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MIGRATION

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GLOSSARY

FURUSATO	Ancient Japanese word meaning hometown
GRANDE FETE	A grand feast to honor something.
YATIRI	Traditional healer and medicine-man responsible for ceremonial rituals
MORENADA	A typical dance from the Bolivian Andes with African influences
NEGRO	Term used in Buenos Aires sometimes affectionately, sometimes pejoratively, for anyone with dark hair or features
PIQUE MACHO	Traditional Bolivian dish comprising beef, sausage, potatoes
EL RETORNO	The return
SALTEÑA	Bolivian breakfast food, similar to an empanada but with gravy
SOPA SIN CARNE	Soup without meat
TRABAJAN EN BLANCO	Working legally, having the right documentation to access public services.
VILLA	A form of shantytown or slum found in Argentina, comparable to the Brazilian favela
HACIENDAS	Estates; sometimes referring to plantations, mines, or factories.
BARRIO	District or quarter of a city
BOLIVIANIDAD	Bolivianness
LA CONQUISTA	The Spanish conquest
EFECTO LLAMADA	The call or pull effect
A LA MODA	Trendy, in current fashion
MERENGUE	High-tempo rhythm and dance originating in the Dominican Republic
SIKUREADA	Instrumental rhythm from the rural Andes primarily performed by panpipes.
CARAJO	The direct translation derives from the word penis, but in usage is a generic expletive similar to the English curse word damn or shit.
CUMBIA	A rhythmic dance music genre from Colombia
SAYA	Afro-Bolivian music and dance, energetically performed in groups with polyrhythms on drums, cuancha, and bells.
CUECA	Musical styles and dances from Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina with influences from Spain and Africa which imitates the courting ritual of a rooster and a hen
GRINGA	An American girl, but more generally used to denote a caucasian female. Can be used affectionately (typically 'gringuita') or pejoratively.
HUAYÑO	Melancholy rhythm played using wind instruments, popular across the the Andean region of South America
CACHARPAYA	Farewell song, typically played in the andean countryside to mark the ending of a festivity

EDITORIAL

PROLOGUE
MIGRATORY MELODIES
DEPARTURE, LONGING AND THE RETURN IN BOLIVIAN MUSIC

This issue is primarily about leaving – about why people migrate away from their homelands, where they go, and what they experience once they've arrived in their new home; whether they're coming to Bolivia from abroad or leaving the country in search of a better life.

In place of an editorial, this month we open with a playlist which you can access by visiting http://tinyurl.com/BXmigration. It's an attempt to capture the deep influence migration and its related themes (yearning, exile and the return, among others) have had on Bolivian music. Turn to the back of the magazine for an epilogue of sorts which we use as a vehicle to collect many central themes in this issue; think of it as this issue's editorial. Paradoxically, many of the central questions surrounding migration are more fruitfully explored by examining its reverse process – the Return.

We open our playlist with La Despedida (The Sendoff), a **cacharpaya** traditionally played in the countryside to send off members of the community migrating to the city, or at carnival time to send off dancers and musicians. It's a melancholy celebration tinged with the tensions and contradictions inherent in a migratory departure. They sing, "these boys are leaving, they are leaving to never-ever return to this village / for them to come back one day / they will have to throw another party".

We then take a trip to the rural community of Italaque to bring you an autochthonous **sikureada** titled Tu Ausencia (Your Absence) which combines the familiar longing of those looking for new opportunities away from home, with the often cited love Bolivians discover for their homeland only after living abroad. "I've been gone from my dear land / Looking for new horizons / I yearn my green fields / My people who keep fighting / My mountains and my lakes / Bolivia I will never forget you / Bolivia I have only learnt to love you"

Next on the decks is The Brother's huge 90's hit "Añoranzas" which today is considered to be an anthem of Bolivian migrant communities, especially those in Argentina. It's a homesick **cumbia** with **saya** influences which speaks of longing for a return to Bolivia despite the personal and financial obstacles which drive so many away in search of a better life. "I only want to return to my homeland / Although I don't have a job (**carajo**), or a friend, or a love by my side, I just want to go back", are the chosen words of David Castro.

We then wave our handkerchiefs to the rhythm of a popular **cueca** titled La Caraqueña composed by Nilo Soruco while he was living in Venezuela. This song tells the familiar story of leaving a loved one behind, with the perpetual promise of an eventual return. "I am so far, so far from the source of my worry / My river, my flower, my sky will be crying / […] they will pay some day / don't cry girl, I will soon return".

Like Soruco, Luis Rico, Savia Andina, and many other Bolivian musicians left the country during the military dictatorships of the 70s and early 80s through a series of voluntary and forced exiles, in large part due to their resistance to the de facto governments of the time, to whom Soruco was possibly alluding when he sang that "they will pay some day". Upon returning to Bolivia in 1983 Luis Rico (who subsequently became well known in part for his cultural and political work with mining communities) composed a song to celebrate the many musicians who had left the country for Europe. The Last Tinku in Paris tells the story of a fellow from Northern Potosi who, charango in hand, leaves to try his luck in Paris. Playing on "streets and squares" he eventually meets a **gringa** with whom he has two children. Yet when their relationship falls apart he turns to drugs and alcohol. One day, sleeping at an underground train station, he rediscovers his path and decides to return home. "He knows he has been unhappy / And being honest and a romantic / Plays his mythic charango / For his last Tinku in Paris"

Finally, we bring you a beautiful **huayño** composed by Gerardo Yañez, a Bolivian composer who no doubt writes with the first-hand knowledge of having lived away from his Andean homeland during his time as a student in Germany. The closing piece is called Corazón Abierto (Open Heart), and despite the heavy-hearted melody transmitted by its winds, ends with a celebration that sums up the joy of returning back home. We have translated and transcribed the lyrics in full.

BONUS TRACKS:
While not exactly Bolivian, the following tracks have migrated their way into our collection. First track on the flipside of this album is a Venezuelan **merengue** titled El Norte es una Quimera (the North is a Chimera) which brushes off the idea that life in the US is better. "Oh New York I don't like your gold, I reject your riches[…] / To New York, I will no longer return, there there is nothing amazing, no wine, no love / I'm not going back to New York / I swear to San Andres / I don't like to speak English / Or take lifts." To end this section we dance our way back to where we came from through Ruben Blades' famous salsa titled Todos Vuelven (Everyone Returns), whose lyrics we also bring you in full. Check out the playlist online for a couple more treats; we'll keep adding to in order to make sure you come back. See what we're doing here?

By Amaru Villanueva Rance

N.B. Several Spanish and Aymara words are marked in **bold** throughout this issue. Their meanings can be found in our glossary

PHOTO: VANIA GONZALVEZ

RUBEN BLADES
TODOS VUELVEN

Everyone returns to the land where they were born
To the incomparable bewitchment of its sun
Everyone goes back to the corner they came from
Where more than a romance was born

Beneath the lonely tree of the past
How many times we begin to dream
Everyone returns, through the route of remembrance
Yet the time of love no longer returns

The air, which brings in its hands the flower of the past
And yesterday's aroma, says softly in our ear
The song it learnt at dusk, telling us with a mysterious
voice of thistle and rose
Of honey and the moon
That love of one's land is holy
How sad is the absence that yesterday leaves behind

Everyone returns

CORAZÓN ABIERTO
GERARDO YAÑEZ

A hope in me arises like a path at dawn
Of seeing the dear sky of the place where I was born

This soul wants to leave behind it the illusions it carries

Girl I long you, I dream with you
Beneath the moon who owns the cold
Your memories are with me
And I cry the sorrows in the river's course

To sprout again in your soil
Tanned fruit
Land of the sun

Whenever I sought the path
This destiny made me wait for it
Because many years have passed
This joy I want to sing

What a delight
To return to my homeland
Open heart
Land of the Andes

SHALOM BOLIVIA

The struggle between tradition and quality of life

TEXT: YANINA ISKHAKOVA

The Jewish presence in Bolivia dates back to the 16th century but evoked mostly during and after the Second World War when thousands of Jews fled Europe and immigrated to South America. Bolivia accepted around 20'000 Jews during this period. But Bolivia was just a bridge for many, a starting point for a life in another South American country. "Now there are about 180 to 220 Jews in La Paz, approximately 70 in Cochabamba and about 150 in Santa Cruz," says Dr Ricardo Udler, the President of the Circulo Israelita. Numbers, that make it hard to imagine a future. "If you ask me, what is the future [Of the Jewish Community]? I'd say maybe ten or maximal fifteen years more", confirms Dr Udler sadly.

There are many reasons for this shrinking trend, and as a father, Dr Udler can confirm at least on of them: " I have three children, one is in Israel, one in Panama and the third is in New York. And when my children said: 'Ok I'd like to come back to Bolivia', I said no, because young people don't have a Jewish future in Bolivia with 180 people. When my daughter came back to Bolivia she had no young Jewish man for her. This is the reason I said: 'No you don't come back to Bolivia. If you like to come back to Bolivia, come back, but after you have created your own family. Then you can come back'."

Most of the Jewish children visit an English speaking school in Bolivia and then go on to study at Universities abroad, Israel and United States being a very popular choice and the elderly members of the community just pass away.

Jewish immigration to Bolivia has also become less popular since Evo Morales has nationalised many companies and deepened his relationship with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president. Although six Mosques have been build in La Paz over the last ten years, Dr. Udler urges: "We don't have anti-Semitism in Bolivia."

He himself is not planning of leaving the country: "Culturally we don't have anything. It's the life quality that matters for me. Many people have houses but here you have a cook, a driver, a maid and someone who does your laundry and all that for an affordable price. Please understand me, this is not arrogance, this is the reality of this country."

However, Dr Udler and his wife feel what many Jewish families feel here: " We are alone. My wife and I are separated from our children. This is the price we have to pay."

Dr Udler believes that he will be amongst the last standing Orthodox Jews in La Paz and as an old saying: "An old tree should not be moved, otherwise it will die."

