

JOSE CARLOS MARIATEGUI

*Seven Interpretative Essays on
Peruvian Reality*



“Faith in the renaissance of the Indian is not pinned to the material process of “Westernizing” the Quechua country. The soul of the Indian is not raised by the white man’s civilization or alphabet but by the myth, the idea, of the Socialist revolution. The hope of the Indian is absolutely revolutionary.”

- J. C. Mariátegui

The Peruvian Nation

An overview of the colonization of the country

The growth of Peru as a nation started much like that of any civilization. First there was an indigenous society, made up of the Incas, which in the opinion of Mariatequi, was a sort of Utopian society, as there were no social problems such as war, inequality, or uneven distributions of wealth.

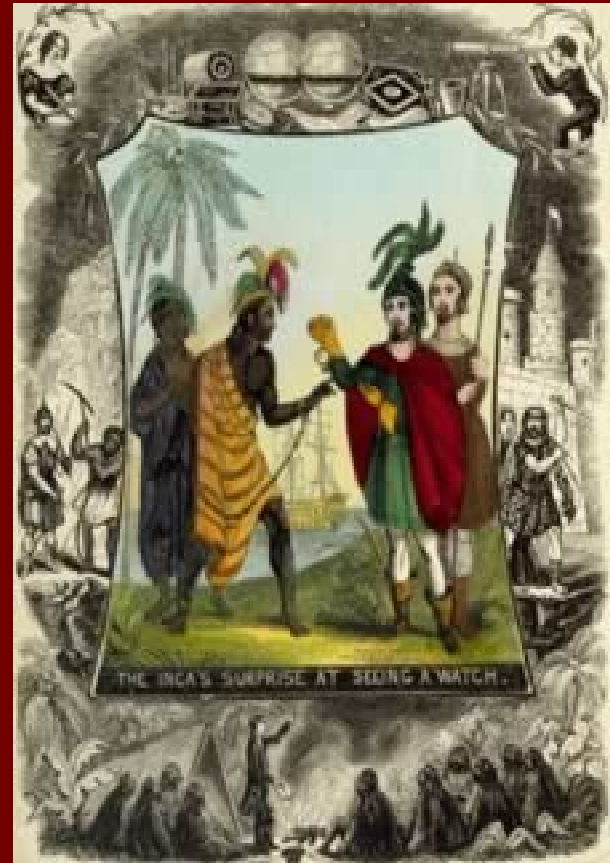


With Colonization comes Feudalism

The next phase for the country was feudalism, as the Spanish conquistadors took over Peru and made it their own nation. Thus began the exploitation of the Incas, as it was a belief at the time that the only answer to the Indian issue was that of exterminating them as a whole.

The feudal setup of the nation was focused on its agricultural strengths. Haciendas run by latifundios, or gamonales, were the predominant authoritative means at the time.

“Gamonalismo” was a principle at the time that could overrule any rights that Indians had.



With Industrialization comes Capitalism

“Spain could supply its colonies only with priests, lawyers, and nobles. Its colonies craved more practical and modern instruments and, consequently, turned to England’s industrialists and bankers.”

With the rise of industrial powers in Europe, Latin American countries began to branch off from their mother country, Spain, during their achievements of independence. They achieved industrial powers, and in turn, the beginnings of capitalism were seen throughout Latin America.

A Nation at a Halt

An underdeveloped nation, Mariátegui describes Peru as a nation instilled with both feudalist and capitalist aspects, but mainly feudalist as it is an underdeveloped agricultural land lacking developed cities.

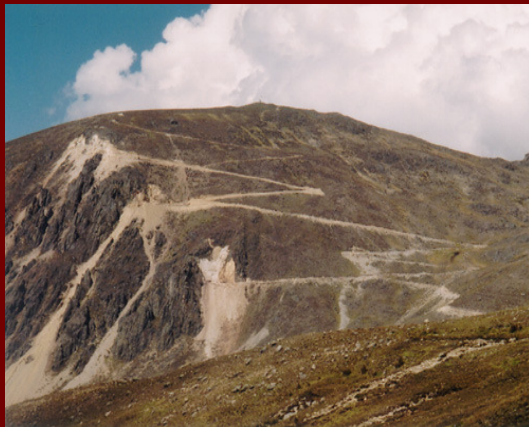
“On the Peruvian coast, the village does not exist because the fief is still preserved virtually intact. The hacienda with its more or less classic manor house and usually wretched workers’ compound are the typical rural community.”



