defined by dress style: as an Indian dressed in a *poncho* and other ethnic clothing, he could not get on a streetcar. This was enormously frustrating for him because he had always wanted to take the streetcar and, unlike other *Apoderados* who changed their clothing to get around, he refused to do so (Carmona 3-5).

Titiriku also refused to address middle-class lawyers as *wiraxucha* (lord) or *caballero* (sir) and would not stand up holding his wool hat between his hands as a sign of respect while speaking to them. As a man faithful to *Pachamama* and the *Achachilas*, he rejected the use of the term *wiraxuchas* for whites because in Aymara language it referred to gods. He said, "We cannot call these people *wiraxuchas* because only *achachilas* (the spirits of *wak'as*) are *wiraxuchas*. If we call the whites *wiraxuchas* we are insulting ourselves. These people came from Spain, and they are Spaniards and not *wiraxuchas*" (Jach'aqullu 1972, 3-6). Most of the lawyers understood Aymara, but they refused to speak it and always answered in Spanish. The *Apoderados* could not circulate freely in the downtown area, and felt they were not welcome in the city or in the "white country," as Titiriku used to call it (Ramos 11-12). Titiriku resisted this situation and kept going to the city because he had a strong sense of mission. He used to justify his persistence in going to offices in the heart of downtown by arguing that

We [jaqis] are in our land and we have the right to walk in the streets, the plaza, the parks, and take the streetcars as well as to sit down in El Prado and watch the trucks and the streetcars. No one has to stop doing that because we are the owners of these lands. We are not guests as the Spaniards are in these lands, we are not whites (María Titiriku 9-12).

While Titiriku was dealing with the *Apoderados'* issues, he started working in several temporary blue-collar jobs that put him in touch with the urban working class. He worked at the slaughterhouse and also at a small bakery. As mentioned, he continued to return to the countryside, especially during harvests, to work in his community's fields. Moving between the country and the city, he learned that *cholos* were largely

anti-Indian.³ For instance, in 1931 a group of *cholos* at his work told Titiriku, "If you want to stay among us, you have to become civilized [...] buy pants and have hat and get a shirt. At least you can buy a *chu'ta* dress. People from the other groups would ask themselves why we let you stay among us" (Jach'aqullu 1972, 15).

As a consequence of these attitudes, he had many confrontations with the *cholo* working class, due to their refusal to speak Aymara (see Titiriku, "Acta de buena conducta entre Gregorio Titiriku, Jacinto Díaz Quispe y Pedro Conde Iturre" 3-5). In later years, Titiriku remembered such times, saying that when *cholos* did not want to speak Aymara, he would refuse to speak Spanish. Titiriku eventually decided to leave his blue-collar job and concentrated on his work as an activist.

Titiriku lived at a time in which literacy was manipulated by political parties. Beginning in 1905, a law created by the Education Minister Juan Misael Saracho established a payment of three bolivianos for every alphabetized Indian, which essentially meant someone who knew how to sign his name. In the early twentieth century, every newly literate person counted as a citizen under Bolivian law, and Liberals and Republicans competed for votes by supporting literacy for Indians and *cholos*. In the mid- 1920s, this became particularly important because candidates could change the results of national elections by signing up just a small number of new voters. At one point, the majority of the Republican Party were *cholos*, some of whom had recently become literate. This phenomenon was especially important in Jach'aqhachi, a region which at that time was full of landlords. Because of this, Republicans won in 1925 for the first time. However, the elite refused to acknowledge this new type of citizen and called them the "sheep of Jach'aqhachi," for blindly following the Republicans. The liberals thought that since these new citizens were Indians and *cholos*, they did not know why they were supporting the Republican Party. In several cases, *cholos* and Indians received cash to vote for the Republicans. Titiriku condemned this type of client-oriented relationship, which linked literacy with political participation (Díaz Machicao 56-80).

