

The Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario: Bolivia's National Revolutionary Party

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by

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with a preface by Russell H. Fitzgibbon

PREFACE

In the spring of 1973 the undersigned conducted a seminar at Arizona State University the theme of which was Latin American National Revolutionary Parties. Mr. Joseph Holtey was an outstanding member of the seminar and presented an exceptionally penetrating report on the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) of Bolivia, one of the significant and long-lived members of that genre of Latin American parties.

The Center for Latin American Studies is privileged to offer that study in revised and written form to a wider audience in the conviction that it constitutes not only an important addition to the literature on the MNR itself, but also to the wider mosaic of Latin American political organizations.

Mr. Holtey had the remarkable opportunity during the summer of 1973 of spending a number of weeks in Bolivia in research, during which time he had several lengthy interviews with former President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, a founder of the MNR, and with other key figures in the movement. Hence the present work is by no means simply a "library study" (though that phrase is certainly not intended to denigrate such research), but is also based on vital and productive field work.

Bolivia's land-locked situation in a sense symbolized for many years an ingrownness and politico-psychological feeling of isolation. The MNR contributed in a very real way to breaking the locks and opening the doors which had long shut in the Bolivians. The process had been started, perhaps, by the traumatic effects of the Chaco War, but the MNR was a significant factor in continuing and institutionalizing it. Placing this paper in such a context thus adds to its importance.

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The Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) developed within the confines of Bolivia, a nation of contrasting population and geography. Although some Bolivians live in the jungles of the north and north-east and in the eastern lowlands, most of the 4,600,000 population inhabit the altiplano (highlands) of western Bolivia. Approximately two-thirds of its inhabitants live in a mountainous region comprising about 15% of the country's land area. Mostly of Indian blood these people have for centuries led a difficult life in the harsh altiplano environment.¹

Bolivia's highland Indians have always been in the majority numerically, but have traditionally enjoyed few rights and practically no political influence. Before the social revolution of 1952 the Indians lived on the fringes of society.² As late as the 1940's Indians could not walk on some of the principal streets in Bolivia's capital city of La Paz. When an Indian found it necessary to approach a fair-skinned member of upper-class society, he had to kneel to address his superior and kiss the hand of the person to whom he wished to speak.³ The Indian's economic condition was analogous to his inferior social standing. Few owned the land they worked. Instead, a landed oligarchy held vast tracts on which the peasants labored as near serfs. A study made in 1939 showed that eight landowners

held an area equal to one-tenth the national territory.⁴ In 1950 less than 5% of Bolivia's rural landholders possessed 75% of all privately held agricultural land.⁵ Three estates were reported to have been 16.3, 3.4, and 2.2 million acres, respectively.⁶ Indians living within private estates worked for their masters for from one to five days a week in return for the right to till a small plot of ground for their own needs. Often Indians worked as household servants in their master's home. This same indigenous population had yet another task assigned to them, that of extracting ore from the nation's rich tin mines.

A few profited in the exploitation of Bolivia's mineral wealth, while the masses looked on helplessly or simply unaware of what was happening. Three powerful entrepreneurs, Carlos Víctor Aramayo, Mauricio Hochschild, and Simon Iturri Patiño, directed Bolivia's important tin mining industry. These three families, who by 1952 directed 80% of Bolivia's tin output, wielded tremendous power.⁷ During the first half of this century tin constituted 70-75% of Bolivia's exports and was therefore vital for the acquisition of foreign exchange used to purchase essential imports. Their control of the country's number-one source of revenue gave these tin-barons extensive economic and political influence. This was especially true

because of laws limiting the franchise to a select minority.

The ballot box offered no solution for the Indians, since literacy requirements made them ineligible to vote. In 1940, for example, the Chaco War General Enrique Peñaranda obtained 48,000 out of 58,000 votes cast by the literate and propertied upper and middle-class white and mestizo elite. This meant that 2% of Bolivia's total population of 2,900,000 determined its President in 1940. About the time of Peñaranda's election a small group of politically active individuals united to form a new movement dedicated to remedying some of Bolivia's critical problems.