IR Y VENIR

TEXT: KIRSTY WALTER
PHOTO: MARIA LAURA LOAYZA Y JUAN PABLO OLMOS

Many of the thousands of Bolivians who migrated to Spain the beginning of the 21st century faced disappointment, difficulties and discrimination. Those who eventually returned frequently made it back to their home country without the desired success. In the latest and strangest of migratory twists, many Spaniards hit by the economic crisis sweeping Europe are making their way over to South America.

If thousands of Spaniards migrated to Bolivia during the early years of **la conquista**, the first years of the 21st century show a mirror image. In the last decade more than 250,000 Bolivians migrated to Spain, yet the search for higher salaries and a better life for their families has been hindered in many ways. Caught between worsened employment opportunities – brought about by the European economic crisis – and new immigration laws, the prospects for Bolivians in Spain have considerably worsened over the last few years.

The rapid influx of Bolivians into Spain is largely attributed to a rumour (and eventual announcement) of an initiative to regularise the legal situation of all immigrants without papers in 2005. The so called **efecto llamada** which ensued is attributed to this amnesty. By 2008 the Bolivian embassy in Madrid estimated that around 350,000 Bolivians were living in Spain, only 70,000 of which were legally allowed to work and receive social and labour benefits.

While the recent reversal in this trend can be partially attributed to the economic crisis in Europe (the ambassador for Spain in Bolivia, Ramón Santos, recently reported that 50,000 Bolivian immigrants had left the country), a strong link can also be made between the mass-migrant departure and decisions made by the Spanish government: in April 2007 it became compulsory for Bolivian tourists to have a visa in order to enter Spain.

Naturally, the Bolivian government's reaction to this was largely negative. Evo Morales openly criticised the Spanish government's actions: 'When the Spanish and Europeans came to America, our forefathers didn't call them illegal.' As detailed by Morales in an open letter to the EU, remittances sent home by Bolivian migrants account for as much as 10% of Bolivia's GDP. In the letter he explained that as the decision went "against human rights", relations between Bolivia and the EU would be strained and hard to pursue.

This diplomatic aspect, however, is only an outward manifestation of this issue: the transition to Spain for any Bolivian is not an easy one, as pointed out by Marcia Seburo. Marcia did not migrate for work as many Bolivians do, yet for a year and a half in Madrid her search for employment went unrewarded. Having managed a city branch of a bank in Bolivia, this was a huge change. She explains the move was hard for other reasons besides: simply hopping on the Metro is not possible for those entirely unfamiliar with its usage. Marcia firmly, and without hesitation, explained that no matter where you came from, starting a new life in Spain, 'Es duro, es muy duro' – 'it's hard, very hard'.

I also spoke to Manuel Canelas who, as a Bolivian student, lived a life far removed from those Bolivians who left striving to earn a better living for their family. His skin is reasonably fair, he wears the type of thick rimmed glasses that are currently **a la moda** in Europe and, along with his casual jacket, t-shirt and jeans combination, it is easy to see how he easily would fit into any European society without appearing unusual or out of place. With ample financial support from his parents, he was not left struggling to find a job that wasn't there and his occupation also placed him opportunely in social situations where he could meet new people – namely other students in similar positions to himself. But he too had seen the difficulties for Bolivians in a country where not everyone welcomes their presence.

Both stories, however, are atypical. Marcia has Spanish citizenship and her two sons have the right to residency; Manuel's appearance and fortuitous position allowed him to live comfortably in the centre of Madrid. Others, however, are less fortunate. The police will stop people simply on account of their appearance and, in the knowledge that a large Latin American population lives in certain **barrios** of Madrid, will station themselves outside specific metro stations to catch immigrants without papers. Discrimination by appearance, accent, and behaviour means that even those who are legal and who do have the necessary documents don't necessarily escape the sometimes-violent actions of the police – Manuel's sister included - he told me. Perceptions of institutional racism and accounts of ethnic-based profiling are abound.

This is not to say that full integration to Spain does not require entirely discarding **Bolivianidad** but it certainly seems to require exercising one's own nationality with discretion: Manuel's own contact with other Bolivians, especially at first, largely took place on a one-to-one basis rather than within the context of a larger community. He did recognise that many would recreate Bolivian communities and practice their culture together, particularly the Bolivians who had been established for many years, it is as if an adaptation process must occur before Bolivianidad can be recreated. Such large groups organise fiestas and dances, and such is the degree of local integration that this sometimes takes place in coordination with local government authorities.

The Bolivian community in Madrid is so large that numerous resources have sprung up to cater for their specific needs. For example, Marcia tells me that the website BMTV (Bolivia Magazine TV) features sections on all aspects of Bolivian life: traditions and customs, food, dance, fashion, current affairs and tourism. The website even has a 'Legal consultation' section, as issues with work permits and nationality can be, in the site's own words, "a terrible headache". BMTV also tries "to be an instrument for union between relatives on opposite shores of the Atlantic" and "an interactive portal and be a window of products and services that Bolivian businessmen offer in Spain." Marcia primarily uses the website for recipes, but clearly it is an important tool for Bolivians in Spain who want to maintain their Bolivianidad, whatever their societal position. Many other formal and informal organisations have sprung up to cater for this demand, among them a sporting organisation called LIDEBOL (La Liga Deportiva Boliviana). In the 2011-12 competition, over 50 clubs of male and female footballers descended on the parque Pradolongo, Madrid.

The difficulties faced by many are not enough to dissuade all Bolivians from setting down roots in Spain. For example, Marcia told me she has rarely considered returning to Bolivia, explaining she has never really felt very patriotic; Manuel returned to La Paz for the purpose of writing his Doctoral thesis, but would consider returning to Spain to live in future.

The migrant's discourse has long been fraught with the idea of not just travelling away from one's country, but with one day returning. Yet predominantly for those Bolivians who left for economic reasons, el retorno has become less a sign of success than the result of having no other choice at the hands of new unfavourable laws and unemployment; the effect of the latter hastened by discrimination. This is all part of the distinctive circular character of migration and suggests many of the Bolivians returning home from Spain are not doing so permanently, but already have their sights set on the next destination - increasingly Brazil.

Yet there is another trend that could well be worth keeping an eye on in the following decades: whilst the economic crisis is forcing Bolivians in Spain to continue their migratory cycle, the native Spanish are equally under pressure to move elsewhere. In 2011, 63 000 Spaniards emigrated, the emerging markets of South America a key destination, and a fall in the Spanish population of almost a million people has been forecast for the next decade by the INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística). In a curious twist of migratory fate, it seems quite possible that a Bolivian Dream – similar, perhaps, to the one imagined by their colonial ancestors in the 16th Century – might just be possible across the Atlantic for Spaniards too.

LONDRES HABIA SIDO BIEN

DESPITE THE LONG DISTANCE FROM THEIR FAMILIES AND DIFFICULTIES IN THEIR NEW COUNTRY, BOLIVIAN IMMIGRANTS HAVE FOUND A CORNER IN WHICH TO FEEL AT HOME IN LONDON.

TEXT: JOANNA THOM
PHOTO: VANIA GONZALVEZ

Dozens of languages reverberate through the winding streets. Children play together, different races and cultures blending into one, shrieks of excitement echoing out. London is known for being a hotchpotch of different cultures; in my high school alone we had kids from more than 50 different countries, each with their native tongue. With friends from all corners of the world, I grew up as part of this mix, delighting in learning phrases from new languages, trying different foods and experiencing a scramble of different fashions. One community, however, that I was not aware of, which congregates in the southeast of London, is that of the Bolivian immigrants.

There is definite, albeit small, Bolivian presence in London. Estimates suggest that there are between 15 to 20 thousand Bolivians living in the U.K., of which 8,000 live in the southeast of London, most of them originating from La Paz, Cochabamba or Sucre.

Vania Gonzalvez runs a community programme for immigrant Bolivian children, organizing arts initiatives to encourage them to express their identities and their heritage through music, dance and other creative forms. The programme, which is part of the Migrante Project in southeast London, also makes use of photography and media to illustrate the children's ideas about their identities.

Through Vania's programme, immigrant children are able to discuss the difficulties they have encountered after leaving their homeland. Nevertheless, these kids have integrated into the London community far better than their parents. While adult immigrants frequently speak a limited amount of English, their children often lose their mother tongue altogether. Vania's project actively encourages them to speak Spanish in order to maintain their cultural heritage, as most of them only speak it as a second language.

Claudia Gonzalez was born in London, but she grew up and went to school in Bolivia. She moved back to the U.K. eight years ago and has British citizenship. Despite this, however, she still feels firmly Bolivian, living in a Bolivian community in London, directing a Bolivian dance class and interacting with Bolivians daily. 'Ninety percent of my friends are Bolivian', she says. She moved to London in order to try to pursue educational opportunities, and although she's proud of what she's accomplished – a master's degree in English, to name one of her many achievements – her journey hasn't been easy. Her job in a financial company that transfers money worldwide is not what she envisioned. However, compared to other Bolivian immigrants, who often work as cleaners, Claudia has been very successful.

In addition to the struggle most immigrants face in trying to find a well-paid job, there are also many personal issues they have to deal with. With Bolivia 6,000 miles away from London, and with flight prices costing in excess of 1,000 pounds, it is not always easy to stay connected to their homeland. Claudia missed out on a lot of important events with her family and close friends throughout the years. Weddings, birthdays, and Christmases all had to be celebrated in a strange and sometimes scary country, far from her extended family. But this is something that Claudia felt helped her to grow: 'I have become stronger since I came to the UK. I had to learn so many things I was not interested in at all – like cooking. I had to take responsibility for myself as my parents were not there to support me anymore.'

