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**Cocalero movements in Peru
and Bolivia**

Coca or Death?

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AUTHORS:

Allison Spedding Pallet
Hugo Cabieses Cubas

EDITORS:

Martin Jelsma
Pien Metaal
Virginia Montañés

TRANSLATION AND TEXT EDITTING:

Glynis Cooper
Barbara Fraser
Anabel Torres

DESIGN:

Jan Abraham Vos
Logo Drugs & Conflict:
Elisabeth Hoogland

PRINTING:

Drukkerij Raddraaier,
Amsterdam

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(The Netherlands)

CONTACT:

Transnational Institute
Paulus Potterstraat 20
1071 DA Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: -31-20-6626608
Fax: -31-20-6757176
drugs@tni.org
www.tni.org/drugs

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Ten years after the first *cocalero* march in Bolivia, when coca leaf producers from the tropical area of Cochabamba trekked over 600 kilometres to the seat of government in La Paz to express their indignation about the effects of drug control policies in their region, there is still no cause for celebration. The same holds true for Peru, where despite a series of peasant protests, government leaders are even more reluctant than their Bolivian counterparts to treat the issue with the urgency required.

The general public opinion and sometimes even experts involved in drug control policy know little about the *cocalero* movements. Misconceptions are among the reasons why it so difficult to solve current conflicts in a peaceful, sustainable way without imposing simplistic and violent 'solutions' to the complex issue of coca cultivation in these two countries.

The *cocaleros*, who usually are displaced former miners or poor peasant families, are easy prey for drug control policies. By robbing them of their source of income in exchange for alternatives that do not yield the expected results, the unbalanced approach of international drug control reveals its counterproductive and devastating economic effects, along with the high degree of repression with which these policies are implemented.

The claim in the International Narcotics Board's annual report that voluntary eradication of coca crops is a success, on the contrary, it has been a failure.¹ Many coca production or eradication zones live under constant tension and violence. Eradication is accompanied by such a show of military or police force that people are coerced to accept. Although not marked by the widespread use of chemicals that has characterised Plan Colombia, forced eradication in Bolivia and Peru has claimed and will claim more casualties if it continues on its present

course.

A balanced approach that seeks to eliminate the harm inflicted by the international community's determination to "abolish drugs" on the supply side is a minimal requirement for justice for those who only produce coca leaves.

A deeper problem in both countries is the lack of leeway for governments and societies to design their own independent policies for solving the current crisis. This crisis is characterised on the one hand by constant political turmoil, aggravated by the structural economic difficulties found in rural areas where people have few productive options, and on the other hand by international conventions that force governments to focus on reducing the supply of coca leaves used to produce cocaine.

Because the coca leaf has been consumed since time immemorial and is an integral part of Andean and Amazon culture, its inclusion in international drug-control policy along with its derivative cocaine, further complicate the situation.

From Bolivia the news of a proposal being prepared directed to the United Nations to decriminalise the coca leaf, and also encourage study of real consumption patterns nationally is a positive sign of change. Meanwhile, there is a need for a mature, democratic culture that allows for consultation and consensus instead of entrenchment behind inflexible positions. But there are dominant voices that hardly allow for these internal processes and do not respect them: they are referred to in these two articles as 'The Embassy.'

In this issue of *Drugs and Conflict*, two authors offer a distinct interpretation of the *cocalero* movements in Peru and Bolivia that help dispel the misconceptions.

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¹ Annual Report INCB 2003, p.54

Bolivia and Peru are two Andean countries where the planting, sale and consumption of coca leaves are widespread and legal activities. Both were main producers of coca leaf for cocaine till the nineties. The rise of drug trafficking in Bolivia began in the seventies, reaching its peak between 1980 and 1986. Coca production declined considerably after this period. This was mainly due to the expansion of the Colombian crop production. There had been some coca eradication campaigns earlier in Bolivia but they had little impact. It was only after 1986 that policies to reduce and eliminate coca production were implemented. These policies have been further intensified since the nineties, despite Bolivia's reduced participation in international drug trafficking.

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Bolivia's central and influential peasant organisation comprises the *cocaleros* (peasants who grow coca). Their movement has headed the resistance to state policies to control and eradicate coca production. It is a legal organization with no proven connection with subversive or illicit groups. The movement has considerable legitimacy in the public opinion which prevents the government from openly repressing the movement and that hinders the implementation of coercive crop eradication methods, like aerial fumigation. Nevertheless, Bolivia's government, in accordance to the demands of 'the (U.S.) Embassy', continues with its eradication campaign resulting in clashes between the *cocaleros* and the government that shows no signs of abating in the near future.

Peasant and cocaleros movements in Bolivia; organisation and structure

Efforts have been made to create peasant trade unions in Bolivia since the thirties. The current peasant union movement dates back to the National Revolution of 1952, led by the MNR (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement). In 1953, this party launched its Agrarian Reform, abol-

ishing the *colonato* (tenancy of plots in exchange for free labour) in large *haciendas*¹ and distributing the land among the peasants. In order to release the peasants from this form of indentured labour and distribute land among them, a peasant union in each reformed hacienda was created. This form of organisation was also adopted by many native communities (not indentured to *haciendas*), replacing their traditional authorities, which tended to have close links with local authorities, identified with the landowning elite. From the point of view of the nationalist government (1952-1964), peasant unions helped incorporate peasants into the country's political life. However, the party organised and controlled them, thus blocking the existence of a truly independent peasant movement. This worked well at the start and continued to function as the 'Military Peasant Pact' during the military governments that defeated the MNR in 1964, until 1974, when the peasant movement severed all ties with the government, after the repression against a peasant demonstration, under the orders of then dictator General Hugo Banzer, which resulted in the Massacre of Tolata. At this time, several independent organisations emerged. In 1979, and a national organisation was established, called the United Bolivian Union Confederation of Peasant Labourers (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia CSUTCB), with a strong indigenous or *katarista* leaning. It was in memory of Julián Apaza, 'Tupac Katari', an anti-colonialist rebel executed by the Spaniards in 1782.² Although the organisation has undergone several internal clashes and divisions, it continues to be the organisational body for the peasant movement and represent the Bolivian peasantry before the government.³

The rural union movement has roots throughout the country, but their organisation is larger and more active in certain regions, amongst those the coca-growing regions. Bolivia has two of these regions: the Yungas of La Paz (North Yungas, South Yungas and Inquisivi Provinces) and the Chapare of Cochabamba (Chapare,

* Anthropologist from the UK living in Bolivia, author of several studies on the coca leaf.

¹ Agricultural property operated by a landowner, who is directing a labor force and aspires to a certain status.

² Rivera, S., *Oprimidos pero no vencidos. Luchas del campesinado aymara y quechua de Bolivia, 1900-1980*, UNRISD, Geneva, 1986.

³ Patzi, F., *Insurgencia y sumisión. Movimientos indígeno-campesinos (1983-1998)*, Comuna, La Paz, 1999.

Tiraque and Carrasco Provinces). Andean migrants settled in the Yungas in pre-Hispanic times and coca leaf production took hold there in the colonial period. Up to 1953, most of the region belonged to *haciendas*⁴. Then the land came into the hands of the peasants, organised into unions during the Agrarian Reform as already mentioned. The Chapare is a tropical area colonised in the 20th century. Migration was massive in the seventies, when coca cultivation started to spread throughout the region. Coca bush became a large-scale crop in the seventies stimulated by the demand of drug trafficking⁵ and overtaking production in the Yungas. Colonisation was largely spontaneous and the colonists organised themselves into peasant unions to facilitate registering ownership of the land they had occupied with the authorities.⁶ The settlers in both regions joined the organisational structure, which grouped a certain number of grassroots peasant unions into a Peasant sub-Central or Central unions. This assembled into a Federation, reaching all or parts of a given province, which in turn forms part of a Departmental Federation affiliated to a national organisation.

The grassroot level of the peasant union is, in fact, the local government of a rural community. In order to join it, one must own land in a region and carry out certain duties, like paying fees, taking part in communal chores or holding a union post. The average member tends to be the male head of a household and can be a widowed or single mother. Single people or those living in a community but not owning land are not represented in the peasant union. The Board of Directors, headed by a Secretary General, rotates annually among all members. Women do not usually hold posts, except in the symbolic '*feminine link*'. However, since the year 2000, some women in the Yungas have become Secretary Generals of their communities. Even so, they tend to be '*women on their own*' (divorced, separated, widowed or single mothers). The trade union meets

monthly in the Yungas or every two months in the Chapare. It addresses various issues, ranging from community infrastructure or things like theft, to external relations with NGOs or municipalities and in the case of the *cocalero* trade unions - how to respond to state coca policies.

In the Yungas, peasants formed another organisation called ADEPCOCA (Asociación Departamental de Productores de Coca).⁷ Formally, ADEPCOCA is independent, but in practice, it is part of the peasant federations. For example, approval by the relevant trade union is needed to join ADEPCOCA. In each community there is a representative in charge of 'communal orders', such as the invoices demanded for each bale of coca entering the Legal Coca Leaf Market (Mercado Legal de la Hoja de Coca) in La Paz. A woman usually holds the post, since trade is traditionally a female task in the Andes.

Peasant unions own warehouses in the villages of the Chapare, where coca is sold to traders (mostly women). They also charge a tax on each transaction, but the peasant organisation has not extended its control of the market into the wholesale coca market of Sacaba in Cochabamba.

From these two markets, coca is sent to the provinces and abroad, especially to Argentina, which has a thriving coca market for what is labelled 'traditional consumption' such as chewing, plus medicinal and ritual uses⁸. This trade depends on professional traders, not peasants, and is subjected to strict government and fiscal control, which purportedly guarantees that coca will be exclusively used for legal purposes. Evidently, this is not always the case, but the *cocaleros* argue that any other use is not their responsibility. As a recent response to the strong *cocalero* organisation, the government has intensified its control over these traders, confiscating their licenses and limiting their number. Peasants have bitter class feelings

⁴ Soux, M. L., *La coca liberal. Producción y circulación a principios del siglo XX*, 1993.