Some of Titiriku's Indian friends became *cholos* in the 1920s by moving to Jach'aqhachi and working in blue-collar jobs where they

³ For a full description of *cholos* during this period, see the second part of this article.

learned Spanish. In the 1920s, this type of job defined ethnic identity from a class perspective. The town became known for its hat making, and it provided rural Aymaras with supplies for rituals in the vast region of the *Qulla* or Umasuyus Aymara nation (Díaz Machicao 45-190). By the mid-1920s, Jach'aghachi had a huge group of *cholos* or *chutas*, which Titiriku called "whitening Indians" (vuelos en blancos). In the late 1930s, he frequently referred to the fact that "while Indians are dying in Pacajes (*paqajaqis*) and Potosí, the Indians here in Jach'aghachi want to become white, and they dress as *cholos*" (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Honorato Rocha. 14 enero 1928).

Titiriku frequently referred to the killing of Aymaras at the Massacre of Jesús de Machaqa in 1921 (Pacajes), and the Massacre of Chayanta, in 1927. These massacres justified his rejection of the mainstream political parties, the Liberals and particularly the Republicans, which had vast support among *cholos*. From Titiriku's perspective, *cholos*, *mestizos* and whites could not be trusted and were all part of the "white republic." Titiriku became more and more convinced of the merit of Toribio Miranda and Feliciano Inka Marasa's⁴ confrontational demand for "the republic of Indians," which sought a fully and exclusively Indian country, separated from the "white Bolivia" (Jach'aqullu 1984, 4-8; Choque and Ticona 21-25; Langer 52-87). During this time, President Bautista Saavedra was known widely as "cholo Saavedra" because of his background and his strong support among *cholos*. Titiriku thought that a two-republic system established through the Indian Law was the best solution since in such an unequal social context, he could not imagine an Indian nation integrated with *mestizos* and *cholos*.

After quitting the *cholo* workforce in 1930, Gregorio Titiriku worked as a muleteer, a job done by most urban Indians unwilling to give up their heritage. He separated from his wife, Santusa Mamani, who remained in her village community, and married his second wife, Rosa Ramos, the daughter of a small slaughterhouse owner near La Paz (María Titiriku 25-28). This area surrounding La Paz would later become strongly supportive of the *Alcaldes Mayores*. By this time, Titiriku was already an important

⁴ Feliciano Inka Marasa and Toribio Miranda were two historic figures of the *Alcaldes Mayores Particulares*, and in their time they were crucial actors in the making of the AMP.

Apoderado, and because of his connections with Feliciano Inka Marasa and Toribio Miranda (two main AMPs), he was well-known among the Indians and *Apoderados* of Potosí and Chuquisaca (see Titiriku, “Los alcaldes mayores particulares,” 3-6). Titiriku and Miranda were both active in the indigenous movement of the *Apoderados* led by Santos Marka Thula, which they supported for more than two decades, although they were in many aspects critical of Marka Thula’s doctrine. Miranda and Marasa started to write petitions separately from Marka Thula in the mid-1930s, and Titiriku publicly criticized Marka Thula at a huge meeting in 1937, expressing that: “The spirits of [colonial] titles did not bring any result. The blood of *Qullasuyu* (the Indian nation) is still crying. We give our money; we give our time and our hope to this worthless endeavor” (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Félix Choque. 22 mayo 1937).

These large meetings became an arena of confrontation between the two bands of indigenous activists. Many *mallkus* who sided with Santos Marka Thula did not accept Miranda and Titiriku’s questioning of his work. Titiriku argued for following the voice of the *Achachilas* and *Pachamama*, and not Marka Thula’s papers (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Andrés Jachakollo. 21 marzo 1941). A serious breakdown was underway between the *Apoderados*.

Religion and Nationalism for Titiriku

The idea of the Republic of Qullasuyu, the homeland of the Aymara peoples, was a powerful notion among various indigenous and intellectual activists during the 1920s and 1930s. Titiriku stated that his intentions were to enforce the border of the Republic of Qullasuyu. Santos Marka Thula understood the Republic of Qullasuyu as an imagined community that embodied the whole Bolivian national territory. He considered patrolling borders a special privilege for Indians, because as aboriginal people they were in their own country, while the whites were there as guests.⁵ Meanwhile, Eduardo Nina Quispe, another well-known Aymara activist, thought that the Republic of Qullasuyu would become a

