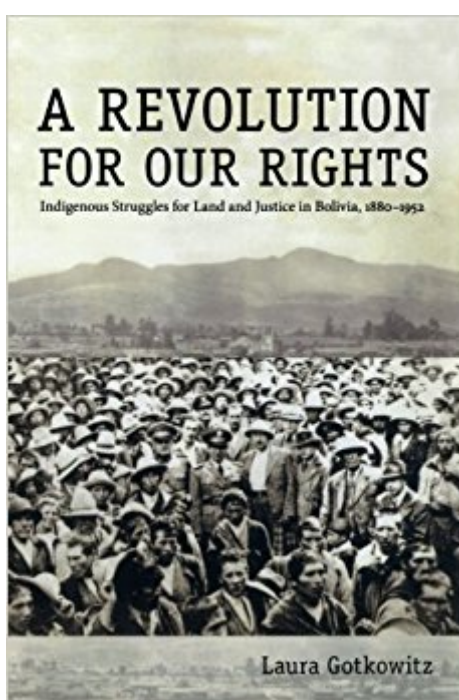


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# A Revolution For Our Rights: Indigenous Struggles For Land And Justice In Bolivia, 1880-1952



## Synopsis

*A Revolution for Our Rights* is a critical reassessment of the causes and significance of the Bolivian Revolution of 1952. Historians have tended to view the revolution as the result of class-based movements that accompanied the rise of peasant leagues, mineworker unions, and reformist political projects in the 1930s. Laura Gotkowitz argues that the revolution had deeper roots in the indigenous struggles for land and justice that swept through Bolivia during the first half of the twentieth century. Challenging conventional wisdom, she demonstrates that rural indigenous activists fundamentally reshaped the military populist projects of the 1930s and 1940s. In so doing, she chronicles a hidden rural revolution—before the revolution of 1952—that fused appeals for equality with demands for a radical reconfiguration of political power, landholding, and rights. Gotkowitz combines an emphasis on national political debates and congresses with a sharply focused analysis of Indian communities and large estates in the department of Cochabamba. The fragmented nature of Cochabamba's Indian communities and the pioneering significance of its peasant unions make it a propitious vantage point for exploring contests over competing visions of the nation, justice, and rights. Scrutinizing state authorities' efforts to impose the law in what was considered a lawless countryside, Gotkowitz shows how, time and again, indigenous activists shrewdly exploited the ambiguous status of the state's pro-Indian laws to press their demands for land and justice. Bolivian indigenous and social movements have captured worldwide attention during the past several years. By describing indigenous mobilization in the decades preceding the revolution of 1952, *A Revolution for Our Rights* illuminates a crucial chapter in the long history behind present-day struggles in Bolivia and contributes to an understanding of indigenous politics in modern Latin America more broadly.

## Book Information

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“A Revolution for Our Rights is a major contribution to studies of Andean history and anthropology and to studies of indigenous and popular politics in Latin America as a whole. In this exciting and powerful study, Laura Gotkowitz illuminates modern Indian political engagements in what is today the most indigenous country in the Americas.” — Sinclair Thomson, author of *We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency* “An innovative, eloquent, and deeply researched history that locates indigenous subjects at the very center of Bolivia’s prolonged struggle for internal decolonization and democracy in the tumultuous half-century leading up to the 1952 Revolution. The book’s fascinating, fine-grained explorations of the radical implications (and grotesque realities) of citizenship and social justice for Bolivia’s Quechua and Aymara communities is a profound and timely contribution to our understanding of how indigenous politics and social movements can sometimes change the course of history.” — Brooke Larson, author of *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810–1910* “This is a most impressive work of history—deeply grounded in archival and primary sources, clearly and beautifully written, and sharply perceptive of the subtleties as well as the extremities that so characterize Andean life. The book will become a required resource for understanding not only the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 but also the social movements of the contemporary period, in which the role of Cochabamba is still poorly understood.” — James Dunkerley, author of *Bolivia: Revolution and the Power of History in the Present* “A Revolution for Our Rights is a path-breaking study of peasant and indigenous political action. It fills a major gap in the historiography on Bolivia, and because of its conceptual innovation and fascinating empirical findings it also raises new questions for the study of rural political mobilisation elsewhere in Latin America.” — (Kevin Young *Journal of Latin American Studies*) “A Revolution for Our Rights is beautifully written, and Gotkowitz’s fine command of theory never gets in the way of her ability to tell a good story. The book is full of biographies of individual indigenous leaders that give the history a compelling, personal immediacy. And, although it focuses on indigenous people and their organization, their history is fully integrated into the social and political history of the time. Gotkowitz also does full justice to the writings of the leading Bolivian politicians and intellectuals who shaped the ideologies of the time. This is a model of historical research and writing.” —

(Ann Zulawski Social History) "An extraordinary book. . . . A Revolution for Our Rights deserves a very wide readership. Serious scholars of Bolivian history must read this book, and for students, scholars and activists interested in the current period it provides one of the better historical backdrops for understanding the long-standing complexities of today's popular struggles against class exploitation and oppression of the indigenous majority." (Jeffery R. Webber Bulletin of Latin American Research) "Gotkowitz masterfully traces the depth and links of indigenous politicization through the use of Bolivian communal, departmental, and national archives that bring both Indian and state voices into the narrative. . . . [T]his is an excellent work, expertly researched and written, that offers new insights into the rural roots of resistance that contributed to and expanded the 1952 Revolution. This work also opens up a greater understanding of Andean rural-urban connections, Indian identity politics, Latin American state formation, and labor movements throughout the region. It is an inspiring testament to the ability of committed social movements to effect change against the long odds of centuries-old racism and oppression." (Michael E. Donoghue The Historian) "This book is a path-breaking work that makes an important contribution to our understanding of popular politics and the ways that indigenous peoples have made and continue to make history in Bolivia. It is essential reading for historians, anthropologists, and Latin Americanists in general." (Lesley Gill American Historical Review) "This is a carefully crafted history of the causes of the 1952 Bolivian Revolution. . . . Firmly grounded in primary sources, A Revolution for Our Rights is an important contribution to Andean anthropology and history." (Latin American Review of Books)

"A Revolution for Our Rights" is a major contribution to studies of Andean history and anthropology and to studies of indigenous and popular politics in Latin America as a whole. In this exciting and powerful study, Laura Gotkowitz illuminates modern Indian political engagements in what is today the most indigenous country in the Americas."--Sinclair Thomson, author of "We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency"

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