LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS

ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, OUTCOMES

Edited by
DIRK KRUIJT, EDUARDO REY TRISTÁN,
and ALBERTO MARTIN ÁLVAREZ

ROUTLEDGE

"This volume comes from the hand of three of the best researchers on revolutionary movements in Latin America. The time elapsed and the partial end of the last guerrilla violence in Colombia with the accumulated knowledge allow the rigorous research that is reflected in this book."

Manuel Alcántara, *Full Professor, University of Salamanca, Spain and Director of FLACSO Spain*

"A pioneering, comprehensive, analytical book on *guerrillas / insurgency* in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Cold War and the guerrillas set the way for political systems in the region and beyond. Counterinsurgency and guerrilla wars left narrow margins for democratic developments in Latin America between 1959 and 1990. A profound observation on twelve national cases. A new and excellent contribution from Dirk Kruijt, Eduardo Rey Tristán and Alberto Martín Álvarez."

Francisco Rojas Aravena, *Rector of the United Nations University for Peace, Costa Rica*

"The editors have compiled a well written and much needed comprehensive scholarly analysis of the Latin American revolutionary guerrilla movements that played a crucial role in the political history of the region in the 20th century. It is particularly important that they have acknowledged the seminal role played by Cuba in this process."

Gary Prevost, *Professor Emeritus of Political Science, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University, USA*

"This impressive collection of essays improves our understanding of the origins, evolution, and outcomes of Latin America's guerrilla movements. The volume brings together a top-notch group of political scientists, historians, and sociologists from Latin America, the United States, and Europe, who have dedicated their professional lives to the study of the region's New Left. It should be on everyone's reading list."

Michael E. Allison, *Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, The University of Scranton, USA*

"Nothing exemplifies the tensions and contradictions of Latin America's quest for peaceful coexistence better than the history of the guerrilla movements that dominated its political life in the second part of the 20th century. Kruijt, Rey Tristán and Martín Álvarez have brought together a volume offering the most comprehensive overview so far of a phenomenon that in its origins, development, demise and aftermath expresses the troubled dynamic between democratization and violence that in different ways continue to plague Latin America society as it enters a new millennium."

Bernardo Arévalo de León, *Latin American Director of Interpeace*

"We have long been overdue for a volume that updates our understandings of guerrilla movements in Latin America. This work more than fills that gap. Drawing on the unrivaled expertise of leading scholars with intimate knowledge of the field, *Latin American Guerrilla Movements* excels in providing us with deep and probing insights and analyses into the successes and

shortcomings of guerrilla movements. This is a required work to understand the Latin American revolutionary left and how it developed in this way."

Marc Becker, *Professor of Latin American History, Truman State University, USA, and author of* Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions

"The book *Latin American Guerrilla Movements: Origins, Evolution, Outcomes*, edited by Dirk Kruijt, Eduardo Rey Tristán and Alberto Martín Álvarez, will become a must-have for researchers, students and those interested in guerrilla action and revolutionary political violence in Latin America. Through 18 chapters written by experts, the work analyzes the different guerrilla waves experienced by Latin America both nationally and from a regional perspective. It is an essential collective work to get an understanding of the 'spirit of the political age' that infected Latin America since the Cuban Revolution, and which involved more than four decades of guerrilla activity."

Salvador Martí i Puig, *Political Science Section Director, University of Girona, Spain*

"This book is an essential guide to an extraordinary period of recent history, one in which two generations of young Latin Americans took up arms as guerrillas in the hopes of seizing power and building Utopian futures in their countries. For historians, scholars, diplomats, and anyone else seeking an authoritative analysis of the revolutionary wave that convulsed Latin America from the 1950s to the 1990s, *Latin American Guerrilla Movements* is certain to become indispensable reading."

Jon Lee Anderson, *author of* Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life

"We are faced with a book that, clearly, was very necessary. Aimed at a plural audience, whether experts in the field or people interested in the Latin American guerrilla phenomenon, the added value of this work is twofold. On the one hand, the work proposes the diverse and complex analysis of the guerrilla phenomenon. The authors observe both the stages through which the armed struggle takes place in Latin America—from the 1960s to the 1990s—as well as the specificities shown by the Central American, Andean and Southern Cone scenarios, among others. The above, without incurring the traditional functionalist bias. Also, the work is markedly pedagogical. It perfectly integrates a rigor and depth in the analysis with a simple and illustrative language."

Jerónimo Ríos Sierra, *Professor of Political Geography, Geopolitics, and Latin American Studies, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain*

"Unparalleled in scope and depth, this comprehensive volume offers scholars, students, and broader audiences a authoritative understanding of the cycle of guerrilla movements and leftist revolutionary projects in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century. The book brilliantly explores and explains the genesis and dynamics of these movements, speaking to their enduring relevance for Latin American politics into our present time."

Kees Koonings, *Associate Professor of Anthropology and Development Studies, Utrecht University, the Netherlands*

"In this fine collaboration, the three editors now unite their own formidable writings on revolutionary groups and trajectories in several Latin American nations with the fine contributions of many other scholars. The result is a book which raises the scholarly bar, to a new tier of both depth and excellence in studies of the region's guerrilla activism. Taken as a group, the sheer region-wide scope is reason enough to celebrate the book. Yet taken as individual offerings, riches abound in the chapter-by-chapter arguments and evidence laid out by this assemblage of careful scholars. Many root their arguments in interviews and other primary-source materials not previously explored, which provide newer and firmer groundings for their national studies. And each chapter is never less than original and excellent in analysis of the revolutionary case(s) that it explores."

Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Georgetown University, USA*

"Dirk Kruijt, Eduardo Rey Tristán and Alberto Martín Álvarez gather a group of Latin American, European and American specialists, with the goal of telling the story of guerrilla movements in Latin America, from the 1950s to date. Besides taking a historic walk through the years of the Cold War in Latin America from the triumph of the Cuban revolution, highlighting political and social processes, one of the main contributions of this book is that it provides an analysis on the origins and evolution of political violence in the different regions and countries of the subcontinent: Central America, the Andean region, the Southern Cone, the Caribbean, Brazil and Mexico. Its originality stands not only in that it offers a compared perspective from new views, but it also makes a balance of the achievements and limitations of the guerrilla movements in Latin America in the second half of the 20th century."

Mónica Toussaint, *Senior Research Professor, Instituto Mora, México City*

LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS

Organized around single country studies embedded in key historical moments, this book introduces students to the shifting and varied guerrilla history of Latin America from the late 1950s to the present. It brings together academics and those directly involved in aspects of the guerrilla movement, to understand each country's experience with guerrilla warfare and revolutionary activism.

The book is divided in four thematic parts after two opening chapters that analyze the tradition of military involvement in Latin American politics and the parallel tradition of insurgency and coup effort against dictatorship. The first two parts examine active guerrilla movements in the 1960s and 1970s with case studies including Brazil, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Peru, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Part 3 is dedicated to the Central American Civil Wars of the 1980s and 1990s in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Part 4 examines specific guerrilla movements which require special attention. Chapters include Colombia's complicated guerrilla scenery; the rivalling Shining Path and Túpac Amaru guerrillas in Peru; small guerrilla movements in Mexico which were never completely documented; and transnational guerrilla operations in the Southern Cone. The concluding chapter presents a balance of the entire Latin American guerrilla at present.

Superbly accessible, while retaining the complexity of Latin American politics, *Latin American Guerrilla Movements* represents the best historical account of revolutionary movements in the region, which students will find of great use owing to its coverage and insights.

Dirk Kruijt is Professor Emeritus of Development Studies at Utrecht University, and currently is a research fellow at the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and at the Centre for Military Studies at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He has published widely about military governments and revolutions; insurgency and counterinsurgency; and urban violence and non-state actors. He has been a visiting scholar at universities and research institutes in Latin America and Europe. In addition, he has been a policy advisor to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, assigned to Latin America on multiple occasions. His most recent monograph is *Cuba and Revolutionary Latin America* (2017); *Ethnography as Risky Business: Field Research in Violent and Sensitive Contexts* (2019) was published in coedition with Kees Koonings and Dennis Rodgers.

Eduardo Rey Tristán is Full Professor of Latin American History at the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. After completing his PhD on the guerrilla movements in

Uruguay, he has specialized in political violence and contemporary Latin American revolutionary movements. He has carried out long-time field research in the Rio de la Plata region and Central America. He is cofounder and coordinator of the Revolutionary New Left International Research Network on Political Violence. He has published monographs, articles and book chapters in several European and American countries, among them: *La Izquierda Revolucionaria Uruguaya, 1955–1973* (2006), and *Revolutionary Violence and The New Left: Transnational Perspectives* (coedited with Alberto Martín, New York: Routledge, 2016). He is currently working on a political biography of the Italian left-wing editor and activist Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (expected in 2020).

Alberto Martín Álvarez holds a PhD on Latin American Studies from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He is currently Distinguished Professor at the Department of Public Law of the Universitat de Girona (Spain). He has been full professor at the Instituto Mora (Mexico City) and visiting researcher at several universities and research centers in Europe and Latin America. He is cofounder and coordinator of the Revolutionary New Left. International Research Network on Political Violence. He has also undertaken extensive research on the origins and development of the Salvadoran revolutionary left. Among his main publications are: *Revolutionary Violence and the New Left: Transnational Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2016, with Eduardo Rey, eds.) and the monograph *From Revolutionary War to Democratic Revolution: The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador* (2010).

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This book is dedicated to the memory of two dear friends and colleagues:

Edelberto Torres-Rivas, mentor of an entire generation of Central American social scientists and historians, a critical analyst of the Central American revolutions and author of the first volume of the Guatemalan Truth Commission (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico). Edelberto died on 31 December 2018.

Ralph Sprenkels, a profoundly engaged scholar who after fifteen years of human rights activism and deep knowledge of the Latin American guerrilla wrote his brilliant study on post-insurgency politics. Ralph died on 14 September 2019.

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Darío Villamizar is a political scientist who retired as a United Nations Development Program (Bogota, Colombia) functionary (reintegration of former combatants, displaced persons and reconciliation). A demobilized member of the guerrilla movement M-19 under the peace agreements of 1989, he widely published articles and monographic studies about the many guerrilla movements in Colombia (several of which were re-edited twice or trice). He is the eminent historian of Colombia's insurgency and recently published the widely acclaimed *Las guerrillas en Colombia, una historia desde los orígenes hasta los confines* (2017).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The genesis of this book dates back to the early 2010s. In November 2013, Alberto Martín Álvarez and Eduardo Rey Tristán organized an international and interdisciplinary conference at the University of Santiago de Compostela, 'The revolutionary wave of the New Left in Latin America and Europe', attended by more than 20 European, Latin American and American researchers in the broad field of social sciences and history. The objective was to initiate a long-term research project on the origins and evolution of political violence with the accent on the influence of the Cuban Revolution. It eventually resulted in the creation of the international network, 'Revolutionary New Left',[1] and in the publication of the edited volume *Revolutionary Violence and the New Left* (2016). This was followed by other conferences and book and journal publications, including Dirk Kruijt's monograph entitled *Cuba and Revolutionary Latin America: An Oral History* (2017).

The two books were presented at the 51st International Conference of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), held in Lima, during a roundtable chaired by Kees Koonings on 30 April 2017, and at the 4th Latin American Congress of Social Sciences held in Salamanca, Spain (17–19 July 2017), during a roundtable chaired by Salvador Martí i Puig.

When the three editors of this book—Martín Álvarez, Rey Tristán and Kruijt, who had already collaborated in the first conference and in previous publications—reviewed the existing literature on the Latin American guerrilla movements and the revolutionary cycle after the Cuban Revolution, they were struck by the fact that the more classical studies had been published back in the 1970s and 1980s and that, following Wickham-Crowley's standard work *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America* (1992), scarcely any new publications with a strong conceptual and empirical comparative perspective had seen the light of day. Since the congress held in Santiago de Compostela in 2013, Wickham-Crowley has also lent them his continuous support, for which they will be eternally grateful.

Since then, they have organized different academic meetings and symposiums at international congresses in the context of the 'Revolutionary New Left' network. Over 100 researchers and numerous academic institutions in Europe, Latin America and the United States have attended these events. In a way, they have all contributed to generate the ideas and debates resulting in this book.

The three editors believed that it would be appropriate to invite reputed scholars with first-hand research experience in one or more Latin American revolutionary movements to provide

a contemporary overview of the Latin American revolutionary wave, based on recent and original studies basically drawing from primary sources and interviews. All the contributing authors are, in the main, senior researchers and specialists in their field and perfectly familiar with the recent literature. The editors would like to thank the contributors for their willingness to write their chapters according to the general guidelines that they were sent and for their diligence in correcting and rewriting them while respecting deadlines and reviewing procedures.

Some of the chapters were written in English and others in Spanish. Thomas MacFarlane proofread all the chapters and translated some of those originally written in Spanish.

The editors' thanks also go to the staff at Routledge, especially Natalja Mortensen and Charles Baker.

Last but not least, our deep gratitude to Carlos Henríquez Consalvi and the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (El Salvador) for the cession of the cover photo.

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Dirk Kruijt, Eduardo Rey Tristán and Alberto Martín Álvarez

Notes

1. International Research Network on the Revolutionary Left (information available at https://nuevaizquierdarevolucionaria.wordpress.com).
2. Project HAR2016–77828-R (Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad—AEI and the ERDF), and the HistAmérica research group, University of Santiago de Compostela (Xunta de Galicia, 2017 GPC GI-1661).

ABBREVIATIONS

1J4	Agrupación Política 14 de Junio (Dominican Republic)
ACNR	Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria (Mexico)
ACUS	Acción Católica Universitaria Salvadoreña (El Salvador)
AD	Acción Democrática (Venezuela)
AD	Alianza Democrática (Chile)
ADO	Autodefensa Obrera (Colombia)
ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América
ALN	Ação Libertadora Nacional (Brazil)
ANAPO	Alianza Nacional Popular (Colombia)
ANN	Alternativa Nueva Nación (Guatemala)
APRA	Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (Peru)
ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (El Salvador)
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (Colombia)
BA	Batallón América (Colombia)
BCA	Brigada de Justicia Campesina (Mexico)
BR	Bandera Roja (Venezuela)
BR	Partido Comunista Peruano-Bandera Roja (Peru)
CEH	Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (Guatemala)
CELAC	Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños
CGSB	Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar (Colombia)
CLR	Comité de Lucha Revolucionaria (Mexico)
CNG	Coordinadora Nacional Guerrillera (Colombia)
CNI	Central Nacional de Informaciones (Chile)
CODIs	Centros de Operações de Defesa Interna (Brazil)
COPEI	Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (Venezuela)
COSEP	Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (Nicaragua)
CRS	Corriente de Renovación Socialista (Colombia)
CTV	Central de Trabajadores de Venezuela (Venezuela)
CUC	Comité de Unidad Campesina (Guatemala)
CVR	Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (Peru)
DCG	Democracia Cristiana Guatemalteca (Guatemala)

DIPBA	Dirección de Inteligencia de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (Argentina)
DOI	Destacamentos de Operações de Informações (Brazil)
EFC	Estructura de Fuerza Central (Chile)
EGP	Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo (Argentina)
EGP	Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (Guatemala)
EGTK	Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari (Bolivia)
EIM	Ejército Insurgente Mexicano (Mexico)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (Colombia, Bolivia, Peru)
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación (Colombia)
EPLUA	Ejército de Liberación Popular Unido de América (Mexico)
EPS	Ejército Popular Sandinista (Nicaragua)
ERP	Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Argentina, El Salvador)
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (México)
FA	Frente Amplio (Uruguay)
FACS	Frente Augusto César Sandino (Guatemala)
FAL	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación (El Salvador, Mexico)
FALN	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (Venezuela)
FAP	Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas (Argentina)
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Guatemala)
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (Argentina, Mexico)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FARN	Fuerzas Armadas de la Resistencia Nacional (El Salvador)
FARN	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Nacionales (Argentina)
FAPU	Frente de Acción Popular Unificada (El Salvador)
FAU	Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (Uruguay)
FDCR	Frente Democrático Contra la Represión (Guatemala)
FDR	Frente Democrático Revolucionario (El Salvador)
FECCAS	Federación Cristiana de Campesinos Salvadoreños (El Salvador)
FIR	Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Peru)
FGEI	Frente Guerrillero Edgar Ibarra (Guatemala)
FLN	Frente de Liberación Nacional (Venezuela, Vietnam)
FLN	Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional (Mexico)
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (El Salvador)
FPL	Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (El Salvador)
FPMR	Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (Chile)
FRAP	Fuerzas Revolucionarias Armadas del Pueblo (El Salvador, Mexico)
FRIP	Frente Revolucionario Indoamericano Popular (Argentina)
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Nicaragua)
FULNA	Frente Unido de Liberación Nacional (Paraguay)
GPG	Grupo Popular Guerrillero (Mexico)
GPGAG	Grupo Popular Guerrillero "Arturo Gámiz" (Mexico)
ICAP	Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (Cuba)
IU	Izquierda Unida (Peru)
JCM	Juventud Comunista Mexicana (Mexico)
JCR	Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria
JPT	Juventud Patriótica del Trabajo (Guatemala)
JUCO	Juventud Comunista (Colombia)
LC23S	Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre (Mexico)

LS	Liga Socialista (Venezuela)
M19	Movimiento 19 de Abril (Colombia)
M23S	Movimiento 23 de Septiembre (Mexico)
M26J	Movimiento 26 de Julio (Cuba)
MAPU-L	Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria Lautaro (Chile)
MAQL	Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame (Ecuador)
MAR	Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria (Mexico)
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Venezuela)
MAS	Movimiento Armado Socialista (Mexico)
MBR-200	Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 (Venezuela)
MI26M	Movimiento de Independientes '26 de Marzo' (Uruguay)
MININT	Ministry of the Interior (Cuba)
MINREX	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Cuba)
MINTER	Ministerio del Interior (Nicaragua)
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Chile, Venezuela, Peru)
MIR-PL	Movimiento de Integración Revolucionaria-Patria Libre (Colombia)
MIRE	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Mexico)
MLL	Movimiento de Liberación Latinoamericana (Mexico)
MLN	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Guatemala, Mexico)
MLN-T	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros (Uruguay)
MMLM	Movimiento Marxista-Leninista de México (Mexcico)
MNR	Movimento Nacional Revolucionário (Brazil)
MNR	Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (El Salvador)
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Bolivia)
MOE	Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil 7 de Enero (Colombia)
MPP	Movimiento de Participación Popular (Uruguay)
MPD	Movimiento Popular Dominicano (Dominican Republic)
MR13	Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de noviembre (Guatemala)
MRO	Movimiento Revolucionario Oriental (Uruguay)
MRP	Movimiento Revolucionario del Proletariado (Mexico)
MRP	Movimento Revolucionario del Pueblo (Mexico)
MRTA	Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Peru)
NGEZ	Núcleo Guerrillero "Emiliano Zapata" (Mexico)
NOAL	Non-Aligned Movement
NORC	Nueva Organización Revolucionaria de Combate (Guatemala)
OAS	Organization of American States
OLAS	Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad
ONAR	Organización de Acción Revolucionaria Nacional (Mexico)
OP	Organización Partidaria (Mexico)
OPR-33	Organización Popular Revolucionaria 33 Orientales (Uruguay)
OR	Organización de Revolucionarios (Venezuela)
ORPA	Organización del Pueblo en Armas (Guatemala)
OSPAAAL	Organización de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de Asia, África y América Latina
PAC	Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (Guatemala)
PCB	Partido Comunista Brasileiro (Brazil)
PCB	Partido Comunista de Bolivia (Bolivia)
PCC	Partido Comunista de Cuba (Cuba)
PCCh	Partido Comunista de Chile (Chile)
PCCo	Partido Comunista de Colombia (Colombia)

PCCo(M-L)	Partido Comunista de Colombia Marxist-Leninist (Colombia)
PCdoB	Partido Comunista do Brasil (Brazil)
PCM	Partido Comunista de México (Mexico)
PCP	Partido Comunista Peruano (Peru)
PCP-SL	Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso (Peru)
PCU	Partido Comunista de Uruguay (Uruguay)
PCS	Partido Comunista de El Salvador (El Salvador)
PCV	Partido Comunista de Venezuela (Venezuela)
PDC	Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Bolivia, El Salvador)
PdlP	Partido de los Pobres (Mexico)
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PGT	Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (Guatemala)
PLC	Partido Liberal Colombiano (Colombia)
PLN	Partido Liberal Nacionalista (Nicaragua)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization (Palestine)
PO	Palabra Obrera (Argentina)
PPR	Partido Patriótico Revolucionario (Mexico)
PPS	Partido Popular Socialista (Mexico)
PR	Partido Comunista del Perú-Patria Roja (Peru)
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Mexico)
PRD	Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (Dominican Republic)
PROCUP	Partido Obrero-Campesino Revolucionario de la Unión Popular (Mexico)
PRPM	Partido Revolucionario del Proletariado Mexicano (Mexico)
PRS-ERP	Partido de la Revolución Salvadoreña-Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (El Salvador)
PRT	Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Argentina, Colombia)
PRT-B	Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores de Bolivia (Bolivia)
PRTC	Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos
PRV	Partido de la Revolución Venezolana (Venezuela)
PSCh	Partido Socialista de Chile (Chile)
PSP	Partido Socialista Popular (Dominican Republic, Mexico)
PSR	Partido Socialista Revolucionario (Peru)
PSR-ML	Partido Socialista Revolucionario Marxista-Leninista (Peru)
PSU	Partido Socialista del Uruguay (Uruguay)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Brazil)
PUR	Partido de Unidad Revolucionaria (Guatemala)
RN	Resistencia Nacional (El Salvador)
UES	Universidad de El Salvador (El Salvador)
UNASUR	Unión de Naciones Suramericanas
UNO	Unión Nicaragüense Opositora (Nicaragua)
UP	Unidad Popular (Chile)
URD	Unión Republicana Democrática (Venezuela)
URD	Unión Revolucionaria Democrática (Guatemala)
URJE	Unión Revolucionaria de la Juventud Ecuatoriana (Ecuador)
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (Guatemala)
UTC	Unidades Tácticas de Combate (Venezuela)
UTC	Unión de Trabajadores del Campo (El Salvador)
VOP	Vanguardia Organizada del Pueblo (Chile)
VPR	Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária (Brazil)

1

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS

Dirk Kruijt, Eduardo Rey Tristán and Alberto Martín Álvarez

Introduction

In Latin America, the Cold War period was not only characterized by dictatorships, military juntas and coups d'état. It was also a time of revolutionaries and insurgents, students taking up arms, pious churchgoers converted into rebels, radical priests transformed into guerrilleros, slum dwellers turned members of underground sabotage cells, peasants joining insurrectional movements and armed civilians combating military and paramilitary forces. Young people became radicalized, youth wings of political parties joined the underground resistance and liberation movements appeared in nearly all of the countries in Latin American and in several Caribbean island states.

From the late 1950s to the late 1990s, one wave of rebel movements after another swept across Latin America where organized groups of the armed Left, guerrilla movements or 'political-military organizations' (as they called themselves), both great and small, contested the existing political, social and economic order. The peak period of most of the region's guerrilla organizations was between the mid-1960s to the late-1980s. And although peace was eventually restored in Central America in the 1990s, while one insurgent movement signed a peace agreement in Colombia as late as 2016, the other is still engaged in warfare (August 2019).

The region's guerrilla forces tried to overthrow right-wing authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships and sometimes even democratically elected governments in order to establish revolutionary utopias of a socialist nature. In the 1960s, guerrilla movements were created by leftist intellectuals, student movements, communist party splinter groups and disillusioned military officers. And then there was the overwhelming influence of the Cuban Revolution, whose successful insurgency encouraged revolutionaries in other countries in the region to tread the revolutionary path and transformed young people into left-wing rebels. Exiled refugees—intellectuals, politicians and revolutionaries—escaping from the military regimes of the period were welcomed on the Caribbean island. Until the late 1980s, Cuba trained and supported guerrilla movements in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Guerrilla movements inspired by the Cuban example but with little or no direct support from the island also emerged in Mexico and in other countries.

Furthermore, in the 1970s and 1980s academic and religious ideologies accelerated the process of radicalization. It was the time of dependency theory at universities and liberation theology in churches. Entire generations were influenced by the anti-imperialist arguments of dependency theory and the radical appeal of a new interpretation of the Bible by theologians and priests.

The introduction to this book, which has the aim to analyze the origins, evolution and outcomes of the guerrilla movements in all of the aforementioned countries, addresses more general considerations on the influences and inspiration behind the wave of insurgency in Latin America in the 1960s and its transformation during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The intention is to trace the region's time-honored tradition of revolts, rebellions and revolution, and the use of both regular and irregular warfare, while also attempting to evoke the Zeitgeist, the ideas, beliefs and sentiments of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s—a period marked by worldwide decolonization, armed national liberation movements and insurgency and counterinsurgency wars in Latin America, Asia and Africa. These were the decades not only of the Cold War and the struggle between capitalism and socialism, between the First and Second World, but also of the Non-Aligned Movement (NOAL) in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the so-called Third World that, in the wake of the Cold War, would come to be known as the Global South.

Those decades were also marked by the New Left wave, a cycle of radical mobilization and revolutionary ambitions that transformed the Western Left—albeit in different ways and assuming varied organizational and operational guises—in Europe and the United States. Similarly, it coincided with the wave of independence ('liberation') movements and wars of independence ('liberation') in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean. Accordingly, the idea of one far-reaching revolutionary wave is the central idea of this book.

Between 1959 and the turn of the century, revolutionary organizations defying the established system of power emerged in all of the region's countries. Without judging their successes, failures, achievements or limitations, their coincidence in time indicates that they formed part of a general cycle of mobilization in which the guerrilla organizations in each country were expressions of a Zeitgeist that affected the entire region at the same time; namely, a cycle that, in turn, pertained to the wave of international political violence of the period.

A Tradition of Dictatorship and Rebellion

Rebellions and revolutions have been some of the leitmotifs of Latin American politics throughout its history. Irregular warfare—what is now usually called guerrilla warfare—is a long-standing tradition. The colonial regime established on the continent also contributed its fair share to engendering opposition. The indigenous people fought long and hard against the Spanish conquistadores in Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala and Peru. Following the region's pacification at the end of the sixteenth century, colonial armies and militias waged war against indigenous guerrilla groups attacking Spanish settlements in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay and on the northern frontier of Mexico. Throughout the eighteenth century, Spanish expeditions were sent to the southern borders of Chile and the northern frontiers of Mexico. Several decades before the Independence Wars, the Peruvian Quechua rebel Túpac Amaru II and the Bolivian Aymara insurgent Túpac Katari took up arms against colonial rule and routed the Spaniards, before their indigenous rebel forces were subsequently overpowered by larger counterinsurgency armies.

Revolutions, rebellions and guerrilla and counterinsurgency campaigns were some of the defining traits of post-colonial Latin America, guerrilla and counterinsurgency warfare

continuing into the nineteenth century. In Haiti (the then French colony of Saint-Domingue), black slaves and mulattos, among others, revolted in 1804. After overpowering the forces raised by the plantation owners and declaring their independence, they then went on to defeat a French relief force that had been sent to restore the plantocracy. The last country to achieve independence was Cuba in 1902, nearly a century later and after three consecutive guerrilla wars of national liberation and an invasion by US marines in 1898.

In the main, the Latin American wars of independence were fought by both regular and irregular armies. Some of the region's greatest war heroes were self-styled military commanders and former local or regional militiamen who raised private armies, enlisting foot soldiers from among the poor and the indigenous communities, as did many of their successors. Former military leaders often became warlords and sometimes even heads of state or presidents for life. In Brazil, in addition to the regular army there was a paramilitary force, to wit, the National Guard, in which local bigwigs (*coroneis* in Portuguese) served as commanders. A similar system of local warlords (*caudillos* in Spanish) with quasi-private armies existed in the Spanish-speaking republics. As in Brazil, they were regional military and political bosses who sometimes assumed the presidency or plotted against presidential adversaries. The region's post-colonial states, frequently led by military men turned politicians, were governed by a hybrid political system based on violence and coercion. The military historian Loveman, who has analyzed the regimes of exception in nineteenth-century Latin America, uses the term 'constitutional tyrannies' as the forerunners of the 'constitutional dictatorships' in which the military establishment acted as the 'fourth branch of government' (Loveman 1993, 398–405). They governed societies with deep divides between the elites and the emerging urban middle classes and a vast mass of underprivileged people and indigenous peasants.

Authoritarian rule and widespread poverty and social exclusion brought about unrest, protest and insurgence. Indigenous Mexican guerrilleros rebelled against taxes and exploitation in Yucatan—thus sparking the Caste War (1848–1855). Peruvian General Cáceres launched a three-year guerrilla campaign in which he recruited indigenous peasants to fight against the Chilean occupation force during the Pacific War (1880–1881). During the War of Canudos in the 1890s, a messianic revolt led by destitute settlers in Brazil's poverty-stricken northeastern region was crushed by the army. The Mexican Revolution was the theater of peasant armies and guerrilla fighters under General Zapata. In the late 1920s, General Sandino launched a guerrilla campaign against US marines in Nicaragua. The 'self-defense' guerrilla armies in Colombia during the 1940s can be considered as the precursors of the successive waves of guerrilla warfare affecting the country. And during the Bolivian Revolution of 1952, armed miners and the police trounced the regular army.

World War II was followed by rapid urban development in the region. But this did not alter the persistence of deep-seated social inequalities between the well-heeled urbanites and the urban slum dwellers, mostly first-generation migrants, and the underprivileged living in rural villages and indigenous communities. The memories of far-right rulers and military governments, which had kept the population in line using coercion and repression, and the social divide persisting in most Latin American countries contributed to the insurgency of the armed Left during a period conditioned by Cold War geopolitics, even in apparently modern societies governed by democratically elected presidents. This goes a long way to explaining why the influence of the Cuban Revolution became so widespread, why dependency theory attracted so many followers and why liberation theology radicalized so many believers. It was the cultural wellspring of the emerging 'political-military movements', with militant ideas about 'liberation' and 'social justice', during the decades of the Cold War and in the following years.

The Cuban Revolution and the Latin American Guerrilla

The Cuban Revolution (1959), itself the result of rural and urban guerrilla warfare, radically changed the repertoire of revolutionary action throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristan 2016). According to the historian Hobsbawm (1994, 262),

> No revolution could have been better designed to appeal to the left of the western hemisphere and the developed countries, at the end of a decade of global conservatism; or to give the guerrilla strategy better publicity. The Cuban Revolution had everything: romance, heroism in the mountains, ex-student leaders with the selfless generosity of their youth—the eldest were barely past thirty—a jubilant people. . . . What is more, it could be hailed by all revolutionaries.

Cuba gave voice to generations inspired by anti-imperialism, national liberation and social justice, especially radical middle-class youths still at secondary school or university. It sparked immense enthusiasm among young leftists, young communists and even disenchanted young military officers, but especially among the student movements. Militant leaders were invited to Cuba to attend conferences, public meetings with representatives of other revolutionary movements or private discussions with Cuban officials. Many of them asked for military training and political advice. Except for the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Sendero Luminoso (PCP-SL) in Peru and the Mexican guerrilla movements, the leaders of all of the relevant political-military organizations at the time sought Cuban support or were invited to the island.

As of 1959, the Cuban leadership created an intelligence and liaison agency which, after operating under a number of different names, would eventually be known as the Departamento América.[1] In that sense, Cuba functioned as a catalyst for the entire region, disseminating ideas and repertoires of collective action, strategies and tactics among emerging or existing movements, and setting itself up as a successful example. For many movements, Cuba's model of guerrilla warfare—the rural foco approach as described in the military writings of Che Guevara—served as a paradigm, especially in the 1960s. It supplanted the slow and patient actions of the existing communist and socialist parties by the promise of a historic political and military victory by means of the immediate, resolute and swift action of a handful of committed revolutionaries.

Cuba's influence cannot be underestimated. In the early 1960s, the collective enthusiasm of Cuban society, the easy-going approach of Cuban officials, the intoxicating effects of interviews with the glorious heroes of the rebel army, perhaps even with the iconic Fidel or the fascinating Che, were seductive and long-lasting. Just one of the many examples is a veteran Brazilian guerrilheiro, trained in Cuba in the late 1960s and early 1970s, who recalls how proud he felt to be one of the future leaders at the forefront of his nation:

> He who went to Cuba thought he'd be back as guerrilla comandante . . . . There was an intense mythology about it because the Cubans encouraged the idea to the organizations of Latin America that, when you went there, spent there a period, and endured training, you would return half Che Guevara, half comandante.[2]

While, following his death, Che Guevara attained the status of a civil saint due to his exemplary heroism, abnegation, willpower, self-sacrifice and martyrdom, younger generations of guerrilla leaders travelled to Cuba to consult Fidel Castro on political and military matters. In later years,

Castro, given his age, reputation and experience, was regarded as a revolutionary oracle and visionary strategist. He was a father figure for the Central American guerrilla comandantes, in El Salvador and Guatemala at war, and in Nicaragua in power, and for the future military socialist Hugo Chávez in Venezuela.