⁵ See Rivera Cusicanqui, *Oprimidos pero no vencidos* 3-20; and THOA, *El Indio Marka T’ula* 13-25.

reality only when Indians became empowered and dominated Bolivian politics. This led him to create “La Sociedad Indígena,” to promote the ideal of the Republic of Qullasuyu (Choque 1993, 13-6; Mamani Condori 55-169). Gregorio Titiriku’s notion of the Republic of Qullasuyu emerged more strongly as a distinct nationalism focused on race and addressed the problematic of the “racial regulatory system” embedded in Bolivian society. In the 1920s and early 1930s, the racial system worked through segregation policies, as I described in the first part of this article.

The core of this ideology was the AMP Indian Law that embodied Aymara practices and rituals such as Andean religious weddings. It strongly promoted native dress as an active and symbolic signifier of Indian identity. This new nationalism included the creation of a vast system of organizations called *escuelas particulares* through which the AMP advocated autonomy (Jach’aqullu 1984, 4-8; Mamani Condori 127-169). This represented the Indian response to the political turmoil of the 1930s. Titiriku’s Qullasuyu was embodied in the politics of indigenous spirituality and religiosity. The AMP’s idea of the Republic of Qullasuyu was different from other contemporary conceptions, such as those of Santos Marka Thula and Eduardo Nina Quispe.

Gregorio Titiriku is most noted for his work with the *Apoderados* and *mallkus* of southwestern Bolivia (Potosí and Chuquisaca). As a young follower of Marasa and Miranda during the 1920s, Titiriku promoted their idea of the Indian Law and their religious nationalism, by calling for strong faith in the *Pachamama* and *Achachilas*. In 1926 Titiriku urged several *Mallku Apoderados*, including Francisco Condori and Juan Iquiapaza (Laxa and Jach’aqhachi), to study the contents of the Law of the Indies. He frequently brought the multiple volumes of the Law of the Indies to *Apoderado* meetings and tried to explain its contents in Aymara, as his Spanish was far from perfect (see Juan Iquiapaza 3). Titiriku worked to recreate the ideas embodied in the Laws of the Indies by means of a new discourse, the Indian Law. Indigenous peoples and their activists were in general eager to learn about the AMP and Titiriku’s new interpretation of Qullasuyu.

In the 1930s, Titiriku intensified his activism by interweaving his political perspective with his religious views. The fragility of Bolivia’s political system, weakened by the nation’s defeat during the Chaco War (1932-1935), was an important element in this shift in Titiriku’s politics. As a consequence of the war, the *Apoderados* movement had been

destroyed, as some of them were sent off to war and others were placed under permanent persecution. After the war, Titiriku tried to reorganize the *Alcaldes Mayores Particulares* movement as he supported the ideas of Miranda and Marasa and felt that, instead of *Apoderados*, indigenous activists should call themselves *Alcaldes Mayores Particulares* (AMP) because this better expressed their goals of leading their town or Indian nation as a mayor (*Alcalde*) does (see Titiriku, "Acta de posesión del Alcalde Particular Carlos Condori," 1). These activists considered themselves the intellectual avant-garde of indigenous peoples, and they legitimized this role through Andean religion by seeking to bring Indian gods into politics. Titiriku insisted, however, that the AMP should be distinguished from the emerging *alcaldes escolares* or *alcaldes del campo*, who were *cholos* in rural areas working with the government. They were *Alcaldes Particulares* because they had a "particular cause," namely to achieve the victory of "the *jaqi* of the Qullasuyu" (Jach'aqullu 1984, 4-8).

Titiriku's native Umasuyus began to experience important changes during the 1920s and 1930s which shaped his intellectual activism. Titiriku had been strongly affected by the influence of the Methodist Church in Janquaimes during the 1930s because he liked their literacy programs, which were also carried out by the Adventists, and for a short time, in 1926, he joined the Methodist Church. Titiriku and other indigenous peoples did not find it difficult to embrace the church during this time because they were not committed only to Christian beliefs, but recognized the benefits of combining aspects of Protestantism with traditional Aymara beliefs, such the worship of *Pachamama* (Lorenzo Titiriku 3-9; María Titiriku 5-13). These churches neither ignored nor tried to control this syncretism. Although the Methodist Church, for instance, gradually changed its view about permitting indigenous peoples' belief systems, and during the 1930s it encouraged a commitment to the official version of the church.