Walking further through the streets of southeast London where the Bolivian community is most concentrated, I arrived at a Bolivian restaurant called 'Parrilladas del Sur' (Grill of the South) on Old Kent Road. It is a community-centre-cum-canteen that transports its customers to a La Paz eatery. The menu includes pique macho, a traditional Bolivian dish which consists of a lot of meat and some chips, and on the weekend it sells hundreds of salteñas. The restaurant's menu and welcome signs are entirely in Spanish; the TVs blare out Latin music, and huge red, yellow, and green flags hang from the walls. I am greeted by the young Bolivian owner and we converse in Spanish before he directs me to a table and recites the set lunch. Similar to nearly all of the restaurants I visited in La Paz, they've barely catered for vegetarians, so we eventually settled on the fish and the sopa sin carne. The meal is large and tasty, though wouldn't quite call it a fine dining experience. Nonetheless, it serves its purpose and keeps me going for the rest of the day at only £7 for the two-course meal, including drinks. The other diners in the restaurant are all Bolivian-looking; some clothed in alpaca sweaters and more traditional dress, while others sit around wearing the typical London a la moda fashion. Their presence confirms what I've been previously told – that Bolivians like to keep to their own circles. But they're all very welcoming, greeting me in Spanish and wishing me a nice day as I depart from this Latin corner of London.

Bolivians who migrate to London normally do so as a result of the strong ties between family members who have already established themselves in the UK. This exemplifies the strength of the Bolivian community found in London and the ubiquity of Bolivian family ties throughout the world. Claudia says, 'Bolivian people do not mix that much with other cultures, they generally stay among themselves and go out to dance or eat to Bolivian or Latin places only.'

Despite the foreboding that will always be associated with moving to a new place, most Bolivian immigrants in London settle into their new lives, helped by the tight-knit community already present. Despite the hardships that Bolivians face in London – the distance from their homeland, uncertain employment and the cultural assimilation of their children – the Bolivians I spoke with unanimously say that they are happy to continue living in the UK.

BOLIVIA, MY NEW FURUSATO

TEXT:DANIELLE GUY
PHOTO: DIEGO JORDAN DE ACHA

The first Japanese immigrants arrived in Bolivia via Peru in 1899, when 93 workers emigrated from Japan to the Mapiri River Region in La Paz where they were hired to work on rubber plantations. Records show that in 1908 there were 15 Japanese nationals living in La Paz and in the 1910s many more arrived, working as vendors or contractors on the railway lines. In 1920, the collapse of the rubber industry saw many Japanese migrate from Beni and Pando to the city of La Paz. Given the ever-increasing Japanese presence in the city, the Japanese Society of La Paz was formed. Originally the society aimed to provide support between businesses and maintain Bolivian-Japanese relations and, at least until a Japanese Embassy was established in Bolivia, the society played an important role in communication between the Japanese community in Bolivia and the nearest Japanese embassy in Peru. Today, the society has 154 members and hosts a variety of cultural events, amongst them the annual karaoke tournament which celebrated its 30th anniversary in August.

However it is estimated that there are over 800 people of Japanese descent living in La Paz, meaning that over 80% of these are not official members of the society. One of them is Tomo Fujimoto, the manager and owner of Café Blueberries on Avenida 20 de Octubre. Tomo is second-generation Japanese, born to Japanese parents who independently moved to La Paz from Japan 30 years ago and subsequently met and married in Bolivia. As a child, Tomo attended a Japanese School organised on weekends by the Japanese Society, but which in the past ten years has grown apart from the Society. For Tomo, the Society has changed direction somewhat, now trying to attract a younger generation of third- or fourth-generation Japanese who seek to deepen their understanding of their identity and heritage. Tomo notes that when an identity is in crisis, you tend to hold on to it tighter.

When asked where he considers himself to be from, Tomo responded, "I was born on the border between Japan and Bolivia, which doesn't exist at all." In the interview with Bolivian Express, Tomo stated, "Being Japanese used to be a burden, now it's a virtue", he describes while reflecting on his childhood in La Paz, where he experienced some instances of bullying because of his race. Today, Tomo considers himself to be both Japanese and Bolivian he speaks both Spanish and Japanese fluently, plans to move to Tokyo next year for work but eventually hopes to return to Bolivia, his **furusato**.

JAPANESE GARDENS

Nestled in the heart of Zona Sur, the wealthy suburb of La Paz, the Japanese gardens cover an area of only 400 square metres but are a true pocket of tranquility exported from the Far East. Finding the gardens was easy enough but we were then faced with a closed gate. On ringing the doorbell we were met with a rather sad response: "It's no longer a park." Previously open to the public, the gardens are now used exclusively for private functions. When asked what brought about this change, the coordinator simply replied that "nobody came." The gardens are just one of several Japanese legacies visible in La Paz after over 100 years of Japanese migration.

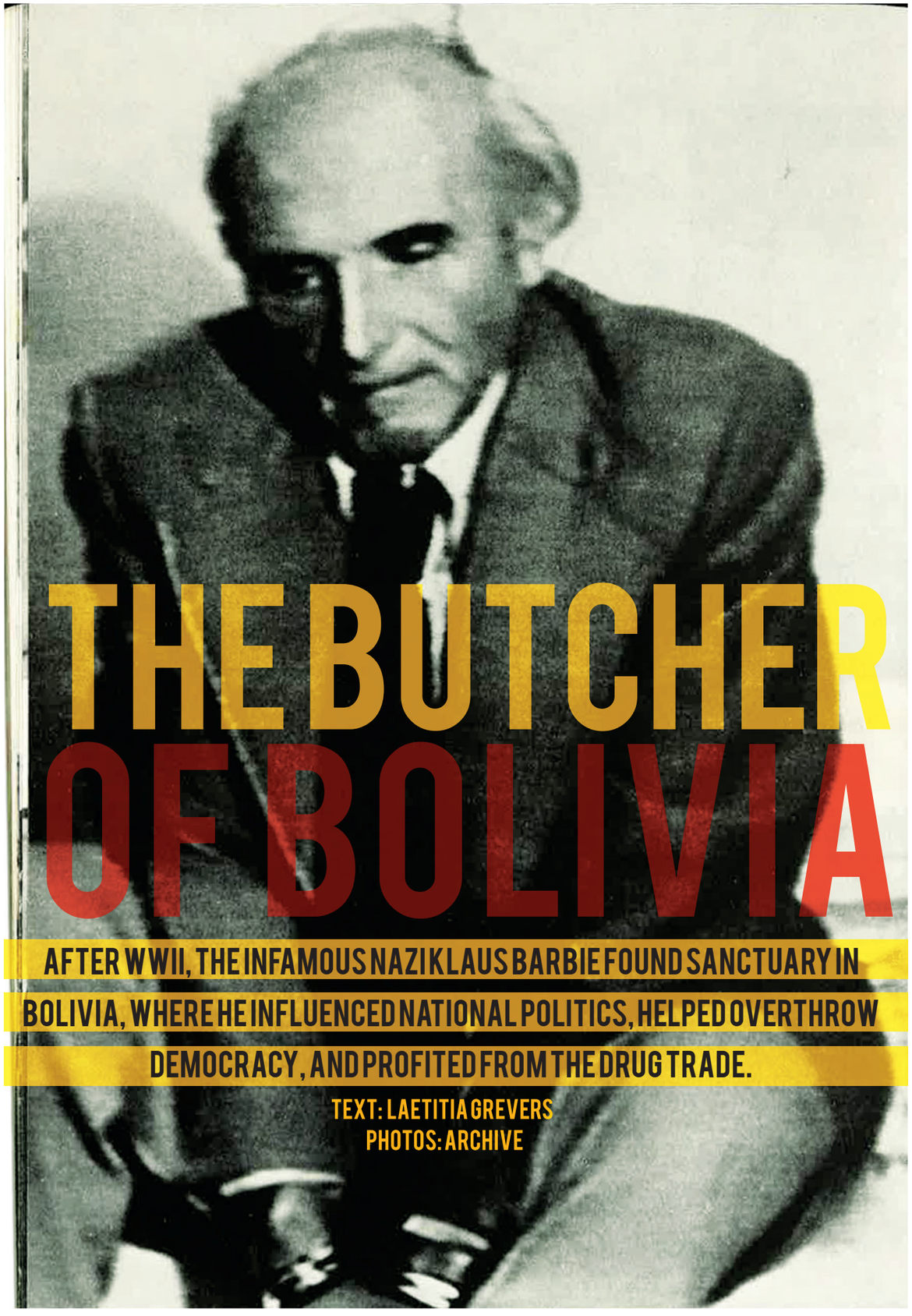
BOLIVIAN IMMIGRANTS IN BRAZIL: WEAVING A NEW LIVING

MANUEL C. MONTENEGRO DA CRUZ
DIPLOMAT AT THE BRAZILIAN EMBASSY IN LA PAZ

As is the case in several other issues in Brazilian-Bolivian relations, migration poses both a common challenge and an opportunity for cooperation. Conservative estimates place the number of Bolivians immigrants living and working in Brazil at 300 thousand, but the only certainty is most live in the state of São Paulo. While migration to the industrial heartland of Brazil may be said to have started with,
and was certainly facilitated by, the 1950's opening of a railroad link from Santa Cruz to the Brazilian border, the phenomenon has grown by leaps and bounds over the last decade or so, as a result of an increasingly robust Brazilian economy. The border city of Corumbá, close to Bolivia's Puerto Suárez, continues to be a logistical hub for migrants, although growing numbers now apparently take a roundabout route through Paraguayan territory to reach Ciudad del Este, where they easily blend among the thousands of people daily crossing the "Amistad" bridge into Foz do Iguaçu, thus avoiding immigration controls. Besides the usual concerns regarding drug running, "coyotes" are known to be involved in human trafficking along the border, which brings an additional and chilling level of complexity to the immigration issue.

