

BOLIVIA

By Huxley

> Most leftists think Bolivia is a workers' paradise. Maybe the Bolivians learned a few PR tricks from their former Azzie masters, because reality is quite different according to Huxley. He's an ex-left-wing militant turned runner who spent a few years in Bolivia and lived to tell the tale.

> Captain Chaos

Transmitted: XXXXXX

BOLIVIA AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Communist Republic

Total Population: 10,527,000

Racial Percentages:

Human: 60%

Elf: 12%

Dwarf: 9%

Ork: 14%

Troll: 3%

Other: 2%

Per Capita Income: 9,600¥

Estimated SINless: 11%

Below Poverty Level: 60%

Corporate Affiliation: 8%

Education:

Less Than Twelve Years: 30%

High School Equivalency: 53%

College Degrees: 12%

Advanced Degrees: 5%

Major Languages Spoken:

Spanish: 68%

Aymara: 65%

Quechua: 43%

Portuguese: 10%

Major Ethnic Groups:

Aymara: 32%

Quechua 30%

Mestizo 24%

Euro-Caucasian: 9%

Brazilian: 3%

Major Religions:

Aymara: 45%

Quechua: 26%

Roman Catholic: 10%

Path of the Sun: 1%

Other/Atheist: 18%

Currency: Bolivian Peso, Exchange Rate: BOP\$10 = 1¥

National Medical Coverage (unarmed): 85% Guaranteed
Response Time: None

It's remarkable how blind we can be about what we hold dear. Back when I was young and naïve, I had a soft spot for Bolivia. I thought I knew everything about the country's struggle against Imperialism, the 2050 Revolution and *El Comandante* Limberg Velazco. My coffee mug even bore Velazco's face in a triumphant look of defiance.

That was then, this is now.

While Bolivia seems to have undergone dramatic changes, the equation remains the same. An authoritarian government abuses its power. Another faction is unhappy with that so it wants to kick them out (to replace them with its own corrupt regime, probably). A third group is looking to make the biggest possible profit out of the crisis. Yep, it all adds up.

> Wow, you've described just about every other country on Earth!

> Groucho Marxist

BOLIVIA TIMELINE

2007: Landslides ruin most coca fields in the tropical area near the Brazilian border.

2010: VITAS I decimates Bolivia's major cities, but spares isolated settlements.

2011-12: The Awakening and subsequent social upheaval shatter the Catholic Church's religious stranglehold. Most Bolivians return to their ancestral beliefs.

2012: ORO Corporation starts offering humanitarian aid to Bolivia.

2034: Amazonian takeover prompts thousands of refugees from Corumba and nearby areas to flee to Bolivia. This is encouraged by the lack of manpower in the deserted lands that VITAS left behind.

2040s: Bolivia receives massive humanitarian aid from NGOs.

2043: Aymaran miner Limberg Velazco receives a scholarship to California.

2046: Velazco returns to Bolivia and forms the communist Bolivian Workers' Movement (MOB).

2050-51: Revolution! The *Movimiento Obrero Boliviano* (MOB) topples the Aztlan-backed Quechua government, installing a communist regime with Velazco as president.

2063: The rumors of Sancho Collqui and his Neolnca movement start roaming the country.

RETURN TO THE OLD WAYS

The first years of this century were particularly difficult for Bolivia. Though the native coca-planters and left-wing nationalists succeeded in fending off early corporate predators, Bolivia remained in perpetual civil unrest having had more than two hundred presidents in less than two centuries of independence. Then in 2007 farmers and native movements were crippled when a series of landslides destroyed most coca fields and their livelihoods.

> Many Bolivians still believe the USA was behind that disaster. The War on Drugs an utter failure, the White House took off its gloves. Who cared if a few thousand Bolivians died?
> Llama Mama

> Actually, I heard the Azzies spun that story later to keep Ares out of the country. When Velazco took over, he thought it was convenient to give the masses an enemy to hate. Keeps the sheep in line, neh?
> PoliSci

The corps didn't have time to exploit the fortuitous turn of events. VITAS I and the Awakening were a fatal blow to both the rich and the poor alike. The plague wiped out more than 30 percent of La Paz's inhabitants, including a good many suits (serves 'em right). Neither the government nor the Catholic Church were able to offer any relief. The Church was frantic over the return of magic, which didn't bode well for its already diminishing power. Many Bolivians still worshipped their ancestral deities behind a thin veil of Catholicism. The Awakening only strengthened their resolve to return to the old ways. No longer seeing a need to maintain their façade, they resumed their traditional beliefs. Unlike Ecuador or Amazonia's, the Bolivian Church withered away, having no one to blame but itself.