⁵ Sanabria H., *The coca boom and rural social change in Bolivia*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1993.

⁶ Blanes, J., *De los valles al Chapare. Estrategias familiares en un contexto de cambios*, Ceres, La Paz, 1983.

⁷ Spedding, A., "Cocataki, taki-coca: trade, traffic and organised peasant resistance in the Yungas of La Paz", en Leons, B. y Sanabria, H. (comps.), *Coca, cocaine and the Bolivian reality*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1997.

⁸ Rivera Cusicanqui, S., *Las fronteras de la coca. Epistemologías coloniales y circuitos alternativos de la hoja de coca. El caso de la frontera boliviano-argentina*, Aruwiyiri/IDIS-UMSA, La Paz, 2003.

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against intermediaries and do not tend to defend these merchants, although, in the long run, the repression launched against the coca trade is bound to have negative effects on them also.

As someone rises in the hierarchy of the union structure, the leadership has more and more to do with political activism and the making of a political career.⁹ Time demands become greater, as do demands for knowledge of laws, statutes etc. and skills such as speechmaking in Spanish and indigenous tongues, command of reading and writing in Spanish. Posts in these peasant organisations, also in the provinces, do not include a salary as money comes in only from the very limited membership dues. Quite often leaders pay expenses out of their own pockets. This self-financing system is crucial to maintain the spirit of autonomy of the peasant movement with respect to the state and other parties. But it limits participation especially for male heads of households¹⁰ and grassroots peasants who cannot leave work and it also makes many leaders more prone to accept secret pay-offs. The grassroots members tend to suspect that any leader can 'sell out'. This suspicion leads to a monitoring effect that prevents the peasant movement from being infiltrated or effectively controlled by outside political forces. But unproven accusations can also destabilise the leadership. Sometimes, a patronage-type relation develops with certain NGOs that provide transport, boarding and lodging and 'training'. The need for formal know-how, which many peasants lack, has created an ambiguous type of relationship with some non-peasant 'consultants' – various kinds of professionals, activists or politicians – whose presence contradicts the movement's independent character, forcing them to act behind the scenes. It is not really certain how much these outside actors have influenced the movement's stands and actions, or whether the movement has used them, so that the dominant class listens to arguments it would reject coming from the mouths of peasants.

Peasant leaders start their careers at local and provincial levels but, in order to reach national levels, they must earn the support of other provinces. Ecological diversity in Bolivia is enormous, and the interests of a *quina* producer in Lípez, for example, have little in common with those of a *cocalero* from the Yungas, even if they are both peasants. There is also cultural diversity to contend with. In the Andean region, the *quechuas* (Cochabamba, Potosí, Chuquisaca), tend to clash with the *aymaras* (La Paz, Oruro), while in the lowlands dozens of languages exist, some of them relatively well-organised, but together all rivalling with the Andeans. Due to their number and higher degree of organisation, peasants from the Andes have always dominated the CSUTCB and in consequence, in the nineties, the peasants of the lowlands preferred to assert themselves as 'indigenous peoples' and create their own organisations, such as the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia (Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano CIDOB).

While in the fifties the first national leaders were *quechistas* from Cochabamba, the *katarismo* of the eighties was dominated by *aymaristas* from the Northern Altiplano.¹¹ The conflicts between Felipe Quispe, 'el Mallku' based among the *aymaristas* of the Altiplano and Evo Morales based among the *quechistas* of the Chapare, form only one publicised case among many others, in which various political factions clash over regional and sectorial interests, and over the *caudillista* tendencies of individual leaders. However, sectorial interests tend to prevail and in spite of the many fractures and threats of division, the CSUTCB has remained as one organisation. Ethnic and nationalist discourse attracts many intellectuals, but for peasants it is little more than rhetoric. Peasants from the Yungas, for example, are *aymaristas* and regard themselves culturally as closer to those settling the Ormasuyos Province who support *el Mallku*. In politics, however they prefer to support the faction led by Evo, because he defends coca, while in their opinion *el Mallku*

⁹ Ticona, E; *Organización y liderazgo aymara, 1979-1996*, Universidad de la Cordillera/Agruco, La Paz, 2002.

¹⁰ It is significant that the two most well-known peasant leaders between 1995-2000, Evo Morales and Felipe Quispe, do not take part in active parenthood: the first has always been single and the latter is currently divorced, although he was married previously and has had eight children.

¹¹ The grassroots peasantry tends to speak of *quechistas* (those who speak Quechua) and *aymaristas* (those who speak Aymara).

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has not taken the coca issue seriously enough. Both Evo and *el Mallku* have tried to forge a political career in Parliament, but Evo's discourse, more class-conscious, wins many more votes than *el Mallku*'s ethnic-nationalist discourse.

Since the eighties, an attempt has been made to establish the Confederation of Peasant Women Bartolina Sisa (Confederación de Mujeres Campesinas Bartolina Sisa, who was the partner of Tupac Katari) on a national scale, parallel to the federations of 'males'. It has provincial and departmental headquarters. Although there is no shortage of peasant women with political awareness, most of the issues this organisation addresses are not gender-differentiated. Filling a post here, especially at the grassroots level, is just confined to taking on a responsibility; an obligation to serve the community and not an opportunity to gain access to a position with power. Women's federations usually exist only at the provincial level and provide space for the personal progress of some of its leaders with the most political ambition or capacity. This does not mean that there is no authentic activism among the leaders, but these organisations are far from achieving the level of participation that male federations have. Furthermore, it is even more difficult for a poor peasant, wife and mother to leave her farming chores for a few days. This is further aggravated by machismo and biases about women's lack of ability to make speeches or enter politics. These attitudes seem to be gradually changing. Women leaders tend to be single or elderly women. Women's attendance at meetings at whatever level does not tend to exceed 20% and the frequency with which they ask to speak is lower than their physical presence. This relative institutional invisibility does not prevent women from actively participating in the mobilisations.

The Cocalero struggle: Instruments and Strategies

The general guidelines for Bolivia's drug poli-

cy are derived from international conventions and, more directly, from the United States. This country is reputed to have put into effect the draconian Law 1008 (1988). This current legal framework of the 'war on drugs' in Bolivia, defines 'traditional zones' for coca cultivation (chiefly the Yungas), in which crops are allowed, while the rest of the country (chiefly the Chapare) is defined as 'surplus areas in transition', in which the crop must be eradicated and replaced. In Chapare eradication proceeded on the basis of paid compensation per coca hectare eradicated, together with the promotion of 'alternative development': roads, schools, palm-heart and banana planting that, compared to coca, were not economically profitable. Once their compensation ran out, many peasants planted coca again. In 1998, the government of ex-dictator and then 'democratic' president, Hugo Banzer, launched the Dignity Plan (Plan Dignidad), which reduced compensations until he completely did away with it. In 2000 he resorted to the forced eradication of coca fields, carried out by armed soldiers without consulting or compensating their owners. Although its economic and social consequences have been disastrous, the two governments following Banzer have maintained this policy. Until early 2004, forced eradication was only implemented in the Chapare after a failed attempt in the South Yungas colonisation area, in June 2001.¹² The Embassy continues to insist that there is 'surplus' coca in the Yungas and it is rumoured that forced eradication will be undertaken in the region. Together with eradication comes 'interdiction' which is meant allegedly to repress drug trafficking, but implies multiple abuses against the civil population like unjustified detentions and other violations of human rights.

All the policies described above came into effect without consulting the peasants. The few negotiation spaces opened up are the result of successful protests from the peasants but they are limited to payments for damage inflicted like compensation for the dead and wounded, or the granting of some benefits not directly linked to coca like road-building equipment.

¹² Huanca, B., *Los Yungas contra atan. La expulsión de la Fuerza de Tarea Conjunta*, June 2001, Editorial Pirata, La Paz, 2001. / Rivera, S., *Las fronteras de la coca. Epistemologías coloniales y circuitos alternativos de la hoja de coca. El caso de la frontera boliviano-argentina*. Aruwiyiri/IDIS-UMSA, La Paz, 2003.