In the 1930s, the Methodist Church expanded in several communities of Janquaimes and began prohibiting its parishioners from worshipping both the *Pachamama* and the Christian God. Titiriku's brother Lorenzo Titiriku and his cousin, José María Titiriku, who were the founders of the Methodist Church in the Titikaka Lake region, slowly stopped supporting the movement of *Mallkus Apoderados* and lost interest in the AMP movement because of their personal adherence to the church. In 1935, Titiriku confronted them and argued that they were forgetting the good tradition of serving the *Pachamama* and were

devoting themselves to the Evangelical God. Titiriku strongly disapproved of the protestant churches teaching people to reject Aymara gods and goddesses. During August of 1935, the month of special worship of the *Pachamama* and the *wak'as* (ancient tombs of the spirits of the ancestors), much to his dismay, he discovered that rituals such as the *waxt'a* (sweet offerings to *Pachamama*) and *luxt'a* (llama sacrifices to the *Achachilas*, the gods in the mountains) had declined in the region of Janqulaimes because the new converts to Methodism were not worshipping the *Pachamama* (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Lorenzo Titiriku. 1° julio 1935). August is as important in the Aymara religious calendar as the month of Ramadan is to Islam; both incorporate rituals, fasting, and occasionally trips to sacred places.

Another factor that influenced Titiriku's activism in the 1930s was that in his native Umasuyus the School of Warisata underwent a dramatic transformation. Warisata was founded by Elizardo and Raúl Pérez with a local Aymara activist, Avelino Siñani, and from 1934 to 1939, it was in the hands of the indigenous communities that handled its administration and covered most of its expenses. The founding of the first school was an act of disobedience against the white ruling elite, which perceived it as threatening the power of *hacienda* owners of the region (Pérez 50-120; Salazar Mostajo 60-90). Only the *ayllus'* defense of the school and the firm decision of the *mallkus* and other Aymara chiefs of the region to support it allowed this project to survive. Titiriku thought that the Warisata experience could "help our race to flourish" (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Mateo Apaza. 25 feb. 1938; Velasco 1-69). Because of his commitment to the network of Santos Marka Thula, he believed that the politics of literacy could help indigenous peoples in the late 1920s. However, the failure of Marka Thula's strategy made Titiriku change his opinion by the late 1930s.

When *Warisata* became a clear success in 1939, the national government took over the school. During this time, the idea developed in Bolivia was that indigenous peoples should have state-sponsored education, a position supported by both the left and the MNR (Velasco 10-45). A good place to start was the School of Warisata, since the government argued that the communities could no longer support it financially. Under state sponsorship, the school became a symbol of dependency on the state, making a mockery of its original purpose: to enhance community autonomy (Pérez 334-401). The situation disappointed Titiriku, who understood that "like the colonial Spaniards

that came to steal our lands and nation, the public school will damage us in the same way” (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Isidoro Mullisaca. 14 abril 1939).

He argued that the government was not providing public schools unconditionally and believed that it would later request that communities pay back their expenses. In accepting public schools, the indigenous peoples were selling themselves out. He said, “Spaniards did not give anything for free. If you do not believe it, ask our grandparents. We are selling ourselves out. The whites will come back as owners of not only your lands, but also of yourselves” (Carta y listas de Alcaldes de Gregorio Titiriku a Manuel Iquiapaza. 6 junio 1944).

The fact that the country was becoming integrated under one school system was a mistake from Titiriku’s perspective. He preferred private, small and experimental schools under the segregationist system. Since the idea of establishing schools was becoming popular with indigenous peoples, Titiriku proposed that

we should create particular schools [escuelas particulares] that will prepare the people to achieve our dream [...] to organize the Republic of Qullasuyu [...] The Achachilas and our Mother Pachamama, the Virgin, will rejoice in happiness seeing how we rise again (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Andrés Jach’aqullu. 3 enero 1941).