Cuba, albeit the most significant, was not the only influential country. Latin American revolutionaries also sought inspiration from Vietnam, China, Algeria (Cuba's first ally on the African continent with which it signed an agreement on mutual support and intelligence sharing in 1963) and Tanzania which, like Algeria, was a sanctuary for African liberation movements during the 1960s. For their part, the early Central American insurgents also cooperated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

The novelty of Cuba was its success and the reasons behind this. The island made five key contributions in this respect. First, it revised Latin America's revolutionary heritage, while rehabilitating political violence as a weapon for social transformation. As already noted, the dominant left-wing (mostly communist) strategy in previous decades did not only involve the use of violence, but also electoral participation whenever the opportunity arose. Violence was temporarily resorted to in insurrectionary cases, like during the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela in February 1958. But not as a structural conception, which would be the defining trait of Cuba's new revolutionary arsenal as of 1959.

Second, the Cuban example (1959) was as powerful for Latin America as the Russian Revolution (1917) had been for Europe: a triumph obtained against overwhelming odds and contrary to the predominant ideas of the Left at the time (the anarchists in 1917 and the communists in 1959). Furthermore, it was a revolution that pursued sweeping social and economic reforms that not only succeeded in taking power, but also managed to retain it as it embraced Marxism-Leninism and resisted fierce US opposition.

Third, the Cuban leadership rapidly supported other revolutionary bids in the region. It was not long before its revolutionary ethos crossed national borders to become a Latin American affair. And since its leadership mainly comprised young middle-class professionals and university students, its example offered the same sectors in other countries of the region an immediate and swift solution, without complex structures or ideological disputes—exactly the opposite of the long-term strategy advocated by the existing communist parties.

Fourth, Cuban influence and the armed path to revolution embodied by the guerrilla were both central to the development of a new leftist political culture in Latin America throughout the 1960s. As Gilman (2003) has shown, the Cuban Revolution had a crucial impact on the transformation of the Latin American intelligentsia. During the 1960s, the quintessential intellectual would be committed to supporting the Cuban Revolution and the guerrilla struggles in Latin America. Thus, the armed struggle would also be legitimized by the support that it received from some of the most eminent Latin American writers and scholars of the period.[3] The guerrilla, revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggle also contributed to transform the universes of poetry, cinema and music throughout the region. Additionally, it had a powerful influence on the restructuring of the religious realm and, in particular, on the emergence of ideas and practices in Catholicism that would be one of the factors behind the advent of a popular church that seconded the social struggles and identified with the objectives of the revolutionary Left. The overall result of these transformations in the political and cultural spheres took the shape, as from the middle of the 1960s, of a 'movement of movements'—the New Left—in which the guerrilla organizations played a central, although not exclusive, role.

This new political culture, which permeated Latin American societies, especially in the major cities, is central to understanding the powerful attraction of its ideas in many regions of the continent until the 1980s. It was the initial breeding ground for those ideas but, although

they represented something much more far-reaching, not all those who were attracted by this culture were driven to take up arms. At the end of the 1960s and notwithstanding the failure of the previous guerrilla experiences, this political culture of the New Left was rapidly expanding.[4] Precisely, its cultural and political vitality, together with the establishment or persistence of authoritarian governments, helps to explain why the Latin American guerrilla wave, far from disappearing, reemerged with force in the Southern Cone, which was where this political culture became most deeply rooted.

Lastly, Cuba offered a coherent and practical revolutionary doctrine for potential adherents. It was a political-ideological reconstruction, justifying the guerrilla warfare in Sierra Maestra, but not the original proposal of those who had embarked on the *Granma*. Its principal ideologue was Ernesto Guevara and his theory was commonly known as foquismo.

The Ideological Framework of the Revolutionary Left

Marxism, Socialism, Communism

The Cuban victory was achieved in an international context marked by the decolonization processes that would convert the Third World into a new and essential political actor and which, basically as from the beginning of the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), contributed to legitimize the armed struggle as a way of bringing about political change. The growing prestige of revolutionary violence among the leftist rank and file ran parallel to the discredit of Soviet communism. Khrushchev's 'secret speech' and the invasion of Hungary in 1956 led to the defection of prominent European intellectuals[5] disillusioned by the course taken by the Soviet Union, which was behaving like an imperial power in its sphere of influence, a communist state that quashed any form of dissidence. The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 contributed even more to tarnish the image of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the new cohorts of young leftist militants, for whom the armed struggles for the liberation of the Third World symbolized the authentic revolutionary path.

The anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, leftist-nationalist, socialist and always revolutionary rhetoric of Cuba's ideology was infused with a post-revolutionary brew of Soviet Marxism. In a public speech before an audience of 1 million people, nearly 18 months after the revolutionary victory and exactly one day before the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, Fidel Castro asked those present if they agreed with his reforms. Of course they did. 'And that is socialism,' he declared to thunderous applause. Only two months before, he had invited a Soviet professor of Spanish descent to a lecture on Marx's *Capital* at the Council of Ministers. Marxism-Leninism had become the island's official ideology after the creation of the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) in October 1965. Yet, Fidel Castro, and afterwards his brother Raúl, always emphasized the 'revolutionary' rather than the Marxist character of the Cuban Revolution. Indeed, Martí, the venerated nineteenth-century Cuban *Pater Patriae*, was invoked in public speeches more often than Marx or Lenin.

In Latin America, Marxist study groups existed on the margins of the region's communist parties and the intelligentsia, making themselves gradually more felt at Latin American universities. By and large, the region's scholars mostly studied European Marxists, while communist party members read Soviet textbooks.

But the Sino-Soviet split led to a bitter rivalry between the two powers over their influence on the communist countries and the Third World as a whole. This caused deep rifts in the majority of Latin America's communist parties. Cuba sided with the Soviet Union, a stance that became even more apparent in the 1970s and 1980s when the country became heavily

dependent on Soviet military, economic and technical aid. In the region, pro-China communist currents separated from their (larger and more influential) pro-Soviet counterparts. While in the 1980s and 1990s, pro-Maoist guerrilla forces appeared in Brazil, Colombia and especially in Peru (Rothwell 2013). Furthermore, Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and its greater reservations about the armed struggle in Latin America after the death of Che Guevara until the end of the 1970s would prompt some of the region's revolutionary organizations to explore the possibility of creating a sort of international guerrilla without the support of the Cuban government. This experiment, however, was short-lived.[6]

This leads us to the ideological disputes raging in new guerrilla organizations in Colombia and Central America. When reflecting on the split between the five constituent movements of the future Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), Sancho, one of the members of the Salvadorian comandancia, concludes, 'We were transformed into sects—political sects. And it was worse, because we were Marxists, . . . even more sectarian than before.'[7] Wheelock, by far the most prolific writer of the nine Nicaraguan senior comandantes, apologetically remarks,

> Our knowledge of Marxism was not very deep—I really don't think it was. In the Frente there were maybe two or three who had read, applied, or knew something about it, remember that the majority of us were students, we had been involved in the struggle since we were 18 or 19 years old . . . . Nobody could go around carrying books.[8]

It can be confidently assumed that for most of the guerrilla comandantes 'socialism' and 'revolution' were two sides of the same coin. On the whole, Marxism formed an integral part of revolutionary theory. Following Lenin, they had adopted the notion that they were an elite vanguard steering the course of national revolutions. Very few had had the opportunity to read the Marxist classics thoroughly. They were revolutionaries at heart and perfectly familiar with injustice, racism and poverty, in view of the exponential growth of urban slums and rural misery during the 1960s and 1970s. In the Andean and Central American countries, members of the Christian-democratic student and youth wings had been influenced by the ideas of Father Roger Vekemans in Chile, who had put forward the notion of 'popular participation' and had begun to assist those living in squalid rural villages or dismal urban slums in order to pave the way for 'pacific revolutions'. This generally resulted in their radicalization (Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristan 2016). Most revolutionary leaders had acquired their knowledge by reading popular literature like Marta Harnecker's *The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism* (1976), which had been the Marxist manual for successive radical student movements in Latin America.

Dependency Theory and Liberation Theology

Another important factor influencing the creation and evolution of the Latin American guerrilla was the rapid growth of the Latin American universities, where students became acquainted with dependency theory and liberation theology. The proportion of the population with higher education rose from 2.5 per cent in 1955 to 4.5 per cent in 1965 and 12.4 per cent in 1975 (Ramírez and Riddle 2012, 95–96). At most Latin American universities, the enrollment rate increased by more than 100 per cent between 1955 and 1965: 467 per cent in Venezuela, 284 per cent in Peru, 234 per cent in Colombia, 221 per cent in Nicaragua, 175 per cent in El Salvador and 161 per cent in Guatemala.[9] New departments were created and campuses were enlarged. Overall, the faculties of humanities and social sciences were the most popular. Just to give an example, at the Universidad de El Salvador (UES) the number of students jumped from 3,000 to

30,000 in a decade and, in 1972, more than half of the student population was enrolled in one of these two faculties (Dunkerley 1988, 353).

Broadly speaking, the region's public universities possessed an exceptional status: they were independent, with the army, police and other security forces being prohibited from entering their campuses without the explicit permission of the academic authorities. Even during the military dictatorships in the Andean and Central American countries, academic autonomy was respected. At the same time, the faculties of humanities, social sciences, law and medicine became highly radicalized in the 1960s and 1970s, and not only those of public universities, but also those of prestigious private Jesuit universities, the alma mater of the brightest students and the scions of the national elite and upper middle classes (Kruijt 2008, 44–48).

In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the academic climate was highly influenced by dependency theory and its intellectual proponents.[10] Its precursor, Raúl Prebisch, the director of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL/ECLAC), formulated a number of influential theses about Latin America's underdevelopment. The region's reliance on exports of primary commodities gave rise to a biased 'structural balance' in international trade. A new Latin American generation of political economists and sociologists placed the accent on studies of the structural factors of 'dependent development'. The dependency theorists (the future Brazilian president Cardoso, Dos Santos, Falletto, Sunkel and Torres-Rivas) studied the economic and political alliances of economic elites, business tycoons, technocrats and the military, plus the collusion of the middle-classes. The continuity of Latin America's 'dependent integration' in the capitalist world economy was seen as the main reason behind the poverty and social exclusion of the urban and rural masses and the perpetual social strife. At Latin American universities, these theses nurtured nationalist-leftist and anti-imperialist views among the emerging student movements.

Moreover, dependency theory became an analytical tool of the Latin American New Left that sought to dissociate itself from obsolete Soviet communism, deemed as bleak, bureaucratic and boring. The crux of the matter was the role of the national bourgeoisie. The region's pro-Moscow communist parties defended the thesis of a possible alliance between 'patriotic and nationalist sectors' and the proletariat and peasantry in order to eliminate the rural landowning oligarchy; in other words, a peaceful transition to socialism. The dependency theorists argued that there was no such thing as a patriotic bourgeoisie, whereby the need for a socialist revolution. Thus, they not only provided the student leaders of the armed Left with anti-imperialist arguments, when analyzing the unbalanced relations with central capitalist states, but also critical ones underscoring the need for revolutionary violence (Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristan 2018).

Anticipated by the worker-priest and -nun movement in Western Europe, France and Spain in the 1950s, liberation theology, which was destined to have an even greater influence,[11] dominated the debates in Catholic seminaries and theological faculties—in which Protestant and Evangelical theologians also participated—where the contributions of Gutiérrez, Boff, Sobrino and Ellacuría, the current's founding theologians, were discussed. In 1968, the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano organized a conference in Medellín (Colombia), at which it officially recommended support for 'Christian (Catholic) base communities' and endorsed the principles of liberation theology.

As a rule, most Latin American adherents were convinced that the Church had a duty to promote social change and ally itself with the working classes and the indigenous communities. From Mexico to Chile, theologians and parish priests interpreted the Bible to the benefit of the exploited, the underprivileged and the poor, as well as the victims of persecution and injustice. Their influence was felt above all in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico,

Peru and Uruguay—and even more so in Central America. They placed emphasis on the moral relationship between religious ethics and political activism for the benefit of the poor and the exploited. Radical Spanish, Chilean, Peruvian, Colombian and Central American theologians drew inspiration from the Bible and the writings of the 'young Marx', alike. Militants compared the murdered Che Guevara or the fallen guerrilla priest Camilo Torres with Christ crucified. Some of them joined trade unions or rural or indigenous associations, while others sided with the guerrilla movements.

But what really engaged large sectors of the population were the Christian base communities, namely small Christian Bible reading groups led by lay people in urban slums and rural villages. These base communities were made up of 20 to 30 people who discussed the Scriptures and their relation to current social and political issues. In those countries where organizing the destitute, the peasantry and the slum dwellers was forbidden, the base communities were the breeding ground for clandestine trade unions and peasant associations. It is no wonder that they served to attract sympathizers and to recruit new blood for the insurgent movements. In the Andean and Central American countries, university students had their own theological reflection workshops. Gutierrez organized them in Peru, while the brothers Fernando and Ernesto Cardenal created similar study groups in Nicaragua, from where many of the future Sandinista guerrilla leaders would be recruited.

The Revolutionary Cycle

The central idea around which this book revolves is that the mobilization and guerrilla experiences in Latin America from 1959 to 1996 were part of the same cycle of radicalization resulting from a similar worldview and a shared repertoire and methodology of action. They all had a common ideological framework. Their leaders, combatants, militants and sympathizers started from the premise that the political, economic and social transformation of Latin American societies would only be possible through the use of political violence, rather than via the ballot box. Ideas deriving from Marxism, dependency theory, liberation theology and third worldism were amalgamated in that framework and then supplemented by a political-military organizational model (first employing the foco approach and then through political-military organizations that were supposed to represent the armed wings of a broader popular movement) and a new repertoire of action that as of 1959 was adopted throughout the continent.

This cycle corresponds to the 'wave' concept proposed by Rapoport (2004), namely, a cycle of activity during a certain period with several phases characterized by the ebb and flow of armed activity. It had an international character, insofar as similar courses of action were taken in different countries driven by the same spirit, to wit, a shared, transnational ideological framework prompting action. This framework defined its actors and fostered relations between them based on a vague idea of shared community because they were regarded as forming part of the same mobilization, beyond their possible differences of opinion on strategic and tactical matters.

In the main, such a wave is usually triggered by an internationally relevant issue that encourages the creation of organizations that strategically opt for political violence. These prominent organizations have, in turn, their own life cycle, which usually—albeit with exceptions—tends to be shorter than that of the wave itself. Additionally, whether or not groups with more remote origins adapt to the cycle or survive beyond its completion sometimes depends on local factors. The wave remains active as long as its momentum has the capacity to generate new groups and declines when its core ideas no longer attract new adherents.

The catalyst of the New Left cycle was the Cuban Revolution. It provided the core ideas that subsequently evolved into a common ideological framework, as well as the organizational

model and the repertoire of action. As already noted, Latin America's history has been riddled with insurgencies, rebellions and revolutions. In that sense, Cuba was no exception. The island's revolutionaries resorted to a course of action that had often been used by political opponents to oust dictators: an invasion force of exiles who then attempted to trigger an armed insurrection.

The prime movers of the wave of the New Left in Latin America beginning in 1959 were the new guerrilla organizations. Unlike other 'New Lefts' in Europe and the United States, whose plans did not envisage the use of political violence, this was a fundamental issue in Latin America. In the 1960s and throughout the following three decades, to be a revolutionary was tantamount to being a guerrillero. As previously observed, the New Left in Latin America can be understood as a 'movement of movements'[12] that did not only involve armed organizations, but also a diverse constellation of alternative cultural and artistic movements appearing in the region during the 1960s. Despite their heterogeneity, the objective pursued by these movements was to bring about a sweeping change in social, economic and political relations and, to this end, they often advocated for the use of political violence—and its embodiment in the guerrilla—as the best means of achieving that aim.

This guerrilla wave was a cycle of activity in a given period (1959–1996), with phases of expansion and contraction and following a similar modus operandi in different countries, in which the prime movers roughly shared the same ideological beliefs and opted for similar strategies and repertoires. Most of the organizations that emerged in this cycle disappeared before its conclusion. The few, but important, exceptions will be addressed in Part 4 of this book.

The cycle was brought to a close with the signing of the last peace accords in Central America—in El Salvador (1992) and Guatemala (1996). Thenceforth, the driving force behind the guerrilla organizations since the 1960s petered out, with no new organizations being created. The vindications of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) in 1994 were more regional and partial than global and maximalist, or aimed at establishing a socialist society. The continued presence (at the time of writing this in August 2019) of substantial guerrilla forces in Peru and Colombia is nothing but the long local aftermath.

Ripples in the Waves[13]

In the historiography on guerrilla movements in Latin America—with a very local and commemorative nature until not long ago and only recently more analytical and academic—there is still no consensus on the internal dynamics of the cycle. Among the authors who have addressed it from a general perspective, the definition of what was or what was not a guerrilla, the characterization of their possible phases and the case studies used as benchmarks for their analyses have been heterogeneous.[14] Our analysis of the cycle, based on recent robust empirical research, is not only an interpretation of the Latin American guerrilla but also of its dynamics.

The existence of phases of expansion and contraction in all cycles of contemporary political violence evince their complexity and the multiplicity of their actors and experiences. Guerrilla activity did not occur in all the region's countries simultaneously or during the whole cycle. In some countries, it was just a moment. In others, it was only one phase that generally ended in the defeat of the organizations involved (except for the success achieved in Nicaragua in 1979). In yet others, there were different phases that had to do with their capacity to rebuild themselves years after their first defeats or the ideological framework of the wave was such that it generated new movements after the debacle of their precursors.

Most authors contend that the cycle had three 'waves'. Although we are of the same mind, our characterization of those waves is different. This has usually been tackled in a generic and rather non-analytical fashion, without really taking into account the particularities of the

groups making up each one. The first wave, from Castro's successful campaign to the death of Guevara in Bolivia in 1967 is usually described as that of the rural guerrilla foquismo thus replicating the Cuban experience. The second, between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, as that of the urban guerrillas of the Southern Cone.[15] And the third, from the early 1970s onwards, as that of the political-military organizations in Central America and the Andean countries (primarily in Colombia and Peru). Indeed, the revolutionary strategy of each group has been used here as a selection criterion.

Although this logic is not flawed in general terms, it lacks solid grounds that justify the inclusion of each case and, at the same time, enable us to understand the process in its full complexity. This is how we see it: the existence of a revolutionary wave defined chronologically and by its key aspects; the consideration of all groups as belonging to a wave regardless of their strategies; and the use of the truly explanatory variables described earlier.

We have focused on two key aspects to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the cycle: the relationship (political and temporal distance) with its catalyst; and the influence of national contexts on the decisions of those who initiated it. The first of these aspects implies that the revolutionary groups adopted one of the following three (main) positions when defining their strategy.

Rational Imitation

Following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, leaders with similar expectations observed and interpreted what had happened before attempting to replicate it. There were two different contexts that had a bearing on subsequent developments. First, those who had already toyed with the idea of overthrowing a dictatorship, or had even tried to do so, before the fall of the Cuban dictator Batista. Considering that the time was ripe, they now reactivated their plans, but resorted to repertoires of action that, instead of being modelled on the Cuban experience, replicated those that had been historically employed in similar situations. This happened at the beginning of the cycle (1959–1960) in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Paraguay, for example. Second, others, including some who had already trodden the well-worn path of insurgency, started to imitate a model that after 1961 began to be exported as a foolproof operational strategy: the foquismo. That happened in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua, as well as in Argentina, Bolivia (Guevara), Peru and, albeit in a more complex way, in Venezuela, in a second stage.

Rational Adaptation

After the failure of the first revolutionary initiatives, especially those that had adopted the Guevarist foquismo, new leaders rationally adapted the previous ideas to the conditions prevailing in their countries. They did not radically abandon the foquismo, but reinterpreted it. This is how the urban guerrilla organizations emerged in the Southern Cone: in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and, with certain particularities, Chile.

Rational Learning

Undoubtedly, as Rapoport and Wickham-Crowley have already noted, accumulated knowledge was transmitted both between the waves and during them, i.e. between their different moments of activity. In the 1970s, old and new leaders alike had learned important lessons from the defeats suffered in the previous decade, thus allowing them to redesign their strategies that

now had little or nothing to do with the foquismo or its different versions. The experiences of Vietnam and China were also vital for reworking those strategies during the 1970s.

On the other hand, national factors carried a lot of weight in the decisions made by the leaders of the insurgency and, as a matter of fact, are the only ones that explain why they decided to take up arms when they did. If the relationship with the country (Cuba) sparking that revolutionary activity allows us to understand the key aspects in their strategic decision-making, the national factors shed light on when the mobilization occurred and the shape that it subsequently took. In other words, there were key drivers of action in each country, which will have to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis to determine not only when the mobilization began, but also the influence of political legacies and the experiences of the previous mobilization. This brings us back to the first attempts to overthrow dictators in 1959 (in Paraguay and Nicaragua, among others), to the military uprising in Guatemala in November 1960 and to the mobilizations in the Southern Cone in the mid-1960s, to name but a few.

The arguments we have briefly described form the backbone of this book. As could not be otherwise, our analysis begins with the case of Cuba, the trigger country. The other country chapters are divided into four parts that roughly pertain to the three situations of imitation, adaptation and learning. These undoubtedly coincide with the standard interpretations of the stages of the revolutionary mobilization in Latin America.

The difference lies in the selection of the cases. Although not all are included, we are convinced that we have covered all the important ones, also with respect to the evolution of the revolutionary cycle as a whole. The book's four parts containing the country chapters are preceded by a brief introduction that explains why the countries in question have been included in the same group and offers an overview of the timing and idiosyncrasies of the particular waves within the revolutionary cycle as a whole.

The fourth and last part of this book addresses the four relevant 'deviant cases'. Needless to say, the three countries analyzed form part of the cycle (along with Cuba, Colombia is the country with the longest guerrilla tradition). What makes the process different from the previous ones is that the national dimension is fundamental to understanding the whys and wherefores of the waves of mobilization and their different phases. The early Colombian guerrilla preceded the Cuban insurgency against Batista; the fundamental reasons of the conflict are still unresolved. Many years passed before the FARC and Cuba established contact, but the second guerrilla movement, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), was deeply influenced by the island, like most of the other guerrilla movements in Colombia. In the second guerrilla wave in Peru, a guerrilla Fremdkörper appeared, Sendero Luminoso. This movement's pronounced local idiosyncrasies may even lead some to question whether it had any place in the revolutionary cycle at all. But its beginnings as a rural foco, its early popularity among the Quechua people, the terror that it unleashed, the horrific counterinsurgency campaign, and the number of victims (the third highest after those of Colombia and Guatemala) clearly justify its incorporation in this book. The fourth case deals with the transnational relations between four national guerrilla movements, which were crucial at certain moments of the revolutionary cycle, a largely unknown aspect that has received little attention to date.

Organizational Forms and Militant Profiles

Characteristics

This book will see the light of day long after the pioneering scholars in the field—Gott (1971), Lamberg (1972), Pereyra (1994) and especially Wickham-Crowley (1991, 1992, 2014)—published

their own works. These scholars contributed conceptually and empirically to understand the way in which the Latin American insurgency movements arose and evolved. Strangely enough, besides these seminal studies, comparative reviews of the Latin American and Caribbean guerrilla movements—some of which have been written by the editors or authors of this book—are still relatively thin on the ground.[16] Indeed, most of the literature published over the past 20 years are monographs or testimonial narratives dealing with one single movement.[17]

Meanwhile, many Latin American government archives have been opened and oral history sources documented. Nonetheless, over the past few decades, for the authors of this book it has been more productive to perform systematic interviews with those main actors who are still alive or to consult previously unknown written and oral sources and public and private testimonial literature.

The endeavor of 18 European, American and Latin American authors who in their new and empirically sound country case studies—most of which are based on primary sources—reflect on the state of the art from historical, sociological and ethnographic perspectives, this book is the first academic analytical study in English to cover the history of the Latin and Central American guerrilla movements from the late 1950s to the present day. In their contributions, they describe some of the common traits of most of the political-military movements, while the final chapter takes stock of the legacy of the Latin American guerrilla as a whole.

Names and Terms

While the indignity of injustice and poverty and anti-imperialist, nationalist and radical Catholic sentiments were all common ingredients of the revolutionary cocktail downed by the recruits, grassroots militants and comandantes of the different political-military organizations, the names given to these insurgent movements drew from nationalist-leftist symbols and the iconic names of liberators, illustrious politicians, famous revolutionaries, fallen heroes and martyrs, including Bolivar, Martí, Sandino, Farabundo Martí, Perón and, later on, Che Guevara and Camilo Torres. The terminology employed was a sort of mission statement: 'movimiento' referred to organizational aspects; 'ejército', 'exército' or army, 'frente' or front, and 'column' and 'platoon' to military ones; 'national' and 'revolutionary' to political objectives; and 'liberation' to the anti-dictatorial or anti-imperialist struggle. And as to noms de guerre and pseudonyms, there was a preference for the names of biblical characters and historical revolutionaries. After returning to civilian life, many former combatants used, and still use, their former noms de guerre or ranks in private, among friends or even in public.

Organizations

These organizations occasionally merged, but frequently suffered schisms shortly after being created. Over the years, most of them united under larger umbrella organizations with a joint command structure. But, at times, they were at daggers drawn. In Colombia, more than 30 guerrilla groups emerged, matured and created coordinating committees which also had their fair share of disputes. Until the late 1970s, however, these umbrella organizations or international guerrilla alliances did not really exist, the links between the different groups being of an informal and circumstantial nature. And as to the Nicaraguan (1979), Salvadoran (1982) and Guatemalan (1982) guerrilla forces, their final unitary structures were brokered by the Cubans in Panama or their embassy in Mexico.

Ranks

All (former) guerrilla members are and were combatientes (combatants). Most rebel organizations adopted the guerrilla officer ranks of the Cuban rebel army, the name of the rural guerrilla during the insurgency period before 1 January 1959: second and first lieutenants, second and first captains, and comandante (the equivalent of 'major' in the Cuban army and 'lieutenant colonel' in the Peruvian and Venezuelan armed forces). Senior comandantes were called comandantes de la revolución and created a comandancia general whenever a unified guerrilla command was required. Field commanders of a guerrilla frente, a regional combat unit, were comandantes guerrilleros. Captains and lieutenants led guerrilla platoons, several of which formed a frente.

Recruitment

Local guerrilla fighters and young comandantes were recruited mostly from universities and secondary schools, plus the youth organizations of political parties. However, others were members of communist and socialist youth organizations, lay members of base communities and sometimes nuns and priests, low-ranking officers or soldiers in the regular army or young men and women from the slums, villages and indigenous communities. In Central America, combatants were also recruited from refugee camps. The longer these political-military organizations existed, the younger their recruits were, for as the death toll was fairly high, there was a continuous influx of young cadres.

Gender Equality

Machismo also played a role. A couple of months before the final victory in Cuba (1 January 1959), the 1,000 guerrilla fighters in the Sierra Maestra included around 300 women. However, only a very small all-female platoon was created in September 1958.[18] In the Cuban guerrilla, women were not usually involved in the fighting, but in the urban insurgency cells there were indeed a number of female leaders. For many years, the new Cuban army was an all-male affair, as was the Departamento América, the intelligence and liaison agency for all Latin American and Caribbean revolutionary and liberation movements. As to Latin and Central America, 20 per cent of the 800 members of the Brazilian guerrilha were female, while in the Mexican guerrilla in the 1970s they accounted for 25 per cent of the total (see the chapters on Brazil and Mexico). The proportion of female guerrilla fighters in the Salvadorian FMLN varied from 10 to 20 per cent, while, in contrast, 40 per cent of the urban guerrillas were women. Between 30 and 40 per cent of the Nicaraguan Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional's (FSLN) combatants were women, with female comandantes taking the second and third cities in war against the National Guard. But following the victory in 1979, they were prevented from occupying key positions in the armed forces or the government. On the whole, the ideology of the guerrilla placed much more emphasis on class and ethnic inequality than on gender equality.

The Urban and Rural Guerrillas

Che Guevara became world famous as a revolutionary theorist and for his ideas about the rural guerrilla (foquismo). In point of fact, his writings basically reflect his and Fidel Castro's experiences during the successful but short guerrilla campaign in the Sierra Maestra during the Cuban Revolution. These ideas were discussed and implemented by many revolutionary movements in the region, especially in the 1960s. Nonetheless, Guevara's defeat and death in

Bolivia and the failure of the foquismo, of which he had been the key theorist, opened an internal debate in Cuba, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala and Nicaragua. In everyday practice, there was normally a kind of mixture of rural and urban guerrilla warfare. Brazilian guerrilla leader Carlos Marighella (2002 [1969]) published an influential short manual on the urban guerrilla.[19] In some countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Colombia, some of the guerrilla movements were primarily urban. Only on one occasion would a political-military movement with a particularly strong urban military force, i.e. the Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua at the end of the 1970s, be victorious. The Nicaraguan Sandinistas, especially Humberto Ortega, had examined KOMINTERN and anarchist manuals on urban insurgency in Cuba.

The pros and cons of rural and urban guerrilla warfare and the sympathy that the rural population purportedly felt for the insurgents overlook the fact that both the army and the paramilitary groups also recruited from rural and ethnic communities. As a matter of fact, the guerrilla and the counterinsurgency, the army and the security forces, and the paramilitary groups all targeted the same sectors to swell their ranks: the poor, the underprivileged and the socially excluded.

Notes

1. See Kruijt (2017a, 84–91) and Chapter 2 of this book.
2. Segundo Domingos Fernandes, a trainee of the IV Exército, quoted in Rollemberg (2001, 38).
3. Including the most prominent Latin American literary figures, such as Julio Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez. Their stances changed at the beginning of the 1970s and, above all, following the 'Padilla case'.
4. Some symbolic works and documents of leftist culture of the period appeared at the end of the 1960s. For instance, the manifesto, 'Hacia un Tercer Cine [Towards a Third Cinema]', was published in the journal *Tricontinental* in October 1969; the film *The Hour of the Furnaces*, a key element of this same current, had been produced the year before; and the International Protest Song Meeting, sponsored by the Casa de las Américas, was organized in Havana in 1967, marking the symbolic emergence of the new Latin American song on the continent.
5. Including E. P. Thompson, Christopher Hill, John Saville, Victor Kiernan and Rodney Hilton in the United Kingdom, and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Maxime Rodinson and Henri Lefevbre in France.
6. The initiative was taken by Douglas Bravo's Partido de la Revolución Venezolana (PRV), which sought to create an autonomous guerrilla movement with a continental scope and far removed from the foquismo. At the beginning of the 1970s, the Salvadoran Partido de la Revolución Salvadoreña-Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (PRS-ERP) and the Guatemalan Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR) would both follow suit. Its particular scope, beyond a number of specific agreements with which everyone is familiar, has yet to be researched.
7. Dirk Kruijt's interview with Eduardo Sancho (San Salvador, 23 Aug. 2005).
8. Dirk Kruijt's interview with Jaime Wheelock (Managua, 9 May 2006).
9. Statistics included in Wickham-Crowley (1992, 47).
10. See Kay (1989), Sánchez (2003).
11. See Löwy (1996), Noble (2013).
12. As regards this characterization, we have sought inspiration from the proposal put forward by Zolov (2008), who in turn took a leaf out of Van Gosse's book to define the sheer diversity of organizations, collectives and protest movements evolving during the 'Long Sixties' in the United States.
13. Borrowed from Sageman (2011).
14. For an analysis, see Bartoletti (2011), and for a deeper reflection, Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristan (2012).
15. Wickham-Crowley (1992), whose analysis is still the most exhaustive, dismisses this wave insofar as he considers that urban guerrillas cannot be regarded as guerrilleros in the strictly operational and military sense of the word; for a debate on this interpretation, see Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristan (2012).
16. See Bataillon (2003), Kruijt (2008), Torres-Rivas (2011), Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristan (2016), Marchesi (2018).
17. For a historiographical analysis, see Oikión Solano, Rey Tristán and López Ávalos (2014).
18. On Cuba, see Kruijt (2017a, 51); on El Salvador, see Kampwirth (2002, 149–153); on Nicaragua, see Luciak (2001, 351).
19. See also the fine biography by Magalhães (2012).