Dialogues and Agreements in Bolivia

Year	Type of dialogue/ origin	Agreements - Disagreements	Dates and Duration
1996	March of cocalero women in the Chapare, along with wives of the President and Vice-President, taken up once more by COB.	First marches produce no agreement. Then COB achieves: - Release of leaders jailed. - Forced eradication is not practiced and will not be practiced. - Care of abuse victims. - Creation of Permanent "Coca-Cocaine" Commission.	December 11 '95 to February 2 '96
	Follow-up of February 3 Agreement, facilitated by COB.	"Understanding agreement" is signed in order to create active verification commissions that monitor enforcement of Alternative Development (AD), eradication and commercialization mechanisms.	May 9 with June 25 as deadline
1997	Dialogue with new government regarding reduction of coca to annual goal (decertification by U.S.) begins.	Agreement signed to eradicate 3000 coca hectares in exchange for: - Compensation (US\$2500 per h.) - Opening of markets. - Creation / strengthening of small-scale industry. - Land and human settlements. - Withdrawal of Armed Forces from the Chapare.	August 11 to October 17
1998	Legal commercialisation of coca leaf with Cbba Precinct.	Pact regulating reopening of primary coca markets. Each member may transport 50 pounds of coca for own consumption every three months.	January 8
	Great tension arises due to eradication of alleged surplus coca in the Chapare.	Pre-agreement: -Destruction of alleged surplus coca is suspended. -Victims of police abuse are granted compensation. -Jailed leaders are set free.	April 20
	Initiative of civil organisations that renew dialogue for the purpose of demilitarizing the Chapare.	Attempts to bring both parties together fail, because neither one wants to yield in their entrenched positions, while an atmosphere of violence continues to take hold in the Chapare.	June 14 to 22
	A cocalero march starts out at the Chapare towards La Paz. Another march leaves Los Yungas.	Entrenched positions; an agreement is signed without content, except for stating that there is a pressing need to conciliate and prevent any further violence. March is regarded as a failure.	August 7 to October 8
2000	Five day blockade of Los Yungas- La Paz road due to eradication plans for the region.	An 18-point agreement with a solution principle is drawn; it not only refers to coca but to the problems that the peasantry faces in general.	April 14 to 19
	Blockade of main highway Cochabamba-Santa Cruz, Chapare.	They sign an 18-point agreement: control over AD resources; no army quarters to be constructed in the Chapare; construction of markets; pre-investment on agro-industrial complex.	September 23 to October 13
2001	Harassment of trade unions and their leaders; proposal regarding coca family plot or cato; threats of road blockades.	No agreement can be reached and dialogue is barely established. Lower Camera issues initiative to try to facilitate it. Parties finally hold talks for two days but they do not reach an agreement.	November 6 to 27
2002	Clashes in coca market due to decree prohibiting coca commercialisation	Signed agreement suspends DS in question and road blockade is lifted.	January 16 to February 9
	Mobilisations and clashes in the Chapare.	An anti-conflicts/ negotiating commission is formed. Studies on AD, demilitarization and legal markets.	September 13
	Broadening of dialogue themes and divisions in peasantry.	It is suspended and no further progress takes place.	December 13
2003	Road blockade threats.	"Coca tables" carry on but there are no clear advances. Cocaleros call "fourth pause" on February 2.	Irregular until February 13
	Dialogue Table restarted under new threats of road blockades.	Act, not undersigned by parties, establishing that members of the dialogue table will use waiting period to work on technical and administrative aspects that will form part of the study about the legal coca leaf market and the new components of an alternative development plan. The Government defines the subject of the family cato as "one more not very serious proposal".	March 17 to 20. Suspended until April 20
	Government presents new anti-drug strategy 2004-2008 before U.N. Narcotics Commission.	Government states in Vienna that it will refuse to put eradication on hold or allow the possibility of growing a family coca plot or cato.	April 12 to 16
	New government of Table refers to possibilities of dialogue.	Three-month truce granted to new government.	Oct.-Nov.-Dec.
2004	Commitment to reach new 2004-2008 drug strategy and declaration of state of emergency regarding cocaleros in the Chapare.	Revision of Law 1008; study of legal market; alternative development; eradication put on hold; proposal to de-penalize drugs internationally and demand of services and management in the Chapare.	Began on February 16

Source: CEDIB

Each government insists that 'The law [1008] is not negotiable' (President Carlos Mesa, January 2004) and refuses to reconsider the general drugs policy framework, even when the peasants (especially in the Yungas) tend to accept repression against 'controlled substances' and the reduction of legal planting zones. They are only requesting a better definition of these areas and guarantees for their crops. In the Chapare some propose the restriction of cultivation to a small plot per family. The government of Banzer y Quiroga (1997-2002), and that of Sánchez de Lozada (2002-2003), set up a series of 'dialogue tables' to discuss coca, but its officials only repeated their pre-defined stands. For example, in 2000, when the cocaleros protested because palm hearts never reached the prices promised as an incentive to plant this product, the government replied that the export price had fallen due to 'dumping' by Ecuador in the Argentinean market, and the peasants could not do anything about it. On the one hand, the government exerts political pressure on the peasants to join alternative development schemes, and on the other hand, it refuses to apply fiscal or political measures like price subsidies or promotion in export markets in order to make these alternative products profitable. The cocaleros never refuse to participate in negotiations but government intransigence forces them to resort to pressure tactics.

Road blockades are the main measure used to exert pressure and, for decades, the main instrument of the Bolivian peasant struggle. The country's main highway crosses the Chapare. This has allowed its cocaleros to paralyse Bolivia on many occasions despite the rise of military repression and militarization of the region. In the cities, protest marches are a general tool of struggle. In 1993, a march of peasants from the Yungas took place; in 1994, a march of peasants from the Chapare joined peasants from the Yungas and in 1996, a march of cocalero women from the Chapare, all of them departing from their own provinces towards the capital, encountered military repression that forced them to abandon the highway and cross

the plains using footpaths. They gained a great deal of public sympathy but the state's eventual concessions were insignificant.¹³ By 2001, the government had assumed a sterner stance and attempted to suppress another march leaving from Cochabamba, forcing its participants to go back. Many returned to the march, but the impact of the publicity and the raised awareness of public opinion had already been diminished. Blockading roads was readopted, as the main instrument while at the same time forced eradication was already under way in the Chapare.

At least since 1986, the Bolivian government terms the cocaleros as 'narcoguerrillas', arguing that they are linked to subversive organisations, although it has been unable to prove such links. More convincing are the references to the 'Comités de Autodefensa' (Self-Defence Committees) in the Chapare. MNR distributed Mauser rifles and organised peasant militias in defence of the revolution in the fifties, and many peasants still own these guns, plus more modern ones acquired recently. Besides, almost all peasant males have had to go into the army, a service labelled 'compulsory'. But in effect it is only the peasants and the lower urban class that undergo this training. Thus they already have a military training with no need of outside training. These factors combined with the tradition of the peasant uprisings of Tupac Katari, which are always recalled in the speeches of the peasant leadership to legitimise armed resistance in extreme circumstances. It is not clear what relation these Committees have with the formal trade union organisation. It would appear they are more aimed at restraining the peasants than promoting or guiding their actions. The peasants know they cannot hope to sustain an armed encounter with the Army and their organisation recognises the state's legal framework. Isolated actions do take place, apparently stemming from certain radical community leaders, consisting of 'cazabobos' (homemade booby traps), or snipers who shoot from the mountains at the soldiers eradicating coca or clearing tree trunks and stones from blocked roads. Until 2000, peas-

¹³ Camacho, N., "La marcha como táctica de concertación política. Las marchas cocaleras de 1994 y 1995", in Laserna, R. (coord.) *Empujando la concertación. Marchas campesinas, opinión pública y coca*. PIEB/CERES, La Paz, 1999. / Spedding, A. *Batallas rituales y marchas de protesta. Modos de apropiarse del espacio en el departamento de La Paz*, Temas sociales 23, La Paz, 2002.

ants were the only casualties (women and children included), usually shot down by the military at blockades. In 2002, the list of fatal casualties included six soldiers and policemen. Most of these were young conscripts, peasants from other parts of the country.

If forced eradication is undertaken in the Yungas, the resistance there is bound to be stronger there than in the Chapare. The highly mountainous terrain of the Yungas are in their favour (the Chapare is flat), as well as the cocaleros from the Yungas are convinced of their right to grow coca as part of their ancient heritage (in the Chapare, most of the population are migrants with no coca-growing tradition). Furthermore, the *chapareños* are 'softened' by over a decade of compensated eradication and alternative development programmes, so that eradication was already a regular component of their productive context¹⁴ and they are willing to consider alternative crops, if feasible and profitable. In the Yungas, compensated eradication was only offered at the end of the eighties, and to a very limited extent.¹⁵ The peasants there, particularly those in the 'traditional zone', believe that ecological conditions do not allow for alternatives to coca. The Bolivian state is well aware of this and has begun its 'alternative development' efforts in regions like Caranavi, which did not produce coca until the end of the nineties, but it is feared that, were it to undertake forced eradication in the Yungas, the consequences might be violent.

Since 1979, the political strategies of the peasants have included a 'political instrument', a party organisation that competes on the electoral stage. At times, they have formed their own parties, like MITKA¹⁶ or MRTK¹⁷; other strategies have included 'borrowing the acronym' of an established party like *Eje Pachakuti* or *Izquierda Unida*, under which rural candidates have run for elections. They have never had more than one or two representatives on a national scale, and although the candidate belonging to MRTKL,¹⁸ Víctor Hugo

Cárdenas, got to be Vice-President with Sánchez de Lozada in 1997, he could not introduce any significant guidelines into government policy. Recently the peasants adopted the acronym MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo). With the initial support of the cocalero federations in the Chapare, this party won the vote of the peasantry and took control of several towns in the Chapare; it got some representatives elected in 1997 and achieved a massive vote in the national elections of 2002 (from peasants and several urban sectors). However, the control of the municipalities it did win has not much to do with the issue of coca per se, but is rather the result of local government reforms promulgated in 1994 and known as Popular Participation. These reforms have allowed peasant candidates to be elected as Mayors in several rural municipalities. The cocalero movement as an organisation played no role either in the 2000 'Guerra del Agua' (Water War) or in the 2003 'Guerra del Gas' (Gas War) which lead to the impeachment and flight of President Sánchez de Lozada. In fact, the peasants from the Chapare could not participate in the latter at all, since military control over the region prevented road blockades from being set up. Peasants from the Yungas did block the road and march to La Paz, but as participants in a general mobilisation against the government, not with demands around the coca question. As cocaleros, they gained nothing out of the mobilisation since just three weeks after being sworn in, the new President declared: "*Bolivia's policy with respect to this issue [coca] is a state policy; it will not change in function of the change in government. Our commitment to eradicating illegal coca continues and so does our commitment against illicit trafficking*" (President Carlos Mesa, November 2003).

Multidisciplinary effects of coca leaf production

In Bolivia, the coca leaf is not just an input for the manufacture of cocaine, but a merchandise

¹⁴ Sanabria, H., *The coca boom and rural social change in Bolivia*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1993.

¹⁵ Leons, B., "After the boom: income decline, eradication and alternative development in the Yungas", in Leons, B. y Sanabria, H. (comps.), *Coca, cocaine and the Bolivian reality*. State University of New York Press, New York 1997.

¹⁶ Indigenous Movement Tupac Katari.

¹⁷ Revolutionary Movement Tupac Katari.