II

Long overdue for extensive social, political, and economic reforms, Bolivia was the scene in 1941 of the formation of a political movement whose platform demanded radical change. This group, calling itself the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, attracted within a few years a large popular following. Its rapid, successful development came as the result of its declaration of a reform program at just the right moment in Bolivia's history. The nation was seething with the discontent which had been unleashed a few years before during and immediately following the Chaco War of 1932-1935.

Perhaps the most significant factor in making the early 1940's ripe for the formation of a new radical movement was the disastrous defeat suffered by Bolivia in the Chaco War. This conflict, initially a minor border dispute with Paraguay, Bolivia's small neighbor to the southeast, had by 1933 erupted into full-scale war. With its larger territory and population as well as its supposedly more powerful German-trained army, Bolivia sought to win a quick victory. However, after several years of fighting and the loss of 65,000 men, Bolivia had to sign a humiliating truce and later a treaty ceding Paraguay 94,000 square miles of Bolivia's Chaco.⁸ Besides seriously discrediting the oligarchical power structure which had directed the war effort, the conflict instilled a new sense of nationhood in thousands of Indian conscripts who returned from the Chaco battlefields.

A dormant segment of society, one which had seldom ventured from its traditional passive role, found itself uprooted from rural highland areas to wage war in the southeastern lowlands. Young Indian conscripts who previously had barely known that Bolivia existed as a nation left their altiplano hamlets and journeyed into a different world. They fought in a region unknown to them, with strange weapons, and alongside comrades they previously thought to be their masters. These peasant soldiers awoke

to a new sense of dignity and self-confidence. Having been thrown into a twentieth-century environment and survived it, they continued to be attracted to this world of progress and self-respect. When discharged from the military service many sought a new life in the cities of Bolivia rather than settling down again in their former homes. Once urbanized the Indian tended to seek greater participation in the economic and political life of his country. Toward this end they had to wait for assistance from another element of society which also had been affected by the Chaco War.

A group of intellectuals which included among its more notable members Víctor Paz Estenssoro, Hernán Siles Zuazo, Carlos Montenegro and Augusto Céspedes reacted strongly to the corruption and utter incapability of Bolivia's civilian and military leaders. These few men met in 1941 to organize a political entity championing the cause of the Bolivian masses.⁹

The MNR developed into an identifiable political movement in 1941 and 1942 under the direction of Víctor Paz, a representative in the lower house of congress and professor of economics at the Universidad de San Andrés in La Paz. Under Paz's direction the founders sought to form a middle-class movement backed by worker and peasant support. Paz and his colleagues pledged to defend the

interests of the lower classes against what they termed the corrupt politics and national exploitation perpetrated by a small privileged economic and political oligarchy.¹⁰ Aspiring to instill an intensely nationalistic sentiment in its platform, the MNR published on May 10, 1941 a statement of its position:

The undersigned citizens of Bolivia, called together under the direction of Víctor Paz Estenssoro, state that they have formed a patriotic movement with socialistic orientation directed to emphasize the Bolivian nationality.¹¹

Paz and his followers denounced foreign influences in Bolivia, called for a land distribution system granting the Indians possession of their own land and demanded that all citizens be given the right to vote in national elections. In short, this young political faction called for the formation of a Bolivia for the Bolivians.¹²

In its efforts to gain a broad base of support the MNR stressed that it represented not just another political party, but rather a movement advocating more rights for the common man. A political party defended the interests of one particular social class, while the MNR spoke for the majority of Bolivians whether they were members of the middle class, workers or Indian peasants.

The MNR's nationalistic platform called for a Revolución Nacional (National Revolution) as the means to accomplish its aims. Their National Revolutionary program

can be detailed as follows:

1) It demanded cancellation of privileges which permitted non-Bolivians or foreign businesses to exercise special rights in Bolivia. It demanded an end to sell-out (entreguista) programs permitting foreign exploitation of Bolivia's natural wealth. It denounced as unpatriotic any foreign influence in the nation's politics, press or news publications, in its armed forces (except for training personnel) or in its economy. Their program demanded the registration of all employees of foreign companies operating in Bolivia and a detailed description of their work and salaries.