> It didn't hurt that both Aztechnology's puppet regime and Velazco's commies were dead set against the Church from day one.
> Missionary

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

With Bolivia reeling from multiple blows, the newly formed ORO Corporation landed a knock-down punch taking over the weakened local cartels. By 2012, the corp began building its power base in the country by publicizing its generous humanitarian aid sent to the most desperate regions. ORO's shrewd manipulations firmly shoved the government into its pocket. It also enabled the corp to peacefully take over the state-owned mining and natural gas extraction companies in the name of Pan-Latin friendship. ORO succeeded in controlling just enough to make a profit without having to worry about the rest of the deteriorating country. By 2022, ORO had renamed itself the Aztechnology Corporation and was too busy taking over Aztlan's government to pay attention to its pet project.

By the 2040s, Bolivia's situation was critical, and international NGOs tried to come to the rescue. The government didn't stop them since their presence made it even easier to skim even more of the budget. The most notable result of the NGO aid was so minor it went unnoticed: Limberg Velazco, a young and impoverished Aymaran miner, received a scholarship abroad.

EL COMANDANTE

Velazco's years in the UCAS are documented elsewhere in the Matrix, I'm sure. Suffice it to say that our poor miner returned with new-found idealism. He traveled the country, delivering moving speeches about metahuman and civil rights, fostering communal organization and planting the seeds of his revolution to come. The masses, thirsty for change, drank in his words. Velazco rallied peasants, miners and other low class Aymaran workers to his *Movimiento Obrero Boliviano* (Bolivian Worker Movement). Under his firm leadership, the MOB (hah!) grew to a powerful force in Bolivian politics. Velazco's followers dubbed him *El Comandante*, the Commander. Velazco united his armies and dangled the people's optimistic dreams for a better life as their noble cause. His crusade easily recruited the country to his banner.

> Nice to see that leftists still have political fetishes. What's next? Che Guevara's clone?
> Tricky Dick

When the war in the Yucatan forced Aztechnology's attention elsewhere, El Comandante seized the perfect chance. Velazco partnered with the more than helpful Amazonians (the enemy of my enemy...), and the puppet Incan Quechua government was unable to stop the raging Aymaran revolutionaries from marching into the cities.

Aztechnology's control slowly slipped away; their Corporate Security stretched thin with tension on the Amazonian border and the Yucatan conflict. The end was inevitable: By 2051 Limberg Velazco became Bolivia's newest president.

> Not only was Aztechnology eventually banned from the country, but the other corps got to play with the Azzies' toys. This goes a long way towards explaining why the Corporate Court has never acted against Bolivia.
> Don Dinero

> I was an ACS “private contractor”, possibly the worst mistake I ever made. The MOB’s commanders were incredibly coordinated, and its shamans packed serious mojo. I heard that paracritters butchered whole Azzie platoons in the mountains. I bailed out in the Aztlan embassy’s last chopper. Last thing I heard about anyone left behind was that they’d been executed or sent to reeducation camps.

> Lynch

MOB MENTALITY

Velazco established a regime that combined communist ideals and Aymaran traditions. But while Velazco nationalized Bolivia’s natural resources and the country held high a tightened fist against capitalism in public, we were soon to learn that the *Movimiento Obrero Boliviano* was as corrupt as the previous regime. Velazco allowed his pet corporations to carry on mining and gas extraction operations, and though the regime never affected the vestments of wealth and power, the only ones who didn’t profit were the little people.

Another ugly aspect of the MOB’s nature soon became evident. The Aymaras in power took the opportunity to “right” past injustices caused by the Incan Quechuas. On the surface, it might be a communist country, but the state has a definite Aymaran flavor to those controlling it. Bolivia’s shiny reputation as a leftist haven blinds potential critics and effectively brands those who speak up, like the Empowerment Coalition, as imperialist agents.

> Nothing new here. The Cubans mastered that propaganda technique decades ago.