¹⁸ Revolutionary Movement Tupac Katari for National Liberation.

item consumed under various guises throughout the country and regarded as indispensable in several settings such as marriage rites and work in the mines. In *cocalero* regions, peasants use the money they get from selling coca to buy food and clothing, pay for transportation, educate their children, hire lawyers and much more. The reduction of coca planting in the Chapare is considered to have had a negative impact on the GNP of the region and the country, not just limited to decreasing the strength of drug trafficking already in recession in Bolivia long before forced eradication was even introduced.¹⁹ The official figures of hectares of coca plantations eradicated are exaggerated, as they are estimated on the basis of the full extent of any plot on which even just a few plants were found. In the Chapare, militarization has produced a climate of constant tension that has disrupted social relations and negatively affected people's daily lives on top of the economic crisis caused by the eradication efforts in the absence of profitable alternatives.²⁰

On an international front, Plan Dignity in Bolivia is presented as a successful model, combining eradication and repression, together with alternative development. But in reality, alternative development has failed; a truth hidden in silence. Since 1994, there has been no national publication analysing the issue. In 2003, some alleged thieves 'stole' the hard disks in the computers of the Ministry in charge, so no information exists regarding what was done with the large sums destined for alternative development. Projects were designed from the outside by people without the relevant knowledge and were not tested first. The peasants themselves were used as guinea pigs for alternative products. When the peasants did manage to grow alternative crops, they found it was difficult to access the market and that prices were too low. We already mentioned the case of

palm hearts. Another example is the Milka dairy plant, set up in spite of the fact that the Chapare had insufficient milk production and no market strategy for the small quantity it did process.²¹ In the Yungas, the Agroyungas Project²² offered a new variety of coffee, but the seeds imported were infected with *broca*, a plague that has even infested native coffee varieties and contributed to the collapse of the coffee industry, forcing peasants to resort to growing coca even more. It is not the *cocaleros* who have benefited the most from alternative development schemes, but the consultants and technical staff involved in them, both nationally and internationally.

In the Yungas, the *cocalero* economy represents one of the few flourishing *cocalero* economies in the country, backed by ADEPCOCA, which has allowed the peasants to take over the part of the market previously in the hands of intermediaries belonging to other social classes. However, a climate of constant tension prevails, due to the political threats made by the national government. Meanwhile, international commentators agree that Bolivia's state policies have no repercussions on the availability of cocaine in the world market. An 'unsought' consequence of the *cocalero* conflicts has been the launching of trade union candidate from the Chapare, Evo Morales, on the national scene.²³ In 2002, he came in second in the national elections. But his position as leader of the parliamentary opposition and potential president elect has led him to 'decocalise' his speeches and adopt stances more in tune with the dominant discourse. For example, not only does he publicly distance himself from the acts of armed resistance in the Chapare, as all other trade union leaders do, but he ceased to demand an end to the militarisation of the Chapare and demand stopping forced eradication there, as a solution to the conflicts. Although it is unde-

¹⁹ This is due chiefly to the expansion of coca fields in Colombia. In the eighties, Colombian buyers arrived in Bolivia to acquire basic paste to process back in Colombia. In the mid nineties, the production of Colombian cocaine made this unnecessary. Furthermore, it seems that when the famous Medellín 'cartel' and the others fell, the new networks replacing them no longer had contacts in Bolivia or reasons to risk going there. The Bolivian drugs trafficking networks are much more modest and do not have the capacity to export cocaine to the North, limiting themselves to sending small shipments to neighbouring countries.

²⁰ See Así erradicaron mi cocal, *Testimonios de campesinos chapareños en los tiempos de la erradicación forzosa* (PIEB/Mama Huaco, La Paz, 2003) for testimonies from peasants on this score.

²¹ Rijnhout, L. y Joep, O., "Mala leche". Una historia amarga de desarrollo en el Chapare, CEDOIN, La Paz, 1994.

²² Leons, B., "After the boom: income decline, eradication and alternative development in the Yungas", en Leons, B. y Sanabria, H. (comps.), *Coca, cocaine and the Bolivian reality*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1997.

²³ Albó, X., *Pueblos indios en la política*, Plural/CIPCA, La Paz, 2002.



niable that if this were to take place, armed actions would cease immediately. In this sense, the *cocalero* movement does not represent a threat to 'governance', since it does not challenge Bolivia's political order.

The proposals emerging from the grassroots level, on behalf of the *cocalero* movement, are limited by their regional character, which influences *yungueños* to deny their support to *chapeños* and, within the Yungas itself, divides the 'traditional zone' and the 'colonisation zones'. Class perspectives lead people to concentrate exclusively on the question of coca production, leaving aside its sale, although without this commerce there would be no economic reason to produce coca. Much less is there any regard for the impact of prohibition in general, partly because the consumption of 'drugs' hardly takes place among the peasants. Official condemnation is accepted as something separate from the policy affecting the producers. In the same fashion, it is claimed that 'they are the ones who make it [cocaine]', that is, it is not the peasants, and the unions reaffirm that they will expel any member involved in the making of cocaine paste in the community.

In the Yungas, the legal coca market is viewed as somewhat limited and soon to be saturated if broadening production areas is to be allowed. The definition of legal zones according to Law 1008 is based on a study of coca consumption carried out at the end of the seventies. The impact on coca leaf demand of the demographic and social changes that have taken place since then is unknown. Since 2002 there has been talk of a new study, which is still to be conducted. The proposals seem to contemplate a survey to identify the social groups (per age, gender, place of residence, occupation, etc.) consuming coca leaf, its purpose and in what quantities, thus calculating legal demand. Designing and implementing a survey of this kind on a national scale constitutes a great methodological challenge. Meanwhile, a first step would be to systematise the data collected by DIGECO, which registers the quantity and destination of all coca taken out of the legal markets located in Villa Fátima and Sacaba. Apart from providing an idea of the regions it is consumed in, the choice of the sites in which

to carry out the survey would indicate significant gaps between the population at the destinations and the quantity of coca consumed, if any. At the same time, the first party guilty of possibly waylaying shipments from inside the legal market would be the government itself, via DIGECO, for it does not check the validity of the destinations registered. This explains, perhaps, why DIGECO never provides information to this effect, and it is strange that neither the *cocaleros* nor the intellectuals participating in the ongoing debate have ever demanded that this data be published. Both data on the current market trends and a survey on consumption might yield information uncomfortable to all parties involved.

The *cocalero* proposals are based on the straightforward defence of the right to cultivate coca, based on economics and varnished in cultural and indigenous tones like upholding of Andean traditions of "millenary leaf" cultivation. Federations from the Chapare have proposed taking charge of some alternative development installations, but this is more a demagogic proposal than a valid strategy; if the installation is not profitable *per se*, peasants taking it over will not change the situation. The same applies to proposals to industrialise the coca leaf, which raise many hopes among its producers, but never develop into feasible projects. Economically attractive products, such as coca tea (*mate de coca*), must deal with an already-saturated national market. Coca leaf is not permitted for export due to international regulations that classify it as a narcotic substance comparable to opium, cocaine or heroin. The economic arguments for coca production are viable, demonstrating that there is no other crop that can be cultivated in its place; given the circumstances of the peasant economy as well as providing the same income from coca. They fail to address the core of the argument used to attack coca, which is the refusal to allow the consumption of cocaine for recreational purposes. As a result, both the government and the *cocaleros* remain firm in their stands, not giving way to rational debate or permitting the search for empirical data and objectivity on addressing the problem.

It might be argued that the root of the prob-

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lem is not the ‘war against drugs’, but Bolivia’s position as a client state of the U.S., forced to accept the mandates of the latter (whether it be suppressing drug trafficking or implementing Neo-Liberalism). The dominant class seeks to suppress the peasantry, viewed as a ‘backward’ group that must be marginalized, if not altogether eliminated, for the good of the nation. Peasant trade unionism, at its beginning, was a means to achieve a goal, but later it has been used by the peasantry as a legitimate weapon against its oppressors. Now the trend is to have it lose legitimacy, arguing that peasants are drug dealers and subversive. The consequences of abandoning this pathetic submissiveness are impossible to determine, since no government has ever attempted to do so. Proof of this is the debate about the extent of the *cocales* that already exist or that should be authorised to exist in order to satisfy local demand. They are based on figures supplied by the DEA. The Bolivian government has proved incapable of financing studies of its own to reaffirm or dispute this data. The *cocaleros*, bogged down by their distrust of the state, are also reluctant to systematise the data at their disposal, or try to undertake their own research on the subject. Intellectuals and national and international organisations have not been able to change this situation, sometimes due to their inadequate knowledge of the practical realities of coca cultivation (which leads them to make categorical statements in the absence of real figures),²⁴ at other times because, like the peasant movement, they are motivated by ideological ends of their own (feminism, indigenous ideology, ecology, etc.).

Recommendations

On the national level

- Demilitarisation of the Chapare, putting an end to forced eradication and the implementation of similar policies elsewhere in the country has to be abolished.
- Alternative development programmes offering substitute crops might be implemented, as long as coca eradication is not made compulsory in order to participate in such pro-

grammes. Substitute products should be previously tested in order to ascertain whether they are suitable for a given region, and peasants should have access to profitable markets if they plant them.