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2

CUBA AND THE LATIN AMERICAN LEFT

Dirk Kruijt

Introduction[1]

In 1993, long after Che Guevara's death and the misfortune befalling the Latin American guerrilla movements that he had supported in the 1960s, Fidel Castro reflected on the conditions determining the success or failure of revolutionary movements. After Colombian President Pastrana and Marulanda, the leader of the FARC, had requested Cuba's mediation, Castro sent a fact-finding mission to the demilitarized zone of Caguán that Pastrana had conceded to the FARC. On its return, Castro held a long nocturnal debriefing session with its members:

> he reflected on the hypothesis of a military triumph: How to consolidate power? And he asked: 'Is there nation-wide support? Is there a strong political movement behind the military operations? Is there a successful alliance with other political parties and movements? Is there an ongoing dialogue with entrepreneurial sectors and the military?' And he answered his own questions: 'If you don't have broad popular support, a political alliance with other national progressive sectors and a certain international support, it will be very difficult to form a sustainable government that can maintain power.[2]

Here, in fact, he summarized the core elements of his own guerrilla campaign in the late 1950s in a military but even more political sense. Guerrilla movements had emerged in nearly all Latin American countries. Between 1959 and the late 1980s, practically all politico-military movements drew inspiration from the Cuban insurgency. In most cases that influence was indirect, through political and military advice and training, logistics, medical care, access to the mass media, and rest and relaxation on the island. Cuba also attempted to encourage or spark similar revolutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Africa.

This small country, with a population of 7 million in 1959 and 11.5 million in 2019, has played a surprisingly prominent role in the world. Thus, the central idea of this chapter is to explain how this was possible, starting with a short review of the Cuban insurgency, followed by other sections offering a more specific assessment of the island's role in the Latin American Left.

Revolutionary Fervor

Castro's rural guerrilla campaign (December 1956–January 1959) was backed by the urban insurgency, which also established a civilian support network for announcing protests, strikes and stops, and providing legal advice and services. Besides the influential Federación Estudiantil Universitaria, in which a number of resistance cells were led by the Directorio Revolucionario, the trade unions and labor organizations also opposed the regime.[3] Castro's movement cleverly used the national and international press, with networks of exile organizations emerging in the United States, Mexico, Venezuela and other countries. Internal financial support was also obtained by selling *bonos* (sympathy vouchers) in denominations from Cub$1 to 20. Furthermore, when several army and navy uprisings seriously undermined Batista's military capability, he ordered that large army detachments be sent to crush the guerrillas. But when these counterinsurgency measures failed, the latter took the initiative. Then, in the last months of Castro's campaign, Cuba's larger sugar enterprises and industrial and trading companies began to pay 'war taxes'.

After January 1959, a new revolutionary aristocracy emerged from among the combatants of the rebel army (the former rural guerrilla) and other insurgents in the island's urban areas. Many of the young revolutionaries rose to positions of great responsibility in the armed forces (the FAR in Spanish), the government and the public sector. Yet, the revolutionary leaders Fidel and Raúl Castro and Che Guevara continued to appear in guerrilla uniform, professing to be 'revolutionaries' and 'anti-imperialists'. Guerrilla rhetoric prevailed during the terms of office of Fidel and Raúl Castro and 'Marxism' was gradually substituted by 'socialism'.[4]

'Revolutionary internationalism' erupted a couple of months after January 1959. During the 1960s, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were convinced of the possibility of replicating the Cuban Revolution in other countries by training and assisting guerrilla movements, based on the rural guerrilla focos. 'We were absolutely convinced that we had discovered an infallible method to free the people,' a close aide of Che Guevara's told Piero Gleijeses,[5] author of a brilliant book on Cuba's role in Africa. The desire to liberate other Latin American and African countries was a consequence of their revolutionary ethos. In retrospect, one cannot deny a certain hubris of the triumphant young insurgency leaders.

In terms of foreign policy, Cuba had to deal with two main concerns: to counter the military and political power of the United States whose growing enmity was now plainly visible; and to forge economic and political ties with new allies. At the same time, this involved creating an army, opening formal and informal diplomatic channels, establishing a financial support structure substituting the island's dependency on the US economy, and developing an internal security system and a foreign intelligence service.

The creation of a strong army and popular militias, now with plenty of Soviet support, was a necessity given the aggressive policy implemented by United States, culminating in the failed invasion of the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and its imposition of a commercial, financial and economic embargo on Cuba in 1962, in the wake of the Missile Crisis. Moreover, the island was placed in diplomatic quarantine. This led to the suspension of its membership of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1962, under strong pressure from the United States. Eventually, all Latin American countries followed suit, except for Mexico.[6] Cuba countered this by training young cadres, recruited from the insurgency, for its diplomatic corps, becoming a leading light in the NOAL, as a counterbalance to its political enemies. Raúl Roa and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, two respected ministers of foreign affairs (MINREX), devised its policy, but Fidel Castro always had the last word. Whatever influence the Soviet Union had, Castro maintained a relatively independent course with respect to Latin America and the Caribbean and was never a Soviet 'yes-man'.[7]

Cuba's security and intelligence apparatus—successively known as the Departamento de Investigaciones del Ejército Rebelde (1959) whose foreign intelligence branch was called 'M', the Viceministerio Técnico (1961) and the Dirección General de Liberación Nacional (1971)—led by Manuel Piñeiro until 1992, was placed under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT), which monitored the liaison structures with the armed Left and, in the main, the political situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 1975, its name was changed yet again to the Departamento América, now under the jurisdiction of the Central Committee of the PCC. Yet, it was no secret that it served as the 'eyes and ears of Fidel Castro', as the link to guerrilla forces, social movements, political parties and 'matters and persons of interest'. Operational instruction was provided by the special forces who remained under the control of the MININT and had their own training camps.

Piñeiro had his feelers in other Cuban organizations and institutions: the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, the other institutions coordinated by the MININT, MINREX and the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP). He also had personal ties with Fidel which meant that he could align with all the party and state institutions. But his network was much larger: Cuba's academic and research institutions, youth organizations, labor unions, the women's federation, the journalists' union, the writer's union, the mass media, and the medical and other types of missions that were sent abroad, before ultimately returning to Cuba. Then there were the numerous '*amigos de Cuba*': visitors, journalists, politicians and researchers interested in the Cuban Revolution. And, of course, the many guerrilla leaders who travelled to the island for consultation, training, medical treatment or relaxation.

Cuba's support was common knowledge, insofar as it had no qualms about trumpeting this loud and clear to the rest of the world in the multitudinous assemblies at which the First and Second Declaration of Havana (1960, 1962) were adopted. In January 1966, Cuba organized the First Tricontinental Conference, an international meeting of solidarity with the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America, at which delegates from 82 countries discussed strategies to combat 'imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism'. At the conference, where Che Guevara's message about the creation of two, three . . . many Vietnams' was read to the delegates, the creation of both the Organización de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de Asia, África y América Latina (OSPAAAL) and the Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad (OLAS) was announced.

In the 1960s, Cuba trained and backed individual guerilla movements in at least 14 Latin American countries. But everywhere in the Caribbean and Latin America, regular armies, police detachments and paramilitary units ultimately succeeded in defeating, or at least isolating, all of the guerilla movements existing at the time, generally after barbaric counterinsurgency campaigns. The tipping point was Che Guevara's campaign in Bolivia that ended in his capture and murder. While Guevara had promoted 'one, two, three Vietnams', the United States and the region's military dictatorships had successfully prevented two or three other Cubas. It was the only Cuban operation in Latin America in which, initially, most of the guerrilleros were Cuban rather than locals, and his death caused a shock in Cuba.

Pragmatic Cuba

Transforming a middle-class economy (with huge pockets of poverty and misery) into a sustainable socialist one takes time and experience. After some five years of relatively icy relations with the Soviet Union, in the early 1970s the Cuban leadership finally realized that they had to realign with the communist superpower. In 1972, Castro embarked on his long 'trip to Canossa', beginning in Africa and ending in Moscow, with Cuba becoming a member of the COMECON that same year. The Soviet Union's monitoring of Cuba's ideological rectitude

was undeniable given the massive presence of its experts on the island, their number increasing from 1,000 in the early 1960s to 6,000 by 1975. Half of them were military specialists, while the remaining half assisted in the island's economic and technological transformation—Cuba's economy becoming highly dependent on Soviet assistance; and specialist education—until the late 1980s, all of the faculties of the Universidad de La Habana had a Russian adviser. For their part, the Cuban military were on the best of terms with their Soviet counterparts. All senior officers received training in Moscow or Leningrad, the armed forces were modernized along Soviet lines and a program was launched to reequip it with the most sophisticated weaponry and military technology available at the time.[8]

Cuba built up a formidable army that sometimes combined regular and irregular units. By the end of the 1970s, i.e. at the peak of its expansion during its African campaigns, its armed forces had strength of between 470,000 and 510,000 personnel. Most of Cuba's military muscle was displayed in Africa.[9] Back in the 1960s, the Cuban leadership had already deployed troops in Algeria, Syria, Congo-Brazzaville and the Congo (Zaire). But the island's most noteworthy involvement was in Southern Africa, sending 380,000 soldiers, along with 70,000 civilian technicians and volunteers, to Angola.[10] In short, Cuba maintained a military presence in Algeria, the Congo, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, in addition to sending civilian 'internationalists' to at least another ten African countries.

In Latin America, Cuba continued to support guerilla movements opposing military dictatorships. Previously, in the 1960s, Cuba had trained all individual guerilla movements separately, even when they were from the same country or region, as was the case with Argentina, Central America, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. But now it explicitly tried to create political-military umbrella organizations: in Argentina, where its diplomats attempted to mediate between the Montoneros and the Trotskyist-Guevarist Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP); doing their utmost in post-Allende Chile to unify the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) and the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR); and assisting the Colombian Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar (CGSB, 1987–1990). In the case of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, Cuba made a decisive contribution to the unification of the national umbrella organizations of the different politico-military guerrilla movements.[11]

The 1970s and 1980s were times of dependency theory and liberation theology. Students and radicalizing Catholics alike were attracted by the anti-imperialist discourse of dependency theorists, while liberation theology had an even greater influence on the hearts and minds of large segments of the population. The influence of this new theology on the center-left and far-left groups of revolutionary movements, both established and new, is undeniable. The martyrs of the revolution, Che Guevara and the Colombian ELN priest Camilo Torres, both became revolutionary and moral icons. Archbishop Romero and other Jesuit priests killed in San Salvador were also given their place in the pantheon of Latin American revolutionary heroes and martyrs.

In the context of dependency theory and liberation theology, Cuba began to take stock of new actors and organizations in Latin America, with the ICAP identifying others beyond the traditional 'revolutionaries'. The time had come to pay greater attention to the world's nationalist-leftist regimes and movements:

> We realized that by being more open-minded and using a more delicate tone, we penetrated sectors to which we otherwise would never have gotten access. That is what we called 'popular diplomacy', going beyond the sectors we traditionally reached, the so-called revolutionary sectors.[12]

The ICAP also created 'visiting brigades' formed by Latin American, American and European sympathizers.

In the 1960s, the United States had placed Cuba in diplomatic quarantine in the region, but by the early 1970s the superpower's efforts in this regard had begun to lose steam. Progressive governments came to power in some countries, coinciding with Cuba's shift towards a more pragmatic diplomacy, creating alliances not only with the armed Left but also with other nationalist-reformist forces. In the 1970s, many of Cuba's political alliances with leftist movements were based on the personal friendships that Fidel Castro had struck up with their leaders—e.g. those of Jamaica, Granada, Guyana and Surinam in the Caribbean. He was also on close terms with the Chilean president Allende, the Panamanian leader General Torrijos and the political team of the Peruvian president General Velasco. He also chose Cuban diplomats with whom these leaders would probably sympathize, thus allowing them to become 'friends of the president' even before the establishment of formal bilateral relations.

Cuba managed to resume diplomatic relations with practically all Latin American countries. Once this had been achieved, it ceased to offer the armed Left direct support. This was especially the case in Mexico, Cuba's diplomatic lifeline, where diplomats and visiting officials representing the Departamento América had to explain to all the insurgent groups there that Cuba could no longer be of assistance to them. Similarly, in Colombia Cuban representatives had to point out that 'Cuba, given the new circumstances, could not continue supporting [them] like in the previous years.'[13] Cuba's pragmatism also influenced its relationship with the Argentine guerrilla movements during the dictatorship.

Soft Power Diplomacy

When the Cold War came to an end, the United States was the only remaining military superpower in the world. The consequences for Cuba were disastrous, insofar as it had become highly dependent on financial and military support from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries which for decades had generously supported the island with credits, soft loans and export subsidies. Although not a member of the Warsaw Pact, Cuba's military standing had benefitted greatly from special training and the supply of equipment and spare parts under very favorable conditions. In an attempt to re-dimension its armed forces, military service was reduced from three to two years, its personnel was officially halved—the cuts were probably more drastic, reducing its previous strength by two-thirds or more—as was its budget (Klepak 2018, 26-ff.). In the late 1980s, Cuba was still supporting the Central American guerrillas in El Salvador, Guatemala and the victorious, post-guerrilla Sandinista government in Nicaragua. But, in 1990, it was forced to withdraw its overseas military presence, with the last troops departing from Africa in 1991.

Cuba's financial and military predicaments also prevented it from lending further support to the remaining guerrilla movements. In the late 1980s, when Carlos Pizarro, the leader of the Colombian guerrilla movement Movimiento 19 de Abril (M19), asked Cuba for support, Fidel Castro made it quite clear that he had been left little room for maneuver:

> The M19 never succeeded in self-financing itself. During those years, the sources of foreign aid dried up and the acquisition of new weapons and equipment was complicated for them. At that moment, Comandante Carlos Pizarro came to Cuba to ask for help. [But by then] Cuba's austerity period, the Special Period, had begun. Fidel told him that he should pursue a negotiated political solution. In his view, at that moment there were very few possibilities for a political-military organization to come to power by force of arms, as had [once] happened in Cuba and Nicaragua.[14]

Notwithstanding this, Cuba strove to influence Latin America's political agenda by other means. As from the 1990s, soft power diplomacy became priority number one. This took the shape of new strategic alliances and humanitarian missions, including medical brigades and literacy campaigns, mediating in peace negotiations in Central America and Colombia, and advocating for new Latin American consultation structures during the region's Pink Tide governments. In most of these undertakings, Castro was assisted by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, who swiftly went from being his revolutionary alumnus to being his revolutionary colleague, supporter and financier.

Medical Assistance

According to MINREX statistics, between 1959 and 2011, around 156,000 Cuban civilians worked as 'internationalists' worldwide: 81,000 in Africa, 47,000 in the Americas and 10,000 in the Middle East.[15] During Raúl Castro's term of office (2006–present) this number has increased and other medical initiatives (medical training for foreigners, for example) have been implemented.[16] In 2016, the countries benefitting most from Cuban medical aid in Latin America were Venezuela (with 28,351 medical personnel), Brazil (10,994), Bolivia (721), Ecuador (567), Guatemala (415) and Guyana (181); and in Africa, South Africa (9,344), Angola (1,712), Mozambique (303), Guinea Bissau (221), Namibia (125) and Gambia (113).

Literacy Campaigns

Based on Cuba's literacy program launched in the 1960s, Cuban teachers assisted in comparable literacy programs in Angola and Nicaragua, followed by Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. In the year 2000, the instrument was standardized in an audiovisual program called '*Yo, sí puedo*' [Yes, I can], widely implemented in Venezuela in the early 2000s.[17] Half a million students were incorporated as teachers and around 500 Cuban experts helped to design it. In 2006, in the context of Cuban and Venezuelan support to Bolivia, the program was adapted to Quechua and Aymara monolingual citizens. By 2009, Cuba had adapted versions of '*Yo, sí puedo*' in 30 countries.

Peace Facilitation

Cuba played a role in the peace processes in Colombia and Guatemala. In the early 1990s, after decades of guerrilla actions and counterinsurgency warfare in Guatemala, the guerrilla and the armed forces were engaged in formal and informal peace talks. Finally, in March 1996, guerrilla and army delegations reached a formal reconciliation in Cuba under the auspices of Fidel and Raúl Castro. The peace negotiations were brought to a successful close after the Havana session and the formal peace accords were signed in December 1996. Colombia's peace process, after seven decades of civil war and multiple atrocities, guerrilla movements and paramilitary actors, has a history of pacts, cease-fires, amnesties, demobilization and social reintegration. During one of the most important peace processes, which lasted from 1989 to 1991, Cuba acted as a facilitator. Following this, the FARC and the ELN continued their insurgency operations. Consecutive Colombian presidents requested Cuba's mediation to restart informal talks, with FARC and ELN missions, accompanied by advisers, subsequently arriving on the island. After the start of bilateral negotiations in Havana in 2012, in June 2016 the FARC and the Colombian government signed the final peace agreement. For their part, peace talks with the ELN got underway in Ecuador, before being transferred to Havana and suspended in 2018, when President Duque formed a new government.

ALBA, CELACS and Other Fora[18]

During the more than 15 years of excellent relations with Venezuela (1999–2013, coinciding with President Chávez's terms of office), Cuban-Venezuelan soft policy benefitted many countries. It was the time of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA), the special ties forged between Cuba and Venezuela in 2004 and afterwards extended to Bolivia (2006), Nicaragua (2007), Ecuador (2009) and six smaller Caribbean island-states. The first 15 years of the present century were also marked by Latin America's Pink Tide, with friendly socialist or reformist governments in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela, plus good relations with most of the Caribbean. Cuba's and Venezuela's policies focused on new Latin American bodies where the presence of the United States was absent or residual.

The Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC) with 33 member countries was created in Caracas in 2011—its main objectives are very varied, from food security to the fight against drugs. While the convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States was signed in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) in 1994. Cuba was one of the prime movers behind both initiatives, from which Canada and the United States were excluded.

Cuba also became involved in regional leftist fora, including the São Paolo forum, founded in Brazil in 1990 by Lula da Silva and Castro, and involving 100 organizations, and the World Social Forum, a Brazilian initiative launched in 2001. Similarly, in 2003 Castro and Chávez founded the Network of Intellectuals, Actors and Social Movements in Defense of Humanity, chaired by the Mexican sociologist Pablo González Casanova. In Cuba, all these initiatives are monitored by the vice-minister of culture.

Rapprochement With the United States

The only country in the Western Hemisphere remaining hostile to Cuba was the United States, the 'Colossus of the North' in Cuban terminology. Despite their mutual animosity, there has been a long history of—both official and back-channel—talks between them on normalizing relations. In 1977, a minimum degree of formal diplomatic interaction was achieved between the US Interests Section (at the Embassy of Switzerland) in Havana and its Cuban counterpart in Washington, while visiting government officials of both countries continued the discussions and negotiations. In their very detailed analysis of the character of the negotiations and the asymmetric power relations that they involved, LeoGrande and Kornbluh (2014, 407) conclude that, by and large, 'the Cubans have been too eager to negotiate and too gullible in believing U.S. promises.'

At the end of the first decade of this century, under the presidency of Raúl Castro, a prudent program of economic and political reforms was implemented. One of the most delicate issues were Cuba's relations with the Catholic episcopate, frozen for 50 years. But in 2010, after incidents in the cathedral, the Cuban president and the cardinal initiated a 'dialogue on issues of mutual interest between the Cuban state and the Catholic Church in Cuba.'[19] It allowed for a much better understanding between Cuba and the Vatican. Under Pope Francis, the Holy See mediated between Cuba and the United States, thus paving the way to the restoration of diplomatic ties and the normalization of relations between the two countries in 2015.

Conclusions

With the benefit of hindsight, the victory of Castro's guerrilla was a unique case in the region. All of the Latin American guerrilla movements emerging in the 1960s failed or were crushed by

superior police forces or military counterinsurgency campaigns. In the 1970s and 1980s, all of the guerrilla forces still active in the region were either defeated or forced to seek a negotiated peace, followed by demobilization. Only in Nicaragua did a guerrilla movement created two decades before manage to triumph in 1979, while, for its part, the Salvadorian guerrilla reached a military stalemate in 1989. In both cases, the elements mentioned by Castro were present. By the twenty-first century, the sole remaining guerrilla forces in Latin America were to be found in Colombia.

Not only diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States were 'normalized'. In some sense, Cuba also became a 'normalized' country, as a member of the OAS, toning down its language as regards the United States, which during the governments of Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez had been characterized by its aggressiveness. Raúl Castro even implemented a series of prudent economic reforms. Nonetheless, Cuba's foreign currency reserves currently depend on the export of nickel, medical missions abroad, tourism and remittances from its diaspora, most of whom live in the United States.

Meanwhile, the regional political panorama changed substantially. The Pink Tide came to an end. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Paraguay, center-left or leftist governments were replaced by rightist or far-right regimes. At present, the predominant economic model in the region is neoliberalism. At the same time, nearly all of the regional alliances in which Cuba played a leading role have gradually lost their sheen and influence. Even the ALBA, the former flagship of Cuban-Venezuelan political clout, is in decline. The profound and still deepening economic and political crisis in Venezuela, the regime's inflexibility and repression, the widespread impoverishment and the emigration of its citizens affect the entire region. The Nicaraguan government is currently immersed in a credibility crisis and has resorted to paramilitary groups to silence protest and student movements. And even though Ecuador is still (at least nominally) a member of the ALBA, its president has explicitly expressed his frustration with Venezuela's policies.

In 2018, Cuba elected a new president, a new government and a new parliament and adopted a new constitution. It still maintains its prestige as a soft power provider of medical services. And even though it still celebrates its glorious past as a revolutionary powerhouse every year on 1 January, the stark reality is that it now faces uncertain times.

Notes

1. This chapter draws from Kruijt (2017, 2018).
2. Author's interview with José Antonio López Rodríguez (Havana, 18 Oct. 2011; 1 Dec. 2012); see also Kruijt (2017, 187–188). López was a mission member who gave me access to his still unpublished memoirs. Castro Ruz (2009) also published a book with long excerpts from diplomatic reports, accounts drafted by special missions and taped conversations between Castro and Colombian guerilla leaders in Havana and elsewhere.
3. For the role of the working classes in the Cuban insurgency period, see Cushion (2016).
4. For a detailed analysis, see Clayfield (2019) and Hoffmann (2018, 121–122).
5. Gleijeses, P. (2017). We Wrapped the Guns in Plastic Bags. *London Review of Books*, 2 Nov. 2017, pp. 11–12.
6. Similarly, Canada (until 1990 only an observer of the OAS) never broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba.
7. Pavlov (1994, 97-ff.), the Soviet intelligence overseer in the 1980s.
8. For a detailed analysis, see Pavlov (1994).
9. For an overview of Cuban and Soviet involvement in Southern Africa, see Gleijeses (2013); Liebenberg, Risquet and Shubin (2016).
10. See Risquet Valdés (2007, xlvii, 2008, 102).
11. Author's interviews with Ramiro Abreu (Havana, 9 Oct. 2011) and Fernando Ravelo (Havana, 17 Oct. 2011). Abreu was head of the Central American Section of the Departamento América from 1975 to

2010, while Ravelo was its vice-chief from 1981 to 1988, handling Mexico and Central America, before being appointed Cuba's Ambassador to Nicaragua in 1989.
12. Author's interview with Luis Morejón (Havana, 1 Mar. 2012), who was the deputy director of the ICAP.
13. Author's interview with Fernando Ravelo, who was the newly appointed ambassador.
14. Author's interview with Jorge Luis Joa (Havana, 27 Oct. 2011), who was Cuba's liaison officer at the Departamento América in 1989.
15. Keynote delivered by Noemí Benítez y de Mendoza (Sociedad Cultural José Martí) at the international symposium, 'La Revolución Cubana. Génesis y Desarrollo Histórico', organized by the Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 13–15 Oct. 2015.
16. Kirk (2018, 63–66-ff.) provides the specifics about Cuban medical aid.
17. Author's interview with Javier Labrada (Havana, 8 Nov. 2012), who was a senior adviser in Venezuela, Bolivia and Haiti.
18. For further details, see Prevost and Campos (2011).
19. Author's interview with Mgrs. Emilio Aranguren Echeverría (Holguín, 4 Aug. 2010), bishop of Holguín, then in charge of the episcopal Human Rights Commission.

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PART 1

First Revolutionary Ripple

The Imitation of the Successful Example

THE SIXTIES AND THE FOCO GUERRILLA

Eduardo Rey Tristán

In January 1959, a few days after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, a group of Paraguayan exiles in Argentina belonging to the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico and the Partido Revolucionario Febrerista staged a coup against the dictator Stroessner. Months later, a similar plan would be set in motion by another group of exiles, with a similar fate, although in the long run the survivors and new supporters of the cause ended up creating two political organizations that would take up arms against the dictatorship during the following decade (Uchôa 2014, 105–106).

To these early schemes should be added other similar ones in 1959: in Haiti, with the attempted landing of an invasion force from Cuba to combat the Duvalier dictatorship; in Nicaragua, with a column participated by Carlos Fonseca Amador against the Somoza regime (Lamberg 1979, 204–208); and in the Dominican Republic, where a number of exiles from Cuba tried to overthrow the Trujillo dictatorship.[1] What they had in common was that they were all invasions from abroad planned and launched by groups of exiles who were not necessarily leftists, but were united by their opposition to the personalist dictatorships governing their countries.[2] A unique case was that of the Argentinian Uturuncos, indirectly related to Peronist rationales and the radical underground mobilizations occurring since the ousting of Perón (1955) and directly to their failed insurrectional strategies (i.e. the staging of general strikes) in 1958 and during the initial months of the following year. Taking a leaf out of Cuba's book, and influenced by the Spaniard and ex-Republican officer Abraham Guillén, living in Argentina, as from the middle of 1959 they began to create a guerrilla foco that would subsequently collapse between December 1959 and January 1960 (Salas 2003, 35–50).

In 1960, further insurrectional plans were hatched in Paraguay, continuing on from those of the previous year, by two new organizations—namely, the Frente Unido de Liberación Nacional (FULNA) and the Movimiento 14 de Mayo—that had emerged in the meantime; in Panama, with an invasion force formed by exiles from Cuba (Rot 2010, 137); and in Venezuela and Guatemala, where the military uprisings ended in failure in both cases. As from 1961, the first rural guerrilla focos began to be created in Venezuela, where urban guerrillas groups, such as the Unidades Tácticas de Combate (UTC), commenced operations. From the following year onwards, it is possible to speak of incipient or tentative rural guerrilla activity in Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru, Argentina and Paraguay, in addition to embryonic schemes in Brazil[3] and Ecuador.[4] In 1963, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic would also follow suit, while new

actors appeared or new plans were drawn up in the aforementioned countries. For, with the exception of Venezuela, a somewhat more developed country, most of these schemes never got off the ground.

The specialized literature has traditionally interpreted those schemes of the first years of the 1960s and those following the death of Ernesto Guevara in Bolivia in 1967 as mere repetitions of the Cuban experience: militants who, encouraged by Castro's success and employing similar methods, attempted to repeat that victory in their own countries, overthrowing dictators similar to Batista. Consequently, they were all classified as Castrista guerrillas (Lamberg 1979), above all the guerrilla focos that applied Guevara's theories.

That idea implies a sort of subversive contagion. Influenced by the impact of the Cuban revolution and regardless of their local reality or traditions, militants in different countries had embarked on an adventure guided by an imported guerrilla model that they first put into practice, before theorizing it, and which adapted neither to their circumstances nor to their political needs. Certainly, this interpretation had, at the time, the virtue of explaining both the emergence and subsequent failure of those schemes, thus helping to cement its position as the dominant one in the specialized literature for quite a time.

Current knowledge of those first experiences offers us new details that suggest a different interpretation, especially during the years immediately after the victory of the Cuban Revolution. Most of the insurrectional projects devised in 1959 and 1960 had three things in common: neither were they politically left-wing nor was their aim to stage a revolution in the sense that this would be understood in the following years (i.e. in pursuit of a radical, socialist transformation); they followed the region's traditions, either democratic-nationalist or semi-feudal or factionalist, without a democratic spirit or simply coup-based; and their aim was to oust personalist dictatorial regimes, as had occurred in Cuba in 1956.

Cuba was doubtless the catalyst of the cycle of action commencing in 1959. The Paraguayan exiles saw in that example the proof that it was indeed possible to overthrow their own dictator, an idea shared by the rest of the initial exponents of the armed revolution in the aforementioned countries. The media impact of Castrismo until its ultimate triumph (Calvo González 2014) contributed to this, as did the initial nationalist and democratic image of the Cuban Revolution. In this connection, the idea mooted by social mobilization theoreticians has been confirmed: a successful mobilization encourages others whose proponents understand that their situation can be interpreted along similar lines (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1999). Following this logic, it is possible to understand the Paraguayan, Haitian, Dominican and Nicaraguan experiences between 1959 and 1960. The eyewitness accounts of survivors also point in this direction.

Those first initiatives, although drawing inspiration from the Cuban success when taking up arms, were not normally influenced by post-1959 Castrismo, but by the seminal idea with which it had emerged back in 1956. By and large, they were militants defending democratic and nationalist positions whose aim was to topple incumbent dictators, but without initially pursuing socialist revolution. The Paraguayans of 1959 were liberal and Febreristas; the Nicaraguans were primarily conservatives until the beginning of the 1960s and, as from 1961, were linked to communism; the Guatemalan rebel officers of 1961 aspired to turn the clock back to the time of the democratic Arbenz regime ousted in 1954; the Dominicans strove to rid themselves of their local satrap and for their country's political liberalization, as did the Haitians; and lastly, the Venezuelans, the most complex case of all, should be understood from the perspective of local politics after the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez and the installation of an exclusionary political regime.

Their combat strategies did not strictly adhere to Guevara's theories on guerrilla warfare (Guevara 1960). Rather, they were prior anti-dictatorial forms of struggle, i.e. action repertoires

inherent to the region—as had been the case with the Cuban insurgency itself back in 1956. These took the shape of columns of opponents invading from abroad (by sea in the case of Cuba, for obvious reasons), who were then coordinated in situ in an attempt to spark a popular uprising against the incumbent dictator. Or, alternatively, they were military insurrections led by officers opposing the regime with a similar objective in mind. Previous examples include the expeditions to the Dominican Republic in 1947 and 1949; the attempted coups against Stroessner in 1956 and an attempted incursion from abroad in 1958; and the armed column led by the conservative Chamorro against the Somozas in Nicaragua in 1958. All of which indicates that they were action repertoires lacking predetermined ideological grounds.

The support that the Castro regime leant some of those expeditions—which was certainly the case in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua and Panama—does not in any way modify our interpretation. Anderson (1997) notes that the Nicaraguans and Guatemalans initially received the support of Guevara, given that he had lived in the country during the months running up to the coup in 1954. But in this last case that backing was financial. In contrast, the initial support was logistic and framed in the context noted previously, but unconnected—or at least not implicitly connected—to the proposal for extending the continental revolution, as would be the case later on.

From 1961–1962, Cuba's impact on the evolution of the insurgency in the region acquired new connotations. As to organizational aspects, new groups representing the schism the Cuban Revolution had begun to provoke in the continental Left sprung up. The MIR had already been created in Venezuela back in April 1960. Two years later, the Peruvian MIR emerged from the transformation of the well-known Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) Rebelde, formed by Luis de la Puente in 1959 as a result of his differences of opinion with that organization in the wake of the Cuban Revolution. While in Ecuador, the aforementioned URJE was created by militants from the communist youth organization in 1962.

Primarily—although not exclusively—leftist pro-Castrist or revolutionary factions at odds with their own organizations began to appear in many of the region's countries at the time. Unlike the certain degree of vacillation that they had shown until 1960, it was then that they took the plunge, those advocating for armed action preferably aligning with the Left. Furthermore, as from 1961–1962, and in line with developments in Cuba and its drift towards socialism, those groups also advanced towards a renovated and reduced conception of revolution, which thenceforth would have a sole objective (socialism) and method (the armed struggle) (Rey Tristán 2016).