Indeed, with *escuelas particulares* he wanted to enhance Indian nationalism and teach “the path of Qullasuyu peoples.” An *escuela particular* was a small community school run by Indians. It was “particular” in its opposition to public schools, and in the sense that the curriculum was defined by indigenous communities. Although Miranda started promoting *escuelas particulares*, Titiriku supplied their clear nationalist content, calling on them to “empower the blood of Qullasuyu.” In contrast to the early Toribio Miranda, Titiriku did not just want the *escuelas particulares* to teach in the native language, but also to promote a new image of a racial community. In other words, he wanted schools to teach Indian nationalism. Titiriku argued

We should pray with faith and devotion to the Achachilas on the top of mountains where the wak’as are, and say, Achachilas and mother Pachamama, give light to our

hearts and fortify us with your will. [...] Only your will makes us strong. We are your children, poor and crying [...] we are the blood of Qullasuyu (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Andrés Jach'aqullu. 3 enero 1941).

Titiriku believed that requests on the top of the mountains to the *Pachamama* and the *Achachilas* would “enhance the blood of Qullasuyu,” thus “Indians will get fortified” to construct the Republic of Qullasuyu and confront the whites of Bolivia (Saavedra 10-35). To lead the new schools, he started to appoint *Alcaldes Particulares* in different parts of the country. In 1944, 489 communities and *ayllus* throughout the country had founded *escuelas particulares* under Titiriku’s sponsorship. Few of them really worked. However, their existence reflected the impact of his discourse in indigenous communities, as well as the way in which the idea of two republics and of separated schooling systems made sense to people like Titiriku and his audience. *Escuelas particulares* also served as local AMP cells promoting Indian nationalism.

Like early Indian nationalists such as Zárate Wilka, whose ideas he learned from Miranda and Marasa, Titiriku insisted that the Qullasuyu should be reorganized into nations. Using oral history as his source, he applied these ideas to the organization of the *escuelas particulares*, which were modeled on fifteenth century Aymara nations. Although some “nations” were similar to current historical regions, such as Umasuyus, he also reinvented others according to nineteenth century provincial names. For instance, the Qaranqas region was called *Paria* in his discourse, while the historical Pacajes was called *Inquisivi [Inqasiwi]* (see Titiriku, “Acta de posesión del Alcalde Particular Carlos Condori” 15). Titiriku required that every *Alcalde* had a stamp representing one of the Indian nations as a way of disseminating the new conception of Qullasuyu. For instance, the Umasuyus stamp had his name, his wife’s name and an inscription of Umasuyus as the nation, which he represented (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Melitón Gallardo. 12 dic. 1945).

The turmoil that emerged after the Chaco war and the resulting transformation of his native Umasuyus gave Titiriku a new audience. He used his basic literacy as well as his knowledge of city life to enhance his nationalist perspectives and impact. His Qullasuyu nationalism, based on Aymara oral history, gave the AMP an audience of indigenous *ayllus* and hacienda peons. Titiriku constructed a discourse of the *jaqi* that he used as counter-race ammunition and organized a structure to promote it in

the countryside. The notion of “subaltern nationalism” represents Titiriku’s ideas better than the notion of “ethnic nationalism,” for his perspective was based on social inequalities and used nationalism and race as ammunition. Ideas like the “blood of Qullasuyu,” “*qhuchapuchus*,” “*montepuchus*,” and “*chullapapuchus*” are associated with racial inequality. Titiriku’s discourse was a subaltern nationalism with decolonial contents that he used for counter-hegemonic purposes against Bolivia’s caste system in the 1920s and 1930s. His strategic assignment in La Paz, the center of Bolivian politics and government, helped to develop both his perspectives and his impact.