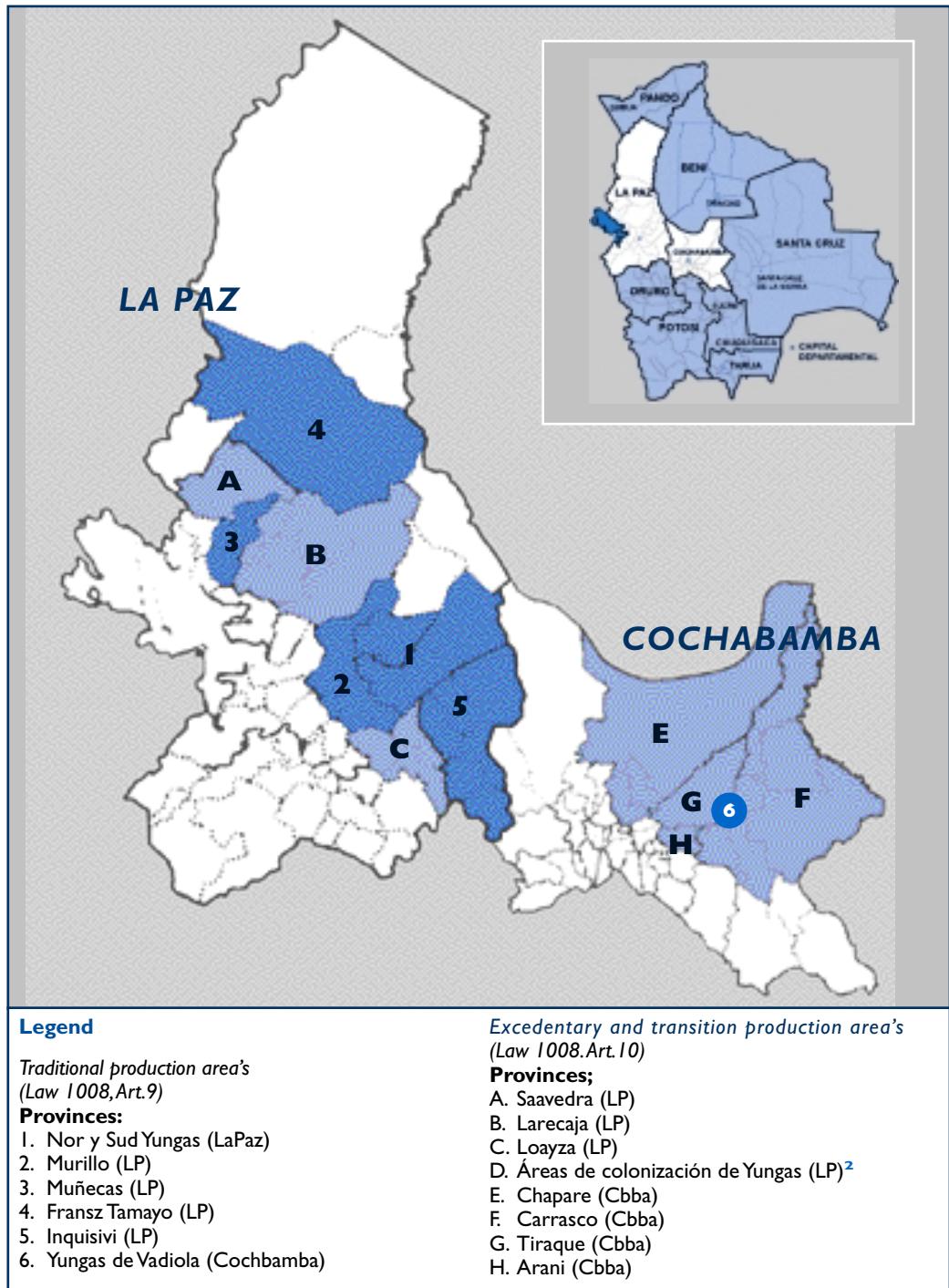
- Instead of repressing those who trade in coca leaf, both the government and the *cocaleros* should seek ways of facilitating coca distribution for legal consumption to the benefit of peasant producers and other social groups by a share in this market.
- Publicize the known fact that the more the legal trade in the product is blocked, the more the market will tend to deviate to illegal forms.
- Research studies on the marketing and consumption of coca leaf, as well as its real productivity per hectare are to be conducted. Issues should be discussed on the basis of valid data. Methodology of the studies should not be biased in order to produce the results desired by those financing or promoting them.

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In the international context

- New ways to promote marketing of such products as coca tea could be found.
- Ban on production of coca leaf should be removed from international conventions dealing with narcotic substances. This requires a determined effort on the part of the Bolivian government in alliance with many other governments.
- Cocaine should be “de-demonised” because as long as cocaine continues to be forbidden, it will be argued that commercial coca, including ground leaves in filter bags, will be used to manufacture cocaine. An open debate on costs and benefits of this prohibition can no longer be avoided.
- The “harm-reduction” focus is an important contribution offering an alternative strategy to ‘drug control’ through military and police repression, which has demonstrated its incapacity and counter productivity in controlling the trade in controlled substances. However, it corresponds to the consumer countries situation, and has little to offer for innocuous coca consumption in Bolivia.

²⁴ Spedding, Llanos, Angola, Aguilar, Huanca and González (in press) present a detailed analysis of coca production and the quantitative data available on the subject.



¹ There is no good map of coca leaf production in Bolivia. This map reflects the legal framework, Law 1.800, promulgated on July 20 1988, in which traditional and excedentary transition area's are distinguished, these last being subject to initial compensation and alternative crop substitution.

² Not indicated on the map.

COCA LEAVES CULTIVATION IN PERU



Legend

Areas of coca cultivation for illicit purposes

1. R: B. Marañon (Utcubamba Chachapoyas)
2. R: Bajo Huallaga (Tarapoto)
3. A: Huallaga C.-Uchiza-Ongon (Juanjui)
4. A: A. Huallaga-Monzon (Tingo Maria)
5. R: Aguaytia-Alto Ucayali (Aguaytia)
6. R: Pachitea (Pto Inca)
7. R: Pichis- Palcazu (Pto. Bermudez)
8. R: Perene- Tambo- Bajo Ene (Satipo)
9. A: Apurimac- Alto Ene (S. Francisco)
10. R: Alto Amazonas (Nauta)
11. R: Bajo Ucayali (Pucallpa)
12. R: Putumayo (El Estercho- Leticia)

13. R:Yavari (Caballococha- Tabatinga)
 14. R: Alto Purus (Esperanza- Rio Branco)
 15. R: Madre de Dios (P. Maldonado- P. Heath)

A.T: Urubamba- Yanatile (Quillabamba)
 B.T: Inambari- Tambopata (Sandia)
 C.T: Alto Marañon (Humachuco)
 D.T: Chicama- Moche (Simbal- Otuzco) (*)

R: Recent cultivation areas
 A: Old cultivation areas
 T:Traditional cultivation areas *

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The ineffective policy of forced coca eradication² in neighbouring Peru, has also led to the mobilisation of coca growers and eventually to the creation late 2000, of a Dialogue Group to negotiate with the government. For several reasons, mainly U.S pressure, the government is unable to properly channel the domestic and grassroots proposals made by a small but significant sector of society into an alternative policy.

The Dialogue Group met during the first six months of 2001, but the transitional government ignored the farmers' proposals. This led to more mobilisations in 2001-2002, culminating in the signing of several agreements with the new government of President Toledo.³ The Toledo administration ignored these commitments, and in January 2003, farmers from the Upper Huallaga, Aguaytía, Tocache, Uchiza, Puerto Pizana and the Apurímac-Ene founded the National Federation of Peasant Producers of the Peruvian Coca-Producing Basins (Confederación Nacional de Productores Agropecuarios de las Cuencas Cocaleras del Perú, CONPACCP) in Lima. A month later, in response to forced coca eradication among legal producers in Aguaytía, several thousand farmers staged a strike. The government responded by repressing the strike and jailing Nelson Palomino, the leader of CONPACCP. The farmers then set out on a March of Sacrifice to Lima in April 2003.

The march concluded with new proposals partially outlined in a Supreme Decree issued by the government, although it did not meet the coca growers' expectations. Furthermore, the national drug agency, the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas DEVIDA), the government, and NGOs that carry out projects, such as Chemonics, have distorted the Supreme Decree's conciliatory spirit, attempting to divide CONPACCP and undermining its'

leaders willingness to dialogue by using a series of manoeuvres, including the bribing of journalists involved in 'awareness-raising' campaigns.

Cocaleros

Cocaleros are farmers who produce coca in the high jungle areas on the eastern slope of the Andes Mountains. The coca plots are small, between 0.25 and 1.5 hectares. There are producer associations in 13 coca-producing basins, and traditional peasant unions mainly in the province of La Convención in Cusco. Peru has about 50,000 coca growers, who also consume coca in the traditional manner. There are approximately 2 million more traditional coca consumers.

A serious flaw in alternative development projects has been their tendency to consider the high jungle an empty space where a social fabric barely exists or where it was destroyed by the violence of the 1980s. This is a misconception; there is, in fact, a firm social structure reflected in a multitude of community organisations, unions, producer associations and cultural groups.

The Peruvian cocalero movement is organised on three levels: international, national and in the local river basins. At the international level, in 1991 the Andean Council of Coca Leaf Producers (Consejo Andino de Productores de Hoja de Coca CAPHC) was founded in La Paz, but it became inactive in 1998. Evo Morales of Bolivia has been its leader since 1995. CAPHC has held three international meetings, in La Paz (March 1991), Cusco (May 1993) and Quillabamba (October 1995), has appeared four times before the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna (1993-1997), and has held various training workshops and meetings. The last one took place in Puno in May 1998. In international fora, CAPHC has stated the following aims:

¹ Economist from the Pacific University, President of the Civil Association for Sustainable Integral Rural Development (Asociación Civil Desarrollo Rural Integral Sustentable, DRIS), Director Secretary of the Peruvian Foreign Relations Forum (FOPRI) and adviser to several farmer organisations in the Peruvian river basins where coca is grown.

² Hugo Cabieses critiques this strategy in "Eradicación de la coca: política boba," Lima, June 16, 1999.

³ See Rojas, I., Lanzando la aventura de la 'coca cero': transición democrática y política antidrogas en el Perú; WOLA, February 2003.

- To reject illicit drug traffic, but also the 'war on drugs' and militarisation, because they are ineffective.
- To eliminate the US 'certification' system, which violates national sovereignty, undermines democracy and fails to take into account civil society's opinions and proposals.
- To change ideas about drugs so that people distinguish between coca and cocaine, coca leaf producers and drug traffickers, and consumers of coca and drug addicts.
- To promote the removal of the coca leaf from Schedule I of the UN Controlled Substances Scheme, reaffirming the leaf's beneficial traditional and industrial uses.
- To seek substantial changes in neoliberal policies and international trade relations.
- To foster community participation in the drafting of development programmes.