Migration in the 1960's and 1970's allowed Bolivians to harness educational opportunities in Brazil, and was fueled at times by Bolivian political instability and military governments not particularly fond of dissenters. Exiles and other middle-class migrants gathered around the "Asociación de Residentes Bolivianos en Brasil" (ADRB), established in 1969. It is still going strong, with around 20,000 members, of whom 40 percent are professionals, 25 percent describe themselves as micro- and small-scale entrepeneurs, and 35 per cent are workers and students with temporary residency permits. ADRB's newsletter, La Puerta del Sol (reported circulation 5,000), is distributed free of charge. However, a new, larger wave of immigrants, starting in the 1980's, was fueled by the deep economic crisis that hit Bolivia and put thousands of miners and other workers out of a job. At the time, the U.S. also attracted relatively large numbers of Bolivians, as did Argentina, which, like Brazil, welcomed them in spite of economic troubles they were facing at the time. These migrants tended to be unskilled and undocumented and were thus prone to being exploited, even by other Bolivians who often had had a hand in bringing them to Brazil. The 2000 Brazilian census thus only reported 20 thousand Bolivian respondents, while 'Pastoral do Migrante', a Catholic church social aid service for migrants, estimated over 200 thousand Bolivians lived in São Paulo alone. Another, less visible form of migration takes place along the 3,423-kilometer border, which an indeterminate number of Bolivians cross daily to benefit from work opportunities, education or health services available on the Brazilian side. Most recent immigrants are reported to be working in the textile industry, occupying the niche that was left by South Korean immigrants moving up the economic scale. Widespread outsourcing by renowned brand names in the wake of globalization involve thousands of small suppliers that are either owned by Bolivians or that employ Bolivian individuals and their families – sometimes including minors. Although immigrants are typically able to send some money to their families back home – some US$ 150 every other month, according to estimates - helplessness created by illegal alien status and profit maximizing goals by ruthless bosses can make up a toxic brew.

In 2005, Brazil and Bolivia agreed to facilitate extending legal alien status to migrants in each other's territories. Starting in 2009, Brazil allowed Bolivians to benefit both from this agreement and the streamlined Mercosul residency process to obtain residency papers. Often working in collaboration with the Bolivian Consulate General in São Paulo, Brazilian authorities have since then been able to turn tens of thousands of Bolivians into legal aliens. Activism on the part of the 'Pastoral do Imigrante', and a tougher attitude towards sweatshops by the Public Attorney's Office for Labor Issues is helping to expose exploitative practices, extending normal work and social rights to Bolivian immigrants by bringing fly-by-night operations into the economic mainstream. A simplified on-line registration system for microbusinesses called MEI, for instance, now boasts 4,000 textile micro firms owned by Bolivians, not all of whhom are necessarily legal residents. Nevertheless, the creation of a strong textile industry in Bolivia itself would go a long way towards harnessing the fine skills of Bolivian workers and helping those migrants who want to return to find good jobs in their own country. In this connection, back in 2010 Brazil extended a US$ 23 million duty-free quota for Bolivian textile exports, which still awaits to be filled by Bolivian entrepreneurs.



THE BUTCHER OF BOLIVIA

AFTER WWII, THE INFAMOUS NAZI KLAUS BARBIE FOUND SANCTUARY IN BOLIVIA, WHERE HE INFLUENCED NATIONAL POLITICS, HELPED OVERTHROW DEMOCRACY, AND PROFITED FROM THE DRUG TRADE.

TEXT: LAETITIA GREVERS
PHOTOS: ARCHIVE

'Again, the topic of the Nazis', says Nicolas Bauer, the president of Club Aleman, in an impatient voice. He lights another cigarette. 'Well, what else could I have expected from someone who wants to write about German immigrants?' For Bauer, it is difficult to say which of the Germans was not a Nazi before the end of World War II. Many Germans who immigrated before 1945 came to spread the Nazi way of life in Bolivia discreetly – several also came after 1945. In particular, many German teachers immigrated during the 1930s and 1940s and spread the National Socialist ideology. Ironically, many German Jews also immigrated to Bolivia during and after the war.

After the war, several ex-Nazis escaped to South America and Bolivia via 'ratlines', the notorious escape routes for Axis war criminals that were organized by members of the Catholic Church. US intelligence agencies also assisted, using the fugitives as assets during the Cold War. Among the most notorious was Klaus Barbie, the former chief of the Gestapo in Lyon. Barbie, the 'Butcher of Lyon', tortured French Resistance leader Jean Moulin to death during the war, and was the man responsible for the deportation of 44 Jewish orphans to Auschwitz and their subsequent deaths. 'I came to kill' was the first thing he said upon reaching France. In Bolivia, Barbie became a tireless hustler and eccentric, wheeling and dealing with the German business community, politicians, and arms and drug traffickers. He held court in the Club La Paz near Plaza San Francisco, where former Nazis would meet with him to discuss old times.

During his stay in Bolivia, Barbie (who went by the name of Altmann) worked for the Department of the Interior as a lieutenant colonel and as an instructor for the Bolivian security forces, teaching them the finer points of torture and 'disappearance' of political dissidents. Together with Hans Stellfeld, another ex-Nazi officer, Barbie was instrumental in the ascendance of General Luis Garcia Meza Tejada, who took over the country as a dictator after a coup d'état in 1980. Called the 'Cocaine Coup', this takeover was financed through deals with wealthy cocaine producers in Santa Cruz, who gave kickbacks to Garcia Meza; Barbie was responsible for eliminating rival drug lords through his paramilitary group 'the Fiancés of Death'.

In 1983, after the restoration of the civilian government in Bolivia, Barbie was finally arrested and extradited to France. He was condemned to life in jail and died there in 1991. His surviving family lives in Germany still. His Nazi comrades do not. They are still at home in Bolivian society. And they do not want to hear about the past.

In the 1960s the 'German colony', as Bauer calls it, was centred in the Sopocachi neighbourhood. Barbie's home was located there, on Avenida 20 de Octubre. Bauer often visited. At the time, he thought Barbie was nice and entertaining, not knowing about his sinister past.

Now, the Achumani district, in Zona Sur, is the centre of the German expat community. The Club Aleman is the reason for this change. With its white stone lobby and elegant wood terrace, it's a throwback to another time. Nearby, the German school now has classes full of Bolivians, most of them members of the Club Aleman. But only 13 percent of Germans in Bolivia are members – an interesting development from the late 80s, a time before which non-Germans were prohibited from joining. Germans in Bolivia are still identified with National Socialism, but they are not criticised or confronted with it. And only occasionally do Bolivians greet their German neighbours with the Hitler salute.

Bolivians avoid acknowledging fascism's bloody history because it was deeply rooted in their own political system for several years. The Bolivian Socialist Falange, established in 1937, was the country's second-largest party between approximately 1954 and 1974. It was particularly strong in Santa Cruz and La Paz. One of the first sights Barbie saw after his arrival in La Paz was a march by FSB members. He later claimed that the sight of the uniformed, armband-wearing militants giving the Roman salute made him feel at home, and he soon sought out the party's leading members and became close to them.

After 1974, the followers of the Falange lent their support to various military regimes, including those of Generals. Hugo Banzer and Juan Pereda. But with the restoration of the democratic process in Bolivia, they have become much less influential.

Yet some remnants of Nazi ideology remain in Bolivia. Four years ago in Cochabamba, the German school choir from La Paz marched into the room with a Hitler salute. It caused a minor scandal but was quickly hushed up.

Bauer says that the public has forgotten about its Nazi connection. Germans introduced a 'forced forgetting' to protect their reputations. They want to maintain their high-status life in Achumani and remain integrated in Bolivian society. In Germany, every school kid has learnt about National Socialism. They've all been to a concentration camp and several war museums. They remember and are confronted with the past. However, the process of a huge public discussion about the war and an emergence of collective memory has yet to develop in Bolivia.

Nevertheless, Bauer sees a light at the end of this tunnel. He wants to establish a discussion evening at the Club Aleman about the Nazi past. 'It will be a scandal, something like this has never happened before', he says in his harsh voice. His attitude changes during our conversation, from reluctantly discussing Bolivia's dark chapter of history to embracing the notion of some sort of absolution through historical confrontation and acknowledgment. Nearly 70 years after the defeat of Nazism in Europe, Bolivia is finally ready to confront its own embrace of that barbarous ideology.

CITY LIGHTS

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION TRAJECTORIES IN THE BOLIVIAN ANDES

Text: Tjitske Anna Zwart
Photos: Evan Abramson

At 4,150 meters above sea level, towering over the city of La Paz, you'll find El Alto: a migrant town made up almost entirely of indigenous people; a place tormented by the cold winds of the altiplano, infamous for its high levels of poverty and criminality. Skyrocketing rates of population growth have transformed this former village into the fastest growing city in Bolivia.

The explosive population growth in El Alto is a result of mass migration, a phenomenon that has made Bolivia, which was once a predominantly rural country, a nation currently with an urban majority. There are political, historical and environmental reasons for this development, all of which have contributed to the gradual impoverishment of life in rural areas and have made living conditions there increasingly more harsh.

Rural migrants hope to find a better life in the city, earn a higher income and achieve greater social status. The reality of El Alto, however, is quite different. Instead of it being a step towards a better, more urban lifestyle, there is a lack of basic services there and employment opportunities are hard to come by. All of this pushes people to find different ways of sustaining their lives.

Historically speaking, migration has always been an important feature of life in Andean communities. For thousands of years, migration has been a way of coping with political, economic, and environmental changes. Agricultural systems, for example, used to be based on a model of vertical production, in which products were grown at various altitudes, forcing farmers to move along the landscape according to the seasons.

During the Spanish conquest and subsequent colonization, there was a radical shift in how agriculture was handled in Bolivia. When the Spanish conquered the land, they distributed it amongst themselves in the form of large **haciendas**. After Bolivia's independence from Spain in 1825, this system was not only kept, but also expanded, expelling indigenous communities from their lands, and therefore providing another incentive for rural migration.

The most important change, however, which laid a basis for mass rural-urban migration in Bolivia, came about in 1952 with Bolivia's National Revolution. Two things were especially significant then. First, the agrarian land reform, which ignored traditional vertical-based agricultural practices and made farmers less resistant to changes in season and climate. Second, the inclusion of indigenous peoples as recognized citizens, which opened up new chances for social mobility.

Next to these developments, there were several other factors that influenced migration, like severe droughts and climate change and the economic crisis of the 1980s, which recorded inflation rates of over 27 percent.

In the long run, these developments led to the formation of towns like El Alto, where the huge influx of migrants overruled the possibility of creating the proper facilities, administering basic services and offering jobs that would be needed. This contributed to the increase of poverty and criminality rates, making some of the migrants perhaps even worse off than they would have been in their places of origin.