2) Their original program opposed Jewish immigration.¹³

3) Continuing with a nationalistic orientation, MNR literature affirmed the movement's confidence that native Bolivians would defend the nation's common interests before their own; it affirmed the ability of Bolivians themselves to build a nation where social justice would reign supreme.

4) The MNR denounced conservative policies which would lower wages of civil servants or permit child labor.

5) The movement demanded that all Bolivians be given ownership of the land they tilled. It encouraged all citizens to support the desires and goals of the Indians, as social justice was inseparable from the

needs of Bolivia's peasants.

6) To attain the above-mentioned goals the MNR asked for active participation from laborers, teachers, artisans and intellectuals in a common drive to revitalize Bolivia's society and give stamina to the national character.¹⁴

The MNR did not have to wait very long for an opportunity to gain widespread notoriety for its views.

III

The Catavi mine massacre of December 21, 1942 marked a turning point in the MNR's efforts to draw attention to itself, while at the same time discrediting Bolivia's ruling oligarchy. On that date the Peñaranda government sent troops into the Catavi tin mining complex to force an end to a massive mine strike. Carnage resulted when troops fired upon striking miners and their families, shooting down nearing one hundred men, women and children.¹⁵ Paz, in his position as MNR leader and representative in the lower house of congress, demanded a complete investigation of the massacre. In August of 1943 he succeeded in leading a congressional inquiry into the Catavi incident. During the ensuing congressional debates Paz defended labor while condemning the Peñaranda administration for the bloody suppression of a legitimate work stoppage by under-paid miners.¹⁶ His rhetoric brought widespread endorsement of his party by

Bolivia's peasants and miners, as well as by the nation's discontented middle class.

In a speech of August 23, 1943 Paz accused the government of a partial attitude toward big business interests at the expense of the mine workers. Paz sympathized with the miners by saying that they suffered exploitation not only through overwork at low pay, but also because the same workers had to endure Bolivia's semicolonial social structure which left them no room for peaceful protest.¹⁷ His final words were prophetic of what was to occur a few months later:

We, the deputies of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, are not simply observers of what is occurring in Bolivian politics, that is the labor of historians. We are political militants who prefer to make history. In that case I declare, Representatives, that if General Peñaranda and his cabinet are not sanctioned for the Catavi massacre, the people will break the chains which bind them to slavery.¹⁸

Four months after his speech and one day before the first anniversary of the Catavi massacre, Paz led a military-civilian coalition which overthrew President Peñaranda's government on December 20, 1943. Major Gualberto Villarroel took over as President and Paz became Minister of Finance. The MNR had risen from obscurity to a major political power in three short years. However, almost immediately the new administration faced serious international difficulties.

A problem arose when the United States refused to

recognize Villarroel's government because of alleged Nazi leanings of the MNR faction within his administration. Under heavy pressure from the United States Paz and two other MNR ministers resigned from Villarroel's cabinet in late March 1944. United States diplomatic recognition followed in June.¹⁹

Despite United States opposition the MNR continued to gain in strength. The July 1944 congressional elections gave the MNR a majority in the legislature.²⁰ Later in the year Villarroel reinstated those MNR ministers who had resigned nine months before.²¹ On capitol hill things looked good for the MNR, but at the same time Villarroel's enemies were finding some measure of success in fomenting discontent among the populace.

By July 1946 opposition reached such proportions that Villarroel's downfall seemed imminent. His government collapsed after a mob composed of civilians and some military elements attacked the Palacio Quemado, the Presidential Palace, in La Paz, murdered the President and his two aides and hanged the corpses from a lamppost in front of the palace. MNR leaders were forced to flee into hiding or exile.²²

Following the tragic incidents of July the MNR's most immediate concern was reorganization of a party leadership apparatus capable of rebuilding the movement. Without its top personnel, including Paz, who sought refuge

outside the country, the party nevertheless prepared for the January 1947 general elections.²³

Remnants of the MNR prepared for the January elections by founding in La Paz an Emergency Committee (Comité de Emergencia) whose task was to keep alive the movement. This committee distributed leaflets containing lists of MNR candidates; heading the ballot was Paz's name as presidential candidate. Final election returns gave 44,700 votes to Bolivia's new President, Enrique Hertzog, while Paz polled 14,000 votes with his strongest backing emanating from altiplano mining areas.²⁴