On a *national* scale, after several previous attempts, the National Coordinating Committee of Agricultural Producers (Coordinación Nacional de Productores Agrícolas CONAPA-Peru), consisting of eight federations and associations, was created in Lima in February 1998 to serve growers in the *cocalero* basins. An indigenous organisation (OARA: Asháninkas del Río Apurímac) and four associations of peasant women (Apurímac-Ene, Tingo María, Uchiza and Monzón) also joined. CONAPA-Peru held three national meetings, but did not extend its proposals to the rest of the national peasant movement. When the government established the Dialogue Group in 2000, CONAPA languished until it virtually disappeared. During the 2002 strikes and marches, the *cocaleros* came together and gained strength, founding the National Confederation of Agricultural Producers of the Peruvian *Cocalero* Basins (Confederación Nacional de Productores Agropecuarios de las Cuencas Cocaleras del Perú CONPACCP) on January 20, 2003.

The Dialogue Group

The Fujimori-Montesinos government (1990-2000) promoted forced coca eradication beginning in March 1996. This caused social

Composition of the CONPACCP

Valley	Nr of members
Apurímac-Ene	11000
Alto Huallaga-Uchiza	2000
Alto Huallaga-Pto. Pizana	1500
Alto Huallaga-Aucayacu	3000
Alto Huallaga-Tingo María	3000
Aguaytía	1200
Pichis-Palcazu	1000
Monzón	2500
Jaén San Ignacio	260
TOTAL	25460

Source: Hugo Cabieses

unrest, kindled subversive violence and sparked the rise of organised social movements in the *cocalero* regions. These actions led to the creation of a Dialogue Group to debate and draft proposals focusing on four main issues: temporary suspension of forced eradication of coca crops and its replacement with a gradual, consensus-driven strategy agreed to by farmers and local authorities; debate and approval of a new law on drugs and coca to replace the current obsolete and inefficient legislation that criminalises culturally appropriate and beneficial uses of coca leaf; research on the use of national and international 'alternative development' funds and real participation by producer organisations in the design of a new strategy; and an increase in the price paid to producers for coca leaves and improvement of services provided by the National Coca Company (Empresa Nacional de la Coca ENACO), including the participation of farmer representatives on its Board of Directors and a national and international strategy to foster acceptance of coca.

Between November 2000 and February 2003, local farmers and authorities from the *cocalero* regions participating in the Dialogue Group insisted repeatedly and in various ways that those four points be discussed with the competent government authorities: Contradrogas

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until May 2002 and DEVIDA thereafter, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture and ENACO. First *Contradrogas* and later DEVIDA attempted to include on their main agendas the issues that local farmers and authorities proposed, but they did not support the proposals strongly enough and tensions increased in the *cocalero* basins.

The Dialogue Group, which has the potential to ease social and political tension and foster debate of technical issues, has not functioned as regularly as required by law. Its last formal meeting was held in Lima on October 5, 2001. In March 2002, an information workshop was held in Lima, but only representatives of the farmers, not the mayors, attended it.



Agreements

As a result of the *cocalero* mobilisations in 2001-2002, government officials signed five agreements with *cocalero* leaders. The agreement signed in Lima on July 13, 2002, went furthest toward the drafting of a political and technical proposal to launch a new strategy on sustainable development and illicit coca crops. The proposal suggested a strategy for the gradual manual reduction of coca crops by the farmers themselves, based on consensus with the members of the associations and federations that signed the agreement. The strategy, initially applied in a pilot project in Aguaytía, was to be accompanied by a technical proposal hinging on the following four conditions:

- Prior registration of member farmers willing to reduce their crops and immediate payment of 336 soles (USD 97.40) per hectare of coca eliminated as soon as DEVIDA, CADA and a representative of the pertinent association certified the reduction;
- Preferential treatment for farmers engaging in reforestation, with immediate payment of 1,686 soles (USD 489) per reforested hectare;

- Emergency credit of approximately 2,100 soles (USD 609) per hectare for crops that the farmers choose freely and that are aimed at safe secondary and short-term markets (bean, rice, cassava and plantain flour) and insurance through Agrobanco;
- Priority certificates for benefits derived from Integral Development Programmes such as Alternativa.

To promote the proposal, DEVIDA requested the cooperation of the U.S. government through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), but USAID refused to honour the agreement with the Association of Livestock and Coca Leaf Farmers of the Padre Abad Province (Asociación de Agricultores Agropecuarios y de la Hoja de Coca de la Provincia de Padre Abad AAAHCPA), which had signed the agreement.⁴ Only the technical proposal, with three substantially modified points, was accepted. The decision was made to provide:

- 551 soles (USD 159.70) per hectare eradicated, to be paid to individual communities and producers, ignoring the agreements with producer associations that had signed the July 13 agreement;
- 650 soles (USD 188.50) food allowance for each family willing to eradicate its coca crops;
- Payment for construction work and/or improvement of the community's social and productive infrastructure, for a period of up to six months; and
- Preference for farmers as beneficiaries of medium- and long-range programmes for producing palm oil, palm hearts, pineapple, livestock, reforestation, etc.

Their top leader summed up AAAHCPA's response to this programme: "We are not paupers who need donations of food and small social works. We are farmers who need credit and markets for new products."⁵

With these four components financed by USAID and monitored by the Narcotics Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy the pilot

⁴ USAID argued that the U.S. government could not fund agreements with 'narcococaleros.'

⁵ Statement by Flavio Sánchez Moreno, president of AAAHCPA, Radioprogramas del Perú, 20/08/2003

Dialogues and Agreements

Year	Type of Dialogue/ Origin	Agreement /Disagreements	Dates - duration
2000 2001	There has been constant tension around forced eradication in the cocalero basins since 1996.	Creation of Dialogue Table to discuss four main issues: suspension of forced eradication; new legislation; alternative development research; better prices/ participation in ENACO and common strategy. They reach no agreements.	November 2000 to October 2001
2002	Mobilisations and failure of Dialogue Tables; Meeting.	Five Acts signed between different leaders and the government, one of these agreeing to create technical commissions. DEVIDA does not comply with these.	July 13
	Threat of agrarian strike.	Acts signed with Apurímac-Ene leaders; DAVIDA does not comply with them.	Between August and November
	Meeting with DEVIDA to create technical commission.	Commission never worked. Instead CONPACCP was founded in the presence of 35 leaders.	September 11
2003	National meeting in Lima.	Elected directives present 24-point plea to Peru's President; they sign Commitment Act.	January 20 and 21
	Forced eradication in Alto Huallaga convokes marches and protests.	Mediating commission named; offers 72 hour-truce to government; meeting with government follows. They agree to create Technical Commission (CTAN).	February-March
	Sacrifice March of CONPACCP. Meeting with President Toledo.	Delegation of 32 leaders signs Supreme Decree with agreements adopted jointly with the President; issued with changes in content on April 24.	April
2004	Compromiso de concertar nueva estrategia droga 2004-2008 y declaración de emergencia de cocaleros del Chapare.	Delegación de 32 dirigentes firma un Decreto Supremo con acuerdos adoptados con el Presidente, promulgado con otro contenido el día 24 de Abril.	Strat February 16

Source: Hugo Cabieses

programme of voluntary eradication was promoted between October and December 2003 in the Von Humboldt Forest in the Padre Abad Province. Agreements were reached with 56 communities to eliminate more than 1,200 hectares of coca; the project benefited about 600 farmers. The pilot project's main political problem was that the association, which had signed the July 13 2002 agreement, refused to participate. It also suffered from technical problems, because the two main points of the proposal on which agreement had been reached — a credit programme for short-term activities and payment for reforestation — never got off the ground.

The Founding of CONPACCP

Because of the problems in Aguaytía, exacerbated by DEVIDA's failure to honour the agreements reached with the farmers from Tingo María, Aucayacu, Puerto Pizana, Uchiza

and Apurímac- Ene, those farmers decided to travel to Lima and present their demands and proposals to the government and Congress. In the pact signed in Lima on July 13, leaders from the Upper Huallaga and Aguaytía leaders had agreed to the creation of technical commissions of farmers and government staff members. This did not work out, however, because in some cases DEVIDA did not even establish the commissions.

In Apurímac-Ene, DEVIDA failed to comply with agreements signed with several leaders in Ayacucho on August 4, 2002, after a strike and protests. It also ignored another agreement signed in November 2002 after threats of rural strikes and a boycott of municipal and regional elections. In that case, the key issues were the withdrawal of the NGO CARE from the zone, the debate and approval of a new coca law, and the registration of farmers by ENACO.

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On September 11, 2002, in the same DEVIDA office where members of a special commission had been called to draft a proposal for the new coca law — which never occurred — 35 leaders from Apurímac-Ene, the Upper Huallaga and Aguaytía decided to create their own confederation. They appointed a Transitional Board to call a national meeting, which was held in Lima on January 20-21, 2003, with 1,210 delegates from different basins.

The delegates paid their own way to Lima, elected a board of 13 members and submitted a 24-point platform to President Toledo and other authorities. They also signed a statement that called for a national strike and a March of Sacrifice if forced eradication was resumed anywhere in the country. DEVIDA, ENACO and the Interior Ministry, however, did not take the Confederation or the leaders' statement seriously.

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National Coördinator of ????????

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The strikes of February 2003

In February 2003, the Upper Huallaga Special Project for the Control of Coca Crop Eradication and Reduction (Proyecto Especial de Control y Reducción de Cultivos de Coca en el Alto Huallaga CORAH), forcibly eradicated coca in the town of Alto Shambillo (Aguaytía). Two AAAHCPA members were wounded. The town's lieutenant governor was jailed when he interceded on the farmers' behalf. The farmers had official receipts from ENACO for the legal delivery of coca, plus their association membership cards. It was CORAH's failure to recognise these that caused the clash.