Construction of a Vast Network of Subaltern Nationalism

Titiriku not only had good kinship relationships and networks, but also grounded his activism in his wife’s contacts. Rosa Ramos’ networks reveal the importance of kinship ties for indigenous activists during this time, and demonstrate the role and participation of women in the indigenous struggle. Titiriku’s ability to move smoothly between countryside and city was mostly related to the role of his family-in-law, which allowed him to maintain a strong hold in La Paz while remaining a leader in his community. None of the other *Alcaldes Particulares* had such good connections in the city as Titiriku did in the 1930s and 1940s, in no small part because his wife Rosa Ramos, an Aymara from the *ayllu* of Chukiawu, had several lots of land in the suburbs of La Paz. Titiriku bankrolled his activism by helping his wife in her sales as a street vendor and petty butcher in the popular neighborhood of El Cementerio in La Paz (María Titiriku 3-6).

Titiriku argued that the best way of promoting his new organization was to publicize President German Busch’s decree of 1936 which ordered hacienda owners to financially support and found schools for the peons on their properties, called *escuelas particulares*, as well as to promote education for Indians. He learned about this decree as soon as it was published, thanks to his frequent visits to the National Public Office for Information, known as the Gaceta Pública. Although the decree was vague and not widely disseminated, Titiriku considered it useful and took the name of “*escuelas particulares*” as the name for his local cell, which gave him the necessary legal support to become established. However,

his AMP *escuela particular* was a cell of indigenous activism, not the type of *escuela particular* that the government had in mind (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Toribio Miranda. 1° sept. 1936).

In the 1930s, the *escuelas particulares* had a subversive meaning in the public arena. Landowners were very much opposed to the idea of “educación para los indios,” and earlier schools in the countryside had been considered seriously subversive (Velasco 25-67; Pérez 21-200). It was not until the 1940s that some white public intellectuals admitted that Indians could be educated and that they believed that this education should focus on skills essential for fieldwork, not training for becoming doctors or lawyers. These intellectuals argued that Indians would be good for industrial labor but not for intellectual or professional endeavors (Choque 1992, 23-75). This explains why Titiriku gave such importance to this law and why he used the AMP organization to talk about the Indian Law, faith in *Pachamama* and *Achachilas*, and to promote their schools throughout the whole countryside (Carta de Toribio Miranda a Lucas Marka. 6 marzo 1937).

As a part of his daily routine in La Paz, where most of his activism developed, Titiriku accompanied his wife and father-in law, Ezequiel Ramos, to set up their street vendor spot. After he opened the business and had breakfast in the streets of *El Cementerio*, he visited the officials with whom he pursued issues relating to indigenous communities. Titiriku frequently accompanied other indigenous activists and often confronted resistance because of his Indianness, especially after 1925, when policemen restricted Indians’ movements even more: “Indians should not get into downtown nor sit on public benches. These benches should not get dirty and are reserved only for true gentlemen with a hat and suit” (Carta de Elena Hurtado de Galarza al Prefecto del Departamento. 14 abril 1938).

Sometimes people, especially policemen, knew Titiriku and let him pass with some ease, which impressed other indigenous activists and hacienda peons who accompanied him. Peons realized that they would not have difficulties entering downtown lawyers’ offices thanks to Titiriku, who promised the policemen that he would be responsible for the indigenous persons with him (María Titiriku 5-13).

Between 1946 and 1948, Titiriku and Miranda organized a campaign against hacienda owners’ abuses of their peons, and Titiriku was responsible for denouncing these abuses in different parts of the

country, especially in Chuquisaca and Potosí. For the first time, a journalist from *La Razón*, La Paz's main newspaper, visited the region of Icla (Chuquisaca) and saw how the houses of peons of Sumala were burned. For the AMP, the fact that a national newspaper took an interest in them and reported on conditions in and out of a place such as Icla meant a major success (Manuel Titiriku 3).

Titiriku frequently called for assemblies of the *Alcaldes Particulares*, exhorting them to come with their wives. In 1956, the International Labor Organization (ILO) made one of its first visits to La Paz to explore, creating labor legislation for indigenous peoples, and held meetings with, among others, the president of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz. When Titiriku learned about their presence through the newspapers, he called *Alcaldes Particulares* to a meeting with the ILO. Although he did not have a scheduled meeting, his whole group waited at the main entrance of the university, and when the ILO's representatives were leaving, the *Alcaldes Particulares* gave them letters and other documents denouncing the abuses on the haciendas of Chuquisaca. This led to a correspondence with ILO that lasted many years (see Titiriku, "Los hijos del sol" 15-20). In November, 1958, Titiriku and the AMP asked the ILO to request that the Bolivian government protect them against the peasant unions that used ex-peons in Chuquisaca, which ILO did in March 1959. European workers connected to the ILO used the relationship with the AMP to keep abreast of Indian issues in Latin America (see Titiriku, "Congreso Interamericano").