From July 21, 1946 until April 1952 MNR members suffered through a difficult six years (the so-called sexenio). Governments succeeding Villarroel maintained blacklists designed to prevent MNR militants from finding jobs. Party supporters found their homes invaded without search warrants and numerous party members were deported. Luis Peñalosa Cordero, an official on the Emergency Committee and one of the more prominent MNR activists, claimed that during the sexenio five to six thousand MNR sympathizers lost their lives at the hands of government authorities.²⁵

In January 1947 the MNR tightened its security apparatus by issuing new party cards. Since numerous identification cards had been seized by police, who in turn

could give them to spies, the MNR printed new ones which served in lieu of any earlier identification. In addition it organized itself to the extent of asking for renewal of the party loyalty oath.

During early February 1947 the MNR directorate held a special meeting in La Paz at which fifteen party officials reaffirmed their endorsement of party ideals through a promise of loyalty and obedience to the MNR and its leader, Víctor Paz. They hoped in this manner to show unity in the face of opposition posed by a party splinter group which refused to endorse Paz's leadership as long as he remained in exile.²⁶

Reinscriptions to the party ranks increased steadily in 1947, reaching a hundred in number and later three to four times that figure. At the same time numerous members returned from exile filling in gaps in lower echelon party positions.

Government opposition prevented the fragmented movement from operating openly, but some party structure did unfold. By October 1947 a group called the Political Committee (Comité Político) replaced the former Emergency Committee and took command of all efforts to rebuild the MNR. The Committee was not elected by any convention or assembly, but rather each member had taken upon himself the task of rebuilding a viable MNR. The Political Committee,

while working closely with exiled Paz, led the party up until the time of the 1951 presidential elections.

A MNR victory in the 1951 elections supplied the momentum the movement needed to reinstate itself forcefully in Bolivian politics. In the contest of May 6, 1951 Paz won a plurality of 54,049 votes. However, President Mamerto Urriolagoitia (1949-1951) prevented Paz and Vice-President-elect Siles Zuazo from taking office. He did so by renouncing his incumbant presidency in favor of a military junta led by General Hugo Ballivián. MNR militants, under the able direction of Siles Zuazo, toppled this government through a bloody revolution in April 1952. A few days later on April 15th Paz arrived in the capital city to assume office as President.

Paz wasted no time in implementing a series of reforms which drastically altered Bolivia's economic, social and political structure. Between April 1952 and the end of 1953 four major decrees set in motion a process labeled the Revolución Nacional.

The Paz administration almost immediately decreed universal suffrage. In October it nationalized Bolivia's largest tin mines.²⁷ The following year in June the President appointed a committee to study the Integral Reform of Public Education and in August 1953 came the land reform decree. The MNR appeared to be fulfilling its program

calling for granting to all Bolivians the fruits of their land, the wealth of their mines and a voice in their government. Nearly all responsibility for these changes rested upon the President's shoulders, since the reforms came about through executive fiat rather than congressional legislation.²⁸

Bolivia's legislative branch remained inactive during Paz's term as President (1952-1956). The social revolution of 1952 had so discredited the entire old ruling class that congress did not function until all senators and representatives could be replaced through a general election in 1956. These elections had been postponed until the nation could again reach a state of tranquility sufficient to insure orderly voting.

On June 17, 1956 for the first time in Bolivia's history all adult citizens, regardless of literacy ability, had the opportunity to go to the polls and vote for the man of their choice. Whereas only about 160,000 citizens were eligible to vote in the May 1951 general elections, approximately 1,200,000 could legally cast their ballots in 1956. A total of 955,412 persons did vote, mostly for MNR candidates.

The Bolivian electorate gave the MNR a clear mandate in 1956, with over 80% of all ballots cast going to that party's candidates. Siles Zuazo won the presidential

race and MNR party men made a clean sweep of the senate by gaining all eighteen seats. In the lower chamber of congress MNR candidates took sixty-three of sixty-eight seats.²⁹ All indicators pointed to an MNR monopoly in Bolivia's political arena for at least another four years.