With regard to activity, the strategies and action repertoires characterizing the first cycle of the wave in Latin America were implemented between 1961 and 1963. There were clear continuities in some groups and countries. In Paraguay, the FULNA attempted to deploy armed guerrilla focos in 1962, as with the opponents of the Dominican regime in 1963. In Venezuela during that same period, different focos were created, the urban struggle was developed and there were even a number of attempted military coups. In Guatemala, the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT, communist) began to consider all forms of struggle in 1962, soon contributing to the birth of the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR), while in the same year the officers who had rebelled in 1960 ended up forming the Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre (MR13). In Argentina, the first Guevarist foco per se was deployed in 1963: the short-lived Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP), led by Jorge Masetti, was annihilated in the middle of 1964. In July of that same year, the very short-lived Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Nacionales (FARN) was created by the 'Basque' Ángel Bengochea after a trip to Cuba. The organization never began operations in the Tucumán Mountains because its few members were killed in an explosion in Buenos Aires when they were preparing to depart (Nicanoff and

Castellanos 2006). In Peru, the first operation involving the failed incursion of the Cuban-trained militants of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) through Bolivia took place in the middle of 1963. Similarly, the Peruvian MIR, whose members were already being trained for guerrilla action, commenced its armed activity in 1964.

Finally, as to Colombia, two different paths were taken. First, those who had been involved in political struggles and organized in peasant self-defense groups for years, whose original raison d'être had nothing to do with Cuba, but with local circumstances, began to organize themselves as a guerrilla bloc as from 1964, thus planting the seeds of the future FARC. Second were those groups emerging as a direct result of the Cuban Revolution, such as the ELN originating in 1964 from an organization created the year before by a group of students who had received guerrilla training in Cuba.

This brief overview illustrates how, in around 1963, the Guevarist strategy of rural struggle in general, and the guerrilla foco in particular, began to prevail as organizational and strategic approaches. In view of the failure of previous insurgencies, which had ridden the wave of the Cuban Revolution, the Castro-Guevarist approach lost ground to a more elaborate strategy revolving around a theoretical formulation based on previous practices. Moreover, in around 1962–1963 practically all of the actors involved in this first cycle of activity of the wave were already operating, were just about to or would do as from 1964.

Nonetheless, neither did all of the groups implement foquismo in the strict sense of the word nor did they do so to the same extent, although this was not the case with those groups directly promoted by Cuba, including Masetti's in 1963, the ELN commanded by Guevara in Bolivia in 1967 and the Cuban-trained Peruvians of the MIR and the ELN who sought to impose the Cuban model on their country. Besides, there were clear nods to Castroism in the Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, Venezuelan and Dominican groups, either through the type of guerrilla approach employed or their training, technical support or political influence.

This summary of the first cycle of activity shows that it was more complex than the literature on the subject would have us believe. What occurred in this period was a rational imitation of a successful revolution.

First, promoters with similar expectations observed and interpreted what had happened in Cuba and, contending that the circumstances were similar in their own countries for the reasons set out here, attempted to replicate it. They were groups or militants who had already had plans—which on occasion they had even put to the test—before the ousting of the personalist dictatorships governing their countries, and who, in light of the overthrow of Batista, reactivated them considering that the time was now ripe. They were therefore imitations whose key lies in the cultural factor, in the dissemination of an idea: the chance to bring a project to a successful conclusion, given that this had been achieved in a country close by whose situation was interpreted as being similar. The repertoires employed were neither new nor were they influenced by others, for all of the region's revolutionaries had used similar ones in such cases, based on previous traditions and merely adapted to the specific circumstances of each country.

Second, the impact of Castro's revolutionary triumph went beyond those groups and militants who believed that the situation in their countries was akin to that of pre-revolutionary Cuba. It played an essential role in the transformation of the Left and the advent of groups that, in countries whose situation differed from that of the Cuba of Batista, proposed political solutions influenced by an ideological interpretation based on Castroism. Namely, they did not have to be the strict result of Cuban resolve or action, but as before, priority was given to the cultural factor and ideological dissemination: the desire to mobilize the people was their main driving force, beyond the links that they would consequently establish with Castroism for its practical implementation.

These organizations emerged between 1961 and 1963. In the main, they had their roots in previous political projects (for instance, Peronism or Trotskyism in Argentina, Aprismo in Peru, Arbencismo in Guatemala and Sandinismo in Nicaragua). But from 1964–1965 they would establish their objectives partially or totally on the basis of the methodology theorized by Cuba: the Guevarist foquismo which was more or less adapted to local conditions and whose implementation was influenced by the prevailing situation. Last but not least, mention should go to the focos directly promoted by Guevara in Argentina (1963) and Bolivia (1967), which far from being imitations were actually the real thing.

In this first section, the spotlight will be placed on the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia, regarded here as the most relevant examples of this first cycle of activity. The cases of Argentina, Nicaragua, Brazil and Colombia will be discussed in the following sections of this book. Whereas those of Paraguay, Panama, Haiti and Ecuador will not be addressed specifically, but have been briefly referred to here in order to understand the cycle as a whole.

Notes

1. Unless indicated otherwise, the information on the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela is drawn from the chapters on these countries included in this book.
2. The term 'personalist' refers to the nature of these regimes. They were patrimonialist dictatorships: Stroessner in Paraguay, Duvalier in Haiti, the Somoza family in Nicaragua and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. In other words, they were more akin to the Batista regime in Cuba than to corporate military dictatorships like that of Miguel Ydígoras in Guatemala and that in El Salvador between 1944 and 1979. On the distinction between both types and their relevance in relation to the insurgency opposing them, see Wickham-Crowley (1992).
3. According to Lamberg (1979, 203), in 1962 there were plans to create a Castrist guerrilla supported by Cuba, although they never got past the drawing board.
4. In 1962, the Unión Revolucionaria de la Juventud Ecuatoriana (URJE) was created, although it was promptly quashed (Lamberg 1979, 208).

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3

GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Cyrus Veeser and Lilian Bobea

The history of guerrilla movements in what is now the Dominican Republic extends back in time almost to the age of Christopher Columbus. The revolt of the Hispanicized Taíno leader Enriquillo, which began in 1519, qualifies as an authentic guerrilla movement. Enriquillo withdrew from Spain's control into an inaccessible region of Hispaniola, attracted a resistance movement that included 'fugitive African and Indian slaves and servants, and even some mestizos,' raided Spanish settlements for over a decade, and surrendered only after winning guarantees of amnesty and grants of land (Altman 2007, 598).

Enriquillo's low-intensity conflict was not anomalous: nearly all the island's conflicts over five centuries were guerrilla wars, if not guerrilla movements. Crisscrossed by mountains, the island had poor land communications that limited the reach of central authority. The long, unguarded border with French Saint Domingue, later Haiti, allowed armed groups to avoid capture by moving from one territory to the other. Throughout the process of forging a republic up to the consolidation of power under the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina (1930–1961), the island's rugged terrain and weak institutions made armed resistance a viable alternative to submission to central control. Yet, ironically, at the very moments in which central authority was enhanced—during both U.S. occupations (1916–1924, 1965–1966) and under the *Trujillato*—guerrilla movements took the field to contest that authority.

Guerrilla Movements Before Trujillo

Borrowing Jorge Domínguez's definition of insurgency as 'the use of violence lasting for more than a few hours against the established government by a substantial number of people who do not occupy formal authority roles,' several patterns emerge in the Dominican case (Domínguez 1986, 807). Guerrilla movements there can be categorized as *cimarrones* seeking to create semi-autonomous or maroon enclaves, regional caudillos fielding private armies, irregular volunteer forces battling foreign occupations, and armed incursions launched from neighboring territories to overthrow dictators.

The war to restore Dominican independence, which erupted after Spain re-annexed its former colony in 1861, was very much a guerrilla war. The minister of defense, Ramón Matías Mella, even wrote a brief manual of guerrilla war that counseled 'our troops should . . . fight while protected by the terrain . . . using small, mobile guerrilla units to exhaust the enemy . . . denying

them rest so that they control only the terrain under their feet.'[1] A Spanish soldier confirmed the impact of Mella's strategy: 'A column of our soldiers marches out, and suddenly 300 or 400 men are upon us, men who know the country and take cover behind the enormous trees, firing at our flanks, our vanguard and our rear guard.'[2] The victory of Dominican irregulars over thousands of Spanish troops in 1865 inspired guerrilla movements in Cuba and Puerto Rico, helping trigger the first Cuban war of independence (1868–1878) and the Grito de Lares in Puerto Rico (Lilon-Larrauri 1998, 185).

Rural and Messianic Nationalism

Leaving aside the frequent armed conflicts among caudillos, the next significant guerrilla movement emerged during the first American occupation (1916–1924). The military government angered the peasant majority by imposing direct taxes and using forced labor to build roads (San Miguel and Berryman 1995, 51–54).

Peasants in the east, the region most impacted by the encroachment of foreign-owned sugar plantations, took up arms against the occupation. The *gavilleros* were often farmers who had lost their land through 'purchase, cajolery, tricks, threats, violence and legal maneuvers' and consequently emerged as social bandits in the sense described by E. J. Hobsbawm in *Primitive Rebels* (Hobsbawm 1965). U.S. marines alleged that the gavilleros were indeed bandits, but the guerrillas articulated a nationalist ideology and in some areas created an alternative government, levying taxes and dispensing justice (Calder 1978, 657–659). The movement continued until 1922, when the occupiers negotiated the surrender of the guerrillas, facilitated by an American pledge to leave the island.

While the gavilleros contested U.S. control in the east, in the southwest a distinct challenge came from the mystic known as Papá Liborio, who was both prophet and guerrilla. Although Americans described his followers as 'mostly criminals who are fugitives from justice,' Liborio organized his inner circle as a *hermandad* or brotherhood that was fiercely loyal to the messianic leader (Lundius and Lundahl 2000, 83). Their frequent attacks on the marines earned Liborio the reputation of the most dangerous fighter against the occupation. Hunted for years, Liborio was surprised and killed in June 1922, along with his son and several disciples. The marines dispersed the remaining Olivoristas.

The Americans left in 1924, leaving behind a well-trained National Guard and improved internal communications. This 'modernized' Dominican state facilitated the rise of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina in 1930. For the next 31 years the Dominican Republic fell under the domination of a brutal megalomaniac whose absolutism 'was totally distinct from any other dictatorship at the time.'[3]

The list of Dominicans who gave their lives opposing the 'Benefactor del País' is a long one, but Trujillo's unremitting repression forced armed opposition to relocate to the diaspora (Ferrero and Eiroa 2016).[4] *Embarcaciones*, or armed invasions by sea, had a long history in Caribbean geopolitics, but during the *Trujillato* they emerged as the only viable strategy against the dictator.

Toward Armed Internationalism

After World War II, resistance to Latin American dictatorships increased. In 1947, with support from the governments of Cuba, Guatemala, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Haiti, a group of Dominican exiles organized the Expedición de Cayo Confites. Some 1,500 men trained in Cuba for the assault; the majority were Cubans with about 300 Dominican volunteers. Trujillo's spy network alerted him to the pending embarkation, which neither the Cubans nor the exiles tried

to conceal. Pressure from the United States and members of Grau San Martin's own administration derailed the plan, allegedly helped by a $2 million bribe to the Cuban leader from Trujillo. The Cuban navy intercepted the guerrillas before they left Cuban waters, releasing them soon after but confiscating their weapons (Gleijeses 1989, 135–136; Pou Garcia 2009, 32).

Undaunted, many of the same exiles, once again led and financed by wealthy Dominican Juan Rodríguez García, organized a second attack, this time from Guatemala in 1949.[5] The Expedición de Luperón recruited an international force of 55 men, with eight Dominicans supported by volunteers from Nicaragua, Honduras, Spain, Mexico, Cuba, Guatemala, the United States and Costa Rica. Due to logistical problems, only one of the rebel's seaplanes reached the Dominican Republic, depositing a band of 15 guerrillas near Luperón on the north coast. Intercepted immediately by Trujillo's coast guard, several died in combat; the rest escaped only to be captured a few days later. Trujillo's soldiers executed the North Americans and Nicaraguan immediately; only five members of this multinational expedition survived.

The failed attacks of 1947 and 1949 are more than footnotes to the more famous *embarcación* of June 14, 1959. The plan for both groups was to penetrate the countryside and trigger a broad anti-Trujillo uprising among peasants. These events took place years before Fidel Castro and Ernesto Guevara practiced, and then preached, foquismo. The attacks of 1947 and 1949 suggest that two multinational coalitions of guerrilleros had risked or lost their lives gambling on the validity of a concept very much like foquismo. Not coincidently, one of the young men who trained to be part of the 1947 attack was 20-year-old Fidel Castro Ruz. When Fidel took up arms in the Sierra Maestra a decade later, Dominican leftists remembered him as the *compañero* of Cayo Confites.[6]

The attacks also reveal the relevance of the region's geopolitics after World War II. In the early postwar years, support for the Dominican guerrillas came from progressive leaders in Venezuela, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Cuba (before 1959) and Argentina. The convergence of social democratic leaders in those nations, many with personal connections to Juan Bosch, cofounder of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (in Cuba) in 1939, led to the emergence of an anti-dictatorial alliance, the semi-mythical Legión del Caribe. In December 1947, under the auspices of progressive Guatemalan president Juan José Arévalo, exiles from the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Costa Rica signed the Pacto del Caribe, which pledged to overthrow the dictators ruling those and other Caribbean nations. The Pacto del Caribe did not constitute the Legión as a formal military organization; it was rather 'a formative space for distinct expressions of a revolutionary and anti-dictatorial consciousness' that played a key role in both *embarcaciones* against Trujillo in the late 1940s (Pérez 2017).[7] The shared principles and values that propelled the guerrillas to fight for democracy created a transgenerational legacy as well as a 'moral debt' inherited by the later armed resistance movements.

Despite the failures of 1947 and 1949, armed expeditions continued to offer the most plausible way to overthrow Trujillo. After January 1, 1959, the anti-Trujillistas had a new reason for optimism: not only did Fidel Castro's victory validate the concept of foquismo; it also provided a base of operations and official support.

It is impossible to overstate the impact of the Cuban Revolution on events in the Dominican Republic. 'The spark of the Cuban Revolution arrived here the same day as Fidel's victory,' recalled José Israel Cuello, a former leader of the Partido Comunista Dominicano. Young anti-Trujillo activists 'wanted to copy what had happened in Cuba down to the smallest detail,' in the words of another guerrilla.[8]

Equally promising, Dominican exile groups in Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the United States forged a new anti-Trujillista alliance. The new coalition agreed to the *Programa Mínimo de la Revolución Dominicana*, a menu of progressive reforms that called for a 'provisional

democratic revolutionary government' to follow the dictator's overthrow, a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution, agrarian reform and a purge of fraudulent land titles, freedom to organize unions, a literacy campaign, and programs to provide social security, health care, and full employment (Cordero Michel 2009, 139–142).

With Fidel Castro's support, some 220 guerrillas began to train at Mil Cumbres in western Cuba. Dominicans dominated the new force—148 enlisted—but in the internationalist spirit of the Legión del Caribe the combatants included 22 Cubans, 13 Venezuelans, six Puerto Ricans, two North Americans, two Spaniards and one Guatemalan (Pou Garcia 2009, 53–57). The guerrillas represented a range of ideologies rather than adherence to a single party or doctrine, as the moderation of the Programa Mínimo suggests. A handful of the guerrillas had peasant or working-class origins, but most were educated, urban and middle class (Pou Garcia 2009, 69).

After only a few months of training, the guerrillas decided to act. The June 1959 invasion would strike at three points: a first group would fly a Curtiss C-46 aircraft deep into the Dominican interior. This airborne diversion was to draw Trujillo's attention away from coastline, where two high-speed launches would drop the main guerrilla forces near Puerto Plata. Even with logistical support from the Cuban Navy, the plan badly misfired. The launches did not make landfall until June 20, nearly a week after the rebels' airplane had touched down at Constanza. There, the guerrillas had divided into three groups, and by the second day faced hot pursuit by Trujillo's military, whose air force dropped explosives and napalm on the rebels.

More crushing was the fact that the campesinos on whom the guerrillas had counted for support instead helped the soldiers kill and capture the invaders. A few months before the June landings, one member of the expedition, José Cordero Michel, had acknowledged that the invasion's 'success will fundamentally depend, not on the force of the exiles, but rather the level of revolutionary consciousness of the masses in our country's interior.' When he spoke in March 1959, Cordero Michel admitted that 'while it is making progress, [that consciousness] is still very weak' (Cordero Michel 2009, 137). Worse still, the rebels had few contacts on the island and none in the countryside. 'They were disconnected from the reality here,' admits Rafael Chaljub Mejía.

The plan for a coordinated three-pronged attack was ruined, and the country was on high alert. The Cuban naval officers had orders to take the Dominicans back to Cuba, but the rebels chose to go on. A survivor reported Cordero Michel's words: 'We will shed our blood on the beaches of our homeland, and I am convinced that from our blood will grow a tree of liberty.' (Cordero Michel 2009, 122). Of the 198 guerrillas, only six survived.

The failure of all the attempted invasions from 1947 to 1959 argues against the realism of the foquista strategy, and the landings have been criticized, at the time and since, for an excess of 'petty bourgeois romanticism'.[9] That critique ignores the fact that established leftist parties had shown little capacity to channel popular resistance against brutal dictators. The orthodox communist parties eschewed armed struggle, insisting on the primacy of an urban working class that in most of the Caribbean was minuscule, and doubting the capacity of peasants to spearhead revolutionary change.[10] The June 1959 expedition might have been, as one critic said, *una hecatombe*, but the sacrifice had a palpable impact. The rebels' landing in mid-1959 'pushed Dominican history to unfold at such a high speed that just two years later Trujillo was dead,' marveled José Israel Cuello. The other primary target of the Legión del Caribe, the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, remained in power for nearly two decades after Trujillo's *ajusticiamiento*.

Trujillo's extermination of the rebels, many from prominent families, backfired. The invasion of June 1959, following closely on Fidel's victory in Cuba, convinced many young Dominicans that Trujillo's end was near. Drawing together small groups of dissidents across the country, Minerva Mirabal and Manolo Tavárez emerged as leaders of a clandestine movement committed

to armed struggle. 'Anti-Batista sentiment in Cuba can't be stronger than anti-Trujillo feelings here,' Minerva declared at one secret meeting. 'I don't understand why they can make a revolution and overthrow a dictator but we can't.'[11] In January 1960, Minerva and Manolo called together representatives of the various organizations to create a formal nationwide 'structure' and plan the imminent insurrection. The conspirators honored those who died the year before by calling themselves the Agrupación Política 14 de Junio (1J4). After much debate they adopted the Programa Mínimo as their doctrine.

The Double-Edged Sword of Cuba's Success

The triumph of the M26J in Cuba had both a positive and negative impact. It inspired thousands of Dominicans to risk their lives to end Trujillo's regime but obscured the myriad differences between the two countries. The Cuban Revolution implanted its strategy, energy and confidence in the superficially similar but fundamentally distinct terrain of the Dominican Republic.

Most of the surviving guerrillas agree that revolutionary Cuba played a fundamental role in nurturing the Dominican resistance, from supporting the 1959 invasion to training a generation of Dominicans in guerrilla warfare.[12] But Cuba also fixated the Dominican left on unleashing an armed struggle in the countryside, which historian Roberto Cassá argues made 'insurrection . . . a general panacea.' Because the Dominican left always 'awaited the great moment of armed struggle . . . other methods were minimized' (Cassá 2007, 55–56). Rafael Chaljub Mejía agrees, noting that the Dominican left 'saw itself as an extension of the process in Cuba and dedicated itself to replicating it here' (Chaljub Mejía 2000, 41).

The impact of Cuba was all the greater because of the intellectual isolation imposed by Trujillo. 'We had no practice developing political ideas—we didn't even have any books,' one 1J4 member recalled. 'There was no intellectual community here as there was in Cuba.'[13] A few texts reached the country from Cuba—Minú Tavárez recalls that Fidel's 'History Will Absolve Me' had an impact on her parents—but knowledge of other revolutionary struggles was fragmentary at best.[14] 'I didn't know who Karl Marx was, yet the government had me pegged as a communist,' noted José Daniel Ariza Cabral. 'We lacked experience,' Rafael Pérez Modesto recalled. 'We had no political education whatsoever.'[15]

Inspired by Cuba, a Dominican guerrilla movement blossomed, but its shallow roots reflected the country's hermetic isolation under Trujillo. The heterodox political views of 1J4 before Trujillo's assassination grew out of this political void. 'There was no time for analysis, we were overtaken by events,' affirms Chaljub Mejía. 'On top of that, the movement was split internally between those who believed that we needed to build social bases and those who understood that the only way to win was taking to the mountains.'[16] According to another veteran of the movement, '1J4 didn't have clear ideas about the Dominican state nor of the country's social composition,' adding that the left never took power because of its 'inability to understand the country's situation—its own political and theoretical weakness.'[17] Of course, these reflections lay in the future. After 1959 the swift unfolding of events superseded any reflection about context and conditions; action was the motto.

In January 1960, the newborn 1J4 had already been betrayed to Trujillo's dreaded security service, the SIM. Soon the entire 1J4 leadership, as well as hundreds of collaborators, was in custody. This time Trujillo's repression touched many of the nation's best families; even young men in Catholic seminaries were swept up in the reaction against 1J4. On 31 January 1960, a pastoral letter written by a group of prominent Roman Catholic clerics was read in churches across the country. The letter lamented 'the grievous blow that has afflicted a good many Dominican homes' and declared that 'it was a grave offense before God to suppress individual

rights, including the democratic rights of freedom of conscience, the press and of assembly.' The Church's first denunciation of the regime in three decades led Trujillo to complain that 'my two biggest problems are the priests and the Mirabals.' The dictator sent his goons to loot the homes of two prominent priests and ordered the murder of Minerva Mirabal and her two sisters (Manley 2012, 91). The day of their murder, 25 November, is now recognized by the United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Trujillo managed to suffocate the insurrection planned by 1J4, but his repression had unintended consequences. His vicious attacks on the Catholic Church meant that 'Dios y Trujillo,' long inseparable, came into conflict for the first time. Rafael Pérez Modesto, a teenage seminarian who had joined 1J4, remembers that for the first time he saw a peasants in La Vega openly protesting against Trujillo because of his attack on the clergy (Pérez 2017, 40). Moreover, the arrest of so many young people confirmed that the nationwide movement against Trujillo was growing.

Post Trujillo Movements

Nevertheless, neither armed guerrillas nor a mass uprising ended the Trujillo regime. On 30 May 1961 a small group of conspirators, including dissident military officers, waylaid the dictator en route to a romantic rendezvous and killed him and his chauffer. The dictator was gone, but reprisals and repression continued for months.

The elimination of Trujillo further accelerated the precipitous evolution of the far left. The leading organization of the left, the 1J4, had the largest following, especially among students and middle-class youth, due to the sacrifice of the *raza inmortal* of June 1959, as well as the leadership of Manolo Tavárez, the left's most charismatic figure at the time. The two other forces were the Dominican communist party, called the Partido Socialist Popular (PSP) after its Cuban namesake, and the Movimiento Popular Dominicano (MPD). The PSP opposed insurrection on the traditional grounds that the 'objective conditions' for success did not yet exist. The MPD favored armed struggle in theory and, on occasion, in practice. 'While the PSP, under the influence of the Soviet Union, was more oriented toward a peaceful transition,' Rafael Chaljub Mejía recalls, 'the MPD favored the Cuban and Chinese thesis of peasant war.'[18]

The 1J4 scorned the *electoreros* who had agreed to take part in elections scheduled in December 1962. Despite the 1J4's call for a boycott, Dominicans voted in overwhelming numbers, electing Juan Bosch of the PRD. A moderate leftist who had lived in exile for decades, Bosch angered the 1J4, MPD and PSP by promising *borrón y cuenta nueva*, that is, impunity for those guilty of human rights violations under Trujillo, as recalled by Minú Tavarez.[19] Yet after Bosch took office in February 1963, the left parties faced a dilemma. Bosch proposed a new constitution, one that was so 'progressive, humane, democratic, and revolutionary' that it alarmed conservative Dominicans, the military, and Washington.[20] How could armed insurrection succeed against the country's first popularly elected president in decades, one who supported land reform and a democratic constitution?

That quandary divided the central executive committee of 1J4, with one faction firmly committed to Castro-style revolution in the short term; the other group favored insurrection but felt conditions were not yet propitious. The militant faction created a military wing, the *infraestructura*, that recruited men and women committed to armed struggle and began to train them with the limited weapons they possessed. In the hopes of radicalizing the recalcitrant faction, the central executive committee sent their leaders to Cuba to learn about guerrilla war. Although based in Santo Domingo, the 1J4 leadership remained committed to guerrilla war in the countryside. Their refrain was *Cogeremos el monte!*—to the mountains! (Chaljub Mejía 2000, 77)

Once again events outran the plans of the far left. On 25 September 1963, the Dominican military overthrew Juan Bosch after he had served only seven months. The coup strengthened the position of the *duros* who dismissed the efficacy of elections. 'Elections were a trick organized by U.S. imperialism,' one 1J4 veteran recalled.[21] The overthrow of Bosch 'was the argument we used to prove that democracy as a way to achieve change was not viable in the Dominican Republic, that armed struggle was the only way,' Chaljub Mejía adds.[22]

Even before the coup took place, Manolo Tavárez had issued a warning to the 'señores de la reacción' that if they blocked peaceful change the 1J4 knew 'where the island's steep mountains lie and there we will go, following the example and fulfilling the work of the heroes of June 1959.'[23] After the coup the military handed power to a civilian Triumvirate, and the left parties reverted to clandestine operations.

Soon after the overthrow of Bosch, the 1J4 called the people to action under the motto: 'When the rights of the people are violated, insurrection is a duty. We wanted armed confrontation because young people who had been deprived of any future for 31 years once again saw their hopes cut off.'[24] With leaders of the moderate faction in Cuba, the 1J4 decided the time for action had come. In late November 1963 the infraestructura opened six focos across a broad swath of the country's mountainous interior. Hastily trained and poorly armed, the foquistas also lacked knowledge of the terrain and contact with the peasants where they hoped to operate, although some campesinos did sympathize with the rebels (Pérez 2017, 145). 'We had commandos who had never held a rifle in their lives,' recalled one survivor. 'I went only because I felt I had made a commitment.' One of 1J4's most notorious firebrands had to ask how one went to the bathroom in the mountains.[25]

Five of the six guerrilla focos collapsed in a few weeks. The remaining group, led by Manolo Tavárez, survived without supplies in the mountains near Pico Duarte. Famished, exhausted and isolated, the guerrillas voted to negotiate terms of surrender with the government. Once they did, Manolo and the fourteen men with him were summarily executed.

The martyrs of December 1963 added to the mystique of 1J4, but with surviving members of the leadership in prison and later deported, the organization was in disarray. Even so, the dream of insurrection would not die. The 1J4, outlawed once again, created a new Military Bureau which quickly became semi-autonomous. One leader recalls that on 24 April 1965 he was at a secret meeting to plan the coming insurrection when the explosive news broke that a group of military officers had risen up to restore Juan Bosch to the presidency.

The first reaction of the 1J4, MPD and PSP was to see the Constitutionalist military uprising as an imperialist trick, a plot to replace the Triumvirate with a conservative but legal alternative. But the uprising quickly became a civil war, triggering an outpouring of popular support that solidified the Constitutionalist rebels' control of the capital. As anti-Bosch troops approached with tanks to retake the city, civilians clamored for weapons to turn back the assault.

In the face of indisputable mass support, members of the 1J4's Military Bureau stepped forward as leaders of the popular resistance (Chaljub Mejía 2000, 128). Having trained for a peasant insurrection, the 1J4 now helped lead a movement of urban guerrillas, dividing the city into zones and establishing commandos to hold off the assault, as Fafa Taveras recalled.[26] On April 27, a combination of rebel soldiers and *muchachos del barrio* supported by 1J4 militants turned back the soldiers and tanks that had crossed the Rio Ozama into the city's oldest *barrios*. Savage fighting left hundreds dead, but 'the miracle of the bridge' gave new hope to the Constitutionalist cause. In that battle and those that followed, Colonel Francisco Caamaño Deñó emerged as the rebel military's standard bearer.

That euphoria was short-lived. On April 28, U.S. marines landed in the Dominican Republic; eventually 23,000 would occupy Santo Domingo. Against the overwhelming power of the

American military, the Constitutionalists and their popular supporters did not surrender. Fighting continued through the summer, and the country was not 'pacified' until September 1965, leaving more than 3,000 Dominicans dead.[27]

The Left Under Balaguer

From 1959 to 1965 the far left had repeatedly misjudged the temperament of the people: by boycotting the elections of December 1962, opening guerrilla focos in November 1963, and denouncing the Constitutionalist rebels as instruments of imperialism in April 1965. 'We were always behind the facts,' Chaljub Mejía admits. In part this had to do with the rapidity of political change in the country. As another 1J4 member said, 'the only time we had to reflect was when we were in prison.'[28]

At the national level, elections held in 1966—with American troops on the ground—brought Trujillo protégé Joaquin Balaguer to power. Under Balaguer the Dominican left did evolve. New parties formed, usually by splintering from the larger parties. The relative success of the urban commandos might have changed the far left's belief in an insurrection based in the countryside, but that was not the case (Cassá 2007, 92). 'Urban guerrillas could be controlled easily by the imperialists,' according to Chaljub Mejía. 'The only place that a prolonged war could be developed was in the *campo*.'[29]

Although the far left continued to privilege the countryside, their strategy moved beyond foquismo. Both China and Vietnam became lodestars of the movement, with their focus on the primacy of the party and patient political education among the peasantry. 'The Chinese were opposed to foquismo,' remembered Chaljub Mejía. 'You had to go out into the countryside and work with the peasants.'[30] Members of both 1J4 and the MPD trained in China and Vietnam. The MPD adopted a new tactic, named after Guido Gil, in honor of a young activist, journalist and lawyer killed by the authorities in 1967. The 'Gil strategy' called for building rural bases around the slogan 'the best to the countryside'. The cadres working in the countryside, however, were easy targets for physical elimination by Balaguer. In response, some experimented with building underground tunnels and bunkers as the Viet Cong were doing, called *tumbas vivas* or living graves.

The diverging tendencies led to the fracturing of 1J4. One faction, the *transformistas*, wanted to build a Marxist vanguard party. Keeping the name 1J4, this group joined the MPD. According to Fafa Taveras, 'There was a great deal of preaching about the unity of the peasants and workers, but in reality, nothing.'[31]

From 1966 to 1978, the *doce años* of Balaguer deployed deadly repression against the left. The government imprisoned, deported and physically eliminated the most active leaders, as well as activists in an awakening peasant movement. The Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Dominicana in Santo Domingo records the names of hundreds of mostly young people exterminated by the police, the military, or death squads (la Banda Colorá) during the doce años. One notorious event took place in January 1972, when government forces ambushed and killed 1J4 leader Amaury German Aristy, along with Virgilio Perdomo, Bienvenido Leal Prandy, and Ulises Arquimedes Ceron Polanco. The four young men, known as 'los Palmeros', symbolized the fading hope of using armed struggle to deliver the country from Balaguer's continuation of Trujillismo.

The atomization of the left continued, with the most radical elements shrinking and over time disappearing. With Balaguer's historic defeat in the presidential election of 1978, the PRD came to power and many leaders of the left were drawn into mainstream parties. Rafael Pérez Modesto recalls that, after his release from prison in the early 1970s, he met with Juan Bosch, who asked, 'Do you want to go back to prison, or do you want to accomplish something?'[32]

Foquismo's Last Gasp

If the April 1965 uprising in support of the constitutionalists was largely spontaneous, the last major act of armed resistance, Francisco Caamaño's invasion of February 1973, was the culmination of more than five years of planning, political infighting, and military training among a small band of Dominican guerrillas in Cuba.

Caamaño, a popular hero of the 1965 civil war, had left the country and made his way to Cuba. There, with a small and shrinking band of Dominican fighters, Caamaño supervised years of training that alternated with frustration. Caamaño had arrived just after the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia in October 1967, a symbolic end to the foquista wave. Even so Caamaño believed that 'heroic actions' consummated by a 'charismatic' and 'patriotic figure' could overcome the lack of collaboration on the ground and the small number of men in his expedition (Hermann 2013, 390). The action would repeat the success of the cuban M26J, 'with Caamaño taking the role of Fidel . . . and the Cordillera Central substituting for the Sierra Maestra' (Mato Moquete 2000, 135).

The position of the Cuban government evolved away from overt support for armed invasions against neighboring states, although by most accounts Fidel Castro delivered what he had promised to Caamaño. In early February 1973, Caamaño and nine men at last landed at Playa Caracoles near Azua. Making their way into the nearby mountains, they soon found themselves under attack by the armed forces. On 16 February Caamaño and two other guerrillas were captured and summarily executed on Balaguer's direct orders. Hamlet Hermann, one of the survivors, noted that conditions in the Dominican Republic were far less propitious in 1973 than they had been in earlier years, yet the attack went forward.