Whenever a group of *Alcaldes Particulares* came to La Paz, Titiriku liked to keep the group there for several days, talking about how to worship the *Achachilas* in the sites of *wak'as*, and how to organize weddings as well as other acts of legitimization of the Aymara religion. Titiriku told them

We are creating escuelas particulares [...] to educate our people in the path of the "Ley of Indias...", so that they can know what our way of life is, the Indian Law, the ama sua, ama llulla and ama khella [You will not steal, you will not lie, you will not kill]. They should not follow the path of cholos, the path that makes people Spaniard (white). They should follow the Republic of Qullasuyu (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Fermín Vallejos. 14 mayo 1944).

Titiriku strongly believed in two Bolivian republics: one was the “White Republic” that oppressed the other, the “Indian Republic.” This discourse helped to construct a strong fraternity among the network of *Alcaldes Particulares* by contributing to the creation of an imagined community among the AMP (Carta de Gregorio Titiriku a Eusebio Canqui. 14 marzo 1945; Anderson 23-178). That imagined community had subaltern religious contents, which were perceived as the only way to confront the dominant racial system. Although previous indigenous activists had referred to the idea of two republics, Titiriku’s discourse was more explicit, using it as a concept to confront the social inequalities of Bolivia in the early twentieth century and to illustrate Indians’ aspirations. From the ideological perspectives current in the 1930s, the AMP wanted to keep the two-republic system because they wanted autonomy.

Titiriku’s wife, Rosa Ramos, helped at the meetings by providing food and shelter for many *Alcaldes Particulares*. Due to Aymara perspectives of gender, Ramos kept her last name. Although not having a central role in the *Alcaldes Particulares*, she participated in the movement’s events and helped financially (María Titiriku 15-17; Orieta Ezequiel 11-13). She had small properties in El Cementerio region of La Paz suburbs and sometimes appealed to her most well-known customers for help. One of these was a Bolivian official, Luis Navia, who worked on issues of Bolivian indigenous education in the late 1930s. Ramos asked him to help Titiriku with his paperwork and with connections with public intellectuals, such as Fernando Diez de Medina and Gamaliel Churata. Since Titiriku was inundated with paperwork, and he was only semi-literate, this assistance proved extremely helpful. Thus, Titiriku’s wife and her family played an important role in the emergence of his leadership as well (María Titiriku 19-21). This complementarity between Ramos and Titiriku is representative of the Aymara view of gender roles, in which women and men share responsibilities and duties. It is also interesting that Ramos kept her economic and social independence by keeping her last name and properties as her own.

Conclusion

The AMP's subaltern nationalism was heavily based on ethnicity and gender relationships. When Titiriku worked with urban *cholos* in La Paz during the 1920s, he decided that *cholos* and *mestizos* were most interested in "becoming whites," and this experience reinforced his subaltern nationalism. This Qullasuyu nationalism was a result of a very grassroots upbringing when the *ayllus* of Janquaimes sent Titiriku to live in La Paz. In his years in La Paz, he relied on kinship networks to construct his position as an intellectual activist. Titiriku based the construction of indigenous networks on gendered relationships with his two spouses, who provided him high kinship support as well as occasional financial help. Perhaps he received stronger support from his second wife, for his first wife only helped him initiate his activist career.