> Tricky Dick

The repression of the Quechua. The halting economy slipping under the table to the MOB’s pet corps. Social unrest. Velazco’s MOB assures Bolivia that this government is what the people want. The people’s response? Find a new idealist. Much like Velazco once did with his fellow Aymarans, an unknown Quechua native, Sancho Collqui, easily rallies supporters all over the country, calling for a return to Incan traditions. Though the government squashes every group of supporters it can find, Collqui’s Neolncas seem well organized and equipped.

> Ok, I’ll bite. Equipped by whom? Aztechnology?

> Tutu Tango

> Aztecs and Incas together? Dream on, chummer.

> Aguari

> Some worry that Shining Path or Tupac Amaru could be expanding into Bolivia, but Amazonia is also a prime suspect. Amazonia’s support of the MOB was founded on a mutual need to oppose Aztechnology. Bolivia’s corporate ties, ecological mismanagement and ethnic oppression strain the precarious relationship between the two governments. I also heard a few other interesting rumors here and there, but those don’t come as cheap ...

> Machiavelli

VIVA LA REVOLUCION!

Behind the cheers for Velazco’s victory hides how the government actually ran this new workers’ paradise. The National Congress has 150 representatives, but the MOB is the only recognized political party. The other groups were absorbed or simply outlawed for a number of (drummed up) reasons. The more widespread factions, such as the previous regime’s Bolivian Socialist Phalanx, were converted. Its leader, Alberto Saucedo, was jailed until he saw the light (so to speak). Saucedo then became Minister of Public Works, and suddenly the Phalanx stopped all resistance against the MOB. On the other hand, the Christian Democratic Party’s leadership refused to play ball and simply vanished overnight.

Having won all elections so far (gotta love one party systems), El Comandante remains on top of the heap. Velazco built himself into an icon of resistance for Leftists worldwide, a later day Che. Did they fail to notice the country’s sorry state? Internationally, Bolivia has the dubious honor of being known for hosting the training camps of groups like Attack!, the Malaysian Communist Party and the UCAS’ International Progressives. They receive their indoctrination in Bolivia and return home to spread their ideology.

> You know what? The PR spin showing Velazco as a humble miner that could, reminds me of a certain farmer from Guadalajara...

> Pyramid Watcher

> Are you implying that Velazco is a Azzie-frontman zombie like Juan Atzacapotzalco was?

> TomTom

- > You know that's not what I meant, you dreckhead.
- > Pyramid Watcher

Velazco established the **People's Council** to take care of the day-to-day policy overview and corporate relations. Most members are MOB veterans, though some simply pop up out of nowhere every time El Comandante shuffles his cabinet. The interesting part is that all infiltration attempts to find out what goes on in the Council's closed-doors meetings have failed so far. Another unusual aspect of the council is that you don't need to be Bolivian to join. Elizabeth "Gringa" Spencer, one of Velazco's Californian friends, has been on the Council since the beginning. There is plenty of speculation about her relationship with El Comandante, and word is they're secretly married.

- > That would explain what I heard last month. La Gringa was heard talking to a couple militants in Cochabamba after a rally, something about retiring to raise a few kids if my sources are correct.
- > Llama Mama

- > Power struggles are frequent, usually ending when Velazco reshuffles his cabinet to reflect the dominant factions. The most infamous was back when the Council was setting up shop in 2051, several members attempted to overthrow Velazco. El Comandante's response was brutal—whole villages were razed in a matter of days.
- > Pariwana

One of the Council members secretly leads the **Revolutionary Guard**. The Guard takes care of internal security, ideological purity and general repression. It also runs the reeducation camps where dissidents, especially Quechuas, are brainwashed into loyal MOB members. All in all, the Guard makes sure Bolivians remember the freedom they lost.

- > Oh please, you're going to give us a speech about liberty? Liberty to be inefficient and miserable? Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole?
- > Mustapha

- > Commie red or corporate gray, a tyranny is a tyranny.
- > PoliSci

- > All I can advise is that if you work inside Bolivia, odds are you'll end up facing the Guard. They are downright scary in their zeal and efficiency, so good luck.
- > Picador

- > The Guard also seems to take care of undesirables. Professor Juan Navarro was a notorious dissident working at the Washington U, until someone put a bomb in his car. Lone Star suspects the Bolivians hired some of our local talent for the job.
- > SPD

If you work outside in smaller cities or villages, you will deal with the local **collectives**. They masquerade for the visitors wearing a façade of industrious workers and diligent farmers side by side, taking care of their own life. Behind the mask, the collectives are usually inefficient and corrupt. The corporations have "business relationships" with the local collectives so they will "overlook" certain regulations in exchange for any goods they can't get from the central government. The farther you are from the big cities, the more unpredictable it gets to deal with collectives.