Legacies of the Guerrilla

A critical evaluation of guerrilla movements in the Dominican Republic must begin with a recognition of their repeated failures, failures that cost many lives. Roberto Cassá (2007, 93) condemns 'ultra-leftism' for its erroneous goal of 'making a revolution in the short term'. For those who participated there are other lessons. 'It was the era,' explained Chaljub Mejía. 'You can't even talk about 'errors,' or at most only about 'noble errors'. . . . It was an infantile stage; the left was led by men and women who had no experience but were well-meaning.'[33] The activists and former combatants felt a profound moral and political debt to those who had fought and died before them. They believed that they had no alternative but to take up arms against the political, social and economic repression of Trujillo, the Triumvirate, and Balaguer.

The words of Minú Tavárez Mirabal are a fitting coda to this chapter. The daughter of Minerva Mirabal and Manolo Tavárez, she was orphaned by repression against the left. Today she sees her mother and father as products of their age, 'a time when it was very easy to distinguish the good from the bad.' In that era 'the ideals of the left had the power to mobilize . . . and the concept of building a better world conferred a sense of moral superiority.' At a point in the past the left was defeated, she continues, yet came to identify itself with that defeat. Today, there are streets named after the Mirabals, Manolo, and Caamaño, but the reality is that 'in this country the left has never held power. What we are today is the responsibility of the right.'[34]

Notes

1. See Matías Ramon Mella (1864, Jan.). Manual de Guerra de Guerrillas. Available at: https://eldia.com.do/mella-elaboro-el-manual-de-guerra-de-guerrillas-una-defensa-ante-los-enemigos/.
2. See Rodríguez Demorizi (1963, 103) quoted in Lilon-Larrauri (1998).

3. Authors' interview with 'Negro' Veras (Santo Domingo, 28 Jan. 2019), one of few surviving members of the anti-Trujillo group known as 'Los Panfleteros de Santiago'.
4. On the earlier plots against Trujillo see Pou Garcia (2009).
5. Authors' interview with Porfirio and Doroteo Rodríguez (Santo Domingo, 14 Mar. 2019), grandsons of Juan Rodríguez.
6. Ibid.
7. See also Ameringer (1974, 1996) and Gleijeses (1989).
8. Authors' interviews with José Israel Cuello (Santo Domingo, 14 Mar. 2019) and José Daniel Ariza Cabral (Santo Domingo, 13 Mar. 2019).
9. In the words of a sympathetic critic Cordero Michel (2009, 137).
10. See Hennessy (1972, 12–15) and Martz (1970, 172, 189–193).
11. Recollection by Leandro Guzmán quoted in Galván (1997, 246–247).
12. Authors' interviews with Rafael Chaljub Mejía (Santo Domingo, 12 Mar. 2019), José Daniel Ariza, Cocuyo Báez (Santo Domingo, 15 Mar. 2019), and José Israel Cuello.
13. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
14. Authors' interview with Minú Tavárez Mirabal (Santo Domingo, 14 Mar. 2019).
15. Authors' interviews with José Daniel Ariza; and Rafael Pérez Modesto (Santo Domingo, 13 Mar. 2019).
16. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
17. Authors' interview with Cocuyo Báez.
18. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
19. Authors' interview with Minú Tavárez.
20. Marino de Jesús Villanueva who was a member of congress for Bosch's PRD when the new constitution was approved. Quoted in Méndez, W. (2013). Constitución de 1963 cumple hoy 50 años. *Listin Diario*, 29 Apr. Available at: https://listindiario.com/la-republica/2013/04/29/275031/constitucion-de-1963-cumple-hoy-50-anos.
21. Authors' interview with Cocuyo Báez.
22. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
23. Guerrero, R.A. (2015). Un muchacho escucha el discurso de Manolo, 1963 [online]. *Acento*. Available at: https://acento.com.do/2015/opinion/8258049-un-muchacho-escucha-el-discurso-de-manolo-1963/.
24. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
25. Authors' interview with José Daniel Ariza.
26. Authors' interview with Fafa Taveras (Santo Domingo, 12 Mar. 2019).
27. Treaster, J. (1985). 20 Years after Dominican War, Wounds Linger. *New York Times*, 1 May 1985, p. A2.
28. Authors' interview with Fafa Taveras.
29. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
30. Ibid.
31. Authors' interview with Fafa Taveras.
32. Authors' interview with Rafael Pérez.
33. Authors' interview with Rafael Chaljub.
34. Authors' interview with Minú Tavárez.

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4

NOTES ON THE GUERRILLA EXPERIENCE IN VENEZUELA (1958–1994)[1]

Eudald Cortina Orero

The international context marked by the Cold War, the impact of the Cuban Revolution and the restrictive political system following the overthrow of the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez (1952–1958) were all behind the advent of the guerrilla movement in Venezuela.

The governance agreement signed by Acción Demorática (AD), the Partido Social Cristiano (Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente, COPEI) and the centrist URD, known as the 'Punto Fijo Pact', excluded the PCV. The tension between the blocs was behind this decision, despite the fact that the communists had been one of the main forces opposing the dictatorship and had demonstrated a talent for conciliation. The PCV had collaborated closely with the rest of the parties, primarily with the Juventud de AD and had formed part of the so-called Junta Patriótica, a unitary opposition platform promoted by Fabricio Ojeda, one of the leaders of the URD. The PCV's exclusion from the agreement did not lead to an immediate break with the institutions, insofar as the party leant its support to Wolfgang Larrazábal, the URD's candidate in the presidential elections held in December 1958.

These elections were won by Rómulo Betancourt, a historic leader of AD, a party whose internal situation reflected huge contradictions. On the one hand, while its leaders had opted for exile, others had remained in the country to oppose the dictatorship. And, on the other, young leaders such as Domingo Alberto Rangel, Américo Martín, Simón Sáez Mérida and Moisés Moleiro, critical with the partisan management and reactionary drift of Betancourt (Gott 1971; Lamberg 1979), started to appear on the scene. This sector was radicalized by the influence of the Cuban Revolution and the example of sister parties like the APRA in Peru, from whose ranks the APRA Rebelde of Luis de la Puente Úceda had split.[2] The internal crisis was resolved with the expulsion of the leaders of Buró Juvenil, who in April 1960 formed the MIR (Marín 2013; Moleiro 1967).

By then, Cuba had emerged as a beacon for a broad sector of Venezuelan youth, both for those who had been excluded from the governance agreement and for those belonging to sectors of the signatory parties critical with Betancourt (the Juventud de AD and the URD). Only a month after the revolutionary victory, Fidel Castro visited Venezuela on the anniversary of the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez. On his first international trip, the Cuban leader was received at the National Congress and the Universidad Central de Venezuela. His speeches marked a generation who, in the following years, would swell the ranks of the guerrilla groups (Linárez 2011; Gott 1971). It was in the university milieu where the link between the members of the Juventud

de AD and the militants of the PCV had been forged, as a result of the struggle against the dictatorship, in the underground Frente Universitario (Salazar 1978; Gott 1971). And the students were also the first to question the course steered by Betancourt and his policies.

The mobilizations escalated just a few months after he had assumed the presidency. The economic recession, the deterioration of public services and the wage cuts, deriving from the drop in oil revenues, fueled a cycle of social unrest that would just go from bad to worse up until 1962 (Oliveros Espinoza 2012). To the financial grievances were added political ones, as reflected in the protests against the visit of US Vice-President Richard Nixon in May 1958 and the student mobilizations that became increasingly more widespread between 1959 and 1961 (Prieto 2007; Pereyra 1994). The government's response was to step up the repression, suspend constitutional guarantees and close down universities (Valsalice 1975).

Besides the repression in the streets, a number of measures were implemented to curb public freedoms and rights to political participation, such as the occupation of the printing plant of *Tribuna Popular*, belonging to the PCV, and the seizure of the MIR's weekly *Izquierda*.[3] The militants of both parties were expelled from the Central de Trabajadores de Venezuela, the country's main trade union organization, while the deputies of the MIR and the PCV were stripped of their parliamentary immunity (Gott 1971; Oliveros Espinoza 2012).

Nor was the Betancourt government free from strife, the ministers of the URD being especially conflictive. Caracas' progressive alignment with the United States and its stance on the Cuban Revolution led to disputes within the cabinet, which were resolved with the dismissal of Minister of Foreign Affairs Arcaya, who had refused to sign an anti-Cuban motion tabled by the United States during the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS. After his dismissal, in August 1960 the rest of the members of the cabinet belonging to the URD resigned (Gott 1971; Prieto 2007). While pro-Cuban demonstrations were being staged in the streets, Betancourt finally broke off diplomatic relations with the island in November 1961. Kennedy's visit a month later would confirm the good relations between the Venezuelan government and the United States (Valsalice 1975).

The Insurrectional Perspective: From Carúpano to the Creation of the FALN

As the opportunities for participation dwindled, the Venezuelan Left began to drift towards armed confrontation. In October 1960, the MIR openly raised the possibility of armed insurrection against the government in a leader published in the weekly *Izquierda*. Marín describes this as 'the one-way trip of the Venezuelan Left down the path of armed struggle.' The government reacted by arresting the MIR's leaders and closing down its newspaper, in an insurrectional climate known as the *Popularazo* (Marín 2013). In a more surreptitious fashion, the PCV gradually assumed this option as the only possible course for Venezuela. If in 1961 the PCV had recognized the need to prepare itself for the 'future of violence hanging over the country' (Robledo 1971), in December 1962 the 5th Plenary Session of the Central Committee formally assumed the option of armed struggle (Lamberg 1979). In this transition towards violence, the PCV created several self-defense structures and reinforced the military apparatus created during the resistance against Pérez Jiménez (Gott 1971; García Ponce 1977; García and Camacho Barrios 1982).[4]

The transition to armed conflict was not without its tensions in the PCV and, in a sense, its leaders were surpassed by the very momentum of its young cadres, who began to carry out armed actions without the party's endorsement. In this context, a group belonging to the Juventud Comunista was responsible for one of the first major urban guerrilla operations in

Venezuela, with the hijacking of an airplane belonging to the airline Avensa in November 1961. After dropping pamphlets condemning the repression over Caracas, the commando diverted the plane to Curacao (Linárez 2011).

While the UTC were taking shape in the cities, in the rural areas the first training centers, which would lead to the creation of the guerrilla groups, were being established. Thus, as from 1961, those promoted by the PCV and the MIR appeared in Lara, Portuguesa, Falcón, Mérida and Yaracuy States (Gott 1971).[5] These first guerrilla focos were characterized by their fragmentation and their lack of a unified command (Valsalice 1975; Pereyra 1994) and appear to have been linked to the military uprisings breaking out in 1962.

From very early on, Betancourt had to cope with the insubordination of the armed forces which found its maximum expression in a number of uprisings representing different political persuasions. In September 1958, a group of servicemen seized the Palacio Blanco, facing the seat of the Venezuelan government. This insurrection, identified with the Right, involved military commanders like Juan de Dios Moncada, Nicolás Hurtado and Manuel Azuaje, who years later would join the insurgency (Linárez 2011). Between December 1960 and February 1961, there were further uprisings in La Guaira and Caracas (Prieto 2007), followed in 1962 by the main military insurrections of the period in Carúpano and Puerto Cabello, which would end up shaping the structure of the Venezuelan guerrilla.

These uprisings were of an eminently nationalist nature and combined political and military demands. The military rebels in Carúpano, grouped in the Movimiento de Recuperación Democrática, sought the government's dismissal, the reestablishment of civic freedoms, a stop to the use of the armed forces as an instrument of repression and the return of military exiles (Duarte Parejo 2005). The demands of the rebels in Puerto Cabello were no different: the forming of a provisional government, the implementation of a Third World foreign policy, the release of political prisoners and the reinstatement of demoted servicemen (Valsalice 1975). The *Carupanazo* and the *Porteñazo* had the active support of the MIR and the PCV, for which reason both parties were illegalized, while temporarily retaining their parliamentary representation. It was this measure that ultimately forced them both to take up arms (Lamberg 1979). The Left of the URD would follow suit, with Ojeda renouncing his seat and the formation of the Frente Guerrillero Rudas Mesones in the borderlands between Lara and Portuguesa States (Abreu 2013).

With the incorporation of the military rebels, in February 1963 the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) began to take shape. Politically led by the PCV, the FALN combined the guerrilla fronts that had managed to stabilize their situation—the Frente José Leonardo Chirinos, commanded by Douglas Bravo in Falcón, and the Frente Guerrillero Libertador, led by Juan Vicente Cabezas in Lara; the urban UTC and scattered guerrilla detachments, structured under the Comando Nacional Guerrillero; and the military rebels represented by the Movimiento 2 de Junio, the Movimiento 4 de Mayo and the Unión Cívico-Militar.[6] The leading role that these soldiers played during the initial stages of the insurgency is highlighted in both the founding act of the FALN and the choice of the navy captain Manuel Ponte Rodríguez as its national commander. This situation, together with the nationalist discourse of the early FALN, might have suggested that the PCV still preferred an insurrectional solution to the crisis, promoting an alliance with the progressive sectors of the armed forces to this end.

During that period, the composition of the insurgency, particularly at a leadership level, was characterized by the presence of young militants from the urban professional and middle classes who, by and large, had been radicalized at university.[7] This prevalence of urban militants was due to several factors. First and foremost, it was in the cities where the struggle against the dictatorship was more intense. Second, most of the urban militants were forced to find refuge

in the emerging rural guerrilla foco by the wave of government repression following the military uprisings. Finally, this exodus of young urban militants to the country's rural areas cannot be disassociated from the expansion of the foquismo as a revolutionary paradigm for Latin America in the 1960s.

Thus, following the failure of the military uprisings, both the PCV and the MIR gave priority to the rural guerrilla as the principal form of armed intervention. In this transition, they could rely on Cuban support for training and logistics alike. As a matter of fact, at the end of 1963 the Venezuelan government intercepted a cargo of arms, dispatched from Cuba to the FALN, off the coast of Falcón. Consequently, at the 9th Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS, held in Washington in July 1964, it was agreed to break off diplomatic relations and commercial exchanges with Cuba (Mondolfi Gudat 2017; Aguilera Peralta 2009). In the following years, the Cuban authorities would go out of their way to accommodate the Venezuelan guerrilla movement, whose leadership was still in the hands of the national communist party.

In the middle of 1963, following the establishment of the FALN, the Frente de Liberación Nacional (FLN) was created as a political directorate to guide the armed struggle, and a broad anti-imperialist political line, capable of integrating the different opposition forces, was adopted (Prieto 2007; FLN 1964). In this connection, the FLN promoted three basic objectives: (1) to achieve national independence and a return to democracy; (2) to recuperate state assets and to defend national wealth; and (3) to establish a democratic, nationalist and popular government.[8]

Between 1962 and 1965, the FALN managed to create five fronts throughout the country. To the consolidated Frente José Leonardo Chirinos in Falcón State were added the Frente Simón Bolívar in Lara and Portuguesa States (Gabaldón Márquez 2018); the Frente José Antonio Páez in Portuguesa, Trujillo and Barinas States (Abreu 2013); and the Frente Manuel Ponte Rodríguez in Monagas State (Abreu 2017). Although there were militants from different parties in most of the focos, these four fronts remained under the control of the PCV. For its part, the MIR managed to consolidate the Frente Guerrillero Ezequiel Zamora in El Bachiller. Subsequently, in the context of the pacification that the communist guerrilla pursued, the MIR created the Frente Antonio José de Sucre in the area of Sucre, Monagas and Anzoátegui, which was reinforced by MIR militants disassociated from the fronts dominated by the PCV.

While the FALN was creating its rural guerrilla foco and having to cope with the capture of most of its leaders and different counterinsurgency offensives, the actions with the greatest impact were still being carried out in the capital. These were especially intense in 1963, the year in which the operational capacity of the UTC was at its height and when the Venezuelan guerrilla made it to the front pages of the international press. In February, emulating the hijacking of the *Santa María* by members of the Directorio Revolucionario Ibérico de Liberación, Venezuelan guerrilleros seized the ship *Anzoátegui*, on its way to New Orleans, diverting it to Brazil.[9] In August, the FALN kidnapped the Hispano-Argentinean football player Alfredo Di Stefano, who was on tour in the country with Real Madrid. Although he was freed three days later, the guerrilla achieved substantial international media coverage. Also in 1963, the FALN captured Coronel James Chenault, Deputy Chief to the US Mission to Venezuela, who was freed a month later.

At this stage, the objective of the guerrilla actions was eminently propagandistic, noteworthy being those aimed at decrying the imperialist presence in the country. In this vein, between 1963 and 1964 the FALN set fire to the premises of the American Chamber of Commerce in Venezuela and stormed the US Military Mission in Caracas and the home of the political advisor of its embassy.[10] In October 1964, the FALN kidnapped Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Smolen with a view to achieving the release of the Vietnamese revolutionary leader Nguyen Van Troi.

The political pressure brought to bear on them forced the kidnappers to free Smolen, the subsequent repression hitting the urban structures of the FALN hard (Linárez 2011).

On the political stage, there was a dual crackdown on the guerrilla at the end of 1963. In response to the death of a guard during a train attack, a presidential decree deprived the 23 delegates of the PCV and the MIR of their parliamentary immunity, after which they were promptly imprisoned (Lamberg 1979; Prieto 2007). With a participation rate of over 90 per cent, the elections, won by Raúl Leoni (AD) with just 33 per cent of the ballots cast, were not affected by the guerrilla campaign. The little or no impact of the PCV's and the FALN's abstention call shored up the Punto Fijo regime and raised considerable debate in the armed organizations which led to a schism in the guerrilla movement (Cortina Orero 2010).

Pacification Policy and Crisis of the Venezuelan Revolutionary Movement

Leoni created a broad-based coalition, widening the circle of power to those parties that had not signed the Punto Fijo Pact and consolidating a solid bipartisan system, with COPEI going into opposition. The regime managed to paint an imaginary picture of political and social integration which legitimized governmental decisions, while hindering the progression of the opposition parties excluded from the accords (Martínez 2010). In relation to the guerrilla movement, Leoni implemented a pacification strategy with which his successor Rafael Caldera would continue, combining political liberalization with more selective ways of repressing the armed organizations, including the disappearance of people (Cortina Orero 2010).

Leoni's conciliatory overtures attracted some of the imprisoned leaders who started to distance themselves from the armed struggle. This was the case with Domingo Alberto Rangel, the secretary general of the MIR, who advocated for reverting to the pacific struggle contending that violent action was not justified in Venezuela, that this had been adopted in a hasty fashion and that its spread to the rural areas had been a fiasco, given the country's social make-up (Gott 1971).

In April 1964, the shortcomings of the insurrectional strategy were analyzed at the 6th Plenary Session of the PCV, resulting in three currents: the first argued in favor of winding down the armed struggle, steering the party back towards mass politics and pushing for an amnesty, party legalization and electoral participation; the second suggested that the military wing of the PCV should assume its mistakes, rejecting right-now coups and defending the need to prepare the party for a prolonged war; and the third, deriving from the disaffection between the political leaders and their guerrilla counterparts, steadily consolidated its opposition to the PCV, under the leadership of Douglas Bravo on the Frente José Leonardo Chirinos.

Even though the prolonged war strategy was adopted at the 6th plenary session, in the following years the PCV headed down the path to peace. In 1965, it adopted the *Paz Democrática* line, before formally renouncing the armed struggle in April (Robledo 1971). Those who argued for the need to continue the fight formed the Partido de la Revolución Venezolana (PRV), restructuring the FLN and the FALN, now without the presence of members of the PCV.[11] In strategic terms, the PRV-FALN defended the *Insurrección Combinada* thesis, which envisaged the short-term importance of the insurrection in the urban areas, while stressing the need to continue waging a long-term war in the countryside.

The PCV's internal crisis and the creation of the PRV preceded the intense discussions on the revolutionary option during the conference of the OLAS in Cuba. Whereas the PCV, one of the few communist parties that had actively pursued and led the armed struggle, was more inclined to peace, Cuba encouraged the creation of guerrilla groups as the main course of action to the liberation of the Latin American people. The Venezuelan communists progressively drifted

away from the Cuban postulates, rejecting the insurgency as a hegemonic form of struggle and questioning the importance of the rural world for the Venezuelan revolutionary process. (Robledo 1971). In this context, Castro backed the faction led by Douglas Bravo and entered into a fierce debate with the PCV, publicly condemning its 'lame' and 'defeatist' attitude.[12]

Bravo not only received encouraging words. In July 1966, a Cuban-Venezuelan contingent disembarked in Chichiribiche (Falcón), led by the comandante of the PRV Luben Petkoff and formed by experienced Cuban comandantes such as Arnaldo Ochoa, Ángel Frías and Orestes Guerra (Linárez 2007). A year later, in May 1967, a new contingent of Venezuelan guerrilleros and Cuban internationalists arrived in Machurucuto (Miranda) with the aim of joining the MIR's guerrilla in El Bachiller. The expedition included Cuban comandantes like Raúl Menéndez Tomassevich, Ulises Rosales del Toro, Silvio García Planas and Antonio Briones Montoto, who was captured and killed (Kruijt 2017; Pérez Marcano and Sánchez García 2007). The failure of both expeditions led to a definitive estrangement between the Cuban authorities and Douglas Bravo and to successive divisions in the PRV, the resulting splinter groups including the Movimiento de Salvación Nacional and Punto Cero.

Renewal of the Left and the Persistence of Armed Initiatives

In December 1968, Rafael Caldera (COPEI) became president, implying the first alternation of power between the two Punto Fijo parties. The debate revolving around the elections and the pacification policies implemented by Caldera ultimately exacerbated the crisis in which the guerrilla movement had been immersed since 1963.

The PCV fielded candidates in the elections under the name of Unidos para Avanzar, achieving its legalization in 1969 after a presidential amnesty. This was accompanied by a profound internal crisis and different schisms in the context of the Left's renewal. The most important of these groups was the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), created in 1971 by leaders who had stood out in the armed struggle like Pompeyo Márquez, Teodoro Petkoff and Tirso Pinto, the latter comandante of the Frente Simón Bolívar (Ellner 1988). After the creation of the MAS, there was a new rift leading to that of La Causa Radical, a party led by Alfredo Maneiro, the comandante of the Frente Manuel Ponte Rodríguez, which, in the following years, would have substantial electoral success (Nogueira-Budny 2014). Lastly, Guillermo García Ponce, the military chief of the PCV, and Juan Vicente Cabezas, the comandante of the Charal guerrilla, also broke with the party, creating Vanguardia Comunista (Linárez 2011).

In the insurgent ranks, COPEI's victory exacerbated the crisis affecting the revolutionary movement, triggering a process of organizational fracture and strategic review. While the PRV-FALN had to cope with the loss of Cuban aid, the MIR started down the path towards its definitive pacification.[13] Between 1969 and 1970, this organization was immersed in an internal crisis that led to the creation of two new guerrilla groups: the Organización de Revolucionarios (OR) and Bandera Roja (BR). The latter suffered a new division in 1976, with the creation of Bandera Roja-Marxista Leninista, which continued the work of the Frente Antonio José de Sucre. In parallel, BR created its guerrilla apparatus under the name of the Frente Américo Silva.

This dispersion of the revolutionary movement was accompanied by a review of the guerrilla's strategy, the debate revolving around its progressive isolation and lack of influence on the mass movement at a time of widespread social unrest.[14] This self-criticism resulted in the promotion of different semi-legal structures during the 1970s. Possibly due to its structural weakness, the OR was the organization that began its transition towards legality at the earliest date and with the greatest success, forming the Liga Socialista (LS) in 1973 (Cortina Orero 2010).[15] In 1969, the Partido de la Revolución Venezolana (PRV) approved its *Viraje Táctico*,[16] although

it was not until 1976 that it promoted Ruptura, its semi-legal apparatus. The BR steered the same course, creating several public bodies grouped around the Comités de Luchas Populares.

This option, far from being uniform, coexisted with the persistence of armed initiatives and, in quite a few cases, disputes between the legal structures and the underground apparatuses. The most important guerrilla actions during this period focused on helping imprisoned servicemen escape and kidnappings for ransom,[17] including that of the industrialist William Niehous, the vice-president of Owens-Illinois. Termed the longest kidnapping in the history of Venezuela, Niehous was snatched by the Grupos de Comandos Revolucionarios, formed by ex-PRV militants critical with the organization's policy shift (Castro Rojas 1979), and held captive until 1979. According to Linárez (2006), this action had the support of the structures of OR and BR, the governmental repression subsequently affecting their most visible organizations.

The brunt was primarily borne by the LS, whose secretary general Jorge Rodríguez was arrested and died under torture. Nonetheless, the LS continued with its institutionalization process, joining the Electoral Council in 1978 and participating in the elections of that same year in support of the MAS. In this context, the swearing in of Herrera Campins as president in 1979 precipitated the pacification of the PRV and the OR, plus the legalization of its leaders. In contrast, BR refused to participate in this process and continued the armed struggle until 1994, when the Frente Américo Silva was ultimately demobilized.[18]

By then, Venezuela was immersed in a new cycle of social mobilizations whose major milestones were the *Caracazo* in 1989 and the military uprisings in February and November 1992. These mobilizations were triggered by the package of neoliberal measures approved by President Carlos Andrés Pérez on the urging of the International Monetary Fund (López Maya 2003) and signified the emergence of new political actors who would mark the country's future. One of those new leaders was Hugo Chávez who, commanding the Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 (MBR-200), led the attempted coup d'état in February 1992.

Both BR and the PRV participated in the uprisings of that year in coordination with the military rebels. The links between the young officers and the ex-guerrilleros dated back to the previous decade. The crisis of the Venezuelan guerrilla movement had yet again highlighted civil-military collaboration as a way of gaining power. In this connection, the PRV implemented a political strategy tailored to the armed forces, which was well received by disgruntled officers and found its expression in the emergence of underground military lodges and groups like the Alianza Revolucionaria de Militares Activos and the MBR-200 (Garrido 1999).

Following the amnesty, Chávez became president in 1998. By then, the rift with the leaders of the PRV (Tercer Camino) and BR was for all to see. The advent of Chavism defined a new political cycle in Venezuela that swept away the rationales that had prevailed in the previous decades. The guerrilla organizations had dissolved into peripheral parties and their militants had to take a stance in light of the new political scenario. Some, like Bravo and Puerta Aponte, would become ferocious opponents of the Bolivarian Revolution, while others interpreted this process as a continuity of their struggles and would hold positions of responsibility in the new Bolivarian institutions.

Notes

1. This chapter has been written in the framework of the Plan I2C (Xunta de Galicia), Project HAR2016–77828-R (Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad—AEI and the ERDF), and the HistAmérica research group, University of Santiago de Compostela (Xunta de Galicia, 2017 GPC GI-1661).
2. The APRA Rebelde would later change its name to the MIR and, as with its Venezuelan counterparts, would commence guerrilla actions in 1965 (see Chapter 6).

3. Subsequently, the censorship of information on the development of the guerrilla was reinstated, this now being under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
4. Evidence of this is the participation of communist militants in the expedition of the Movimiento de Liberación Dominicana which, in June 1959, disembarked on the coasts of Constanza, Maimón and Estero Hondo to combat the Trujillo dictatorship (Cabieses Donoso 1963).
5. Together with the guerrilleros of the MIR and the PCV, other insurgent organizations emerged, including the Bolivarian and nationalist Directorio Revolucionario Venezolano which, in 1961, created a guerrilla foco in Sucre (Linárez 2006).
6. Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (1963). Acta fundacional de las FALN [document]. *Venezuela*, 20 Feb. Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados (CeDeMA). Available at http://cedema.org/ver.php?id=3777 [Accessed on 10 May 2019].
7. With the pacification of the PCV and the dispersion of the MIR, there emerged a second guerrilla generation in which the militants from the peasantry would play a more preponderant role at leadership levels.
8. FLN. Program of Action of the FLN. Venezuela. [program] Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados (CeDeMA), Ref. A-4.
9. The Directorio was a unitary organization formed by Spanish and Portuguese exiles to combat the Franco and Salazar dictatorships. In 1961, its militants hijacked the transatlantic liner *Santa María*, with nearly 1,000 passengers on board. Federico Fernández Ackerman, who had participated in the hijacking, was also a member of the commando that seized the *Anzoátegui*.
10. In this regard, the FALN attacked US commercial interests by blowing up the pipelines of the Creole Petroleum Corporation (Standard Oil), Mobil Oil, Texas Oil and Gulf Oil.
11. Douglas Bravo, Lubén Petkoff, Gregorio Lunar Márquez and Francisco Prada formed the Comandancia Nacional of the FALN. Ojeda was named president of the FLN and, after his death, was replaced by Elías Manuitt. Two parallel FLN-FALN organizations coexisted for a time, the first under communist control and the restructured FLN-FALN monopolized by the PRV.
12. Castro Ruz, F. (1967). Speech Delivered by Fidel Castro at the Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Storming of the Presidential Palace, Havana, 13 Mar. 1967. Available at: www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1967/esp/f130367e.html [Accessed on 10 May 2019].
13. The MIR, led by Moisés Moleiro and Américo Martín, finally took the electoral route, first on its own and then in alliance with the MAS (Moleiro et al. 1993).
14. In 1970, Venezuela experienced levels of conflict unknown since 1958, 72.5 per cent of the incidents having a socioeconomic origin and 17.9 per cent involving violence (López Maya 2008).
15. Initially called Liga por los Derechos del Pueblo y el Socialismo, as from 1998 the LS supported Hugo Chávez's candidacy, being one of the organizations that, in 2007, joined the Chavist Partido Socialista Unificado de Venezuela. President Nicolás Maduro was a militant of this organization.
16. PRV (1971). Cinco años de combate por la liberación y el socialismo. *Fuego*, 4–5, pp. 3–30.
17. In Jan. 1975, BR and the PRV were behind the Cuartel San Carlos jailbreak in which 23 guerrilleros were freed. In Aug. 1977, another 13 militants managed to escape from 'La Pica', in the first operation carried out by the FAS.
18. By 1982, this structure had been practically dismantled as a result of the Cantaura massacre in which 23 combatants had died (Rosas 2005).

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5

THE FIRST CYCLE OF THE GUATEMALAN INSURGENCY (1954–1972)[1]

Carlos Figueroa Ibarra

Introduction

In this chapter, the first cycle of the Guatemalan insurgency is analyzed and interpreted. The central thesis is that two factors propelled the Guatemalan Revolutionary Left towards armed struggle: first, a plainly repressive military dictatorship; and second, the schism that the Cuban Revolution had caused in Latin America. Its impact was primordial in the sense that it challenged everything that the old Left, including the PGT, viz. the communist party of Guatemala, had stood for, especially communist beliefs: the way to and character of the revolution; the significance and role of the party; the characteristics of revolutionary violence; the relationship between armed and mass struggle; and the role of the different social classes in the revolutionary process and their association with the revolutionary subject.

The first revolutionary cycle ended in clear defeat for the Guatemalan insurgent movements. This reverse was interpreted differently by the PGT and the two movements that had split from the party, namely, the FAR and the Nueva Organización Revolucionaria de Combate (NORC), which only underscored their dissimilarities, especially as regards their modus operandi, during the second revolutionary cycle (1972–1996). Another case is that of the MR13, which had nothing to do with the PGT and whose ideology differed with respect to other revolutionary expressions.

From a Bourgeois Democratic State to an Anti-Feudal and Anti-Imperialist One: Taking Up Arms

The triumph of the Guatemalan Revolution on 20 October 1944 not only spelled the end of the dictatorship of Jorge Ubico (1931–1944), but also of a short-term attempt to restore the regime. In the subsequent decade, it sought to dismantle the oligarchic regime deriving from the liberal reforms of the nineteenth century—a regime that had been sustained by a one-person dictatorship, its dependence on and submission to the United States, its agro-export latifundia system and the indentured labor of the indigenous peoples. The 1944 Revolution intended to establish a liberal and representative democracy, to build a republic with political sovereignty and economic independence, to bring an end to the latifundia system and to modernize the capitalist relations of production. In the context of the Cold War, the United States, allied to

the oligarchy, the anti-communist parties, the army, the Catholic Church and those sectors of the population living in fear of communism, finally managed to oust President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, contending that his government was a communist one whose aim was to establish such a regime in the country. This was a smokescreen for the counterrevolution initiated in 1954, whose objective was to restore the oligarchic society that was being dismantled by the revolution. The ousting of Arbenz was the origin of the internal armed conflict, whose first cycle is addressed below.