V

Serious problems developed within the MNR in 1960 when Siles Zuazo stepped down as President and a new candidate had to be selected for the approaching elections. Two contenders fought for the nomination: Paz, who had returned from his duties as ambassador to England, and Walter Guevara Arze, former member of Paz's cabinet and more recently Siles' Minister of Government. Paz thought himself the only man capable of maintaining the party in power for another four years, while Guevara sought what he felt rightfully his after so many years of service to the MNR. Paz united around him the moderate and liberal elements within the MNR; Guevara worked to extend his appeal beyond that of the conservative wing which he had led since 1952.³⁰ Final convention voting gave Paz a victory but at the expense of a major split in party ranks.

Reacting against what he saw as an unjust check upon his legitimate desires to become President, Guevara fought back. He took what forces he could muster and formed his own party, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario

Auténtico (MNRA). Guevara then ran as MNRA presidential candidate but Paz easily won another term as President (1960-1964). In 1961 the MNRA changed its name to Partido Revolucionario Auténtico (PRA) in order to define clearly its separate identity as advocate of an ideology distinct from that of the MNR. PRA affirmed its defense of the National Revolution but accused the MNR of patronizing foreign influences in Bolivia and of being too willing to tolerate Marxist elements within its party structure. This latter accusation referred to the MNR's left wing under the direction of Juan Lechín Oquendo.

Lechín's power as leader of the MNR left wing and as long-time spokesman for Bolivia's mining unions prompted Paz to enlist him as running mate in 1960. None the less, Paz was always wary of extremist elements within the party so he named Lechín as ambassador to Italy and Libya. This manoeuver kept the Vice-President out of the country for over eleven months during Paz's second term.³¹

The second major split in the MNR took place in July 1964 at its Ninth Party Convention.³² Having pushed through congress a constitutional amendment allowing him to run legally for a second consecutive term, Paz once again sought the nomination. His opponent this time was Lechín. As had been the case four years before with Guevara, the battle became quite heated and Lechín found himself outside

the MNR. Also like Guevara, Lechín proceeded to form a new party.

In reaction to his failure to secure the candidacy for President, Lechín founded the Partido Revolucionario de la Izquierda Nacionalista (PRIN).³³ Based on a vaguely defined Trotskyite political philosophy the PRIN platform called for greater participation of labor in Bolivia's government.³⁴ Never a serious threat to Paz's authority, PRIN nevertheless added yet another faction to the broadening base of opposition towards Paz. Sensing his ever weakening position, the President began to solicit backing from other sectors.

Paz gambled on increasing his strength through the support of Bolivia's armed forces. Since its dismantling after the 1952 revolution the military had been severely restricted. But in the late 1950's, with Siles Zuazo as President (1956-1960), the army and airforce began to develop once again into powerful entities.³⁵ Subsequent to his election as President in 1960 Paz continued the military buildup because he believed that this force represented a power loyal to him alone. Despite Paz's plans, however, a few months after his 1964 reelection a military coup ousted him from office.³⁶ Following this military takeover the MNR went underground until August of 1971, when it became part of a coalition effort to overthrow

President Juan José Torres Gonzáles (October 1970-August 1971).³⁷

After his return in 1971 Paz worked to unite all of his party's rank and file members behind the military and the Falange Socialista Boliviana (FSB) factions in President Hugo Banzer Suárez' government. This was a challenging task, since these two groups had for many years been at odds with the MNR. A military coup had sent Paz into exile in 1964, while the FSB had been the MNR's traditional enemy. As part of this three-pronged alliance ruling Bolivia, many MNR members feared that the new coalition government would mean compromising the basic principles upon which their party based its ideology. Paz, however, strongly disagreed. At his party's Eleventh National Convention in February 1972 he called for MNR cooperation in Bolivia's new government. Paz stressed that such a stand by the MNR would not negate the party's traditional political stand. The MNR's fundamental precepts were rigid; what had changed was the party's way of fulfilling its goals. He described the MNR as:

...firm in its fundamental objectives: to make Bolivia a true nation, to establish social justice for all its citizens, especially for the working class. But at the same time, during the MNR's thirty-year history, it has demonstrated sufficient flexibility to allow it to alter its tactics for changing historical situations.³⁸

VI

The MNR began as a middle-class, politically motivated nationalistic movement attempting to answer local needs within Bolivia's society. It had a national, as opposed to international, ideology and leadership. Organized and led by Bolivian intellectuals the MNR spoke to the disillusioned masses awakened by the shocking and disastrous Bolivian defeat in the Chaco War. Offering an extensive reform program, the MNR flirted with national politics during the Villarroel administration. But it was not until 1951 that it won a victory in national elections. In that year the MNR presidential and vice-presidential candidates won a plurality of votes.