- > The government suspects that Inti T'ika's dealings with some collectives are far deeper than previously suspected. Who's up to some Q&A in Santa Cruz?
- > Sundance Kid

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

Velazco's spin doctors would love to tell you that Bolivia is besieged by reactionary forces vying to destroy the Revolution and oppress the masses once again. All the security measures are to protect the Bolivian people from Imperialist agents. "We're from the government. We're here to help, blah blah blah ..." There is a grain of truth in their propaganda so it is still moderately effective. The people who are sick of the regime are too afraid of the Revolutionary Guard to do anything about it, so the "protection" lives on.

- > No kidding. The Guards have eyes and ears everywhere, even your friends could be working for them. Better to keep quiet and hope things improve.
- > Mamani

> I'm Limberg Velazco, and I approve this message.
> Bung

Any who actively oppose the communists have rallied behind the **Neolncas** and their leader Sancho Collqui.. Reputedly from Peru, Collqui is a full-blooded Quechua. Careful not to exclude any potential followers of other ethnicities, he likes to point out that in Tahuantinsuyo, the ancient Incan Empire, all tribes lived in harmony.

> And were ruled by a Quechua, of course.
> Mamani

The Neolncas enjoy strong support in the Quechuan and mestizo community. The liberation message is spreading even to Aymarans and is fueled by poverty, oppression and "corruption" of their traditions and faith. The Neolncas welcome them all, but some fear the movement is being infiltrated by the government. Collqui himself was almost killed last month during a government ambush near Tarija. Only the bravery of Gonzalo Cardozo, his second-in-command, saved his hoop.

> I wonder how long it will take for Collqui to become a martyr, and for a saddened Cardozo to take his mantle.
> Skeptic

Though not as visible as the Neolncas, the **Old Regime** is still out there. Most of its surviving members live in exile in Buenos Aires, Antofagasta or Caracas where they plot against the communists in their spare time. Collqui's revolutionaries could be useful pawns, but these people don't like the idea of Incan wannabes in power either. They've opted to muster their own forces and are waiting to step in once Velazco and Collqui have torn each other apart.

> Guillermo Zamora is the right-wingers' man in Buenos Aires. Zamora was a Colonel in the Bolivian Army before the communist revolution and has good relations with Aztechnology and Argentina's government, which suggest some link to the secretive *Legio*. He's been known to use runners to smuggle weapons to reactionary cells in Bolivia.
> Quijote

THE ANDEAN TREASURE CHEST

If Amazonia is the Earth's lungs, then Bolivia is Latin America's heart. The energy Bolivia provides with its oil and natural gas keeps the continent's engines running and the people warm in winter. The country has vast underground resources that are the backbone of its economy. If it's a mineral you need, you can find it in Bolivia.

Sadly, the treasure chest is running out, and reaching hands seem to be scraping bottom. The deep mineral excavations are proving to be increasingly difficult. Natural gas reserves are starting to run dry. The main drive behind Bolivia's economic growth is coming to a halt. All bad news for El Comandante, because he needs the money to stabilize the current social crisis. To his credit, Velazco has been very effective at keeping this crisis under wraps. He successfully maintains the illusion of Bolivia as a tempting treasure chest of resources.

> The way I hear it, even the corps are wary of the regime's recent moves. The MOB expropriated a mine near Potosí belonging to Andes Mining. Though Bolivia eventually compensated Tanamyre for its subsidiary's lost asset, no explanation was ever given beyond the usual "defense of our natural resources."
> Don Dinero

> Rumor is the miners found something really big, but the government wanted to keep it for itself. Don't know why Tanamyre objected so lightly, though.
> Digger

Bolivia is entirely landlocked, which hampers the country's economy by restricting the means for exporting its wealth. The country used to control the Arica port in the Pacific Ocean, but lost it in a disastrous war against Chile two centuries ago. You'd think that tempers would have calmed down by now, but the issue remains a rallying point for the nationalists and Velazco's posturing. Bolivia has tried and failed to regain the lost territory through diplomatic means.