Rural-urban migration has also had negative consequences on the countryside due to the fact that it has been mostly men who have migrated to the cities, meaning that women are left with double the workload in the countryside.

It would be wrong to say, however, that rural-urban migration is a purely negative phenomenon and that a town like El Alto, with its lack of services and facilities, is only a place of poverty and despair. According to José Luis Rivero Zegarra, general coordinator of CEBIAE, that would only be a 'capitalist' way of looking at the place.

There is so much more to El Alto that can be seen if one abandons the 'Western way of looking' and embraces other visions. Then, it would be possible to see that El Alto is much more than a place of poverty and criminality. It is also a place for different ways of seeing life; a place made up of different indigenous traditions and systems of morality, mixed with 'urban and capitalist' views--a place, that is, for innovation and creativity.

Rural life tends to be reproduced in cities like El Alto due to the deep ties of its inhabitants with the countryside. For them, getting away to the city does not mean leaving their rural community entirely. At times, a migrant is asked to return to the countryside to govern his or her local community. At others, communal ties place moral limits on how much an individual can enrich him or herself in the city. Some people believe that an individual's fortune results from the support lended to him or her by the community, which is why they have an obligation to let their wealth flow back into the countryside. They may throw a party in the city or in their village in retribution.

This is why José Luis Rivero Zegarra suggests that El Alto's way of life cannot be fully understood through a capitalistic logic. 'It is a different way of living', he says, 'that responds to cultural traits that have been alive for centuries.'

Despite far reaching attempts to suppress this culture by importing a Western way of life, presented as 'the right way' of living, Zegarra says, in past decades ´indigenous and traditional ways of living have gained ground again.' He goes on: 'Bolivia is going through an identity crisis, in which people have to ask themselves who they are, what their values are and what place they want to take in the world´.

In Bolivia's process of defining its own identity, the concept of being indigenous -once something to be ashamed of- has become something that nobody tries to hide anymore. In light of this, instead of pitying El Alto for its poverty rates and so-called ´backwardness´, we might take Zegarra's views as a source of inspiration and begin to experience El Alto as a new way of viewing life, in which the community is placed above the individual, and in which solidarity, reciprocity, and mutual caring prevail.

Special thanks to:
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Fundación Pueblo

MIGRATE AND CONQUER

A colonial tale of Bolivia's original migrant population

Text: Ashley Lloyd Cooke

It is a well-known story. In 1492, the forty-one-year-old Christopher Columbus, a then unknown Genoan sailor, convinced King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to fund his voyage to discover a western maritime passage to the Far East. With the rich rewards that the 'Capitulations of Santa Fe' promised, whereby Columbus would attain the rank of 'Admiral of the Ocean Seas' and Viceroy and Governor of any new lands he claimed for Spain, he embarked upon an unprecedented journey. In October, after a journey greatly facilitated by his knowledge of the Atlantic trade winds, Columbus and his crew sighted land. He landed at what is presumed to be the Bahamas - which he christened San Salvador-, and became the first European to 'discover' the Americas. Columbus however, maintained that he had not discovered the 'New World.' Rather, he had unearthed a new sea-route to an old world, that of the East Indies.

Fast - forward forty years to 1533, and the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire was nearly complete. Present-day Bolivia was known as Alto Perú and was ruled by the Viceroy of Lima. In the first one hundred years of Spanish imperial rule, 250,000 Spaniards migrated to Alto Perú, and would continue to colonize the country for the following 300 years. But who were these Spanish migrants?

The New World was a distant, daring and dangerous prospect. The passage across the Atlantic in wooden ships was harsh and exhausting, and whilst the prospective riches loomed heavy on the horizon, there was no incentive to engage in such a risky pursuit when one had relative stability in Spain. Thus, the well-to-do families tended not to colonise the New World. At the same time, society's poorest could not afford to make the journey. The crossing was costly, and those peasants stagnating at the bottom of Spain's social hierarchy were in no position to participate in the creation of the Spanish colonies.

It was a middling and marginalised individual that took the gamble of packing up his existence in Spain and setting out for the great unknown. Poor journeymen and the illegitimate children of impoverished gentry set sail for the New World, not artisan craftsmen and the sons of major landholders. As Herbert Klein acknowledges, 'it was, in short, the lowest groups within the potentially upwardly mobile classes who left for America.'

Upon arrival, migrating Spaniards discovered a greatly undeveloped continent compared to their native Spain and, for the very first immigrants, a country plagued with militaristic conquest.

The challenge of migrating to the New World was inextricably linked with the promise of riches and exploitation, and the nature of the proceeding conquest was exacted with this in mind. In the absence of Spanish peasants, indigenous peasants formed the bottom tier of the social hierarchy. Without any competing institutions or classes, the migrating Spaniards received an instant elevation from their social position in Spain.

In such unusual circumstances, the establishment of a permanent Spanish society in South America became a reality from the very beginning of the emigration. Regardless of their former status in Spain, their perceived cultural and racial supremacy placed any Spaniard above an indigenous Bolivian. Where once the titles Don and Doña were restricted to the elite, by the second generation of conquistadors they were being more generally applied to all whites.

The migrating Spaniards arrived very much aware that both posterity and God would judge them by their actions in the New World. The first product of this mindset was a fervour for conquest, construction, and religious conversion.

In the early 1540s, the Spanish conquistadors felt confident enough to push south in a bid to extend their rule, and their efforts were met with the rich reward they had hoped to attain. Whilst the pursuit for the mythical El Dorado was entirely futile and unfruitful, silver-rich Potosí exceeded the wildest hopes and dreams the Spanish held for the inestimable treasures of the New World. Founded in 1545 as a mining town, Potosí became the most populous city in the Western Hemisphere. By 1600, its population of 150,000 likely exceeded that of London, and Spain was bankrolled throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century by the silver that left the cavernous mouth of the city's mountain.

The Spanish conviction in their New World activities established a vibrant chronicle tradition, which greatly aids our understanding of the migration. Bartolomé Arzans de Orua y Vela was born to first-generation Spanish parents in 1676 in Potosí, and his epic work chronicles life in the city and elsewhere in Alto Perú.

Despite the immense riches beneath Cerro de Potosí, life in Alto Perú, and particularly in the city of Potosí, was described by Arzans as proving very challenging for the migrant Spanish residents. The immense altitudes in Bolivia were novel and formidable. At over 4,000m, Potosí greatly exceeds Spain's highest point, and it made childbirth a real difficulty. Arzans chronicles how a majority of the first children born in Potosí bore the name of Nicolás, a result of desperate Spanish parents naming their firstborn sons after the San Nicolás de Tolentino (the patron saint of difficult births), in a bid to secure a safe delivery.

The wealth a man made in the New World however, and his improvement in social standing, was non-transferable. Settlers could not assimilate into the Spanish nobility and rub shoulders with the Iberian gentry should they decide to return to Spain, despite attaining such a standing in Alto Perú. The product of this scenario was the creation of a permanent migrant community from the very beginning.

This societal structure that was crafted in Bolivia in the sixteenth century has remained remarkably intact over half a millennia. The large indigenous population continue to exist at the bottom of the socioeconomic structure, whilst the small elite are of European descent. A 2006 paper by the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID) revealed the extent of horizontal inequality (economic disparity does not stem from any difference in intelligence and skills) in Bolivia, putting into academic writing what is immediately apparent when one spends any amount of time in Bolivia.

More than a third percent of indigenous Bolivians live in 'extreme poverty', compared to just 12.8 percent of non-indigenous almost three times greater. Not until the 1952 Revolution could indigenous Bolivians vote or even go near La Paz's Presidential Palace in Plaza Murillo. Pale-skinned European descended elites continued to rule until Evo Morales was sworn in as president in 2006, which brought the first indigenous Bolivian leader to power in a country with a an indigenous majority.

The same ODID paper cites a survey of Bolivians that revealed that nearly two out of every three Bolivians believe their ethnic or racial origins affect their chance of employment in the private or public sector. Of those who identified as indigenous, 76 percent believed ethnicity had an impact on their working possibilities. The plight of indigenous Bolivians is plain to see and persistent.

Evo Morales established a new constitution in 2009. It gave indigenous peoples unprecedented rights, championing native culture like the coca leaf, making symbolic gestures such as the adoption of the wiphala and more active reforms such as the 2006 redistribution of 77,000 square miles of land to Bolivia's poor population.

When one wanders the streets of La Paz, however, and sees the cholita stalls and the lustrabotas on every corner, or when one visits El Alto, where the population is 80 percent indigenous in sharp contrast to the European-descended residents one sees on the streets of Zona Sur, or even Sopocachi, the impact of the 500-year-old migratory wave from Spain is quite apparent. It continues to affect politics, social standing, and economic success. Perhaps no other global migration has had such a profound effect as that of Spain's conquistadors.

WEAVING DREAMS

STITCHING THEIR WAY ACROSS THE SEAMS OF COUNTRY BORDERS, BOLIVIANS HEAD SOUTH IN SEARCH OF A BETTER FUTURE

Text: Rose Acton Photo: SETEM

Buenos Aires is a vast and diverse city, a cosmopolitan metropolis laced with colonial architecture and peppered with downtrodden **villas**. It attracts a remarkable number of Bolivian migrants, drawn by the bright city lights. Currently around 1.2 million Bolivians live in the Buenos Aires province alone, a further 300 thousand scattered across Argentina, most in search for a better life and increased opportunities.

The flow of Bolivians to Argentina has been a trend for many decades; during the late 1980s and early 1990s, many exminers from the valley of Cochabamba travelled to Buenos Aires to work in sewing workshops and other locations. The Argentine economic crisis of 1999–2002 meant that many Bolivian migrants returned home, while others continued their migratory cycle to Spain. Despite Argentina's economic recovery following the crisis, it has recently begun to suffer stagflation, a term used by economists to describe a mix of stagnant growth and strong inflation.

Amador Choque Ajata first came to Buenos Aires out of curiosity and returned to live there because he missed 'how big and different things are compared to La Paz—the city is more complete.' He tells me that the majority of Bolivians are curious to see what things are like in Buenos Aires; they come for the standard of living. They see the opportunities for work, and they are impressed by the transportation and health system. Amador also tells me how many migrants are impressed by different consumer products which aren't available in La Paz.