The counterrevolution of 1954 was a political watershed. The cutting short of a revolutionary process that pursued the democratic development of capitalism radically altered the conception of the nascent Guatemalan revolutionary Left. Contrary to the anti-communist propaganda throughout the Cold War, the PGT had not seen the political process unfolding between 1944 and 1954 as something that should be radicalized in pursuit of socialism. The party was perhaps the staunchest advocate of the reforms, which were not perceived as socialist but as bourgeois democratic. Until 1954, it had called for a government and mass organizations—the labor unions and peasant organizations—dominated by socialists and workers, until an indefinite future when the bourgeois democratic revolution would be transformed in a socialist phase (Alvarado 1994, 24–25).

US intervention in Guatemala not only restored the most conservative sectors of the oligarchy to power, but also reversed the reforms of 1944–1954 and put paid to the plans of the (now clandestine) PGT to establish a socialist state. A year after the counterrevolution, the PGT published a self-critical analysis. It had placed too much confidence in the national bourgeoisie who had eventually capitulated to imperialism; it had not energetically denounced the treason of the army's top brass for failing to distribute arms among the popular sectors; it had not tried to incorporate the loyal officers; it had not vigorously promoted its own class program for fear of provoking the powers that be; and it had neglected to build a solid worker-peasant alliance, while also neglecting its ideological tasks.[2]

Although the document did not explicitly mention 'the violent path to revolution', it was not difficult to deduce that it was referring to a forthcoming 'anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution' that would lead to a new type of government in which the proletariat would be the dominant class. That government would then establish a revolutionary democratic dictatorship and restructure the army with the integration of popular militias, a process that was impossible via the ballot box. Impossible because the state that the revolutionaries were opposing was a nascent military dictatorship. The overthrow of Arbenz and the establishment of a dictatorial regime unleashed a storm of violence in Guatemala that would last for four long and violent decades.

The Impact of the Cuban Revolution

But it would be several years before armed rebellion broke out. The first to take up arms were young officers, the 'Juventud Militar' as they were called in Latin America, on 13 November 1960.[3] There are indications that, even before the Cuban Revolution and the failed rebellion of 1960, the PGT had considered overthrowing the military dictatorship established in 1954, through a military coup or popular uprising. Such a coup, combined with a popular uprising, had brought about the 1944 Revolution. On the other hand, the very definition of a communist party had been profoundly influenced by Marxist-Leninist, or better said, Soviet interpretations. The party followed the Marxist-Leninist doctrine which implied democratic centralism and combating internal faction fighting—which eventually ended in the creation of splinter groups—in its tireless quest to maintain close ties with the masses.[4] This led it to infiltrate the Federación Autónoma Sindical de Guatemala, the coopted trade union of the dictator Castillo

Armas (1954–1957). Nonetheless, it deplored the fact that this audacious move had not been accompanied by a popular uprising, even though it did not dismiss the idea of allying with the military rebels. At a certain point, nor did it rule out a democratic solution through the so-called line of national conciliation, inspired by a similar approach once postulated by the Partido Comunista de España, involving a national agreement between all of the political parties, regardless of their ideological beliefs, to reach a democratic solution to the crisis triggered by the counterrevolution of 1954.[5]

The Cuban Revolution put an end to those expectations. On the one hand, it radicalized the Right and led the government of President-General Ydígoras Fuentes (1958–1963) to step up the repression. And on the other, it produced a political earthquake that shook the mindset of the PGT's leadership, members and sympathizers, as in most Latin American and Caribbean communist parties. Hitherto, the PGT had conceived the revolution as the result of a process similar to that of the Bolshevik uprising back in 1917. The concept of revolution defended by Che Guevara (1960, 1969a, 1969b) and Debray (1967) was diametrically opposed to that of the PGT.

One of the consequences of this new concept of revolutionary praxis and its ideological implications was the creation of new revolutionary organizations: the FAR in 1967, the NORC—which in 1972 was renamed the EGP—and the Organización del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA), up until 1971 a regional branch of the FAR and officially renamed in 1979 (Debray and Ramírez 1975).

Emergence and Defeat of the First Revolutionary Cycle

In spite of the initial setbacks suffered by the PGT following the counterrevolutionary coup that ousted Arbenz in 1954, it managed to survive as an underground organization. One of its leaders, José Alberto Cardoza, recalls that in the first months of 1960 it still had around 600 active members across the country.[6] He also remembers that the PGT had around 4,000 militants in the last days of the government of Arbenz. Nonetheless, a clandestine membership of 600 is significant given the highly repressive context in which the Guatemalan Left had to survive. Notwithstanding this, the PGT held its third congress from 20 to 22 May 1960 (Alvarado 1994, 4), which for Guerra Borgues, another PGT leader, was an organizational success.[7] Alvarado afterwards its secretary general, concluded that the PGT 'was essentially rebuilt' (Alvarado 1994, 44).

Other resolutions dealing with the use of revolutionary violence were passed at the congress. Whereas the reactionary classes were guiding the people towards violence, the party would shoulder 'the responsibility for that violence when the people are forced to make use of it for the sake of the revolution.' It was also agreed that the party should adopt specific measures to be essentially prepared to take part in the struggle, 'whatever form it takes' (Alvarado 1994, 44). Gutiérrez (1965, 32), a trade union leader and member of the political commission of the PGT, estimated that 53 per cent of the delegates were workers and peasants and, moreover, that 47 per cent had survived the prisons of the dictators Castillo Armas and Ydígoras Fuentes and, finally, that 6 per cent had been tortured by the regime's henchmen. Although he did not mention it, the proportion would have been substantially higher if he had included those who had returned from exile in his sample.

During those years of reconstruction, the PGT had organized its youth branch, the Juventud Patriótica del Trabajo (JPT), thus supplementing its working class and peasant militants with an important number of university and secondary school students, most of whom hailed from the urban lower middle classes. In the rural areas of the south coast and the northeast of the country, the party recruited more agricultural workers and peasants, many of them veteran agrarians of Arbenz's agrarian reform. In the 1960s, the urban militants of the PGT not only included

artisans and transport, railway, linotype and industrial workers, but also service sector workers, civil servants, teachers, professionals, students and intellectuals, farmworkers and peasants. Indigenous people were also incorporated, although, in the PGT imaginary, these were in fact rural proletarians or poor farmers.

These 'mass' or 'extended' organizations were not only the 'transmission belts of the revolutionary organization', but also its legal fronts. Since the PGT was banned and fiercely persecuted, its 'social organizations' acted as channels through which to engage, and implement policies for, broader segments of society. Special mention should go to the Partido de Unidad Revolucionaria (PUR), organized by leftist dissidents of the then government and other times legal opposition Partido Revolucionario (PR), combining both revolutionary and anti-imperialist democrats and communist militants.[8]

The regime's relentless persecution of the PGT forced it to develop what were called 'broad fronts', i.e. a commonwealth of revolutionary platforms. These and similar 'fronts' were created in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua in the forthcoming decades, in the form of political parties (like the PGT) or as politico-military organizations, as the guerrilla movements were called. They also served to recruit new militants. The PGT (1972) conceived these platforms as vanguard movements made up of 'the best sons of the people'.

In March 1962, the PGT called for the use of all forms of struggle. The Ydígoras Fuentes government was on its last legs. The resentment of the far-right of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (MLN), the rightist social democracy of the PR and the fledgling leftist social democracy of the Unión Revolucionaria Democrática (URD) and Democracia Cristiana Guatemalteca (DCG) against the corruption and severe repression had reached such a point that they took to the streets demanding the resignation of Ydígoras Fuentes (Gutiérrez 1962). Two months of continuous protests and street fighting brought the government to its knees, but this pre-insurrectional phase petered out two months later.

At the same time, a guerrilla column organized by the PGT, the PUR and other sectors, under the command of the former colonel Carlos Paz Tejada (army chief under Arévalo, Arbenz's predecessor) went into action in the department of Baja Verapaz (Figueroa Ibarra 2004). The name of the guerrilla group (20 October) referred to the date of the 1944 revolution, marking the beginning of the 'Guatemalan Spring' of the governments of Arévalo and Arbenz (1944–1954). Nevertheless, Paz Tejada's column was promptly defeated.

The MR13, another guerrilla initiative led by the former lieutenants Yon Sosa and Turcios Lima—both of whom had been involved in the military uprising of 1960—and launched in February 1962, seemed to hold more promise. Nevertheless, its guerrilla credo encountered many stumbling blocks, including the ideological influence of the Guatemalan and Mexican Trotskyists of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario which, led by Posadas, was affiliated to its international branch. This gave the MR13 a reputation for promoting a socialist revolution, while underscoring the importance of the peasantry in such a process.

In 1962, the MR13 had a hand in the founding of the FAR, in which the PGT and a short-lived organization called Movimiento 12 April also participated. But an ideological dispute arising from 1964 caused a rift between the MR13 and the FAR. MR13 chose to go its own way in 1965. Yon Sosa was killed on the Mexican side of the border with Guatemala in 1970 and his death was the final blow for the movement (Figueroa Ibarra, Paz and Taracena 2012).[9]

Between 1965 and 1966, the FAR reached its zenith, creating several frentes and carrying out a variety of actions: armed assaults, executions, economic sabotage, ambushing army units, occupying towns in the northeastern part of the country, armed propaganda, economic and political kidnappings and 'financial actions of a military character' (Alvarado 1994, 55). It resisted two offensives by the army in 1964 and 1965 (Debray and Ramírez 1975). But the third

one, launched the day after the death of its leader Turcios in a car accident and culminating in mid-1967, completely crushed the rural guerrilla (Debray and Ramírez 1975, 290–299).

The Guatemalan army unleashed a brutal offensive. The villages of the highlands of the Sierra de las Minas were evacuated, while those around the Atlantic Highway were occupied. Thereafter, permanent military garrisons were established there. The first phase of the offensive was psychological: the army assembled the village people, told them that they not only knew of their support of the insurgents, but also that the rebels had asked them to vote for Méndez Montenegro (1966–1970): 'You voted for him and now he is the president. So why does not the guerrilla demobilize?' The end of the formal military dictatorship and the establishment of an apparently civilian government, notwithstanding its demagogy, caused confusion among many of the villagers in the guerrilla zones. After all, the PGT and the FAR had supported Méndez Montenegro's candidacy.[10] The pep talk ended with the threat of severe punishment for anyone daring to continue to collaborate with the insurgents.

It was then the turn of La Mano Blanca, an anti-communist death squad, its members painting its logo (an extended hand) on the walls of the houses of the villagers presumed to be members of the local underground committees.[11] Intimidation was followed by action: the kidnapping, torture or murder of those singled out in this way. Terror was unceremoniously employed to smash the guerrillas' grassroots support networks: 'They tore their tongues out, their genitals were shoved into their mouths, they poked their eyes out, they left them on the roads down which they knew we would pass. We recognized some of them, while others had been completely disfigured by the raptors (birds of prey).'[12]

Lightly armed patrols with radios scaled the mountain peaks to spot guerrilla contingents, communicating sightings to mobile detachments on the road in order that they should intercept them when they tried to escape. These maneuvers were accompanied by the bombardment of the guerrilla's theaters of operations to terrorize the civilian population. Military offensives and similar acts of terror took place in Guatemala City and in the northern and western regions of the country, to wit, the insurgency's spheres of influence. Effectively, it took its toll on the guerrilla (Debray and Ramírez 1975, 297).

In March 1966, the army struck the guerrilla a resounding blow by capturing approximately 35 cadres and revolutionary militants belonging to different organizations, all of whom subsequently disappeared without trace (Figueroa Ibarra 1999). Counterinsurgency activities also had a significant impact on the urban actions and support networks of the so-called Resistencia Urbana.

Dozens of green berets commanded by US army officers stationed at the US Embassy helped in the design of counterinsurgency plans. It was part of the increasingly greater amount of military aid coming from the United States, supplemented by a notable increase in Guatemalan military spending (Figueroa Ibarra, Paz and Taracena 2012). The defeat of the first cycle of the insurgency cannot be understood in isolation from the second wave of terror that hit Guatemala.[13] Academic sources and data supplied by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (summarized in Figueroa Ibarra, Paz and Taracena 2012) provide estimates of the number of casualties, murders and disappearances: from 2,800 between 1966 and 1968 to 8,000 between 1962 and 1972. Approximately 300 guerrilleros were killed in action, along with an unknown number of local peasants supporting the insurgency (Debray and Ramírez 1975, 286; Melville and Melville 1971; Jonas 1972, 24).

The defeat of the revolutionary insurgency, for all to see by the end of 1967, did not affect all the revolutionary movements to the same degree. By then, those still standing included the PGT, the FAR and a group of combatants stationed in Cuba, where they were preparing a new revolutionary plan under the command of Ricardo Ramírez de León (whose nom de guerre

was Orlando Fernández and then Comandante Rolando Morán). This group would begin its activities as the NORC, before morphing into the EGP. Finally, the MR13, led by Yon Sosa, was completely dismantled.

The Interpretation of the Defeat

There are three different interpretations of the defeat suffered by all of the guerrilla movements in the 1960s: those of the PGT, the FAR and the future leader of the largest and most important guerrilla movement in the next revolutionary cycle in Guatemala. For the PGT, the defeat of 1967 had been fundamentally the result of the wrong decisions made by radicalized sectors of the JPT and the FAR. The FAR was created with Cuban support in December 1962, as the armed wing of the PGT. But the Cuban influence fostered its ideological and operational independence from the party. In January 1968, the FAR publicly disclosed its break with the PGT.[14] The members of the FAR and the JPT occupied a strong position in the PGT, which made concessions in order to preserve the necessary unity. The party also accepted that the armed activities be based on the foquismo, rather than relying on the fighting spirit of the Guatemalan people.[15]

The PGT's conception, first mentioned in a document drafted in 1968, was more extensively formulated in another approved at its fourth congress in 1972 (PGT 1972). In line with the definition proposed by the Centro Provisional de Dirección Revolucionaria—then a joint command of the PGT, the FAR and the JPT[16]—in 1965, the PGT defined the revolution that would pave the way to socialism as anti-imperialist, agrarian and popular. The war would be waged in various stages impelled by the 'driving forces of the revolution': urban and agricultural workers, poor peasants and small landholders, the salaried middle classes and small proprietors. The (future) Guatemalan Revolution would be violent, a prolonged popular revolutionary war that would be comprehensive (combining all forms of struggle) and multilateral (with several theaters). The stages would not follow a predetermined course but would depend on accumulating forces, attacking and defeating the enemy, seizing power and crushing the counterrevolution.

The FAR's interpretation of what was happening was nothing short of delirious: the revolutionaries could not back down, there could be no truce, the only thing that they could do was to continue the armed struggle. The army and its US advisers could go after them if they liked, 'only to fall into our ambushes and traps; let them go to the mountains to die; let them hunt us, we will disperse like mist before them; let them encounter us, we will receive them with the bullets that we took from them.'[17] These claims were made after only a handful of guerrillas had survived the onslaught of the army in the Sierra de las Minas.

It would be three years before the FAR finally accepted its defeat and the causes behind it. At its national convention in Guatemala City (from December 1970 to January 1971), during a particularly brutal offensive launched by the government of General Arana (1970–1974), there was bitter criticism of the previous foquismo, with a complete reorientation of its activities, implying explicit activism in urban mass organizations, being called for instead. This was the case throughout the 1970s and a determining factor in the emergence of the second guerrilla wave.

The self-critical attitude of the FAR can be found in a document released in 1973.[18] Between 1971 and 1973, it created an important urban organization largely made up of students recruited from the Escuela Normal para Varones, the specialized training institute for urban primary school teachers. After the electoral fraud of 1974, a group of labor lawyers from the DCG also helped in recruitment efforts. With these new recruiting and organizational assets, the FAR emerged from its darkest period.

A third interpretation was made by Ramírez de León, in what is generally known as the Documento de Marzo,[19] which set out ideas that he had previously developed in his biography of Turcios, published under the pseudonym of Orlando Fernández (Fernandez 1968). In a tone similar to the initial documents of the FAR, the Documento de Marzo departed from a basic premise: as a revolutionary instrument, the PGT was obsolete due to its bureaucracy; its leadership was not intimately convinced of the necessity of the war; they did not understand the role of politics in war or that of war policy; so, consequently, they were unfit for real military command.

In a geographical sense, the war in Guatemala developed slowly but surely, starting from a base to encompass new areas, new regions and new social sectors, before becoming a widespread national conflict. Since only war had the power to attract the urban masses, the movement had to start in the cities and then shift to the countryside, before returning again to the former. The peasantry would be the backbone and driving force of the revolution and the revolutionary war, while the indigenous population would play an essential role in the latter.

The theaters included three strategic areas: the area of greatest interest to the enemy (the south coast and the highlands); the area in which the enemy had their command posts and power centers (the urban and suburban milieus); and the area that the enemy deemed to be inert, where most of the indigenous masses lived. The strategic interest of the revolutionary forces had to be directly the opposite of that of the enemy, i.e. the areas in which the army showed the least interest should be of the greatest importance to the guerrilla. A confrontation with Yankee imperialism, the main enemy, was unavoidable. The insurgents had to sustain the war effort with their own resources and those obtained from the enemy, in order to maintain the independence of the revolutionary movement. Due to several causes, Guatemala was the weak link of imperialism. The leadership of the revolutionary forces had to be politico-military: there could be no political leaders who did not know how to wage war and no military leaders who needed political commissioners.

On the basis of these three interpretations, three separate revolutionary organizations emerged between 1972 and 1984. As already noted, the MR13 went into decline after the murder of Yon Sosa. The ORPA split from the FAR and, led by Rodrigo Asturias (whose nom de guerre was Gaspar Ilóm), became a new contender. The debate on the political and military elements involved in staging a revolution, which the Cuban Revolution had given rise to, led to three different outcomes in Guatemala. In the PGT, the political apparatus once again prevailed over the military one. The future EGP opted for a politico-military organization, a position generally adopted by the FAR, as well. Sometime later, the FAR would even go so far as to claim to be the 'authentic communist party', thus incurring the wrath of the PGT.

Epilogue

Without doubt, the first cycle of the Guatemalan guerrilla insurgency was strongly influenced by the Cuban Revolution. The conquest of power by the M26J and its allies shattered the paradigms of the traditional Left—particularly those of the communist parties—in Latin America, especially with regard to the revolutionary path to power. The Cuban Revolution gave priority to armed struggle, thus challenging the Leninist vision of armed insurrection stage-managed by a revolutionary party.

After 1959, many of those interpreting the Cuban Revolution embraced the idea of foquismo as a catalyst. At the same time, doubt was cast on the need for a leading party, as had been held since the Russian Revolution. The separation of powers between political and military apparatuses was also questioned. The guerrilla organization, rather than the party, was regarded as the basic instrument of the revolutionary struggle. The predominant scenario of this struggle, shifting from the city to the countryside, and the appraisal of the peasantry both

became relevant. All this was based on the assumption that the Cuban Revolution owed its success to the revolutionary flame kindled by the guerrilla foco.

The Cuban Revolution gave rise to a fierce ideological debate that led to the emergence of new revolutionary organizations in Latin America. Guatemala was no exception. But their doctrine was not grounded in Maoism or Trotskyism, as was the case in other countries of the region. Trotskyism only had a residual presence in the MR13 and its appeal to 'permanent revolution' was assumed by Yon Sosa also in a circumstantial manner. However, it did indeed cause a schism in the MR13, with all of the Trotskyists being subsequently expelled from the movement's ranks (Rodríguez Suárez 1984).

Just as the influence of the Cuban Revolution was evident in the first cycle of the guerrilla insurgency in Guatemala, so too did the self-criticism of the foquismo shape the ideological beliefs of the surviving organizations and their institutional successors: the different forms of struggle; the character of the revolutionary organizations; the geographical and social scenarios of the revolutionary struggle; and the social subjects and the importance assigned to them. This formed the ideological bedrock of the second guerrilla cycle in the country, whose analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Notes

1. Throughout this chapter, recourse is made to documents published by the Comisión Política del Comité Central del PGT between 1955 and 1959.
2. PGT, Comité Central, Comisión Política (1955, Jun.). La intervención norteamericana en Guatemala y el derrocamiento del régimen democrático. [document] Guatemala: PGT, pp. 30–46.
3. For an eyewitness account of what happened during this rebellion, see Figueroa Ibarra (2004, 2006).
4. PGT, Comité Central, Comisión Política (1958, May). Por un partido marxista-leninista vinculado estrechamente a las masas. [document] Guatemala: PGT.
5. PGT, Comité Central, Comisión Política (1958, Nov.). La Situación Política Nacional y la Táctica del Partido. Guatemala: PGT. PGT, Comité Central, Comisión Política (1959, Sept.). La Situación Política Nacional y Algunas Cuestiones de Nuestra Táctica. Guatemala: PGT.
6. Author's interview with José Alberto Cardoza 'Mario Sánchez' (México DF, Aug. 1997). Vice-secretary of the Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala and a member of the Congreso de la República for the PGT during the revolutionary decade; member of the central committee and the political commission of the PGT from 1949 to 1978; secretary general of the PGT (Nucleo de Dirección) since 1978 and, as such, a founding member of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) in Feb. 1982.
7. Author's interview with Alfredo Guerra Borges 'Martín' (Mexico DF, Sept. 1997), one of the 41 founding members of the PGT in Sept. 1949 and a member of the central committee and the political commission of the PGT up until Feb. 1966.
8. PUR (1959, May). Histórico Primer Manifiesto del PUR. [document] Guatemala: PUR. (1959, Sept.). Estatutos del PUR. [document] Guatemala. (1966, Aug.). Instructivo para Normar la Acción en estos Primeros Meses del Gobierno de Méndez Montenegro. [document] Guatemala: PUR.
9. See also Arrazola, C. (1997). La Historia Secreta del 13 de Noviembre. *El Periódico*, 18 Nov., Guatemala. Yon Sosa, M. (1967). Breves Apuntes Históricos del MR13. In: *Revolución Socialista, Órgano del Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre* (MR13). 2a. época, Guatemala C. A., pp. 15–22.
10. Author's interview with Carlos López García 'Pizarrón' (Sept. 1998), a militant of the JPT until 1962; a member of the group of young Guatemalans who received training in Cuba in 1962; and a combatant of the Resistencia Urbana and, subsequently, of the Frente Guerrillero Edgar Ibarra (FGEI) until it was disbanded in 1967.
11. Author's interview with Jorge Soto García (Comandante Pablo Monsanto, Mar. 1999), a combatant of the FGEI since he was 17; a member of the group of young Guatemalans who received training in Cuba in 1962; and a captain in the FGEI and, subsequently, in the armed forces between 1967 and 1968, before becoming the commander-in-chief of the armed forces from 1968 to 1969.
12. Ibid.
13. The first wave of terror occurred during and after the fall of Arbenz (1954), the second, whose aim was to suppress the first insurgent cycle, from 1966 to 1972, and the third, aimed at crushing the second insurgent cycle, between 1978 and 1984 (Figueroa Ibarra 2004).

14. FAR (1968, Jan.). Declaración de las FAR de Guatemala; El PGT ha Capitulado. Las FAR rompen con una Corriente Política Oportunista. Guatemala: FAR. (1968, Jan.). Declaración Internacional de las FAR. El Proceso Revolucionario de Guatemala Nos Enseña la Necesidad de un Viraje Radical en Cuanto a la Concepción Estratégica de la Guerra. Guatemala: FAR.
15. PGT, Comité Central, Comisión Política (1968, Mar.). Situación y perspectivas de la revolución guatemalteca. [document] México: PGT.
16. Centro Provisional de Dirección Revolucionaria (1965, mMar.). Declaración del Centro Provisional de Dirección Revolucionaria. [document] Guatemala.
17. FAR (1968, Jan.). Declaración Internacional de las FAR. El proceso revolucionario de Guatemala nos enseña la necesidad de un viraje radical en cuanto a la concepción estratégica de la guerra. [document] Guatemala: FAR.
18. FAR (1973, Mar.). Los Fundamentos teóricos de las FAR. [document] Guatemala: FAR, mimeographed. For a testimony of this period, see the unpublished writings of Mario Robles Villatoro (1995, 1997).
19. EGP (1967, Mar.). Documento de Marzo. Documento Básico del FGEI de las FAR y que originó al EGP. [document] Guatemala.

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6

THE PERUVIAN GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS OF THE 1960s

Jan Lust

The Peruvian guerrilla movements of the 1960s were influenced by three factors: first, the political and social situation in Peru; second, the peasant uprisings at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, especially the struggle led by the Trotskyist Hugo Blanco in the southern department of Cusco; and third, the Cuban Revolution.

Peruvian society was characterized by an extremely unequal distribution of property, particularly in the countryside, whereby a change in land ownership relations was essential to bring about any social progress. Furthermore, the social relations of production in the Peruvian countryside were more compatible with those of a pre-capitalist or feudal society than with those of a capitalist one.

Socialist or communist-oriented political organizations had very little power. As a matter of fact, since the 1920s the popular political spectrum was dominated by the APRA, an originally anti-imperialist organization with social-democratic pretensions.

The weakness or impotence of the revolutionary Left came rapidly to an end with the peasant uprisings at the end of the 1950s, especially in Cusco. The peasants, organized in unions and led by Blanco and his party the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria (FIR), managed to overthrow an agrarian system based on the land monopoly of a small group of landowners.

The Cuban Revolution had been the principal stimulus for groups and individuals to start organizing the guerrilla struggle in Peru. Of course, the political and social situation in the country urged a revolutionary break, but the development of the armed struggle was not an item on the revolutionary Left's political agenda. The Cuban Revolution helped to create or stimulate a political force that believed that it was not necessary to wait until all the conditions were met to start the armed struggle because the very existence of the guerrilla foco would help to create them.

In this chapter, the principal Peruvian guerrilla movements of the 1960s, i.e. the ELN and the MIR, are described and analyzed before examining the reasons behind their defeat. This is then followed by a short discussion on the significance of the guerrilla struggle in the 1960s for subsequent political processes in Peru.

The ELN

The ELN was founded in September 1962 in Cuba under the collective leadership of group of seven young Peruvians, who had travelled to the island at the end of 1961. Albeit a politically

heterogeneous group, including several ex-members of the communist party, the common denominator was their admiration for the Cuban Revolution and their intention to learn lessons from it. Later, the initial group was joined by other ex-members of the pro-Moscow communist party, independent revolutionaries and around 40 Peruvian students who had received scholarships to study in Cuba, but impressed by the Cuban Revolution expressed their intention to organize the guerrilla struggle in Peru.

The Cuban leaders were very important for the development of the ELN, since they not only influenced the guerrillas morally and ideologically, but also provided them with the necessary military and logistic support for them to take off.

The immediate objective of the ELN was 'the formation of a powerful National Liberation Army' through the creation of 'guerrilla movements throughout the country'. Through armed actions and other forms of struggle, it was believed that the organization would 'gradually incorporate the people into the ranks of the revolution, promoting at the same time the organized unity of the masses.'[1]

The ELN fought for a socialist revolution. The working classes and the peasantry were supposed to be the main forces.[2] But the latter were of utmost importance because most of the former had been 'bought' or were politically dominated by parties belonging to the establishment, for which reason they chose to follow reformist pathways to achieve their demands, instead of revolutionary ones. The peasants, for their part, demanded a change in the system of land ownership.[3] The countryside was 'the weak link of oligarchical domination in every colonized country' (Béjar 1973, 17). The petty bourgeoisie were necessary to help the working classes and the peasantry to attain a revolutionary awareness.[4]

The revolutionaries forming part of the ELN believed that the armed struggle was essential for seizing power. As the organization set out in its program, 'we cannot deceive ourselves or the people, advocating for peaceful means in a country like ours that is oppressed by an economically and militarily powerful oligarchy accustomed to resorting to tyranny, despotism and coups d'état' (ELN 1965, 8). However, the creation of a guerrilla movement did not imply that other forms of struggle were irrelevant. It only meant that the guerrilla struggle was first and foremost and 'in terms of which all the others [struggles] are to be carried out.'[5]

The ELN was a guerrilla organization in the tradition of what has been called Castroism. It was convinced that the missing subjective conditions, such as a revolutionary political awareness among the masses and a strong revolutionary political organization, could be created. Furthermore, it did not consider it a political hindrance if the guerrilla struggle was waged during the term of office a democratic government because, according to Héctor Béjar (1967, 4–5), a former ELN leader, Peru 'is living under an oligarchic dictatorship that uses parliamentarism or military imposition according to its own convenience.'

The revolutionary war could not be waged and certainly could not be won if the masses did not actively contribute to the struggle. The ELN saw itself as the germination of a people's army that would take the cities in a battle that was going to commence in the countryside.

Initially, the ELN intended to create two guerrilla fronts. One group would be sent to the departments of Cerro de Pasco and Junín, located in the center of the country, while the other would be deployed in the department of Cusco. The choice of the guerrilla fronts was based on the ongoing peasants' struggles in these regions. However, this plan, developed in Cuba, failed when the vanguard of the guerrillas was detected and decimated in the city of Puerto Maldonado in May 1963.

In 1964, after some deliberation, the decision was taken to create a guerrilla front in the province of La Mar, in the department of Ayacucho. This was ultimately achieved in April 1965, when between 15 and 20 ELN militants traveled there,[6] while several of their number stayed

behind in Peru's capital Lima to offer them logistic and political support.[7] The main action launched by the guerrilla, mainly formed by members of the petty bourgeoisie, accompanied by several peasants from the region, was the attack and occupation of the Chapi farm on 25 September 1965.

This was not an unexpected move as, according to Béjar, 'Chapi was the symbol of domination of the latifundia system throughout the area.' Furthermore, the action had the approval of the nearby peasant communities of Chungui and Anjo. The taking of the Chapi farm was followed by the distribution of the land among the peasants and the burning of their debt records.[8]

The attack was one in a series of actions to eliminate large land ownership in La Mar, the Chapi farm being solely the first objective.[9] These armed propaganda actions ended when a clash with the military was imminent, thus forcing the guerrillas to abandon the department of Ayacucho. But, on the night of 16 to 17 December 1965, they were caught unawares by the regular army when they were preparing to leave for the neighboring department of Cusco, with almost all of them perishing in the ensuing clashes.

The ELN's third attempt to create a guerrilla front was in support of Ernesto Che Guevara's continental project that was supposed to hinge on the Bolivian guerrilla (1966–1967). This front, created in Peru's southern department of Puno, had to serve, first of all, as a support base for the guerrillas in Bolivia. Then, once firmly established, it was expected that it would go into action.

This initiative did not prosper due to the lack of guerrilla fighters. Indeed, little was achieved apart from establishing a number of weapons caches, ammunition dumps and food deposits and exploring the area, with the guerrillas ferrying supplies across the border to the small Bolivian town of Reyes.[10]

The assassination of the Peruvian guerrilla leader Juan Pablo Chang and Guevara in Bolivia in October 1967 put paid to the groundwork laid in Puno (Lust 2013, 396–423). The winds of political, social and economic change that began to blow a year later made further guerrilla initiatives unviable and was the main reason why the surviving members decided to disband the organization in 1971.

The MIR

The MIR was founded in March 1962. According to the CIA,[11] the organization had approximately 1,000 militants. Other sources mention between 100 and 150 (Mercier 1969; Alleman 1974; Lamberg 1972), while Ricardo Napurí, a former MIR leader, claims that it had between 200 and 300.[12] One of the historic leaders of the MIR, Gonzalo Fernández, tells how the ten central committee members in 1965 came from the petty bourgeoisie, representatives of the national workers and peasant leaders being conspicuous by their absence in the upper echelons of the organization (Mesa Pelada 1982).

The foundation and development of the MIR were inextricably linked to Luis de la Puente, the son of a landowner, lawyer and agricultural specialist, who worked as a union and peasant community advisor in northern Peru (MIR-SNPP 1984). From 1942 to 1959, he was a militant of the APRA but was expelled because of his criticism of the party's shift towards the Right.

Following this, De la Puente founded, along with others, the Comité Aprista de Defensa de los Principios Doctrinarios de la Democracia Interna whose aim, as its name clearly indicates, was to arrest the APRA's ideological shift and to restore its 'doctrinal principles of internal democracy', albeit from outside the party. In May 1960, it decided to change its name to the Comité Aprista Rebelde, mainly because its principal members had started to entertain more revolutionary ideas. Finally, under the impact of the Cuban Revolution and the increasing

influence of Marxism on the organization, the MIR was founded two years later, with De la Puente as its still-undisputed leader.