> Interestingly enough, Velazco's regime has assigned this as a priority in the current agenda. How the commies are going to achieve this is unknown.
> Valpo Vic

> I heard a few people in Geneva talking about supporting Bolivia's next move in the UN. Of course, the Chilean lobbyists were barking mad at the possibility and they got corporate support.
> Ambassador

CORPORATE PIRACY

Megacorps and communists are usually at odds, but not here. Though Bolivia rejects the Business Recognition Accords, El Comandante's policy has been most pragmatic. If a corp has something his regime needs, it gets carte blanche to operate in Bolivia. The government squeaks about strict regulations and supervising its "commercial partners," but that's all.

> That's not entirely true. Lord knows why, but some areas of Bolivia are a no-go for corporations and foreigners. Security is also provided by the regime, except in the Free Trade Zones. These are located in La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba.
> Don Dinero

This case-by-case system has benefited quite a few savvy corps who took the time to research Bolivia's needs. Leading the pack is Australia's **Tanamyre Resources**. Its subsidiaries supply the military, mine the mountains and store toxic wastes in the mines when they're empty. A good deal for the Aussies, if you ask me. Too good for rivals to ignore. Shiawase is aggressively targeting the Andes Mining's operations. The Bolivian military is being courted with alluring offers from the Shiawase Armaments, France's Esprit Industries and Canton-based Baihu Corporation.

> Tanamyre and other corps are getting plenty of flak from the Neolncas. Collqui's anger about the corps' relationship with the regime usually translates into raids against their facilities.
> Pariwana

> It could also be that other companies are simply disguising their covert ops as rebel attacks. If anyone wants names, you know how to find me...
> Machiavelli

One more notable, or more to the point, controversial corp is **Inti T'ika Bioengineering**. CEO Alejandro Yupanqui invested heavily in Bolivian media and biotech sectors. This puts Bolivia and the corp directly at odds with Spain's Sol Media and Meridional Agronomics. Peru has managed to hold their own thanks to some ingenious PR tactics. They've played the Andean nationalism card expertly, having all but accused the Spanish of being Pizarro's heirs, ready to loot the Incan Empire a second time.

> Yupanqui also supports the Neolncas for reasons of his own. He's met with Sancho Collqui personally several times.
> Philomitus

> One surprise project ITB is involved in is a sickly sweet soft drink called *Maná Dorado*. *Maná* is all the hit in the country and is starting to become popular elsewhere in South Am and overseas. The formula is secret and it's produced exclusively in several government licensed "collectives".
> Corp Watcher

FIELDS OF GOLD

Coca growing has been a regional staple since pre-Columbian times, its leaves traditionally used for energy-replenishing chewing and teas or even religious rituals. These days, however, cocaine is still the primary reason why coca is grown. And though many coca fields were destroyed in 2007 by landslides, they were re-grown. Too profitable to let a little mud ruin the income. Never mind what it's used for.

> Novacoke is still popular and isn't entirely synthetic.
> Dabbler

> Right, blame us for your problem. People forget that as long as there is a demand for drugs, there will be a supplier.
> Pariwana

> Our problem? Last time I was in Potosí, the slums were full of addicts. It's because of people like you that Aztechnology exists.
> Diamondback

[21 Mp deleted by SysOp]

> Yet another constructive debate between commie pinkos and imperialist pigs down the Shadowland toilet. First and last warning, chummers, can the bulldrek or I will!
> Captain Chaos

When Velazco became president, he publicly executed *narcotraficantes* and burned their shipments, but that was just a flashy PR show to boost his image (and besides, they were Azzie flunkies). To this day, the communists officially deny any involvement in or support of drug trade (if you believe that, I know some spammers with great offers.) Admitting to it or not, one of the MOB's first moves was to establish relations with the Ghost Cartels. Thus the **Morales Cartel** was born.

Arturo Vargas has led the Cartel since 2062, when an Azzie Otontin warrior geeked his predecessor. Though it wasn't the first time Aztechnology's killed the Cartel's head honcho (and it certainly won't be the last) the Bolivians seem able to shrug off their losses without affecting their operations. Vargas uses the Morales Cartel to give Bolivia a disproportionate amount of influence in Latin America's underworld. This stretches the MOB's heavy hand even into Peru.