Despite its ballot-box victory in 1951 the MNR was denied the opportunity to take office. It therefore led an armed revolution in April 1952 and successfully threw out the ruling military government. During the next twelve years the MNR effected the unprecedented feat of retaining executive control for three full terms. By the end of this period the Revolución Nacional had gone a long way toward accomplishing its proposed aims.

At first the nature of its broad and popular reform program sustained the MNR's political strength and internal unity. As time passed, however, and top level positions continued to remain in the hands of the same few men, various

factions began to seek their share of power. Concurrently, the party began to lose the full support of sections of society represented by conservative and leftist wings within the MNR. Besides disagreeing over distribution of authority, party leaders fell behind in their task of redefining goals in order to continue to appeal to the broadest possible segment of the Bolivian population. This latter shortcoming was apparent when it became more and more difficult to simultaneously please the military, organized labor, the peasants and the middle class. All these dilemmas contributed to Paz's downfall shortly after his election to a third term.

By 1964 the MNR was seriously split from within, having lost such leaders as Guevara Arze and Lechin.³⁹ This weakened the MNR and made it possible for the military to take over in 1964.

Paz returned from exile in 1971 and the MNR once again became a viable power in Bolivian politics. As long as it remains within the nation's political arena, Bolivia has a chance for the eventual return of democratic civilian government. This is possible if the MNR can become a rallying point for those seeking such leadership. Paz is working to convince his colleagues to set aside old grievances not only for political stability under Banzer, but also to allow the MNR to someday again assume the leadership of Bolivia.⁴⁰

REFERENCE NOTES

1. This high, bleak, wind-swept plateau ranges in altitude from 10,000 to 14,000 feet above sea level. For an excellent discussion of Bolivia's varied geography and people see Harold Osborne, Bolivia: A Land Divided, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford Press, 1964), pp. 1-34; 103-20.
2. United Nations, Report of the United Nations Mission of Technical Assistance to Bolivia (New York: United Nations, 1951), p. 2.
3. Luis Peñaloza Cordero, Historia del Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, 1941-1952 (La Paz: Editorial Juventud, 1963), p. 85. This book represents an important source of information concerning the MNR party since its writing stemmed from a concurso or joint effort by various MNR members, including Peñaloza and Víctor Paz Estenssoro. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, personal interview, La Paz, June 1973.
4. Cornelius H. Zondag, The Bolivian Economy, 1952-1965; The Revolution and Its Aftermath (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1966), p. 144.
5. William S. Stokes, "The 'Revolución Nacional' of the MNR in Bolivia," Inter-American Economic Affairs, 12 (Spring 1959), 38.
6. Idem.
7. Herbert S. Klein, Parties and Political Change in Bolivia, 1880-1952 (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 403.
8. Ibid., p. 187.
9. Hernán Siles Zuazo, who for the past few years has made his home in Santiago, Chile, is the son of a former Bolivian President, Hernando Siles (1926-1930), and half-brother to Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas (President from April-September 1959). Augusto Céspedes served in Bolivia's lower house of congress from 1938-1940 and again in 1958. Principally a journalist Montenegro was one of the leading intellectuals among the founders of the MNR; he died of cancer in 1953. Other founders of the MNR include: Rigoberto Armaza Lopera and Germán Monroy Block of La Paz; Armando Arce, who lives in

Buenos Aires; José Cuadros Quiroga of Cochabamba, Bolivia; and six deceased founders: Alberto Mendoza López, Claudio del Castillo, Raúl Molina Gutiérrez, Fernando Iturralde Chinel, Arturo Pacheco and Rodolfo Costas. Rigoberto Armaza Lopera, Augusto Céspedes, Germán Monroy Block, personal interview, La Paz, August, 1973.