The MIR fought for a democratic revolution as the first step towards socialism. This conception stemmed from the belief that Peru was a semi-feudal society. Owing to the fact that the capitalist phase had not been concluded with the institution of full liberal civil rights, it was first necessary to establish democracy so as to open the way to socialism.[13]

The democratic revolution was above all an agrarian one, which could only be achieved through an alliance between the working classes and the peasantry, since the bourgeoisie's shortcomings meant that they were unfit for leadership. It should come as no surprise then that the guerrilla focused its actions on the rural areas. Urban activities were concentrated in the departments where the MIR was creating its guerrilla forces. In the cities, the militants' main job was to provide the guerrillas with logistic support, including sending food, medicine, clothing and weapons to them in the countryside. They were also tasked with gathering information that might be necessary for the successful development of the guerrilla war.[14]

The MIR considered the armed struggle as the only way of depriving the ruling classes of their power, which was essential for the establishment of socialism. An analysis of the alleged objective conditions for revolution, such as a possible crisis of the bourgeoisie and a structural decline in the population's welfare, was not necessary because, according to De la Puente, 'they are not only mature, they have always been mature. I do not believe that there is a country in Latin America whose infra- and supra-structural conditions are as unfair, addled and archaic as ours.'[15] Although other forms of struggle were not disregarded, they were thought to be less important.

These alleged subjective conditions for revolution did not exist. As in the case of the ELN, the MIR thought that the guerrilla would possess a series of attributes that could help to create those conditions.[16]

The MIR, as a movement, saw itself as part of a process that was supposed to lead to the creation of the party of the Peruvian revolution. But this alone was not enough. It was also crucial to establish a united front, composed of a diversity of social strata, sectors and professions, under the leadership of the allied working classes and peasantry.

The MIR was a Marxist-Leninist organization,[17] but neither did it follow instructions from Beijing nor was it what might be called a Maoist organization. Its members had received political, ideological and military training in different countries: first of all in Cuba, as with the ELN, and then in China.[18] Similarly, other budding guerrillas were given political training in North Korea and Vietnam.[19]

The MIR had a relatively broad network of contacts. This was necessary considering that the military and political training of its guerillas took place in Cuba and in several Asian countries. In Europe, there were sections in Italy, France, Spain and Czechoslovakia. In Latin America, there were support committees in Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The task of these sections or committees was to facilitate the transit of the guerrillas to Peru and abroad (MIR/UDP 1980).[20]

In May/June 1964, the MIR started to establish itself in its putative areas of operations and, as Ricardo Gadea (1969, 17), a former member of the organization's central committee, writes, 'in July 1964, the MIR already had several armed groups, living like guerrillas and ready to fight, completing the indispensable groundwork to begin the armed struggle.' The idea was that the MIR would go into action within a period of three months. In October 1964, however, the organization realized that it still had a lot of work to do, especially of the political sort, in order to commence guerrilla activities with any hope of success.[21]

The MIR had originally planned to develop six guerrilla fronts throughout the country.[22] It seems that the main idea behind this was to disperse the regular army.[23] However, instead of achieving this goal it was the MIR that was weakened by this strategy.

By June 1965, only two of the six guerrilla fronts had gone into action. Three others had been dismantled or detected by the police even before the armed struggle had begun, while the remaining front was demobilized soon after its activation. The two guerrilla fronts that had managed to commence operations were the Túpac Amaru in the department of Junín and the Pachacútec in the department of Cusco. The department of Junín was one of the regions where the MIR, under the name of the APRA Rebelde, had already carried out political work with peasants, mineworkers and students back in 1961. While in Cusco it had built a network of contacts and support.[24]

The Túpac Amaru guerrilla front was formed by around 50 militants, mainly peasants, including two women (MIR 1980; Artola 1976).[25] Although it had managed to create a network of peasant sympathizers, it had not yet succeeded in drumming up mass support. Juan Córdova, a former Túpac Amaru guerrilla fighter, claims that the guerrillas had supporters in almost every village. Some brought them food and weapons, while other were employed as messengers.[26]

The first actions were a resounding success (attacks on a mine, an estate and a police station), not only because of what was expropriated, but also, above all, due to the impact that they had on the peasants, for they began to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Some asked to join the guerrilla, believing that, after participating in a couple of actions, they would soon be back working on their plots.[27] Two days after the first actions on 9 June, another estate of a big landowner and a group of policemen were attacked.

On 27 June, there was another action that occupies an important place in the annals of the history of the MIR. In Yahuarina, a unit of 17 guerrillas, supported by 30 peasants, ambushed the Civil Guard,[28] killing nine of their number. It was the main reason why the Belaúnde government mobilized the army. In other words, instead of the police, the army was given the task of repressing the guerrilla.

After the first defeats at the end of July, the initial euphoria began to wear off. The regular army's persecution of the guerrillas forced them to penetrate deep into the jungle. Yet, the continuous retreat was in vain. On 7 January 1966, the last skirmishes took place, with Guillermo Lobatón, the leader of the Túpac Amaru guerrilla front, meeting his death, together with another eight guerrilleros (Ministerio de Guerra 1966).[29]

Unlike the Túpac Amaru guerrilla, the Cusco guerrilla, whose strength had increased from around 15 to 40 members (MIR 1980),[30] had put the accent on laying the political groundwork for the armed struggle—working to this end with the present unions—with the aim of creating a social base on which this might prosper.

The immediate result of the actions in Junín was that the army and the police now turned their attention to the guerrilla command of De la Puente in Mesa Pelada, Cusco. The whereabouts of the MIR leader were no secret since he had already revealed it back in April 1965, two months before the guerrilla had gone into action. So, when the army entered Mesa Pelada, the only thing the guerrillas could do was to retreat. Indeed, only one attack on the regular army by the Pachacútec group was registered. On 23 October 1965, De la Puente was slaughtered, along with other important guerrilla cadres in Cusco (Brown and Fernández 2001).[31] The guerrilla was eliminated.

The Defeat

There were several reasons behind the defeat of the guerrilla. First and foremost, the Peruvian political establishment was not in crisis. Second, the socioeconomic conditions of the working classes and the peasantry had not drastically deteriorated before or during the 'guerrilla

years'—it can be argued that their situation had even improved. Third, although the mass struggle had gathered a fair amount of momentum between 1958 and the first months of 1964, there was still a low level of political consciousness among the masses, whose objectives were of a more economistic nature. Furthermore, the different political organizations of the Left were embroiled in a power struggle.

Besides these fundamental causes, there were also some politico-military mistakes that contributed to the fiasco. To start with, the MIR's decision to send all of its cadres to the countryside left its urban organization unmanned. Consequently, coordination between the different guerrilla fronts was impossible. Nor could political or union work in the labor movement be adequately developed.[32] To this should be added that the guerrillas had remained in their combat areas too long, which meant that the regular army had no problem in locating them. In the end, it was the army that chose when and where to engage the rural guerrillas and, since the MIR had neglected its political and military activities in the cities, the army and the police were able to devote all their energies to combating them. The ambush of the Civil Guard by the MIR in Yahuarina was yet another error, for it increased the level of confrontation at a moment when the guerrillas were still in their development and propaganda phase. Lastly, the MIR had not chosen its theaters of operations well. Whereas in Cuzco the peasants had received land, the police and the army were familiar with the area, many peasant leaders had been imprisoned or had left the region and the peasant unions had been dismantled, the ELN established its guerrilla in an area that was both underpopulated and all but impenetrable—the haciendas were off the beaten track and there were no roads. It was an ideal place for hiding, but easy to isolate because it was surrounded by rivers. The army only had to install guard posts on the bridges to stop anyone from entering or leaving the area.

The defeat of the guerrillas cannot be attributed to US support for the Peruvian army. Their repression was mainly a Peruvian affair. The country's army and police force had been very well prepared before engaging them. Even before the victory of the Cuban Revolution, the army academies had been busy investigating guerrilla strategies and tactics and formulating political and military responses.

The use of independent special units formed the basis of the strategic plan to combat the MIR and the ELN, as it helped to win a lot of time. Instead of waiting for orders after a guerrilla unit had been located, they were authorized to take immediate action.[33] According to an army manual, before forming part of this type of unit servicemen should be physically and mentally hardened, should master counterinsurgency tactics and should be able to endure long patrols and night marches in very difficult areas (Ejército Peruano and Escuela Superior de Guerra 1966). These special units acted like guerrillas and could depend on plenty of air cover.

The Significance of the Guerrillas

The MIR and the ELN were revolutionary organizations for whom the armed struggle was the main path to socialism. These small organizations believed that the creation of a guerrilla army and the establishment of a united front would prompt the population to rally behind the flag of the socialist transformation of Peruvian society. During the preparations for the guerrilla war, the MIR associated itself with peasants' unions, while the ELN forged links with small peasants in their area of influence. Nevertheless, the guerrilla struggle of both organizations was condemned to failure from the outset.

The 1965 fiasco spelt the end of the MIR's guerrilla activities. As a matter of fact, after the defeat it split into a number of competing MIRs. In contrast, the ELN formed part of Guevara's continental guerrilla project. In this context, the organization started to establish a guerrilla

front in Puno, in close connection and cooperation with the guerrilla fighters in Bolivia under Che's leadership.

The defeat of the MIR and the ELN did not mean that their ideas were cast into oblivion. The 1968 army coup against the Belaúnde government was inspired by them and the subsequent military government of Juan Velasco (1968–1975) even implemented some of them, such as agrarian reform. It is no wonder then that the imprisoned guerrillas were amnestied and that some of them even started to work for the military regime.

Some years later, the PCP-SL drew on those previous experiences to wage its guerrilla war in the 1980s. And the same can be said of the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA), the other armed organization active during the 1980s and 1990s. The result of a merger between several socialist organizations, in which one of the MIRs (MIR-El Militante) founded after 1965 played a key role, the MRTA not only learned lessons from the guerrilla struggle, but also had a number of former guerrillas of the MIR in its ranks.

Notes

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9. Author's interview with Héctor Béjar.
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14. Author's interviews with: Juan Cristóbal, a militant of the MIR as from 1965 (Lima, 8 Apr. 2003); Gonzalo Fernández, a member of the central committee of the MIR during the guerrilla war (Trujillo, 18 Apr. 2004); Carlos Flores, a militant of the MIR (Lima, 27 Nov. 2009).
15. De la Puente, L. (1973). La revolución en el Perú. *El Mirista, órgano Interno del MIR*. [document] Perú, p. 8.
16. Ibid. MIR (1973). Nuestra posición. *El Mirista, órgano interno del MIR*. [document] Perú, pp. 1–10.
17. MIR (1973). Nuestra posición. *El Mirista, órgano interno del MIR*. [document] Perú, pp. 1–10.
18. Author's interview with: Gonzalo Fernández (Trujillo, 17 Apr. 2004); Gonzalo Fernández and Óscar Alvarado, militants of the MIR (Trujillo, 10 July 2004); Julio Rojas, a cadre of the MIR (Lima, 2 Sept. 2006). Author's correspondence with Teresa Pardo (23 Mar. 2008), a militant of the MIR.
19. Author's interview with Elio Portocarrero, a cadre of the MIR (telephone interview [Sweden], 28 Apr. 2005).
20. Author's interview with Fernández and Alvarado; Julio Rojas; Elio Portocarrero (Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 25 Nov. 2007); and Carlos Flores. Author's correspondence with Pardo (24 Feb. 2008).
21. Author's interview with Ricardo Gadea, a leader of the MIR (Lima, 1 May 2003–6 Mar. 2004).
22. PCP (1965). De la Puente expone programa del movimiento guerrillero: llamada a la formación de un frente único antiimperialista y antioligárquico. *Unidad*, 9(93), p. 6.
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24. Author's interview with Abraham Risco, a militant of the MIR (Trujillo, 9 Aug. 2008).
25. Author's interviews with: Arturo Aranda, a militant of the MIR (Lima, 9 Sept. 2007); Juan Córdova, a militant of the MIR (Huancayo, 5 May 2007); Eusebia Bravo, a member of Túpac Amaru guerrilla (Huancayo, 8 July 2006); Donato Hinojosa, a farmer who helped the Túpac Amaru guerrilla (Huancayo, 10 June 2006). See also Cristóbal, J. (1989). Antonio Meza Bravo. El combate por la vida. *Cambio*, 4(65), p. 20.
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7

THE BOLIVIAN GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN FOUR PHASES[1]

Gustavo Rodríguez Ostria

Introduction

In the early 1960s, the Cuban leadership decided to promote rural armed struggle in South America as a mechanism of self-defense and a way of spreading the revolution, convinced that an isolated country without the support of similar regimes would have less of a chance to survive. In 1960, Ernesto Guevara published his famous text *Guerrilla Warfare*, which would serve as inspiration for several generations. In February 1962, the Second Declaration of Havana left no doubt as to Cuba's determination. As a result, thousands of combatants—missionary cadres whose task it was to 'export the revolution'—were trained in Cuba. The communist parties, the most important leftist party structures in the region, openly and vehemently opposed the so-called foquismo, insofar as they believed that it clashed with their Marxist-Leninist belief system, rooted in their tradition as the proletariat's organizational cadres, and was thus a 'provocation' against the peaceful coexistence between socialism and capitalism touted by the Soviet Union.

Notwithstanding this, the Cuban posture had the barely disguised support of sectors of the radical Left, disillusioned with the passivity of the communists and their confidence in a peaceful transition to socialism. Convinced as they were that Cuba and its method of armed struggle represented a harsh alternative, but that it was ultimately the only infallible way to bring about revolution in the region, dozens of them joined the rural armed struggle. The history of the guerrilla in Bolivia is dominated by the iconic figure of Ernesto Che Guevara and his activities in 1967. Although there is scant information on what happened before and afterwards or on the historical interconnections, a reevaluation of the data and the facts demonstrates the existence of four successive phases of armed struggle in Bolivia: in 1963, 1967, 1970 and 1973. What these four moments had in common was the involvement of the same people and the use of the foquismo. The difference lay in the use of the territory and the locus of political action. In 1963, for the guerrilla Bolivia was a place of transit and refuge, plus its rearguard. In 1967, the country formed part of an international continental strategy, a center from which guerrilla columns and armies would depart. In 1970, the Bolivianization of the guerrilla meant that the strategies of power and conquest were implemented in Bolivia per se. Nevertheless, the idea of internationalism was maintained as a guiding principle, albeit no longer from the Guevarist perspective as the nerve center of guerrilla activities encompassing Latin America as a whole.

This chapter analyzes the effects of these decisions on Bolivia and shows how the first three guerrilla phases between 1963 and 1973 overlap. Finally, the post-Guevarist guerrillas are examined in the context of the neoliberal socioeconomic project implemented in Bolivia in 1985.

Phase I (1962–1966)[2]

In 1962, Che Guevara's strategic plan involved two guerrilla columns, trained in Cuba, which would pass through Bolivia on their way to Peru and Argentina, the former (Operación Matraca) involving the ELN and the latter (Operación Sombra), which was the priority, with the EGP. In both cases, the objective was not to take power in Bolivia or to turn the country into a theater of operations, but to use it as a logistic and transit base for operations in Peru and Argentina, respectively.

The Cubans had agreed to cooperate with the Partido Comunista de Bolivia (PCB) in these campaigns. At the time, the PCB was a legal party, influential in some trade union circles but with scant national political weight. The communists provided cadres for the logistic tasks, but not without certain reservations. They operated with such inefficiency that there are analysts who contend that they intentionally delayed the start of actions in order not to damage their relations with the 'fraternal' communist parties in both countries, particularly in Peru.

At least in the case of Operation Matraca, in which the route taken by the ELN's large force implied crossing most of Bolivia, it is true that the Cubans had the consent of the national government, then in the hands of the populist Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR). Bolivia was one of the few Latin American countries that had not broken off diplomatic relations with Cuba and it is likely that the government of President Víctor Paz Estenssoro had reached a modus vivendi with the Cubans, who had promised not to encourage guerilla activities in Bolivia in exchange for maintaining diplomatic relations. As they later admitted, the Bolivian political police turned a blind eye to their armed activities in the two neighboring countries,[3] thus allowing the Cuban Embassy in La Paz to serve as a liaison and communications center. The Cuban political operators Ulises Estrada, Juan Carretero (whose nom de guerre was Ariel), José María Martínez (whose nom de guerre was Papi) and Olo Pantoja, all members of the Cuban intelligence apparatus and close collaborators of Guevara's, worked from the embassy.[4]

In early 1963, some 20 Peruvians, mostly students who had been awarded scholarships in Cuba, entered Bolivia under the command of Héctor Béjar. They arrived in pairs, pretending to have just returned from a trip to Europe. The Bolivian communists hid them in the cities of Oruro, Cochabamba, La Paz and the nationalized mining centers over which the national government had traditionally exerted little control. After waiting for a couple of months, they then helped them to travel to the Peruvian border in the Bolivian province of Pando. The expedition ended in disaster when the ELN column was dispersed at the Bolivian-Peruvian border. On 15 May, in the area of Puerto Maldonado, the young poet Javier Heraud died, while some his comrades-in-arms were imprisoned by the Republican Guard of Peru. Defeated, the remaining few sought refuge in Bolivia. Even now, those who were involved are still convinced that they were hoodwinked by the PCB, in cahoots with its Peruvian counterpart which repudiated the foquismo, much preferring the electoral route to power and accepting the peaceful coexistence advocated by the Soviet Union (Rot and Bufano 2007).

The Bolivian communists, however, once again protected the Peruvian fugitives, helping them to bury their weapons while they waited for a new opportunity. At least half of them had been captured by the Bolivian military forces. Yet, the Bolivian government, true to its word, freed the detainees and granted them political asylum. Some Peruvians remained in Bolivia, where they would play a role in the next two Guevarist guerrillas in Bolivia in 1967 and 1970.

With the militants of the ELN prematurely disbanded, four Argentinian members of the EGP and a Cuban arrived in Bolivia, traveling on Algerian passports and accompanied by Algerian diplomats as protection (Rot 2000). They were led by Jorge Masetti, a journalist and compatriot of Guevara, with whom he had been friends since his audacious interview with Che in the Sierra Maestra. Another Argentinian who participated was Ciro Bustos, whose nom de guerre was 'El Pelado' (Bustos 2007). Their task was to set the ball rolling, consolidating the initial phase after which Guevara would join them as their comandante. The group remained undercover in La Paz and Oruro for a while; they then established themselves in Tarija, in the southern region of Bolivia near the Argentine border. Bustos sporadically traveled to La Paz to receive instructions at the Cuban Embassy, where his contact was Papi, the same who would accompany Guevara in 1967.

The Bolivian communists used the same team collaborating with the Peruvians. Rodolfo Saldaña and José Luis Teller were the leaders; in 1967, they would play a similar role (Saldaña 2001). Under the cover of a communist agronomist called Murrillo, they purchased a property in Emborozú, near the river Bermejo on the Argentine-Bolivian border, with money furnished by the Cubans, where they completed their training. Jorge Vázquez-Viana, another Bolivian communist, was tasked with providing them with cover and protection. To this end, he moved to Emborozú with his wife and children. Like almost everyone involved in Masetti's Operación Sombra, he also played an important role in the guerrilla of 1967.

On 21 June 1963, the small group entered Argentina for the first time. But they were promptly forced to return due to the unfamiliar and hostile environment. For the next few months, they moved between the two countries until, in early 1964, the small column finally marched into Argentina. Ill-conceived, without social contacts and eventually infiltrated by enemy forces, the guerrilla succumbed in a few months. By April, it had ceased to exist.

The circle closed with ignominious defeat. None of the guerrilla columns managed to survive the deployment phase, while the ELN did not even manage to commence its guerrilla activities. As is well-known, a disillusioned Che Guevara began his African campaign in 1965. But he still contemplated a replication of the actions of 1963 in Argentina and Peru, with Bolivia as a transit point. Proof of this is that he sent the German-Argentinian Tamara Bunke (whose nom de guerre was Tania) to Bolivia in October 1964. Her mission was to infiltrate Bolivian high society and await instructions, adopting the false identity of Laura Gutiérrez Bauer and posing as an ethnographer.

Phase II (1965–1967)

Cuban plans to create new focos in Peru continued apace. In mid-1965, while Che was still in Africa, the Peruvian MIR, which had not participated in the developments of 1963, took up arms in the region of Ayacucho, together with the ELN. After its failed incursion into the Congo that ended with the exfiltration of Guevara and his comrades-in-arms in November 1965, Cuba fell back on Latin America as a theater of operations 'against imperialism'. In this context, Bolivia yet again became a transit point and rearguard, like in 1963. The ELN guerrillas, albeit few in number, were decidedly foco-minded, for which reason Guevara was indulgent with them. In December 1965 or early 1966, probably during the Tricontinental Conference in Havana, the ELN leadership agreed to allow Guevara, who at that moment had sought refuge in Tanzania, to join their ranks.

Cuba was again interested in Peru and there was no mention of Bolivia as the epicenter of Guevara's new guerrilla. But sadly, the Peruvian guerrilla frentes were ultimately crushed. Guillermo Lobatón, one of the leading MIR comandantes, died in combat in January 1966.

Héctor Béjar, the ailing ELN comandante, was captured in Lima to where he had been transferred on 1 March. And on 26 May, Ricardo Gadea, a former brother-in-law of Guevara's and a leading member of the MIR, was arrested by the police. By mid-1966, the Peruvian guerrilla movements had been shattered yet again.

Furthermore, the mysterious circumstances surrounding the arrest of Béjar and the death of other guerrilla leaders raised the suspicions of the Cuban operators, for which reason they ruled out Peru as a theater for Guevara's campaign.[5] Accordingly, by May 1966, they and Guevara had opted for Bolivia. In Che's eyes, and in terms of its suitability for guerrilla operations, this country offered many advantages: it had lengthy, undermanned borders with five countries, including Argentina; there existed a tradition of heroic social struggles; and this time the communist party appeared to be less adamant about taking up arms.[6]

In November 1966, Guevara left Cuba for Bolivia, this time regarded as the hub of a continental project from where armed guerrilla columns would march into neighboring countries. What happened in military terms between 6 November 1966, when Guevara reached Ñancahuazú, and 23 February 1968, when the last three surviving Cuban guerrilleros managed to break out from a military encirclement and escape to Chile, is sufficiently known. It is unnecessary, and indeed impossible due to space limitations, to offer a more detailed account of those events, beginning with the first operations on 7 November 1966 and ending on 9 October 1967 with Guevara's capture and murder. What is more interesting is the analysis of the continuity between the guerrilla experience of 1967 and its 1963 precedent, both under Che's supervision or day-to-day leadership.

First and foremost, both followed the same model involving the deployment of armed guerrillas without the consent of the local, left-wing political organizations, as was the case with the ELN and the EGP. This time, the PCB, which initially seemed to be content with playing the same role as in 1963, made an abrupt about-face when perceiving that Bolivia would not be a simple transit point or temporary refuge, but the theater of operations. This led to a clash between the PCB and Guevara during the meeting with Monge (secretary general of the PCB) held in the latter's guerrilla camp on 31 December 1966. This dispute left Che's guerrillas without their urban communication structures, which could not be easily replaced. But worse still was the fact that the handful of young PCB cadres who changed sides and joined the guerrilla were dangerously inexperienced.

Second, it should be noted that the cadres involved were practically the same as before, despite the PCB's self-exclusion. The Cuban contingent included Papi, Ariel and Olo Pantoja, who had also been in Bolivia in 1963. They knew the context and the people, their concerns and their capabilities. While José Luis Teller, the brothers Vázquez Viana, the brothers Roberto (whose nom de guerre was Coco) and Álvaro (whose nom de guerre was Inti) Peredo, plus many others who had participated in the 1963 campaign, figured among the Bolivians. Following the second failure in Peru in 1965, some members of the ELN even reappeared. One of these was 'Sánchez', now a member of Che's urban network in La Paz, where he operated with Rodolfo Saldaña, whose acquaintance he had made back in 1963. And there was also 'Negrón', a key figure in Cuba's contacts with Maoist dissidents, several of whom were miners.

The clear difference was the operational command. Back in 1963, the leaders had been national cadres, whereas Cuba's presence had been secondary. But now in 1967, Che was the uncontested comandante, supported by a team of 19 veteran Cuban guerrilla fighters.

Thirdly, the 1966–1967 phase ended in the same way as that of 1963, i.e. in defeat, due to logistic errors that had not been corrected and to the fact that the foquismo had remained unaltered. Although the insurgents were up against a badly supplied and fed army without a

tradition or training in guerrilla warfare, it still found ways of encircling and defeating them. In his last combat, Che encountered troops who had been well trained by American instructors.

Phase III (1968–1970)[7]

The assassination of Che in October 1967 and the defeat of his guerrilla movement immobilized the cadres of several nationalities who were waiting to travel to Cuba for military training, before joining his campaign. Confused and leaderless, many of them, especially the Argentinians, began to have their doubts about the absolute validity of the foquismo. Meanwhile, the Cuban leadership almost immediately made arrangements to replenish the guerrilla in Bolivia. In 1968, a group of about 80 combatants, most of them Bolivians, but with an important presence of Chileans and Argentinians, received training in Baracoa, in the eastern region of the island. Simultaneously, a smaller group was prepared for urban activities.

In April 1969, after all the preparations, they began to make their way to Bolivia, passing through Chile. They were members of the ELN (founded by Che in March 1967) and had the logistic support of militants of the Partido Socialista de Chile (PSCh), including Elmo Catalán, Beatriz ('Tati') Allende and Arnoldo Lemier, all staunch advocates of the foquismo, who managed the safe houses. This time, Chile played the same role as a back-stop country as Bolivia had in 1963. Traveling from Santiago to Calama and Antofagasta, the militants crossed the Chilean-Bolivian border with supplies, weapons and combatants from Cuba. The members of the urban network then guided them to La Paz using smuggling routes.

Between July and September 1969, the incipient guerrilla suffered a number of serious setbacks: raids, arrests and the death of its comandantes, all which caused uncertainty among the movement's militants. The most severe blow was the death of Inti Peredo—the chief of staff—in La Paz on 9 September. At a certain moment, as a result of the insecurity in Bolivia and probably under Soviet pressure, the Cubans withdrew their support. The guerrilleros, badly mauled, managed to bolster their numbers by incorporating middle-class students, many of them Catholics belonging to a splinter group of the youth movement of the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), as well as from Christian (Catholic) organizations, such as the Congregación Mariana and the Juventud Estudiantil Católica.

At sunrise on 19 July 1970, the reinforced guerrilla went into action in the jungles of Teoponte, a wild and rugged area about 150 kilometers from La Paz, the Bolivian capital and government center. The majority (80 per cent) of the 67 combatants were Bolivians. Their comandante was Osvaldo (whose nom de guerre was Chato) Peredo, the younger brother of Coco and Inti, both comrades-in-arms of Che Guevara in Ñancahuazú. This expedition was also an unmitigated disaster. In less than 100 days, starvation and the regular army had decimated their ranks. Of the original 67 members of the guerrilla column only nine survived, including Chato Peredo. On 5 November 1970, they went in exile to Chile, then governed by Salvador Allende, whose daughter Tati belonged to the ELN.

Teoponte was not an isolated initiative of a group of young student volunteers. It was actually a continuation of the experience of 1967, as borne out by its multiple links to Guevara's guerrilla, the most important of which are described next.

The Same People and the Same Contacts

The reorganization of the ELN and the new guerrillas in Bolivia basically drew from groups, cadres and contacts who had waited in vain to enlist in Guevara's column in 1967 or who had played an active part in it, like Rodolfo Saldaña. This was also the case in Argentina, Chile and

Cuba. The Cuban team, under the supervision of Manuel ('Barbarroja') Piñeiro, was formed by the same operators as in Guevara's day: Ariel and also Lino (the nom de guerre of Gustavo Burgués), plus two survivors of the 1967 campaign as instructors, 'Pombo' (the nom de guerre of the future Cuban general Harry Villegas) and 'Benigno' (the nom de guerre of Dariel Alarcón).

Likewise, there were veteran Argentinian participants including 'Miseria' (the nom de guerre of Luis Faustino Stamponi) and 'Gordo Carlos' (the nom de guerre of Oscar Pérez Betancurt), both of whom had participated in the ill-fated 1963 campaign and are also believed to have done so in Guevara's 1967 campaign. There were also people who had participated in other organizations relating to Guevara's initiatives. In 1970, the Bolivian ELN recruited further Argentinian combatants, such as the experienced 'Osvaldo' (the nom de guerre of Rubén Cerdat). Cerdat, who belonged to the Federación Juvenil Comunista, was arrested at the Camilo Cienfuegos training camp in Icho Cruz (Córdoba, Argentina) in 1963, where he was apparently preparing to participate in Masetti's columns. In 1966, he traveled to Cuba for advanced military training in order to integrate the ELN. Something similar occurred in Chile. Ricardo (the nom de guerre of Elmo Catalan), a journalist from Arica and the head of the Chilean section of the ELN, had been working with the Cubans since the early 1960s. There was even a chance that he would join the urban network in Bolivia during Guevara's campaign.

The Same Foco Approach

The Bolivian ELN cursorily adopted the foquismo, another link to the immediate past. Its leaders and militants still saw themselves as belonging to a vanguard organization with a military apparatus for waging rural guerrilla warfare. They dutifully followed the guidelines established by Guevara in 1963 and 1967. The difference was that they had now 'nationalized' the scheme for taking power in Bolivia, without renouncing the call for a continental one. Their leaders were Bolivians: Inti Peredo who, after his death on 9 September 1969, was succeeded by his brother Chato. Similarly, most of the members of the guerrilla taking action in July 1970 were Bolivians.

A Previously Considered Theater of Operations

The theater of operations had already been explored by Régis Debray in 1966, when looking for a territory suitable for guerrilla operations on behalf of Che Guevara. Debray recommended the region and, as far as we know, Guevara also saw its geographical and political potential (Debray 1999). However, for reasons unknown, he preferred to operate in the southern region of Bolivia. The new guerrilla knew about these considerations and had read the documents that they had received from Debray during their training in Baracoa, Cuba. In early 1969, they updated the geographical, political and human situation in the region and confirmed the decision, another indicator of the continuity with the 1967 campaign.

The Role of the Cubans

The Cubans participated actively in the military and logistic training of the guerrillas, although the three Cuban combatants in the theater of operations were clearly less than the 16 veterans who had accompanied Guevara. In the first phase, the Bolivians took the Cuban plans for a continental guerrilla tacitly for granted. The Cubans sent human and logistic resources to Bolivia according to their convenience. By the end of 1969, in light of Cuba's withdrawal of support for the ELN, its high command decided to go it alone. To this end, they forged links with the

Uruguayan Tupamaros who provided them with money. Relations with Cuba were frozen until 1971, and only restored after the military coup in August of that year. All things considered, one can certainly conclude that the Teoponte guerrilla was Guevarist in nature, in the sense that it followed the foquismo, but did not directly form part of Cuba's plans, as had been the case in the 1963 and 1967 campaigns.

At this point it should be noted that the guerrilla operations in Bolivia in 1967 and 1970 (and even the 1963 campaign) under direct influence of Cuba had certain similarities, despite the different political and geographical contexts.

In 1967 and 1970, it was the guerrilla who achieved the first victory. On 23 March 1967, Guevara's forces destroyed a military column. On 30 July 1970, Chato Peredo's men confronted the Bolivian army in the Carura area, killing a soldier. In both cases, the military panicked. But after the initial defeat, the Bolivian army ultimately won the war. Moreover, in 1970 it could fall back on the lessons learned in the counterinsurgency campaigns launched against Guevara, thus giving it an additional advantage over the greener guerrilla cadres.

Both in 1967 and 1970, the guerrilla's radio communications broke down and, what is more, in Teoponte they never functioned at all. When they moved, the guerrilleros had to leave all their heavy equipment behind. In Ñancahuazú, the radio transmitter was obsolete and in a poor state of repair, with fragile lamps that were easily broken and a petrol generator, meaning that it never worked for long. It is common knowledge that Guevara's defeat was largely due to the fact that he divided his forces on 17 April 1967, separating from the group led by the Cuban Joaquín (the nom de guerre of Volo Acuña) in order to be able to move more quickly. They never managed to reunite, thus diminishing the firepower of both sections. Joaquin's column, in which Tania also trekked, was ambushed by a military detachment on 31 August.

On 1 September 1970, the guerrilla column in the Teoponte area also split into two sections after coming under a ferocious attack launched by the Bolivian army deploying mortars and helicopters. Each section, isolated and facing overwhelming logistic difficulties, either died of starvation or were killed by the army. To make matters worse, two combatants were executed by firing squad on the orders of their authoritarian comrades-in-arms, the same fate that had befallen another pair in Masetti's column back in 1963–1964.