Bolivians who arrive in Buenos Aires traditionally work within the textile industry. However, at least for the first year or two, this tends to be illegally – trabajan en **negro**. This illegal migration status clearly affects migrants' choices and opportunities, and many Bolivians find themselves working in precarious conditions. The number of people living in near-slavery conditions is estimated at around 500,000 people; half of these are garment workers who live and work in sweatshops. Employers typically pay for the immigrants' transport from Bolivia, as well as their food for the first few weeks, leaving many trapped: one woman described how she had to work for six months without a check in order to pay back all the money she owed; another man described how he earned $30 in first month, of which his boss kept $26. The threatening behaviour of their employers and a fear of the authorities leaves them with few other choices. Many are also physically trapped, with employers locking the doors and as many as 10 to 12 people living per room. Long working hours are the norm, with some employees expected to stay at their machines from as early as 7 am until as late as 1 am or 2 am. If the migrants had the necessary legal papers – **trabajan en blanco** – they would have access to medical and work insurance and would be able to work fewer hours by adopting other occupations as cleaners, receptionists, etc. However, this is rare, as most Bolivian migrants are in irregular situations, severely limiting their options.

The conditions related here form a stark contrast to the initial dream of a better life. Amador portrays how people who arrived 10- 15 years ago had many opportunities, due to the increased purchasing power afforded by the Argentinean peso's parity with the dollar. Back then, a peso would buy you up to 6 Bolivianos, today it will only buy you 1.2 Bolivianos- with this economic climate, many recent migrants now work just in order to survive. Amador states 'it's not like before- it's not like the Argentinean dream. The currency used to be stronger, people used to be able to save. But now that the Argentinean peso is closer to the Boliviano - there are few opportunities.'

The Bolivians who come to work in Buenos Aires rarely integrate or are welcomed into the Argentine community; in fact, they face widespread discrimination and racism. They encounter widespread perceptions which label Bolivians as illegal, racially inferior and job stealing. Edson Veizaga, who lived in Buenos Aires for 13 years, states that this discrimination is in the collective consciousness. The media plays a big role in this issue: 'Once I remember on Crónica TV, a very popular news channel, they said "Three people and one Bolivian died during an accident on a construction site."' He then tells how the word 'boliviano' is used as an insult or synonym of 'dirty,' 'ignorant' and 'low class.' Amador also tells me how even seemingly complimentary stereotypes conceal deep-seated racism. 'They say the Bolivian is a good worker. That is a euphemism. What they mean to say is that they offer cheap labour. They will do any job at any price.' Amador says that the Bolivian community is very closed, having created a tight-knit social network amongst themselves. He says that this insularity further hinders integration and that it is not just Argentinean society that is to blame.

A vast separation exists between the two communities: Bolivians live and socialise in different quarters to Argentineans. Famously, many Bolivians live in Villa 31, a shantytown which spreads out from the port of Buenos Aires. A Bolivian immigrant describes how he would never go to the Argentine bars because they discriminate against his countrymen – 'They think you are just an Indian', he says, and 'this guy is ignorant; he's a dirty **negro**.'

One display of traditional Bolivian culture in Argentina is the Fiesta of the Virgin of Copacabana, which is a large-scale gathering attracting around 30,000 participants and spectators, the majority of whom are Bolivian, held in the Charrua neighbourhood. At first glance, this would appear to be a potent symbol of Bolivians united, yet this is not necessarily the case. For example, the **morenada** is a way of displaying one's economic status with the dominant protagonists being those who own or operate textile workshops, together with the Bolivian immigrant professionals and white collar workers who arrived in the 1970s and 80s. Their lavish outfits clearly set them apart, the most expensive of these being the super achachi, which comes complete with gloves, headpiece and careta (scepter), all of which together cost approximately US$500 to purchase and US$300 to rent.

This hierarchy found amongst Bolivians at the Fiesta of the Virgin Copacabana is indicative of real life, particularly between textile employees and their bosses. Painfully, despite their mutual discrimination and heritage, some Bolivians have reported that they prefer working under Korean bosses rather than Bolivian bosses, as they are seen as more reliable at paying their wages. Bolivians who progress to the stage of owning their own factories use the same methods under which they were exploited. Amador states, 'It's Bolivians exploiting Bolivians – it's those people who arrived 10 to 15 years ago. They come to Bolivia and bring people over.'

Las Alacitas, a Bolivian holiday in which people purchase miniature versions of things they desire – anything from cars to university titles – which are then blessed by a **yatiris**, is celebrated by many Bolivians in Buenos Aires. The striking difference is that in Buenos Aires, miniature factories are are offered for sale, showing the celebrants' desire to one day own a real, full-sized factory of their own. Often when immigrants arrive, it is on the basis of the promise that the factory owner will help them set up their own factory in the future. Amador admits that he at one stage considered setting up one of his own; however, he has decided against this route, as 'people who've opened a workshop suffer from much stress – it's a big responsibility to provide people with food and lodging, its a total commitment'. In order to make a profit, 'you have to maintain an open workshop, working at all hours.'

The Bolivian migration to Buenos Aires is a curious one, from outside the main migration motive sees to be a search of better opportunities while working illegally in textile workshops under extreme working conditions. It appears inherently paradoxical - why do people choose to stay? Amador said that people choose to stay due to shame, 'They feel they have left their country to build a future. They hope to return to the country and prove they have made a better life. What face will I give to my brothers, to my parents? The commonly held belief is that people who live in Argentina earn more.' These immigrants' mentality and silence on the issue clearly fuels this cycle of disparity. And so the cycle continues: Many more immigrants continue to chase the Argentine dream, even upon realising that it's their pride which leads them to stoically endure their situation.

WITH OVER 1.2 MILLION RESIDENTS, THE LARGEST BOLIVIAN COMMUNITY OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY IS IN BUENOS AIRES. DESPITE THE PROMISES OF VAST OPPORTUNITIES AND DREAMS OF AN IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE UPON DEPARTURE, THE REALITY CAN BE MUCH DIFFERENT ONCE THEY ARRIVE. ROSE ACTON EXPLORES HOW THE PROSPECT OF LIVING IN INHUMANE CONDITIONS SOMETIMES IS LESS TERRIFYING THAN THE PROSPECT OF RETURNING TO THE COUNTRY EMPTY-HANDED.

OOH LA LA!, OOH LA PAZ!

From Joie de Vivre to Suma Qamaña

Text: Rose Acton and Laetitia Grevers
Photo: Michael Dunn

Sopocachi, with its charming cafes and bohemian feel, is commonly thought of as the pseudo-French district of La Paz. The French influence is instantly recognisable with restaurants such as 'La Comedie' and 'La Guingette' and the modern Alliance Francaise. The old-style French houses reflect a long-standing Gallic influence; even the Paraguayan Embassy is located in a building designed by Gustave Eiffel, the creator of the famous French landmark. In the past, during Eiffel's time, Sopocachi was very much an elite and predominantly white area. Today, however, its bustling diversity tells a different story, with Sopocachi Market and traditional Andean street stalls alongside upmarket restaurants.

Today many French people still fall for the charm of Sopocachi, the owner of La Comedie Bernard Arduca set up his restaurant in 2003 and has never looked back since. La Comedie is one of the finest restaurants in La Paz with its sophisticated French inspired interior design contained within an unusual ship-shaped building, and of course with gourmet food. Bernard described his food as having the 'french touch,' a popular dish being llama and béarnaise sauce; a fusion of Bolivian and French culinary traditions. On the 4th July, Bastille Day the French independence day, he holds a **grande fete** in his restaurant thus maintaining the French feel.

Bernard tells me of the existence of a large French community, many of whom work as teachers, ambassadors, or are employed within the tourist industry and the research and development centre. Interestingly, he states that there is little solidarity amongst the French in Bolivia and that, for the most part, it is French people who own businesses who work together for mutual gains. Bernard feels integrated within the Bolivian community, telling me that around half of his friends are Bolivian. Likewise, Jules, a young Frenchman who has lived in Sopocachi for 2 years describes how he avoids to practicing French culture because he wants to integrate - estimating that 15% of his friends here are French. It is clear that the French community in La Paz is not one solid entity.

Both Jules and Bernard plan to stay in Bolivia long-term; this is not an extended holiday. Bernard does not want to return to France: his life, business and friends are here in La Paz. He also states that it is easier to live well in La Paz compared to France, it is easier to build up a new business whereas in France there are many businesses already established, and with the current economic crisis it is only becoming harder.

Jules has decided to stay put for now because he is enjoying the Bolivia and the 'South American lifestyle'. He tells me it is a life full of adventure which avoids getting into a routine. The Bolivian mentality is to live the moment intensively, unlike the western mentality where the present is often reduced to a means for the future. A routine which will lead us to a new routine. Jules believes that there is little solidarity between the people in Western societies, in Bolivia people share and help without asking for a favor in return.

Many young French people come here for a while to leave their normal routine to travel, Jules was one of them. At first he only wanted to work temporarily in the French tourist office Terra Andina which organizes tours for French people. Interestingly, during the last 10 years one can observe a large increase in the number of French travellers who come to Bolivia and South America in general. There are two types of travellers: the old wealthy people who participate in luxurious adventure holidays and the young backpackers - who mostly work while they travel either as a teacher, in the IRD or as a volunteer. Some of them decide to stay for longer or forever like Jules this spontaneity forms a sharp contrast to people who migrate to places after long and careful planning.

Jules does not like to return to France for longer than 3 weeks, otherwise he finds himself frustrated. France means back to a routine life - it is the people who change him again, back to his old mindset. He does not want to be like that anymore. This is why he wants to stay in South America forever.