> Peruvian authorities (excuse me, the Japanacorps) believe that Bolivia funds the Andes Ahora movement through the Morales Cartel, but have yet to find proof. When and if they do things could get nasty.

> Philomitus

> Bolivia is a mandatory stop over for smugglers on the Andes route. Its mountains provide all kinds of opportunities for skilled riggers to evade detection. Besides, the Bolivian radar coverage isn't that great to begin with.

> Air Sailor

> It doesn't need to be. Their Army supplements its forces with spirits. Very nasty ones, I might add.

> Maia

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Velazco won the masses over to his rebellion by preaching idealism. Once in power, he built his idealistic society, conveniently a culture supportive of his regime. The Aymaran beliefs and way of life were infused throughout Bolivia to the point that other groups faced assimilation or discrimination: Aymaran is the official language and the only one taught in Bolivian education systems.

The Quechuas resisted for the most part, but minority groups like the Chiquitanos weren't so lucky. Today's Bolivian kids learn Aymaran, heavily dosed with communist propaganda, as their lifestyle. Communal work and absolute dedication to the State are a given.

> For some of us this isn't a big problem, as the government rewards people for adopting the party line.

> Warakusi

> Have you no pride in your heritage? This is cultural genocide!

> Guaraní Warrior

> I take pride in surviving and doing my job right. If that means discarding outdated traditions and replacing them with a few others, so be it.

> Warakusi

This policy is a point of contention for the Native American Nations in accepting Bolivia's request to become an associate member of the Sovereign Tribal Council. For many in North America, especially the Sioux, Velazco's regime resembles the old USA's extermination policy. On the other hand, Bolivia's natural resources are a temptation. The NeoIncas has also applied to the NAN for support, asking it to cut ties with Velazco's government. The STC recently met with Florencia Quispe, one of Sancho Collqui's advisors, so maybe there's substance to the rumor.

> Chummer, the STC barely agrees on what day of the week it is. It could be years before they send Collqui a postcard.

> Black Eagle

Other than the differences between Aymaran and non-Aymarans, people in Bolivia classify one another depending on which region they live in. This is particularly valid for *Kollas* (highlanders) and *Cambas* (lowlanders), who enjoy a friendly rivalry marked by pranks and jests. I saw this firsthand when I worked in Cochabamba. My Camba friends treated our new Kolla decker in the most condescending way at first, arguing that "lack of air" probably made him a slow thinker.

FAITH

Perhaps one of the most bizarre aspects of Velazco's Bolivia is its state religion (yeah, I know, religious communists?). In his quest to be the perfect socialist man, El Comandante modified Aymaran religion "to adapt it to a workers' society," also adding some Catholic trappings and government propaganda. Yes, ritual offerings to the Pachamama (Mother Earth) and Ekeko (God of Abundance) are frequent, but their nature has changed. They have become a show of devotion and obedience, a tool for social control.

Speaking of tools, there's a small group of Bolivians who follow the Aztec Path of the Sun. They're remnants of Aztechnology's time in the country. Of course they have to keep their faith private. The Azzies still have friends in this community, always a bonus for their agents.

- > Religion, the opium of the masses ... Can I have some?
- > Groucho Marxist

KISS THE SKY

When most people think of Bolivia, they imagine *El Altiplano*. This majestic, lung-torturing plateau looms 3,600 meters above sea level, concentrating most of the country's population in cities and isolated villages. Its landmarks go from tourist-traps like Tiwanaku and Lake Titicaca to the bizarre Uyuni salt flats.

- > Uyuni is choking with virgin telesma. Too bad the area is infested with rockworms and worse pests.
- > Privateer

- > The winds are strong and cool in the Altiplano, but breathing can be a problem for foreigners. Get used to the altitude and lack of air before doing something strenuous, or you'll exhaust yourself in no time.
- > Wind Rider

Bolivia isn't just a pile of rocks. Once you go eastward, large tropical lowlands replace the highlands. This area suffered heavily when VITAS swept the country. Whole villages were transformed into empty ghost towns.

- > Not so empty. I heard Shedim are becoming a problem for smugglers and rebels hiding in them.
- > Picador

La Paz

The world's highest capital city, La Paz houses 2.5 million Bolivians who work day and night in its industries. The city's Free Trade Zone is home to a huge Novatech facility where workers assemble cheap consumer goods for South American markets. The government's Byzantine politics, the corporations' schemes and the increased rebel activity have allowed a thriving shadow community here.