10. Víctor Paz Estenssoro described in his own words the founding of the MNR. The following is an excerpt from a speech he gave in La Paz on June 7, 1972, the thirtieth anniversary of the official founding of the MNR:

"Later came the Peñaranda government during which economic interests took advantage of Peñaranda's inexperience and lack of knowledge on how to run a government....

"It was during that period that a group of independents as representatives in the congress began to organize as a group. They included such men as Rafael Otazo, Germán Monroy Block, Fernando Iturralde, Atilio Molina, Rodolfo Costas, Hernán Siles, Alberto Mendoza López, Roberto Prudencia and the present leader of the MNR. This activity coincided with the efforts of the newspaper La Calle under the direction of Armando Arce, Carlos Montenegro, José Cuadros Quiroga, Augusto Céspedes and Nazario Pardo Valle. Thus began the formation of a political entity with its own particular characteristics. Here it is worthwhile to point out something: while these groups called themselves independents, they were basically all nationalistic and voiced the need to better the situation of labor. We were preoccupied with Bolivia, with the fact that workers should be better paid and that the big mining interests leave some of their profits in Bolivia." Víctor Paz Estenssoro, El MNR cambió el rumbo de la historia boliviana (La Paz: By the MNR, 1972), pp. 15-16 (Documentos políticos, No. 1).

11. Peñaloza, Historia del Movimiento..., p. 39. There exists even an earlier document of January 25, 1941 mentioned by Peñaloza (p. 38), who adds that Augusto Céspedes considers this January date the occasion of the MNR's founding. The official date is June 7th of the following year. For the text of the January 25th document see appendix.
12. Here the MNR spells out enough of its ideology to warrant it being included among the National

Revolutionary parties of Latin America. For a discussion of the ideology widely held by such parties see Russell H. Fitzgibbon, "Seven Dilemmas of Latin American Revolutionary Parties," Orbis, 14 (Summer 1970), 454-62.

13. It should be noted that Paz Estenssoro and other future MNR leaders had exercised a leading role in the German Busch administration (1937-1939) which originally permitted Jewish-German immigration. These immigrants received entrance visas under the condition that they settle as farmers. When many later went into small businesses, providing competition with native Bolivians, the MNR protested. See Robert J. Alexander, Latin American Political Parties (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1973), p. 234; also La Calle (La Paz), 22 de septiembre, 1944, p. 1. Paz Estenssoro is here quoted as saying before the lower house of congress: "The MNR upholds the prohibition of Jewish immigration. The Jews have caused problems in labor and housing because they have not complied with their task to work as farmers."
14. Mario Rolón Anaya, Política y partidos en Bolivia (La Paz: Editorial Juventud, 1966), pp. 273-75.
15. Official government reports claimed only 19 miners were killed and about 40 wounded. However, at least two writers, both using Bolivian sources, place the casualties in the hundreds: Klein, Parties and Political Change..., p. 356; and Jerry Knutson, "The Impact of the Catavi Mine Massacre of 1942 on Bolivian Politics and Public Opinion," The Americas, 26 (January 1970), p. 254.
16. Bolivia, Congreso Ordinario de 1943, Redactor de la H. Cámara de Diputados (La Paz: Escuela Tip. Salesiana, 1944), Tomo I, Agosto y Septiembre, pp. 257-58. Redactores are published documents which record what was said in the Bolivian congress; Cámara de Diputados is the lower house of congress.
17. Ibid., p. 259.
18. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, Discursos parlamentarios (La Paz: Ediciones Canata, 1955), p. 157. Although this publication appears as a valuable primary source on Paz's speeches in congress, when compared to the original Redactores it can be seen that Paz's words

have been edited and at times words have been added. This particular paragraph quoted here does not contain the eleven additional words that appear in Discursos parlamentarios when compared to Congreso Ordinario de 1943, Redactor de la H. Cámara de Diputados, Tomo I, p. 293.