Jules' and Bernard's behavior reflects the state of mind of the majority of the French immigrants in La Paz and Bolivia. They act very differently to the typical French immigrants abroad who tend to stick together. The Parisians in London have their own community - South Kensington is known as little Paris with French bookshops, patisseries and cafes alongside the Lycee Francais Charles de Gaulle and the French Embassy.The same can be said for French people in German cities such as Munich. The French mothers in Munich rotate form a mircrocosm limited to Sendling - the district where the French school is located. They do not make little attempt to integrate or to learn German. They want to preserve their frenchness at all cost. French people in South America should thus be taken as an example for all French people in foreign countries to start integrating and adapting to a society and a culture. The spontaneity behind their decision may well affect the way in which they integrate, they see it as more necessary to embrace the culture that has lured them to stay. Sopocachi, indeed Bolivia, certainly has an enticing charm.

EPILOGUE - EDITORIAL

'ASI ES PUES, LA TIERRA LLAMA'

THE RETURN

TEXT: AMARU VILLANUEVA RANCE
PHOTOS: EVAN ABRAMSON

'It's how it is, the earth calls for you' Edson told me, plainly, upon hearing that I was thinking of returning back to Bolivia after having lived abroad for almost a decade. Minutes earlier I had been explaining to him how I was torn between staying in the US for a few years to take advantage of all manner of opportunities, and the irresistible urge (duty, even, I liked to tell myself) to return to my beloved country and put an end to all manner of yearnings. The story was not an unfamiliar one around those parts, especially not to Edson. Indeed, in all of my interactions with members of the sparse Bolivian community in San Francisco, the idea of returning was a constant; a recurring imperative so obvious it was barely worth bringing up in conversation, somewhat like talking about the weather, good only for small-talk, perhaps. The real question wasn't so much whether, but when.

Just as obvious and beyond the realms of conversation were the reasons Bolivians found themselves in the US in the first place. Yet in all exchanges that touched on this topic (and implicit in many life plans I learned about), I constantly encountered an almost-Christian idea of deferred gratification, a theme also present in many migratory accounts collected in this issue. The maxim seemed to be: work hard today and save some money in order to enjoy tomorrow. Yet this promised tomorrow rarely seemed to arrive. I met Rodolfo and his family, for example, who had been living in the US for 20 years yet couldn't go back due to their status as illegal immigrants; if they left the US, they would never be allowed back in. I spoke to Maria, who, while able to go back (holding dual Bolivian-American citizenship), couldn't quite bring herself to make the jump as the timing never seemed right. During a Bolivian gathering, Alberto, a man in his 40s doing a routine visit to some relatives in the US told me: 'when you talk to Bolivians here everyone says they will go back soon, next year even, yet they never do. Remember my words.' I wondered whether the same would happen to me. I set out to investigate different return experiences to understand what drives this process and what are the conditions necessary for it to take place.

The first step was realising that whether or not it consciously registered in our minds, Rodolfo, Maria and myself had a choice, broadly speaking. Sure, going back would imply all sorts of sacrifices and trade-offs, yet the idea presented itself to us at least as a path among many we could decide to take.

Exile

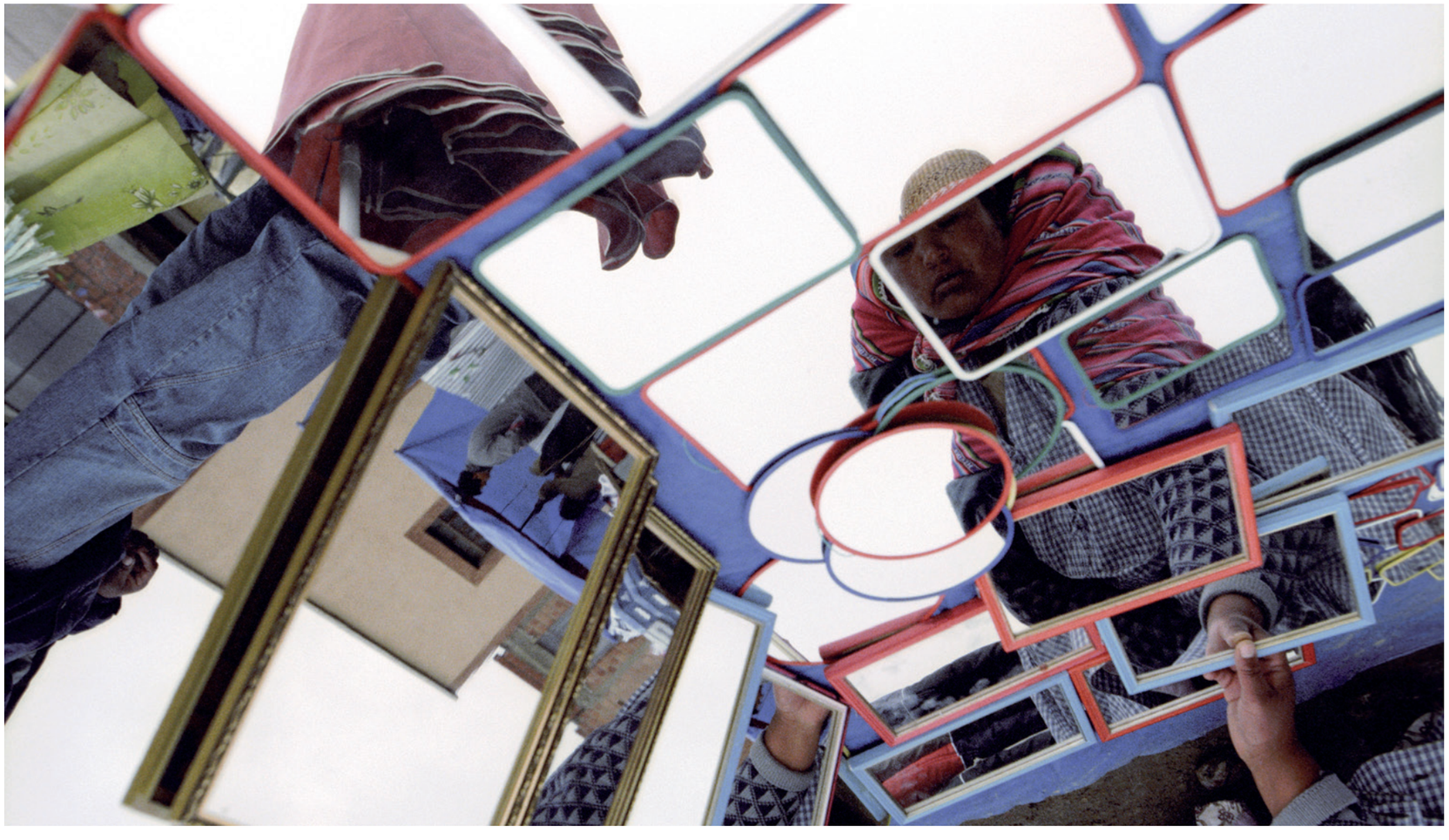
Others have been less fortunate. During the 70s and early 80s many Bolivians (activists, musicians and writers among them) were either forced or driven to exile due to their opposition to the military dictatorships of the time. For them, leaving the country was not so much a case of looking for a better life, but rather a chance to stay alive. It wasn't migration in the standard voluntary sense we're familiar with today. In their case, the idea of returning didn't present itself as a choice but as a dream. While many settled abroad, several others returned to the country after democracy of some sort was reinstated or they were no longer persecuted. These individuals were instrumental in fighting the military regimes by campaigning from abroad and helping with the flow of information between Bolivia and the outside world. Luis Rico, a well known activist, researcher and musician, exemplifies this migratory and return trajectory, continuing with his political work when he returned to the country after spending several years in Mexico.

La Patria, el Pueblo

What I was learning is that there is an additional motivation which drives the return process, linked with duty and a commitment to our communities of origin. Luis Rico tells me 'migration is a way of getting payback from developed countries for the looting they were responsible for during the colonial period' He continues by telling me how he feels a strong affection towards migrants 'because they have had the courage to leave the country, because in their departure they carry with them a part of Bolivia - I hope that one day they will have the courage to come back to teach us what they have learnt'.

Yet the international dimension of migratory processes can make us mistakenly believe it is a purely transnational phenomenon. As Alfonso Hinojosa tells me 'we often make the mistake of differentiating between local and international migration. They are one and the same phenomenon.' Jorge Sanjinez poignantly captures one such journey in his 1989 masterpiece Nacion Clandestina, a film which tells the story of Sebastián

Mamani, a man from the countryside who leaves his community to go to the city, eventually playing a part in their repression at the hands of a military regime. When he returns he is no longer welcomed – he is scorned not only for his betrayal, but for having brought shame on his people, who no longer recognize him. To redeem himself he is presented with only one path. He must take part in a ritual which involves dancing himself to death, a custom associated with shame and redemption documented in rural communities of the Altiplano.



Indeed, shame is a strong return inhibitor in migratory trajectories, a theme also present in Rose Acton's piece on Bolivian Migrants in Argentina. Returning home after spending time abroad is a complicated decision for a whole range of reasons besides logistics. As Amador Choque explains, some bolivians see this reverse journey as a form of failure. 'They ask themselves, what face will I show my brothers and my parents if I return empty-handed?' Another strong deterrent to **el retorno** comes in the form of an identity crisis. Amador tells me 'we experience an emotional migration as well as a geographic migration. We end up living in a social limbo, we don't know what culture we belong to. It's a bastard identity you grow into whether you arrive as a child or an adult.'

Todos Vuelven

Yet just as strong as these inhibitors are the gravitational forces which pull you back to your homeland. Rilke famously said that 'our only real home is our childhood', an idea echoed by several of the migrants we spoke to. Hinojosa tells me that implicit in the notion of a migratory departure 'we find the idea of an eventual return'. The explanation being that there is an existential dimension to migration, as well as an economic one. Maric argues that there's a social construction of meaning involved in the idea of migrating, imbuing in individuals in a society the idea that not leaving their country represents a failure or stagnation of some sort. Also present in these social constructions is the idea that an eventual return offers a level of realisation and fulfillment (or even redemption, as Sebastian Mamani's story suggests) not available away from our homeland. And of course there's the incessant and irrepressible longing for the smallest details which colour the memories of the person who has left. Saudade is a Portuguese word which apparently has no direct translation into Spanish or English, but means something like a yearning that shines along one's path like a guiding light. Romanticisations of everything from the smell of marraquetas to the blinkering city lights of La Paz on the way down from El Alto airport are certainly familiar to me, not far removed from Chaplin's famous 'city lights' which attracted me to Europe in the first place.