“The hacienda, by taking over the trade and transport as well as land and dependent industries, deprives the town of a livelihood and condemns it to a sordid and meager existence.”

The Many Sides of Peru

The Highlands



Feudalism was most strong in the highlands where haciendas ruled over the agricultural society.

The Coast

Cities along the coast began the capitalistic nature of Peru through industry, like the mining of guano and nitrates



The Sierra



The Sierra, where Mariátegui sees the most promise, is where small groups of indigenous peoples continue their communal lifestyle

The Incas: The Peruvian Indian

Victims of the Colonial Legacy

a. The Colonial Legacy:

1. exploitation of indigenous peoples
2. unfair division of classes
3. lack of political power in the lower classes
4. a fractured society
5. The use of the hacienda to control labor



The Exploitation of the Incas

- The indigenous people suffered greatly under the feudal system that was employed by the Peruvian conquest, as well as by the growing capitalistic nature of it's society.
- “Furthermore, the Spanish pioneer had no talent for creating working groups. Instead of making use of the Indian, **he seemed to be intent on exterminating him.**” - Mariátegui



The Fall of the Indian

“But the crops, the machinery, and the exports that the latifundistas boast of are far from being their own achievement. Production of cotton and sugar has flourished thanks to the stimulus of credits **obtained for that purpose and on the basis of appropriated lands and cheap labor**”

“The individualistic character of the republic’s legislation has favored the absorption of Indian property by the latifundium system.”

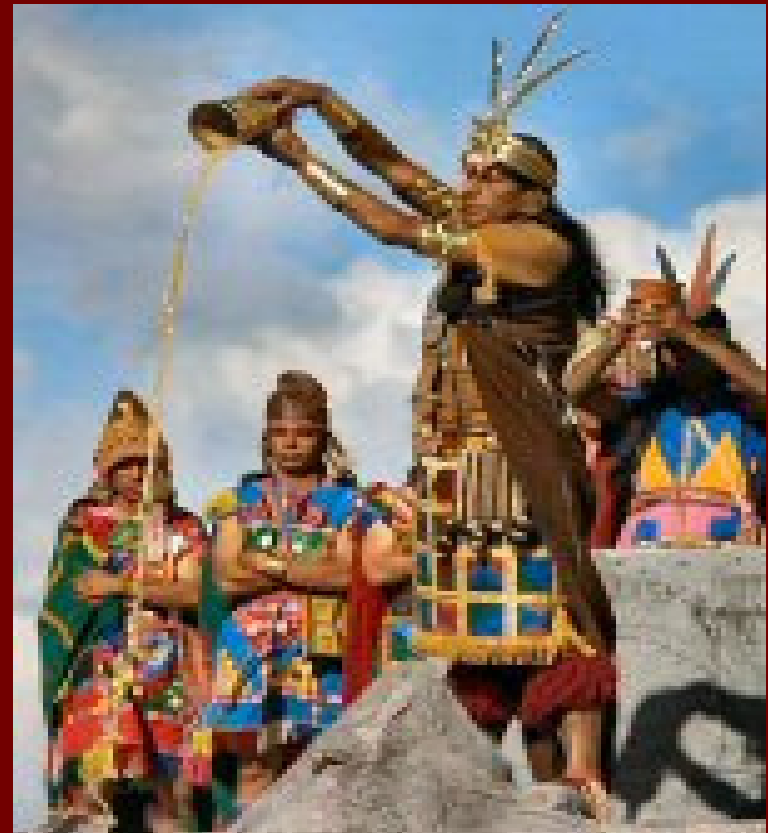
“Gamonalismo is fundamentally opposed to the education of the Indian; it has the same interest in keeping the Indian ignorant as it has in encouraging him to depend on alcohol.”



The Answer?

Mariátegui concludes that a socialist and Marxist reform will come through the incorporation of the indigenous peoples

Admiring the Incas for their communal lifestyle, Mariátegui identifies them as a powerful example of socialist and Marxist success.



The Revolution

Through a socialist and Marxist revolution, set off by the indigenous peoples, the Incas could achieve an ownership of land while getting rid of the feudal haciendas. This would bring about a more even distribution of wealth for the working class as well as for the suffering Indians.

Relations to Jose Martí



Jose Martí



Jose Carlos
Mariategui