This action, which CORAH later admitted was a mistake,⁶ sparked an immediate reaction from the farmers. In coordination with CONPACCP, they held several marches between February 20 and 28, as well as strikes and roadblocks in Aguaytía, Monzón, Tingo María Aucayacu and Puerto Pizana. On February 28, at a General Assembly in Tingo María, they decided to grant the government a 72-hour truce to negotiate a solution. A negotiating commission made up of local authorities, without any leader of the farmers' movement, was appointed.

While that was happening in the Upper Huallaga, on 21 February 2003, the top leader of the Apurímac-Ene farmers and president of CONPACCP, Nelson Palomino, who was in Huamanga coordinating a mobilisation in that valley, was arrested in the regional office of the government's Human Rights Ombudsman and jailed in the Yanamilla Prison. He was accused of 'justification of terrorism' and another six unproven counts, and his case was sent to the court in Huamanga. Days later, the Interior Ministry announced that the charge of 'justification of terrorism' was a mistake and that the executive branch had no control over the case. Nevertheless, both the Interior Minister and the director of DEVIDA, Nils Ericsson told the press that *drug traffickers, terrorists and politicians were manipulating cocalero leaders*.

⁶ Personal conversation with the director of DEVIDA, Nils Ericsson (29.4.2003)

On March 5, the negotiating commission, which did not include leaders from the farmer associations that had called the strike, along with several local mayors and the president of the Regional Government of Huanuco, met with the Prime Minister, DEVIDA's Executive President and the Secretary General of the National Decentralisation Council (Consejo Nacional de Descentralización CND). It was agreed that a High-Level Technical Commission (Comisión Técnica de Alto Nivel CTAN) would be appointed to travel to the cocalero basins where the conflict had occurred, identify the problems and propose solutions. Without understanding that the problem was political rather than technical, the members of the commission visited Monzón and Cachicoto, Aguaytía and Tocache-Uchiza-Puerto Pizana. It was the first time most of them had been in the region, and they did not know that, as far back as 1997 farmers had carried out various participatory rural analyses, identifying the main problems and presenting specific proposals for programmes and projects to Contradrogas and various international cooperation agencies.

Without understanding that the problem was political rather than technical, the commission visited Monzón and Cachicoto, Aguaytía and Tocache-Uchiza-Puerto Pizana

The April 2003 Marches

The government launched a new propaganda campaign against the CONPACCP leadership. It attempted to divide the organisation by supporting leaders who were not cocaleros and began talking with farmers who were beneficiaries of 'alternative development' programmes and local mayors, meeting with them in Lima on April 1 and 8. While CONPACCP leaders were setting out on their March of Sacrifice, the president of DEVIDA went to Vienna, where he addressed the 46th Session of the U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs on April 8. He was out of the country until April 20.

On Sunday, April 20, as the marchers approached Lima, DEVIDA issued a statement in which it emphasised "talks under way with coca producers and [its] commitment to development" and noted that the technical commissions had met with cocalero leaders between April 7 and 15. According to the statement, the participants in those meetings had agreed to:

- the gradual and consensus-guided reduction of illegal coca plantations;
- arranging with the Interior Ministry for CORAH to intervene only in the elimination of maceration pits and new coca plantations, while farmers and CADA carried out a gradual and consensus-guided eradication;
- carrying out a study to determine the real demand for legal coca consumption, in order to calculate the area needed to produce that crop;

- updating the data base to include farmers currently selling their crops to ENACO;
- 5) compiling the recommendations made by multi-sector teams working in the various basins to link chains of production.

DEVIDA's statement undermined the CONPACCP leaders, claiming that "*a minority group is insisting on misinforming about the dialogue process, imposing strikes and marches that hinder the actions of the working groups.*"

Two contingents of coca growers participated in the March of Sacrifice. One consisted of more than 4,000 men, women and children from San Francisco and Quimbiri, and the other was made up of about 2,000 people from Uchiza, Puerto Pizana, Sión, Aucayacu, Tingo María and Aguaytía. They marched peacefully, without blocking highways or disturbing the peace.⁷ Displaying placards, slogans and visible signs of poverty, the marchers set up blankets and communal cooking pots in front of the Palace of Justice, right next to

⁷ On April 10, there were clashes with the police in Huamanga because of a roadblock by youths who were not members of FEPA-VRAE, during which arrests were made and some people were wounded.

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the Lima Sheraton Hotel. Their leaders sought meetings with the media, Congress, the prime minister and the president.

Meeting with the President and the Supreme Decree

After long discussions with the *cocalero* leaders in the prime minister's office and DEVIDA, on April 23, 2003, President Toledo received a delegation of 32 leaders, signed the Supreme Decree reflecting the agreements that had been reached, and visited the marchers, where he stated that:

- coca producers are not drug traffickers;
- the Supreme Decree could be improved and his office door was open for that; and
- ENACO would reopen its registry to include the farmers who belonged to the associations represented by the Confederation.

According to the *cocalero* leaders, the Decree, which was signed into law on April 24, was not freely accepted by them, but had been imposed by DEVIDA and the office of the prime minister. In fact, the decree echoed a statement issued by DEVIDA on Sunday, April 20, and did not reflect the farmers' main proposals, which included dropping the trial of the union leaders and releasing Nelson Palomino. The decree made DEVIDA, CORAH, CADA, ENACO and the Agriculture Ministry responsible for implementing its five points, and changed nothing.

In response, on April 26 the *cocalero* leaders sent a letter to the president saying they had been deceived. They presented an alternative proposal with a 30-day deadline for further discussion. "We do not agree to putting DEVIDA, ENACO, CORAH and the Agriculture Ministry in charge of carrying out the actions approved in the Supreme Decree. We have mobilised, among other reasons, because they are inefficient, attempt to

manipulate us, have not honoured past agreements and have lost credibility with us," the leaders said.

The *cocalero* leaders believe that the government was pressured by the United States, but trusted that President Toledo would address their demands "because he was poor once, he was elected president thanks to us, and during his campaign he said he would not forcibly eradicate coca." They requested new talks with him within 30 days, saying they would resume protests if their request was not granted. The deadline was May 26; another meeting was held that day in Lima, at which they agreed to extend the deadline.

"Because he was poor once, he was elected president thanks to us, and during his campaign he said he would not forcibly eradicate coca."

Despite all this, the coca growers have made some significant progress: formal recognition of CONPACCP as their representative; issuing of the Supreme Decree; real, though not official, suspension of forced eradication; reduction instead of consensus-based grad-

ual eradication of coca; neutralisation of the media campaign that had called them 'drug traffickers and terrorists' and said they were being manipulated; and a meeting with President Toledo. The leaders, however, have NOT signed any agreement. And the basic political problems remain unsolved:

- guaranteeing compliance with the agreements signed in 2002;
- dropping the court cases against *cocalero* leaders and releasing Nelson Palomino, who was jailed in February;
- temporary, unofficial suspension of forced eradication and its replacement with a strategy of consensus-based gradual, manual reduction as outlined in the July 2002 agreement;
- participation in the drafting of a new coca law, following an independent study of legal coca use and, above all, registration of new producers in ENACO, rather than simply updating information about those who were registered in 1978.

The farmers presented an 11-point platform.

Their demands could be resolved, and there are sufficient resources for that, but the government is not independent enough from the United States. As in the case of transportation workers, teachers and farmers from other regions, before analysing how problems might be solved, the government has attempted to: 1) isolate the Confederation from the other farmers, negotiating with each basin separately on the grounds that this is being done for "technical reasons;" and 2) undermine the legitimacy of the farmers' proposals, claiming that they are being manipulated by terrorists, drug traffickers and politicians.

There are differences in approaches and great contradictions between *cocaleros* in Upper Huallaga and Apurímac-Ene, as well as those in Monzón and Quillabamba, but the government should encourage dialogue, support the empowerment of these organisations and understand that these farmers want to be formal, law-abiding citizens, that they set their hopes on President Toledo, voting for him, and are tired of bureaucrats and NGOs that do not take them seriously and that are trying to impose policies with which the farmers do not agree.

Current situation in the coca-producing valleys

The situation in the coca-producing valleys is currently tense again, as the 60-day deadline to which CONPACCP agreed in Lima to launch a five-point Immediate Plan for Struggle, has recently passed. The waiting period could have been shortened if the government had resumed its voluntary eradication programme, since the pattern so far has been 'accept or we eradicate your crops anyway,' or if forced eradication had continued in specific parts of certain coca-producing valleys, as is currently occurring in Masisea and Nueva Requena, Ucayali, the province of Huallaga, and Saposoa in San Martín. Local mayors have spoken out against the presence of DEVIDA and CORAH. The 60-day deadline could have also be shortened if DEVIDA or the NGOs involved — against which there are court cases pending because of their

inefficiency, disrespect and deceit — continued to flaunt their financial resources and capacity for publicity, reflected in their fleet of pick-up trucks and motorcycles, in their pursuit of the goals of the U.S. government and USAID.

A significant number of the grievances and complaints by farmers and local authorities against DEVIDA and the NGOs and other agencies carrying out 'alternative development' and 'voluntary eradication' plans have been corroborated by oral testimony, written complaints from beneficiaries and photographs. The agreements reached in Lima (CONPACCP) and Cusco (FEPCACYL) are extremely radical in comparison to the proposals made by farmers between 2001 and 2003. This resulted from the deaf ear turned by DEVIDA and the implementing NGOs and their disregard for the balanced, feasible proposals signed by the *cocalero* leaders in 14 agreements, as well as the Supreme Decree issued by President Toledo in April 2003. In Cusco, the proposals have been summed up in the slogan, "Coca or death... we shall overcome."

As a result, contrary to DEVIDA's statements and local media reports, the *cocalero* movement, goaded by DEVIDA and the Interior Ministry's constant demonising, is currently working on three levels, although this is still incipient and somewhat chaotic. There is national coordination among the *cocaleros*, national coordination with other sectors, and coordination at the international level.