- > Security is tough, but not impossible. Yes, there's a zillion Revolutionary Guards patrolling the city, but tourists are so common that foreign runners shouldn't have any problems pretending to be one.
- > Paquito

Santa Cruz

If La Paz is Velazco's mountain stronghold, then this is Collqui's tropical hideout. Santa Cruz de la Sierra's inhabitants widely favor the Neolncas movement. Anti-government protests are increasingly frequent. The communists have declared martial law several times, but the situation is only worsening. Me, I'm betting on the rebels.

- > Hey Huxley, what keeps you from joining them? Is it because you're a gringo?
- > Arctic White

- > Not really. It's just that working *pro bono* isn't my style nowadays. They know how to contact me if the pay's good.
- > Huxley

Santa Cruz also happens to be Bolivia's eastern economic hub. The recent discovery of uranium reserves triggered an ongoing fight between Shiawase Atomics and Andes Mining. Both companies are vying for the collectives' support in every (dirty) way they can imagine.

VIRTUAL RUINS

Bolivia's big cities are the only places where you'll find something remotely resembling the Matrix. The public RTG is so lousy and decrepit they had to stick to UMS iconography (and if you have to ask what UMS is, you'll just make me feel old). Outside the big cities all bets are off. Because corporations are using satellite uplinks to communicate with the rest of the world, decking into their hosts can prove to be difficult if not fatal.

- > The government keeps a private system for itself, but it has more ice than Antarctica.
- > Decker del Sur

ANCIENT RUINS

Bolivia teems with historical sites that are difficult to reach at best. Some haven't even been explored by archeologists. Standing near the southern shores of Lake Titicaca, the ancient city of **Tiahuanaco (Tiwanaku)** was the center of Aymaran civilization before the Incas and subsequently the Spanish conquered them. As such, it holds paramount importance to Velazco's regime. Religious ceremonies are held here at the beginning of every lunar month with thousands participating.

- > The Neoincas once plotted the assassination of Velazco here, but Collqui discarded the idea at the last minute. He feared that such a move in Tiahuanaco could start a civil war.
- > Llama Mama

Archeologically-minded groups like the Atlantean Foundation, Genesis' Terramater and the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research have all petitioned the government to study Tiahuanaco. So far the answer has been a big frag-off!

- > Come on, Tiahuanaco's already been explored from top to bottom. It's not like they're going to steal something, right?
- > Ancient History
- > Maybe they know something we don't.
- > Elijah

GAME INFO: BOLIVIA

Velazco's Bolivia is to the Sixth World what Castro's Cuba is for our own. Though many locals and foreigners still believe in El Comandante, the dream of the Revolution has turned into a nightmare. Sancho Collqui's movement shows that the oppressed masses are finally awakening to reality, but the regime isn't going down without a fight and has quite a few tricks in store.

GETTING IN/OUT

Cyberware and weapons are subject to standard laws, but the Bolivian government keeps harsh laws regarding magic. All magical abilities must be declared when applying for a visa and even then this request might be denied. Anyone caught using unlicensed magic is treated as an enemy and usually sent to a reeducation camp. Corporate employees in the Free Trade Zones are exempt of these requirements.

Bolivia has few international airports. The two most important ones are El Alto (La Paz) and Viru Viru (Santa Cruz), though the first one does not service semiballistic or suborbital flights. Santa Cruz's economic importance makes Viru Viru a popular airport with the corporations, but it also means it's a juicy target for the rebels. Airport security is handled by the Revolutionary Guard, which also runs the military airline *Transportes Aereos Militares* (TAM).

The country's railroad system has been upgraded to help the corps' mining operations. The railroads connect with Argentina's own at the Villazón-La Quiaca border and with Chile's at the Avaroa-Ollagüe border. On the other hand, the lines near Amazonia are all but abandoned. Only smugglers use them to move their goods or guide themselves.

The *Altiplano* region belongs to the so-called **Andean Highway**, which goes from chilly Patagonia to Colombia's rainforests. The Ghost Cartels and independent smugglers use it to deliver their goods all over Latin America, daring harsh weather conditions and treacherous mountains in exchange of increased surreptitiousness. Use the rules for Sensor Dead Zones (p. 32, *Rigger 3 Revised*).