19. La Calle, 23 de junio, 1944, p. 5.
20. Election results were misleading since most opposition candidates boycotted this election.
21. Villarroel reinstated Paz on December 31, 1944.
22. Augusto Céspedes, El presidente colgado (Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Álvarez, 1966), p. 250. Germán Monroy Block places much of the blame for Villarroel's death on the shoulders of communist labor elements in Bolivia. In the early 1940's, while working to win over labor forces around La Paz, Monroy had especially aggravated communist labor bosses with his relative success at convincing union members that their goals should be nationalistic rather than orientated toward foreign influences from Russia. Germán Monroy Block, personal interview, La Paz, August, 1973.
23. Paz found asylum in the Paraguayan embassy in the capital. From there he made repeated attempts to reorganize the MNR into a viable minority force. After approximately 100 days the new government allowed him to leave safely for exile in Argentina. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, personal interview, La Paz, August, 1973.
24. Peñaloza, Historia del Movimiento..., pp. 123-24.
25. Ibid., p. 131.
26. Ibid., p. 126.
27. For the text of the speech Paz gave at the signing of the nationalization decree on October 31, 1952 see Víctor Paz Estenssoro, Discursos y mensajes (La Paz: Editorial Meridiano, 1953), pp. 30-42.
28. José Fellman Velarde, Víctor Paz Estenssoro: el hombre y la revolución (La Paz: Editorial Don Bosco, 1954), p. 95; see also Zondag, The Bolivian Economy..., p. 45.
29. Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., Political Handbook

and Atlas of the World, 1957 (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 14. The mid-term elections of 1958 left the MNR with the same numbers in congress.

30. Rolón, Política y partidos..., p. 311.
31. Lechín left Bolivia on December 8, 1962 and returned on November 10, 1963. Presencia (La Paz), 8 de diciembre, 1962, p. 4; 11 de noviembre, 1963, p. 5.
32. The definitive break between Lechín and the MNR occurred in July 1964, but already in early December 1963 Lechín fired a stern attack against the Paz administration; the occasion for this outburst was the Twelfth Mining Congress which met at Colquiri, north of Oruro, on December 3, 1963. Presencia, 4 de diciembre, 1963, p. 5.
33. Lechín founded PRIN in March 1964, about two months after the MNR convention.
34. Its Preamble appears in unabridged form in Rolón, Política y partidos..., pp. 327-40.
35. Hernán Siles Zuazo, Mensaje al Honorable Congreso Nacional, 6 de Agosto, 1960 (La Paz: Dirección Nacional de Información, 1960), pp. 97-100. Here Siles describes the buildup of the Bolivian military during his four years as President. See also George Jackson Eder, Inflation and Development in Latin America, A History of Inflation and Stabilization in Bolivia, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 263-64. This latter publication discusses the Siles-Lechín conflict which prompted Siles to look to the military for backing.
36. Paz's Vice-President, General René Barrientos Ortuño, and General Alfredo Ovando Candia, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, together forced Paz to flee to Lima, where he stayed for more than six years until 1971.
37. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, personal interview, La Paz, June 1973. The leftist government of General Torres (October 1970-August 1971) had plunged Bolivia into a condition of serious internal tension. Rumors of possible secession circulated in some lowland areas of the nation. A civil war between Torres' supporters and middle-class elements in the society seemed imminent.

At this juncture old rivalries were forgotten as the military, Falange (FSB), and MNR united to overthrow Torres.

Beginning in January 1971 Paz exchanged correspondence with Mario Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, leader of the FSB, who was then in Buenos Aires. They agreed in this manner to fight together with a rightist military faction to ouster Torres.

38. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, XI Convención del MNR (La Paz: By the MNR, 1972), pp. 8-9.
39. Between June and August 1973 rumors circulated among prominent members of Paz's party regarding the possible return to the MNR of Walter Guevara Arze. In June Guevara admitted having had a private meeting with Paz. Presencia, 5 de junio, 1973, p. 8.
40. On June 23, 1973 President Banzer made headlines in both of La Paz's morning newspapers when he announced constitutional elections for sometime in 1974. El Diario, 23 de junio, 1973, p. 1; Presencia, 23 de junio, 1973, p. 1. Of equal importance was the August announcement by the MNR and FSB endorsing Banzer as candidate for the presidency in 1974. Presencia, 11 de agosto, 1973, p. 1.

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