On the national level, bonds have been strengthened among *cocaleros* in the various basins. They have different characteristics, but similar demands. CONPACCP was founded in January 2003, basically with leaders from Apurímac/Ene, the Upper Huallaga and Aguaytía, which together represented half of the 50,000 coca growers estimated to exist in the country, almost none of whom is registered with ENACO. CONPACCP has since expanded to include leaders and members from the other half of the coca-growing population, including more than 15,000 who are registered with ENACO, although a significant

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group of Apurímac/Ene leaders have withdrawn from CONPACCP.

Meanwhile, the *cocalero* movement has begun to approach political parties, not only the 'Ollanta' movement of the Humala brothers, but Perú Ahora, APRA, Patria Roja and other left-wing parties. It has also established links with non-coca-growing organisations that have pledged support for its proposals, such as SUTEP, the CGTP, the Departmental Federation of Peasants of Cusco (Federación Departamental de Campesinos del Cusco) (as coca consumers), the Federation of Indigenous Ayllus of Ayacucho (Federación de Ayllus Indígenas de Ayacucho), the Chota/Cajamarca Association of Livestock and Coca Farmers (Asociación de Agricultores y Ganaderos de Coca de Chota/Cajamarca), the National Peasant Self-Defence Coordinating Committee (Coordinadora Nacional de Rondas Campesinas), the Association of Agrarian Producers of Lima (Asociación de Productores Agrarios de Lima), the Aymara, Amazon and Quechua Grassroots Organisation (Organización de Bases Aymaras, Amazónicas y Quechuas), the Departmental Federation of Peasant Communities of Huancavelica (Federación Departamental de Comunidades Campesinas de Huancavelica), etc.

At the international level, the leaders have agreed to re-establish and strengthen the Andean Council of Coca Leaf Producers (Consejo Andino de Productores de Hoja de Coca CAPHC), led by Evo Morales, which has not met since June 1998. The leaders have contacted Morales and agreed to meet in Puno. They have also established or renewed ties with political parties and other organisations in Bolivia (basically MAS and the Federations of Chapare and the Yungas), Ecuador (Pachacutik) and the United States (WOLA and the Drug Reform Network), and approached TNI in The Netherlands, ENCOD in Belgium and MLAL in Italy. Relations with Colombia are very incipient, but contact has been renewed with the Colombian union leader Omayra Morales, CAPHC's Communication and Promotion Secretary.

In contrast to statements made by the Inter-

rior and Defence Ministries, certain analysts and the media, the security situation in the valleys — especially the Apurímac/Ene and Monzón — has been unchanged in recent months. There is no sign of Sendero Luminoso regrouping to carry out significant armed actions that would threaten security in the valleys. Rather, all signs point toward peaceful political action. Local residents and farmers reject violence and favour peaceful protest, such as the March of Sacrifice, without blocking roads, smashing windows, throwing stones, taking hostages, etc. They learned the lessons taught by the Sacrifice March in 2003, and the fact that women are leading this movement gives it a particular overtone of peaceful defence — although with radical language — in search of respect and the affirmation of civil rights.

With respect to illicit drug trafficking, there is a large scattering of bands and dealers who buy coca leafs or washed paste, but there are no reports of violence or revenge killings. The gangs have no visible leaders or strategic plan, but appear to be isolated groups with little connection or competition among themselves. Thus DINANDRO can boast to the media about 'successful' operations in which petty criminals are nabbed and large amounts of drugs confiscated, while the big drug barons escape. So far, interdiction targeting maceration pits and drugs, such as Operation Fierro 2003, carried out in Monzón and the Apurímac/Ene in November and December 2003, have proven counter-productive, because they do not involve sound socio-economic development plans with citizen participation or the establishment of permanent police stations. Furthermore, these actions have no relation to the real drug traffickers, although they do temporarily lower coca prices, and only serve to justify U.S. funding of other Interior Ministry activities.

Main complaints of Local Farmers and Authorities

Contradrogas and DEVIDA have not honoured the agreements signed between 2001 and

2003 and have ignored proposals made by the cocalero leaders in the Dialogue Group.

No studies of soil, plant disease or fungi have been done, nor have there been economic and ecological studies that could serve as the basis for productive projects. There has been no serious study to determine demand for legal uses of coca. Farmers have not been allowed to register with ENACO, although this demand was included in the agreements that were signed. No census has been done to determine coca production ratios and yield.

Specific complaints have been lodged against ENACO because of problems related to prices, quality ratings, weights and abuses committed when the agency purchases coca leaves from producers.

Signing agreements has not solved these problems. The voluntary eradication of coca crops upheld by the April 2003 Supreme Decree is ineffective, as it was not established with the farmers belonging to the associations and federations whose leaders led the March of Sacrifice. The argument used is that the United States does not recognise these organisations as valid participants in actions involving USAID. Voluntary eradication is done with "communities" and individuals, but excludes legitimate producer organisations, such as the associations and federations, from all decisions about the process. Voluntary eradication is a pre-requisite for being considered a beneficiary of the alternative development programmes, summed up in the phrase, "eradicate first, then we deliver the benefits".

After voluntary eradication, DEVIDA and its implementing agencies, such as Chemonics and other NGOs, have not kept their promises. While families were promised USD 180 each, to be paid after eradication, many have received only 160 soles. The rest has not been

paid, or if it has, an excessive amount has been deducted for the tools they received to eradicate the coca. Regarding the food aid of USD 150 per family from CORAH, the rations have often been incomplete or the food has not been delivered, even though it was included in the agreement. Technical support and tools, seeds and seedlings for the productive projects are often of a sort that are not priorities for local farmers. For example, the proposal for palm oil and cotton in Neshuya-Curimaná was not supported, but was replaced by plantains and corn, although there was not a sure market for these products. In the case of the two social and/or economic infrastructure projects decided on by the community, DEVIDA or its contractors carry out one but not the other, and in several cases the works have been overvalued.

Meanwhile, DEVIDA and/or Chemonics present as their own successful productive activities that have actually been carried out by the private sector or other institutions. Examples include palm oil production in Neshuya, which is a joint effort by grow-

ers and the UNDP with partial funding from the Peru-Canadian Trust Fund, cotton in San Alejandro, and plantain and pineapple production in Aguaytía, which is an individual effort by farmers. Some people who are listed as cocaleros benefiting from the programs are actually merchants, teachers, motorcycle taxi drivers, etc., who have allowed their names to be used. Furthermore, in many cases the number of registered beneficiaries in a community or village is greater than the total number of inhabitants.

DEVIDA may have appropriated some of the ideas of the farmers' associations about productive projects. For example, leaders in Aguaytía had presented a USD 19 million programme focusing on five productive areas — palm oil, livestock development, cotton, reforestation and a processing plant for cassava

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plant. The proposal was shelved, but now DEVIDA is promoting reforestation without involving the association. Several leaders and farmers in the Monzón and Apurímac-Ene valleys contend that maceration pits that are being targeted, like those targeted by Operation Fierro 2003, are old pits that had already been raided earlier.

The farmers consider TV reports about coca and drug trafficking to be an insult. This is particularly true in La Convención, where all of the coca leaves produced are used for traditional coca chewing. No significant progress has been made on the new coca law. Instead, Congress is discussing more than 10 draft laws. Meanwhile a new protest cycle has started causing new tensions of the same kind.

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USED ABBREVIATIONS

AAAHCPA	Asociación de Agricultores Agropecuarios y de la Hoja de Coca de la Provincia de Padre Abad
CADA	Cuerpo de Apoyo al Desarrollo Alternativo
CAPHC	Consejo Andino de Productores de Hoja de Coca
CGTP	Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú
CTAN	Comisión Técnica de Alto Nivel
CONFACCP	Confederación Nacional de Productores Agropecuarios de las Cuencas Cocaleras del Perú
CONAPA	Coordinadora Nacional de Productores Agropecuarios
CORAH	Proyecto Especial de Control y Reducción de Cultivos de Coca en el Alto Huallaga
DEVIDA	Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas
ENACO	Empresa Nacional de Comercialización de la Coca
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo
NAS	Oficina de Asuntos Narcóticos
PCM	Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros
PNUFID	Programa de Naciones Unidas para la Fiscalización Internacional de Drogas
SUTEP	Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación del Perú
OARA	Asháninkas del Río Apurímac
USAID	Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional
VRAE	Valle del Río Apurímac y Ene

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Following Bolivia's 2002 parliamentary elections, the success of the political party headed by cocalero leader Evo Morales, rekindled debate regarding cocalero organisations in the Andes and their vindications. Disinformation around these organisations has contributed to a rise in terms like *narcoguerrilleros* and *narcoterroristas*, etc. being applied to the various cocalero peasant movements.

At the core of this debate lies the relationship between good governance, drug policies and the *cocalero* movements. The unbalanced approach of international drug control, the lack of leeway that governments and societies in the South enjoy to design their own, independent policies, and the phantoms conjured around the *cocalero* organisations, make good governance a genuine challenge in the countries pinpointed as coca producers.

This issue of *Drugs and Conflict* analyses *cocalero* peasant organisations in Peru and Bolivia and their interaction with successive governments during the peasant mobilisations of recent years. The achievements and failures of such negotiations expose the difficulty in finding peaceful and sustainable solutions to an issue as intricate as the cultivation of coca leaf.

Founded in 1974, TNI is an international network of activist-scholars committed to critical analyses of the global problems of today and tomorrow. It aims to provide intellectual support to those movements concerned to steer the world in a democratic, equitable and environmentally sustainable direction.

Since 1996, the TNI Drugs & Democracy programme has been analysing trends in the illegal drugs economy and in drug policies globally, their causes and their effects on economy, peace and democracy.

The Drugs & Democracy programme conducts field investigations, engages policy debates, briefs journalists and officials, coordinates international campaigns and conferences, produces articles, publications and briefing documents, and maintains a daily electronic news service on drugs-related issues.

The aim of the project and of the *Drugs and Conflict* series is to stimulate a re-assessment of conventional prohibitive and repressive policy approaches and to argue for policies based on principles consistent with a commitment to harm reduction, fair trade, development, democracy, human rights, environmental and health protection, and conflict prevention.