The Amazon rainforest and its rivers are another option for people wishing to illegally enter Bolivia from Perú and Amazonia. For a fee, the local cargo boats will carry anything, be it cattle or shadowrunners. This insertion method isn't without risks, however. In addition to Bolivian patrols, travelers must take care of the rainforest's dangers (see p. XX).

RUNNING IN BOLIVIA

Be it smuggling milspec weapons for them through the Andes, or hunting down their fund-raisers in North America or Europe, runs in Bolivia are increasingly linked to the Neolnca insurrection. It is perfectly possible for a character to naively support the *Velazquistas*, only to find out the regime is just as rotten as any capitalist country.

The megacorps also have their own game in Bolivia, fighting to earn the collectives' favor and sabotaging their competitors' operations. Tanamyre Resources is circling its wagons to defend its assets from other corps, while Inti T'ika Bioengineering is trying to gain influence over the Neolncas.

Bugs in the System

As hinted in its chapter, Bolivia is deeply infested by a cabal of insect spirits who are transforming local society for their own purposes. Limberg Velazco himself is a "good merge" flesh form, though he could also be a corrupted *Yatiri* (Aymaran shaman). The bugs also take advantage of Bolivia's prestige to expand their influence across the globe, turning many sympathizers into flesh-form agents. Even the Ghost Cartels are being subtly manipulated through the Morales Cartel.

The situation is probably known to several corporations, but it seems they have chosen to deal with the devil as long as they can plunder Bolivia's natural resources. Aztechnology is coldly hostile towards the regime, but it hasn't taken any major actions against it except for the Morales Cartel, which threatens its own drug trade. On the other hand, Amazonia has had enough time to regret supporting Velazco's revolution and is secretly backing the Neolnca movement.

Shadowrunners could also become pawns for the bugs' internal intrigues. What the team thought was an honest hive-cleaning operation in a remote Bolivian village could well be an attempt to increase a faction's influence in the People's Council at the expense of another one.

Bolivian Oddities

The home of pre-Columbine civilizations, Lake Titicaca and Tiwanaku (also known as Tiahuanaco) are known for astral shallows and power sites (pp. 99-100, *T:AL*), many of which are aspected towards Inca shamans. On the other hand, centuries of exploitation and suffering have given Potosí a negative Background Count of 5. At the gamemaster's discretion, some areas in Bolivia might have become Toxic Zones (pp. 155-156, *YOTC*), or aspected towards insect spirits.

Characters arriving to the Altiplano may experience breathing difficulties. Use the High Altitude rules in p. 195 of *Shadows of North America*, except that problems last for 12 + 2d6 days and the character's effective Body and Athletics are also reduced by 1 when making tests involving physical efforts.

Yankee go Home

Ron Sanders had it all: a rich family, good friends and a bright future in father's company. He also hated it all to no end, feeling trapped in a golden birdcage from birth. Finally, after several months of bitter discussions with his father, Ron suddenly vanished.

Feeling guilty, Mr. Sanders hires the runners to track him down. All they can find in his college dorm is a scrapped note about a meeting in the Friends of the Bolivian Revolution, a radical group that supports Velazco's regime. If pressed, the FoBoR's members will admit that Ron was a frequent, passionate visitor. An online search through Ron's credit record will reveal that he bought a plane ticket to La Paz one week ago, shortly after his last clash with daddy.

If the runners inform Mr. Sanders about this, he will panic about his son being abducted by "Bolivian commie pinkos". Mr. Sanders will offer the team a substantial reward for the safe (and quick) return of his son. Should the runners hesitate, the gamemaster might decide that Mr. Sanders can use his business connections to ensure they can enter Bolivia without problems. All they have to do is to find the collective his son is and convince him to return home. How tough could this possibly be?

CHECKPOINT VERIFICATION TABLE

Country	Verification System Rating
Bolivia	2

UNAUTHORIZED BORDER CROSSING TABLE

Country	Sensor	Flux	ECCM	ECD	NPC/Pro. Rating
Bolivia	5	7	3	-	Inferior/3

LATIN AMERICAN MATRIX RTGS

Country	Security	Access	Control	Index	Files	Slave
Bolivia	Blue-2	3	3	3	3	3