As an intellectual activist, Titiriku crafted his discourse on subaltern nationalism as a means of dealing with the discourse of modernity linked with ideas about *jaqi* peoples. He encouraged the worship of *Pachamama* and *Achachilas*, and dressing in native style as an expression of pride in the *jaqis*. The AMP also promoted the construction of networks of cells, eventually reaching 480 units throughout the Andean world. Many of those cells were organized in Chuquisaca and northern Potosí, particularly among *Apoderados* of *ayllus*, and groups of hacienda peons, where the AMP was popular. The AMP approach was found elsewhere in the world at this time. Marcus Garvey, a black intellectual in the US during the early twentieth century, instructed his followers to love the black race and not be a "white-black." Just like the AMP, Garvey was very concerned with organization and the diffusion of his ideas, and he constructed a large network called the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association), which in 1940 had 725 cells throughout the Americas. While quarreling against colonialism, he argued Africa should be for African descendents (Martin 22). It is evident that intellectual activists frequently confront the contents of hegemonic racial discourse vis-à-vis modernity by creating an imagined community and by promoting and organizing ethnic pride among subaltern peoples. In all of these cases, they speak their "truth to power" by using subaltern entity as the medium to challenge hegemony.

Glossary

Achachila: Good spirits, grandfathers, grandparents, ancestors.

Alcaldes Mayores: A high level of leadership among Indians at the end of nineteenth century and the first half of twentieth century.

Alcaldes Mayores Particulares: A large network of indigenous activists who believed in the Indian Law.

Ayllu: Economic and political organization of a large number of communities in the Aymara and Andean worlds. Ayllus were an economic and social segment within *markas*, comprised of a number of indigenous communities.

Ch'uta or **chuta:** A person who is changing his/her identity from Indian to *cholo*. He or she starts to wear mixture of *cholo* and Indian fashions. However, he or she retains indigenous fabrics as a part of their dress.

Chu'kuta or **chucuta:** Modern name for La Paz peoples, the urban Aymaras. It refers to the time of the 1920s Bolivian Cultural revolution.

Chullpapuchus: Aymaras in the 1920s' Urus' oral tradition.

Cholo: A person who might be Indian or *mestizo* in origin, but wears western fabrics, developing a unique ethnic style. He or she usually defines his/her identity by distinguishing from being Indian in the twentieth century.

Escuelas Particulares: An AMP cell at villages and haciendas in the 1930s and 1940s.

Jallp'a Sangres: A term used by Gallardo to inspire racial pride and religious devotion to Indian deities amongst supporters of the AMP. It means "the blood of our lands."

Jilaqatas: Intermedial level of Indian leadership.

Qullasuyu: The Aymara country in the pre-Inka times. In modern usage, it is an imagined community promoted by the AMP.

Ley de Indios: The subaltern nationalist text that the AMP promoted to motivate the recuperation of pre-Inca religion and heritage.

Marka: a unit of one Aymara nation.

Mesa: Offering to the Aymara deities that basically consists in sweet cookies and aromatic herbs, all put together in a colorful preparation. There are many types of "mesas" according one's religious motives.

Montepuchus: Oral history among Urus in the 1920s. This term is used to refer to Quechua people.

Qhuchapuchus: Among Urus, this term is used to refer to themselves, and differentiate themselves from Aymara and Quechua peoples in the 1920s oral history.

Pachamama: Mother earth, the main Aymara goddess who also became a pan-Andean divinity.

Republic of Indians or Republic of Qullasuyu: A term referring to an imagined community of people of pre-inka heritage, which includes notions of race and religion as promoted as an ideal by the AMP.

Urus: An ancient nation of the Bolivian Altiplano. The Urus are pre-Aymara people in the highlands.

List of Abbreviations

AMP: Alcaldes Mayores Particulares

APAJMC: Archivo Privado de Andrés Jach'aqullu y Matilde Colque

APEO: Archivo Privado de Ezequiel Orieta

APHOA: Archivo Privado de Historia Oral Amuykisipxasinatasaki

APHOMI: Archivo Privado de Historia Oral de Manuel Ilaquita

APHONS: Archivo Privado de Historia Oral de Nabil Saavedra

APPM: Archivo Privado de Pedro Mamani

FPGTRR: Fondo de Gregorio Titiriku y Rosa Ramos

FPHE: Fondo Privado de los Hermanos Espirituales

FPMG: Fondo Privado de Melitón Gallardo Saavedra

FPTQ: Fondo Privado de Tomás Quevedo

THOA: Taller de Historia Oral Andina

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