Of Peaches and Politics

Several of these forces, psychological, political and economic are occasionally nutshelled in a single trajectory. If Cochabamba is the archetypal migrant department in Bolivia, Arbieto is the emblematic migrant town in Cochabamba. In 2009 Leonardo de la Torre, a Bolivian researcher and filmmaker made a documentary titled 'Un Dia Mas', which tells the astonishing story of an individual, Don Diógenes Escobar, who first left his community of Arbieto aged 20, returning decades later as the town's elected mayor - leaving behind him four children and a wife in West Palm Beach, Florida. What's most curious about this story is that Don Diógenes was elected as the MAS candidate in large part through the strength of constituents belonging to over 500 migrant families from Arbieto (population 8000, registered voters 4809) residing in the USA. Such is the strength of the 'resident' base abroad ('resident' being a bizarre misnomer used to denote the population of Arbieto natives living abroad) that the streets of this town have been cobbled with funds raised entirely through contributions from the town's US residents. Indeed, the streets of this place could easily be mistaken with american suburbs, wide pavements, manicured lawns and all; this is no coincidence. The film was premiered on March 6th 2009, a date chosen as this is the day of the month in which the 'residents' traditionally -almost ritually- return to visit their birthplace. Politics and economics aside, what's almost poetic about Don Diógenes' tale is his romantic desire to harvest and see blossom the peach orchards which he left behind.

We are born migrants

It is said that humans don't have rots but feet. As Alison Spedding puts it, "acaso las personas son árboles para no moverse". Migration has been one of the few constants throughout human history - indeed, up until relatively recently it has been the default state of existence of our entire race. In a 2009 study, Maria Lily Maric estimates that humans have only been sedentary for the past 10 thousand years, that is, for less than one hundredth of our time on this earth. Prior to this, we were largely nomadic, conquering territories far and wide from deserts to arctic regions. We would have disappeared off the face of the earth had this not been the case. Evolutionary biologists such as E. O. Wilson attribute our success as a species above all things to our capacity for adapting to new and unfamiliar environments in creative ways. In this sense, not much has changed in today's world where travel and telecommunication technologies have hastened migratory processes.

Bolivia is a prime example of this global process. As de la Torre argues in a 2006 article, in a country such as Bolivia we can adopt Hirschman's notions to explain how desperation diasporas (migrating due to overriding forces, political or economic) transform into hope diasporas (migrating in pursuit of better opportunities), and eventually into tradition diasporas (migrations driven by the experiences and expectations of older generations).

According to a 2009 study by Alfonso Hinojosa on Transnational MIgration, Bolivia has in the region of 25-30% of its population living abroad, turning it into a "country in diaspora". Indeed, according to the International Organisation for Migration (OIM), there are around 3 million Bolivians living abroad, with half of these in Argentina, followed by 350 thousand in Spain and 200 thousand in each of Brazil and the USA. Economic dimensions have, perhaps, received the greatest attention in studies about migration. By some estimations over $1Bn come into the country every year in remittances. We need not look far to find remarkable figures on the economic impact of migration. For example in Mexico, over $10bn come into the country every year in remittances. Nicaragua gets 14% of its GDP in this way, and in Haiti the figure is four times larger than what it receives in international aid. Yet there is also a gendered dimension to these figures. For example, in a study by Hinojosa from 2006 he estimates 67% of migrants from Cochabamba are women.

The Migratory Merry-go-Round

Even after Bolivian migrants are forced to leave their host country due to an economic crisis, deportation or family problems at home, there's no guarantee they will stay in Bolivia when they make their way back home. In the words of a Bolivian Migrant interviewed by Dandler and Medeiros in 1985 'I don't go away and say "I'm staying" and, when I'm back, I don't either come back forever'. Accounts such as these make it clear that many of today's migrants live in a perpetual migratory limbo, their existential predicament is one of coming and going, not of settling. Leonardo de la Torre Ávila and other researchers have referred to this phenomenon as 'circular migration', describing a cyclical process whereby migrants don't merely return home but embark upon a new migration shortly after. Hinojosa tells me 'it is common for families to experience not one, but two to three migratory processes during the course of their lifetime'.

The return, a new departure

A couple of weeks after speaking to Edson I had a conversation with a dear friend who had recently spent over a year in Ecuador after living in the US for 24 years – all of her life. Lulí was born in the US to Ecuadorian parents, yet talked about how she sensed a deep connection with the motherland she inherited, eventually gravitating back to her roots. Her story was, sure enough, one of the famed Return, yet strangely it took place across generations. This duty-driven, almost ceremonial, cross-generational (and certainly emotionally-laced), return process reminded me of what is referred to by the Jewish community (the diaspora people par excellence) as an aliyah. I told her, rambled even, about the existential predicament I was facing. 'I want to be there but I also need to be here.' My predicament was becoming all too familiar and universal to me to the point of getting tiresome to my own ears. If I was facing a dilemma, Lulí wisely failed to see what it was. She gave me the same plain look Edson had given me weeks earlier and told me 'what you don't realize is that you're already in Bolivia. You've already returned, you just need to become conscious of this fact and follow your path'.

So I had already left, interesting. That thought planted a seed in my mind which turned into a shrub, and then a tree, rapidly growing out of my head and whose branches shook the structures around which I had built my career and personal relationships. I woke up one Tuesday morning with the unshakeable idea of an imminent return to Bolivia, leaving everything behind. The seed which had turned into this plant shortly after bore its first fruit in the form of a plane ticket. One month after speaking to Edson I landed in El Alto airport, and one month after the day I landed I find myself writing these lines.

Bolivian Express
Grupo Express Press

Cultural Calendar

October 2012

October 3 through 10
Continuation of Brazilian footballer Eliane Nascimento's 'Star of the Future/Girls of Football' project
Thanks to the support of Petrobrás, this year footballer Eliane Nascimento will visit Bolivia for the second time, to spread her 'Star of the Future/Girls of Football' project to low-resource schools in La Paz and Tarija.

Star of the Future

This project contributes to the improvement and human development of 165 girls and boys between ages 4 to 15 who are residents of the Rocinha slum in Río de Janeiro. It promotes well-being and social inclusion through the medium of football. Through the games, the kids are able to develop personal, cognitive and social awareness, helps out their individuality, development and motor skills. The project also offers psychological and pedagogical support, as well as strategies based on incentive and positive reinforcement that improve academic performance of at least 50 percent of the students involved.

Girls of Football

This project encourages the participation of adolescents from economically challenged communities through the practice of women's football. The project aims to provide football activities and promote education, culture and health to adolescents between 15 and 17 years old. Professional players offer training and weekly classes in Brazil.

Eliane Nascimento, better known as Lili, has been involved in sport since childhood, with football above all. Whether on the pitch, in the classroom or in the country, together with the 'Generation of Marta' she continues to break down barriers in women's football.

Nascimento has played with such clubs as Várzea F.C., América F.C, Botafogo, Flamengo (where she had the opportunity to play in a qualifying game in Maracanã) and Santos.

October 30
OPENING
'Star of the Future/Girls of Football' project photographic exhibition, by the Sinmotivo Collective
Centre of Brazilian Culture
7 p.m.
(Av. Arce 2808 corner of Cordero)
Complimentary Caipirinhas

Season of Brazilian Cinema Wednesdays
'The Golden Years'
Wednesdays, 6 p.m.

Brazilian Cinema Wednesdays have been taking place since 2009 in La Paz, and currently also taking place in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, El Alto, Potosí, Sucre, Cobija and Cochabamba. In 2012's schedule, there will be months dedicated themes dealing with children, urban histories, music, romance and comedy, migration, the Golden Age of Brazilian cinema, Brazilian celebrities and a Brazilian vision of the human condition, before the year is rounded off with a homage to Roberto Carlos, one of Brazil's best-known artists and singers

Compa Trono
Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Cultural Centre, 5p.m.
Potosí, National House of Currency, 4:30 p.m.
Sucre, Musef, 7 p.m.
Cobija, Salón Rojo, Microcine Chasqui 6:30 p.m .
Free entry until box office sells out.

October 3: Pelé Eterno
Director: Aníbal Massaini, 2004,
120 minutes, documentary.
The life of Pelé through testimony of ex-players, friends and celebrities, as well as the showing of many of his goals, principal matches and deeds that have marked his career.

October 10: Bye Bye Brasil
Director: Carlos Diegues, 1979, 110 minutes, drama
Follow the adventures of the Rolidei caravan, a group of musicians and artists who travel through and discover a Brazil where the archaic and the modern, the misery and abundance, the tragedy and beauty, the past and future coexist (FILMAFFINITY).

October 17: Chico Xavier
Director: Daniel Filho, 2010, 124 minutes, drama
Chico Xavier is an adaptation of the film that describes the career of the medium Franciso Cándido Xavier (Chico Xavier), who lived 92 years and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Xavier was chosen in 2002 as one of the most important Brazilians of the 20th century, due to his lasting impact in the psychic and philanthropic movement. The film considers his hectic life, preaching peace and encouraging charity.

October 24: Bruna Surfistinha (ages 18 and older)
Director: Marcus Baldini, 2011 131 minutes, Drama
Biography of Raquel Pacheco, the 21-year-old Brazilian woman who, under the pseudonym Bruna Surfistinha, transformed into a phenomenon of publishing sales in her home country, thanks to the fame garnered by her blog, which she narrated her sexual experiences while working in the sex industry.

October 10: Pra Frente, Brasil (Adelante Brasil)
Director: Roberto Farias, 1982, 105 minutes, drama
This is the story of a man who is detained by the police due to being confused with a terrorist. The man suffers brutal treatment in a Brazilian jail, while the people in the streets celebrate having won 1970's World Cup in Mexico. In this story of mistaken identity, we are shown torture by paramilitary forces who were hired by business world to defend itself from guerrilla attacks on its properties and employees.

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Photo: Evan Abramson

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Photo: Evan Abramson