In 1967, the core guerrilla members were Cubans with plenty of military experience. They were accompanied by cadres recruited from Soviet and Maoist communist movements, a large proportion of whom were working class. In 1970, in contrast, most of the guerrilleros were young middle-class Bolivians, while perhaps 15 per cent of them were workers or peasants. Most of the foreigners were Chileans, eight in total. Neither in 1967 nor in 1970 did the guerrilla movements receive support from the peasants. In both cases, the rural population collaborated with the army, either by conviction or under coercion, provisioning the troops and revealing the whereabouts of the guerrilleros.

Phase IV (1973–1976)

Despite the failures of 1967 and 1970, the ELN made a further attempt to take up arms in 1973. After having reestablished cordial relations with Cuba, it sent around 50 militants to the island for training. The plan was to use Chile again as a rearguard and transit route to Bolivia, but the ousting of Salvador Allende in September 1973 put paid to that idea. This led to much frustration and a heated debate on why the organization had been following the foquismo all those years, thus triggering an internal crisis, followed by expulsions and schisms. But, at the same time, the ELN tried to broaden its horizons; it had always had visions of a continental guerrilla since the presence of Guevara in Bolivia in 1967.

There were also a substantial number of foreign cadres in the guerrilla and, in 1974, the Bolivian ELN joined the Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria (JCR), formed by the Chilean MIR, the Argentinian Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) and its armed branch the Guevarist-Trotskyist ERP, and the Uruguayan Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros (MLN-T). They collaborated in several actions and opened training camps for politico-military cadres.

However, the JCR was not enthusiastic about the Guevarist foquismo. Its members were followers and admirers of Guevara, but not of his method of struggle. This gave rise to yet more discussions in the Bolivian ELN, which was still reeling after the acerbic criticism of what had happened in Teoponte and during the subsequent years. In April 1975, the largest section of the ELN founded in Lima, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores de Bolivia (PRT-B), modeled on its Argentinean counterpart. Bearing the iconic image of Che, this new organization, which defined itself as a proletarian party with an armed wing, opted to introduce itself into existing social organizations and to create its own mass fronts, a position very different from the traditional foquismo, with its emphasis on rural armed struggle.

The Last Breath

Between 1976 and 1977, the PRT-B soon fell victim to the coordinated political repression of the dictatorships in Bolivia and neighboring countries, in the context of the Plan Condor in which Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay also participated. Its political presence was in any case limited in a country whose leftist movements sought to restore formal parliamentary democracy, which occurred in October 1982.

As from 1982, those who advocated for armed action were not able to carve out a niche for themselves and their followers, with all attempts, which were very few, being quickly frustrated. Eventually, the ELN went underground with a very reduced following and practically no public activity of which to speak.

The situation changed in 1985, when Bolivia adopted the neoliberal economic model, resulting in an abrupt increase in poverty and social exclusion. The trade union system suffered from the mass layoffs that led to the disappearance of the mining proletariat that had formed the spearhead of the social protests in previous years. Nonetheless, the social unrest continued, this time as a result of the emerging indigenous movements keen to be emancipated from state tutelage. In that new context, a number of modest organizations, with no more than several dozen men and women at any one time, advocated for resuming the armed struggle, although this would remain a pipe dream.

Three organizations emerged in 1987 and 1988. The first was the Coordinadora Nacional Néstor Paz Zamora, with a mixture of ELN-PRT-B members and radicalized Catholic groups inspired by Liberation Theology. Its name, alluding to an ex-seminarian who had starved to death in Teoponte, symbolized the unification of the two groups. The radical change in perspective of the second group, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Zárate Willka, which also included ex-ELN leaders, was crystal clear in its reference to the Aymara leader of the indigenous rebellion of 1899. This idea of indigenous revolutionary actors substituting the working classes was also adopted by the third group, the Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari (EGTK), comprising young mestizo and white students and indigenous Aymara members. The EGTK produced abundant literature on the revolutionary perspectives of the indigenous peasantry. This interpretation broke with the Guevarist tradition of guerrilla fighting that had never deployed ethnic or indigenist arguments.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, these three organizations began to operate in several cities, blowing up pylons, robbing banks, attacking government facilities and kidnapping people. The government hunted them down swiftly and mercilessly, sadly leading to the death of their members and the capture of their leaders.

Notes

1. This chapter draws from Rodríguez Ostria (2006, 2010).
2. This section draws from Vázquez Viaña (2000) and Suárez Salazar (2007). Humberto Vázquez Viaña and his brother Jorge (whose nom de guerre was 'El Loro') were important cadres during this campaign, the latter being captured and assassinated by the Bolivian army during the Ñancahuazú campaign.
3. Author's interview with Jorge Kolle Cueto, the former first secretary of the PCB (Cochabamba, Mar. 2006).
4. Confirmed by Ulises Estrada in Suárez Salazar (2007), Estrada's biographer.
5. Harry Villegas in his campaign diary, published by Soria Galvarro (2005).
6. About the relations between Guevara and the PCB, see Rodríguez Ostría (2007).
7. This section draws from Rodríguez Ostria (2007).

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PART 2

Second Revolutionary Ripple

The Adaptation of a Non-Viable Model

THE URBAN EXPERIENCE

Rethinking the Guevarist Foco

Eduardo Rey Tristán

The wave's first cycle affected countries whose political situations were similar to that of the Cuba of Batista. In several of them, furthermore, the political opponents of the incumbent dictators had been testing classic repertoires of action to topple them for some time. In a second stage, there emerged projects and proposals resulting from the influence of the Cuban Revolution, its direct mobilizing action or the application of the Guevarist foco by groups of militants in tune with and, in many cases, even with direct links to the island.

As already established, they were cases close to the catalyst, Cuba, as regards both their political aspects and their timing. Just as these two elements of this first variable began to change, so too did the initiatives become more differentiated while the second variable proposed here, i.e. the influence of national contexts on the decisions of those promoting the mobilization, also gained relevance.

It goes without saying that this national variable was also present in the first ripple of activity, especially in the first armed groups, namely, those associated with the classic repertoires of action and for which Cuba was more a successful example to be followed than a new strategic proposal.

As to the second ripple, in contrast, it played a more determining role. This was due in part to the fact that the political and temporal distance was greater and in part because the failure of the first projects had led to a certain amount of reflection on the model on which it had been based and also to its more critical adaptation to the unique circumstances of each country.

Cuban influence was also key. But not now as a successful example to be copied (the first ripple), a model to be followed (the second) or because the organizations were created after their promotors had visited the island for political and military training (e.g. the Peruvian case). Following the death of Guevara (the main advocate of those experiences) in 1967, moreover, Cuba ceased to export its revolutionary model directly. Even the future support that it would lend the new insurgencies would evolve with respect to the direct and somewhat spontaneous formulas of the beginning of the 1960s (Kruijt 2017).

Without Cuba, it is impossible to understand the political-ideological transformation of the Latin American Left since 1959: the advent of a new Left that was defined by its stance on the revolution and the role of political violence in staging it. The appearance of that new revolutionary Left on the continent was not only represented in each country by armed organizations, but in the case of the second cycle of activity it was also a central factor in the four countries studied here.

In Uruguay, it was expressed in the political debates of the Left between 1959 and 1962 and led to schisms and new organizations and proposals for armed action as from 1963. Its main exponent was the Coordinador de los Grupos (1963–1965), from where the MLN-T emerged in 1966.

In the previous section, reference has already been made to the appearance of the first groups in Argentina—the Uturuncos first of all, followed by the EGP led by Masetti, among others—as from 1959. At the end of the decade, the two main armed organizations, which would later become the Montoneros (Peronist) and the PRT-EGP (Trotskyist), were a direct result of the debates between Peronism, Trotskyism and Castrism (the first two currents being influenced by the third).

In Brazil, some authors note that since 1962 there were contacts between certain sectors of the Left (Francisco Julião) and Cuba with the aim of promoting a guerrilla war, whose plans were discovered and thwarted (Lamberg 1973). And, as Celso Castro remarks in Chapter 8, between 1966 and 1967 Cuba certainly supported the creation of a guerrilla foco of the Movimento Nacional Revolucionário (MNR) in the Serra do Caparaó, which was swiftly quashed. At any rate, Brazil is certainly a unique case owing to the early establishment of the military dictatorship (1964), the tumultuous political context leading up to the Goulart government and the role played by the Left at the time.

Lastly, in Chile the debates within the Left led to the creation of the MIR in 1965, as noted by Goicovich in Chapter 11. The particularities of this case have to do this time with the evolution of Chilean politics and Salvador Allende's accession to power with a project of socialist transformation that, in theory, made the discourse on the armed struggle as a method of change (although it was also present) unnecessary.

On the other hand, in these four countries it is possible to observe how the Cuban revolutionary myth formed part of the political socialization of the new cohorts of young people who were unquestionably different from those who had answered the call at the beginning of the 1960s. In the first cycle of guerrilla activity, many of those young people born between the 1920s and the 1930s had previous experience as militants and interpreted their mobilization on the basis of political developments relating to national situations whose keys lay in the previous decade.

In the second cycle of activity, those young people born in the 1940s and entering the education system (at a secondary and university level) in unprecedented numbers as from the end of the 1950s, would play a leading role. For that student body, much larger now than in previous decades, the Cuban Revolution would be a wellspring of ideas for their mobilization, whose keys were not to be found now in earlier protracted political processes but in their 'ideologized' understanding of their situation and in their desire for change.

At the end of the decade, these young people, who were mostly students, formed the spearhead of the protest movements and other radical actions in their countries, as was the case in Uruguay in 1968 and with the *Cordobazo* in Argentina in 1969. They were massive popular movements that, apart from the Guatemalan student protests in 1962, were absent from the first cycle of activity.

Therefore, the influence of Cuba and the ideas generated by its revolution were fundamental during the decade, either for the evolution of the Left or for the creation of new political bodies and organizations that mobilized the young and were strategically orientated towards the armed struggle. But with differences with respect to the previous cycle: the armed groups did not appear immediately in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, but some time afterwards at the end of the decade (temporal distance); they occurred in countries whose political profiles differed greatly from that of the Cuba of Batista (political distance); and they led to organizational

changes in the Left (debates, schisms, the birth of new groups, etc.), whose followers reflected on their national circumstances and the correct way of implementing political violence in their countries (national context).

This political and temporal distance is clear in the four cases discussed in this section. As to the latter, there was activity mainly in the second half of the 1960s and the first years of the following decade. Chile was a unique case because of its political process culminating in 1973. The Allende government first checked the insurgency (except for the short-lived Vanguardia Organizada del Pueblo, VOP, active between 1969 and 1971), whereas the military dictatorship promoted it as a form of resistance after 1973 and even in the 1980s, although employing strategies that differed from those implemented hitherto in an urban context in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.

In Brazil, there were also insurgencies under the military dictatorship as from 1966. But unlike the type of action taken by the Chileans since the middle of the 1970s, the initiatives of Ação Libertadora Nacional (ALN) and the Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária (VPR) were more akin to what is commonly known as urban guerrilla warfare. This also played a leading role in the Uruguayan and Argentinian insurgencies, in the former mainly between 1966 and 1972 and in the latter particularly between 1970 and 1976.

As regards politics, the profiles of the countries were different from that of Cuba: a consolidated democracy, albeit immersed in a political, economic and social crisis, in Uruguay; a complex alternation between dictatorship and political liberalization in Argentina between 1955 (with the ousting of Perón) and 1976 ('*El Proceso*'); and a newly consolidated democracy in Chile where, moreover, a president with plans for the pacific socialist transformation of the country came to power in 1970. Only in Brazil was the insurgency a result of a military dictatorship, but in this case of the corporate-institutional kind and, therefore, firmly established, unlike those personalist dictatorships that inspired both the Cubans back in 1956 and those who wanted to emulate them in several countries after their victory in 1959.

The other principal variable proposed here to interpret this stage, i.e. the influence of national contexts on the decision-making of the mobilization's promoters, was both an individual decision of each group and a transversal element in the political evolution during that decade.

In the second half of the 1960s, the insurgencies associated with the plans hatched by Guevara disappeared after his death in Bolivia. This development surely had something to do with the demise of the internationalism prevailing before, in which some of the promoters understood their struggle as part of the continental project led by Guevara. That idea of continental revolution, rather than evaporating, would be reformulated. The Andes would no longer be regarded as the Sierra Maestra of South America, but each national struggle, albeit contributing to the global regional struggle, would be understood as being autonomous. In other words, the action plans devised by the different groups in their respective countries had to have a national basis. Only in that way, and thanks to the sum of many national projects, would the continental goal be achieved, for the enemy would be confronted by manifold insurgencies, thus dispersing their forces.

In light of this logic of political and temporal distance and the relevance of national contexts for many of the promoters as from the middle of the 1960s, let us now examine some of the urban insurgencies emerging at the time. We believe that all of the aforementioned factors influenced the deliberations of those militants (sometimes as from the beginning of the decade and sometimes even with a certain degree of Cuban influence): those countries were not like the island, neither politically nor geographically speaking. They doubtless valued the Cuban experience but were of the mind that it was impossible to replicate back home, primarily because of the lie of the land. If the countries covered in the first section—to wit, those of the

first cycle of activity—might have believed at some time or other that the Cuban foquista model of revolution was applicable given their jungles and mountains, the four under discussion here lacked those conditions.

Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Brazil are essentially urban countries, with vast expanses of countryside, of course, but where most of the inhabitants are city dwellers. Neither the jungle regions in Brazil nor the Andes, are suitable for deploying guerrilla focos, at least in their political dimension. For those militants, the Guevarist model was unviable. Their jungles and mountains were actually the major cities, to which they would promptly turn their attention.

They nevertheless did not reject that possibility initially and even put it to the test later on. In their debates on and their quest for the most correct revolutionary definition for Uruguay, the members of the Coordinador had attempted to find their Sierra Maestra in Cerro Betete: 'Nearly all of the groups roamed sierras and hills in search of future refuges. We spent our money on blankets and lanterns, on boots and good maps. Our comrades-in-arms in the interior walked and walked' (Fernández Huidobro 1987, 75). The results were unproductive in an otherwise flat country and, only some years later, did the MLN-T use the countryside as more of a refuge than a theatre of operations.

In Brazil, as already noted, the MNR endeavored to deploy a rural guerrilla foco between 1966 and 1967. There would be another similar attempt in the Araguaia at the beginning of the 1970s with calamitous results. In Argentina, besides the initiatives of Masetti and the Basque Bengochea, later on the ERP tried to commence operations in Tucumán. The Chileans of the MIR even sought to create two guerrilla fronts in the south of the country (Neltume), also ending in disaster.

Once the countryside had been discarded as a theatre of operations, the major cities took over. In the foquismo theory formulated first by Guevara and then elaborated on by Debray, the role of the urban struggle was completely secondary: support, a pool of (human and material) resources, opportunities for sabotage and other activities for wearing down the regime and also for logistics and information gathering, etc., but never the main stage of the revolutionary struggle. This would have to be in the countryside and with a new revolutionary subject: the peasantry.

Two objectives were certainly achieved with this. On the one hand, in an insurgent process in which many had participated (especially on the plains and in the cities) but on which only a few had capitalized (the guerrilleros of the sierra), according to the triumphant narrative, only they had made revolution, the role of the former being secondary and, at best, supportive. It was the first objective of internal political justification and legitimacy. On the other, the model, adjusted not to the initial prospects but to a retroactive interpretation, defined a new subject, a new protagonist, a new model and a new space. It thus challenged the previous revolutionary model par excellence (the communist—party, urban and proletariat, rather than rural foco and peasant—approach stemming from the 1917 Russian Revolution) and set itself up as a future example, thus politically and internationally legitimizing its proposal.

Even though they valued the Cuban model, the proponents of revolution in the Southern Cone were aware that it was inapplicable given the conditions prevailing in their countries. So, rather than repudiating it, they redefined and adapted it to their circumstances. If the Guevarist foco was above all physical and a catalyst of revolutionary awareness, for the urban groups it had a second meaning: they subtly interpreted it as a questioning and coalescing activist core. In other words, they approached foquismo from a qualitative perspective. Its main influence was not purely military, but lay in its capacity to stir revolutionary minds and to raise the awareness of the masses who would ultimately second the revolution (Rey Tristán 2005, 178–179).

This idea, which has been defined in the analysis of the Uruguayan MLN-T, was no different in the rest of the cases. The crux of the matter was the continuity of the idea of a pivotal vanguard in foquismo, in which a few mindful and determined militants willing to lay down their lives for the cause, without prior organization or any ideology, would be able to transform that first foco, thanks to their efforts and the support that they received, into an authentic revolutionary army capable of contending for power.

These groups still had not drawn inspiration from Asian strategic concepts (especially those of Vietnam), despite the fact that they were familiar with them and used them in their arguments and propaganda. But, in contrast, their critical interpretation of the first foquista experiences and their rural isolation are indeed interesting. On the basis of these Southern Cone cases, it can be observed how the new organizations envisaged armed, political and mass strategies. The foco and vanguard concepts per se in which these proposals were grounded implied a resizing of the political factor; but they also helped to attract the masses in greater numbers and to create structures that provided them cover and support in that sense. This was primarily observable in Uruguay and Argentina and, to a lesser extent, in Brazil and Chile, attributable to the dictatorial regime and to its limited experience in repression. Thus, their criticism and reformulation anticipated and served as a link to the third phase in which the organizations would possess political and military structures, alike, thus distancing them once and for all from Guevara's foquismo.

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8

GUERRILLAS IN BRAZIL, 1960s AND 1970s

Celso Castro

This chapter deals with the armed struggle in Brazil between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s. Some chronological milestones are important in understanding the political and ideological landscape in which guerrilla operations took place. The first is the military coup initiated on 31 March 1964, which was quickly victorious, with the deposition of President João Goulart and the assumption of power by a Military Junta on 2 April which became the Comando Supremo da Revolução. Two weeks later General Humberto Castello Branco was sworn in as President of the Republic. A long military regime began in Brazil that would last for two decades, ending only with the inauguration of a civilian president in 1985.

After the beginning of the military regime, some organizations from the left orientated themselves ideologically and strategically towards an option for the armed struggle. The Cuban experience, where Fidel Castro's guerrilla forces had overthrown the Batista dictatorship and taken political power, was an obvious inspiration. More than that, there was also effective support from the Cuban government since before the military coup, focused on military training and financial resources for some members of the Ligas Camponesas (Peasant Leagues) that emerged in the Northeast of Brazil since the mid-1950s, under the influence of the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB). After the coup, Cuban support began to focus on the Movimento Nacional Revolucionário (MNR), linked to Leonel Brizola, former governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and brother-in-law of João Goulart. In October of 1966 a group of 14 militants of the MNR arrived at the Serra do Caparaó, on the border between the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, with the project of establishing a guerrilla foco. They were, however, discovered by the police and arrested in April 1967, without ever engaging in combat.

A deep division within the Brazilian left also predates the 1964 coup, especially those resulting from the reforms advocated by Nikita Khrushchev during the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956. One important milestone was the dissent in the PCB that deepened in 1962 with the creation of the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB), led by João Amazonas (1912–2002), Mauricio Grabois (1912–1973), and Pedro Pomar (1913–1976), which would adopt a Maoist political-ideological line, becoming the only organization of the Brazilian revolutionary left to opt for rural guerrilla.

Between July and August of 1967, Cuba organized a conference that resulted in the creation of the OLAS, which ultimately decided on a revolutionary strategy for the entire Latin

America. Present at the meeting was former communist deputy Carlos Marighella (1911–1969), then regarded by the Cubans as the greatest promise of a Brazilian revolutionary leader.

Throughout 1968 several PCB leaders would break with the party, initiating revolutionary organizations. All of them (with the exception of the already mentioned PCdoB) would opt for urban guerrilla. Among the main organizations are the ALN led by Marighella and Joaquim Câmara Ferreira (1913–1970); the VPR, to which pertained former captain Carlos Lamarca (1937–1971), defected from the Army in 1969, as well as Dilma Roussef (born 1947), future president of Brazil between 2011 and 2016); and the Partido Comunista Brasileiro Revolucionário led by Mário Alves (1923–1970), Jacob Gorender (1923–2013) and Apolônio de Carvalho (1912–2015).

In 1968, urban guerrilla actions were few, notably robbery of guns and the assassination (justiçamento in the guerrilla's jargon) in October of the US Army captain Charles Chandler, a Vietnam War veteran accused of belonging to the CIA and to be in Brazil to teach techniques of torture to the police.

On Friday 13 December 1968, after a long dispute with the National Congress, President General Costa e Silva convened the National Security Council, placed the armed forces in a state of readiness and issued the Ato Institucional n. 5 (AI-5), the hardest of the entire military regime, which conferred almost absolute powers to the President of the Republic, in addition to suspending several constitutional guarantees. It was a watershed in the process of increased authoritarianism of the Brazilian military regime, which now assumed overtly dictatorial features.

On the other hand, the AI-5 also produced a greater engagement of groups of the revolutionary left in the armed struggle against the regime. Although the view that guerrilla warfare has emerged as a reaction to the hardening of the military regime is not historically correct—as already mentioned, some groups had already taken action before AI-5—the new political conjuncture strengthened the political orientation to armed struggle as the only possible option. As Marighella wrote, in the introduction of his urban guerrilla mini-manual (June 1969):

> The accusation of 'violence' or 'terrorism' without delay has a negative meaning. It's got a new outfit, a new color. It does not divide, it does not discredit, on the contrary, it represents the center of attraction. Today, being 'violent' or a 'terrorist' is a quality that ennobles any honest person because it is an act worthy of a revolutionary engaged in the armed struggle against the shameful military dictatorship and its atrocities.[1]

How many were engaged in armed actions against the military regime in Brazil and what are their characteristics? The journalist Elio Gaspari estimated that around 800 militants were involved in the armed struggle in early 1969, divided among several organizations. A survey by the Army General Staff in 1970 about prisoners nationwide incarcerated by the army (just over 500 people) indicated that 56 per cent came from the student movement; the average age of prisoners was 23 years; and there were neither illiterate nor very poor people.[2] There was also a significant participation of women in these organizations—about 20 per cent of the total—mostly of high schooling, although they remained in subordinate roles within revolutionary organizations (Ridenti 1990).

This generation of guerrilheiros e guerrilheiras was very critical of the position of the PCB, considered 'reformist'. The ideal of revolution, in this context, was perceived as the only viable path to overthrow the military dictatorship and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in Brazil. There were many disagreements between the various organizations, both in organizational matters and in political-ideological minutiae or strategic scenarios. They

agreed, however, about the viability of the revolutionary path that could lead to defeat the dictatorship.

If the first actions taken by urban guerrillas—such as bank 'expropriations' to fund the organizations and arms theft—were relatively easy from an operational standpoint, the scenario quickly changed. New repressive legislation was adopted, new repression units were created, and tactical fighting methods were perfected and solidified by the government. Many guerrilheiros were killed or arrested—'to fall' ('cair'), in the revolutionary jargon. Torture became the institutionalized method in the 'underworld' of the regime to obtain information, thus leading to new arrests.

In 1969 and 1970 there were actions of great media impact, such as kidnapping of diplomats and airplanes, which served both to draw the population's attention to what was happening (thus breaking the censorship barrier) and to open the possibility of negotiating the liberation of fellows taken prisoners. On 4 September 1969 the most spectacular action of the armed struggle took place: the kidnapping of the American ambassador Charles Elbrick in Rio de Janeiro. It was an action that made headlines around the world and deeply impressed the military. The ambassador was exchanged for 15 political prisoners, who went to Mexico on the same day that the government decreed AI-14, exacerbating to those involved in the 'revolutionary or subversive war' life imprisonment and death sentences for those involved in the 'revolutionary or subversive war'. In 1970, three more diplomats were abducted by insurgent organizations: the Consul General of Japan in São Paulo, and the ambassadors of West Germany and Switzerland. As a result of these three kidnappings, 115 political prisoners were released and sent abroad, and the guerrillas had their revolutionary statements published in the media. Without popular support, however, the guerrilla organizations very soon found themselves on a path of no return, from which it became increasingly difficult to leave.

The escalation of guerrilla actions coincided with an apparent moment of crisis within the military regime, caused by the leave of General Costa e Silva from the Presidency on 29 August 1969, due to a stroke (he was to die a few months later, without resuming its functions). A military junta was formed by the three ministers of the armed forces, who ruled the country for two months. After long and difficult deliberations, the High Command of the Armed Forces appointed General Emílio Garrastazu Médici as the third military president to take office.

Under the Medici administration repression was intensified, with the justification that the police were not prepared to combat the new forms of 'subversion' and that more agile and efficient structures within the armed forces should be created. In July 1969, Operação Bandeirantes was officially created in the state of São Paulo, with the financing of important São Paulo entrepreneurs. Also, in July, the government issued an 'Diretriz para a Política de Segurança Interna', a new Institutional Act that established the death penalty or life imprisonment for the cases of 'war of psychological opposition, and of revolutionary war and subversive struggle'. In January 1970, the Centros de Operações de Defesa Interna (CODIs) were created to coordinate repressive actions in the various military regions. The CODIs soon created their own operational armaments, the infamous Destacamentos de Operações de Informações (DOI), acronym that, ironically, in Portuguese also means 'it hurts', as more than one officer involved in the repression noted.[3] The DOI-CODIs, as they became known, thus became additional operational units, alongside the Centro de Informações do Exército, the Centro de Informações da Marinha and the Centro de Informações da Aeronáutica. Together, these repressive structures would concentrate more violent operations, while the Serviço Nacional de Informações and the Ministry of Justice would act more in political and ideological repression.[4]

In less than three years—that is, by the end of 1971—urban guerrilla groups had been destroyed or disbanded, and the most important guerrilla leaders were dead or on the run.

Marighella was killed in an ambush in São Paulo in November 1969; Lamarca was killed in the backlands of Bahia in September 1971.[5]

With the urban armed struggle facing defeat, the PCdoB made a desperate attempt to establish a rural guerrilla foco in a sparsely populated area in the Araguaia River region. Conceived since 1967, it was in 1971/72 that about 80 militants, many of them middle class students and young professionals, including José Genoíno (born 1946), future congressman and president of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), were gradually infiltrated in the region, disguised as rural workers, seeking to win the loyalty of the local population. When they were discovered by the repression, they were fiercely attacked. Some initial failures of the forces of repression, mainly due to logistical difficulties and errors of evaluation, led to the final mobilization of some 12,000 troops in the largest military action during the military regime. The final defeat of the guerrilla was consummated only in January 1975, already during the government of General Ernesto Geisel, the fourth military president, who began a slow process of political 'opening' that would take ten years to end. After three campaigns, the Araguaia Guerrilla left dozens of dead and disappeared among the guerrilheiros, of whom only about 20 survived.

However, despite the violence of the repression that hit leftist organizations engaged in armed struggle, we should not attribute their defeat only to repression and, in particular, to torture. The position of political vanguards that they assumed, together with the detachment from the national reality, were decisive factors for the political defeat of these organizations. The revolutionary perspective of these organizations removed them from representative political democracy. Ties with the legal political opposition to the regime were very weak. Politically isolated, these organizations were soon limited to a desperate attempt to save their cadres from physical extermination by the far superior force of the repressive apparatus assembled to combat them. They lacked, above all, the expected support of society in general.

One of the 'sins' of the urban guerrilla mentioned by Marighela in his *Mini-Manual* was precisely 'to exaggerate its strength and try to do projects that lack strength and, still, do not have the required infrastructure.'[6] The Brazilian society missed the encounter with the Revolution, perhaps because it was enchanted the so-called Brazilian Economic Miracle that led to very high growth rates after 1969 until the 1974 global Oil Crisis. During this same period, the country would live its 'Anos de Chumbo' (Years of Lead) with the constellation of armed opposition groups suffering the same process of repression and destruction; and its members, the experience of going into clandestinely, prison, torture and murder by repressive forces, or in some cases, escape into exile.

The memory of the ex-guerrilleiros manifested latter in several autobiographical books, starting with the success of *O que é isso, companheiro?*, published in 1979 by journalist Fernando Gabeira (one of the hijackers of the American ambassador), just after his return from exile. It is, however, a divided field of memory, with many points of tension. In general, the historiography produced in academia about this period tends to pay more attention to the armed struggle than to other forms of political mobilization against the military regime.[7]

At the other extreme of the political camp, the military had always resented that, although victorious in the struggle against the organizations of the revolutionary left, they lost the struggle over the historical memory about this period. Many officers complained precisely about the fact that a military official version about the repression against guerrilla warfare—a version that could become socially legitimate—was never publicized. In this sense, the history of the defeated therefore prevailed over that of the winners.

It is also worth noting that even 50 years later, there are still 'battles for memory' over the armed struggle and repression in Brazil. The Comissão Nacional da Verdade (National Truth Commission) created in 2011 by the president (and former guerrilheira) Dilma Roussef finished

its work at the end of 2014 under severe criticism.[8] The former Army captain and right-wing congressman Jair Messias Bolsonaro proudly pronounced his vote in favor of Dilma Roussef's impeachment on 31 August 2016, 'in memory of Colonel Brilhante Ustra', a well-known torturer who had died the previous year. At that time, nobody would predict that Bolsonaro would assume the presidency of the Republic on 1 January 2019, after being elected in the second round with 55 per cent of the valid votes. Everything indicates, therefore, that in relation to the Brazilian Anos de Chumbo, the struggle continues.

Notes

1. 'A acusação de 'violência' ou 'terrorismo' sem demora tem um significado negativo. Ele tem adquirido uma nova roupagem, uma nova cor. Ele não divide, ele não desacredita, pelo contrário, ele representa o centro da atração. Hoje, ser 'violento' ou um 'terrorista' é uma qualidade que enobrece qualquer pessoa honrada, porque é um ato digno de um revolucionário engajado na luta armada contra a vergonhosa ditadura militar e suas atrocidades'. See Marighella (1974 [1969]).
2. Muricy, Antonio Carlos. Discurso, 11/11/1971. Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) CPDOC.
3. See, for example, the testimony of General Adyr Fiúza de Castro, one of his chiefs, in D'Araujo, Soares and Castro (1994, 52). This is the best collection of memoirs from the military about the repression.
4. For an overview of the repression in Brazil, see Gaspari (2002).
5. The best biography about a leader of the guerrillas was written by journalist Magalhães (2012).
6. 'exagerar sua força e tentar fazer projetos que lhe faltam forças e, ainda, não tem a infraestrutura requerida.' See Marighella (1974 [1969]).
7. Four books help us to have a good overview of the armed struggle in Brazil, as well as to understand the discussions (and divisions) on the social memory of the guerrillas in Brazil: Aarão Reis Filho (2000), Fico (2004), Gorender (1987) and Ridenti (1993).
8. Fort the work and the final report see Comissão Nacional da Verdade (2014). Relatorio da Comissão Nacional da Verdade. [online] Available at: http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/ [Access on 01 Mar. 2019].

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9

THE GUERRILLA EXPERIENCE IN URUGUAY (1963–1972)[1]

Eduardo Rey Tristán

Introduction

During the second half of the 1960s, guerrilla warfare had spread across Latin America. For many young militants, there was every chance that the revolutionary transformation of their societies was something that could be achieved in the short term. As in Cuba over a decade before, all that was needed was to create the right conditions, which included organizing themselves and entering the fray to attain that reality which, to their mind, was not at all fanciful. Notwithstanding the defeat of the first guerrilla movements in the region and the death of Ernesto Che Guevara, their main theorist and propagandist, the idea gained momentum in the wake of the mobilizations occurring in the last years of the decade, both for their proponents and those dedicated to combating them.

In the first years of the 1960s following the Castroist success the insurrectional struggles built up steam first in those countries governed by dictatorships comparable with Batista's (the Paraguay of Stroessner, the Nicaragua of the Somoza family and the Dominican Republic of Trujillo), and subsequently in countries whose socio-political conditions could be—according to revolutionary theory—hotbeds of unrest and insurrection (Guatemala, Peru and Colombia). By the end of the decade the guerrilla wave had reached the Southern Cone countries. The first to feel its impact was Uruguay, in theory the most stable country of all with the solidest democracy in the region.

The main actor was the MLN-T, created in 1966 as the culmination of the protracted debates of the previous years among small radicalized groups hailing from different sectors of the non-communist Left. The MLN-T was the principal urban guerrilla in Latin America, judging by its impact: albeit temporarily, it managed to challenge the Uruguayan government and succeeded in creating a discourse, image, method and structure that would serve as an example for many other Latin American, European and American militants during the following years, as has been demonstrated in recent studies of the transnational dimension of political violence (Martín Álvarez and Rey Tristán 2016; Gracia Santos 2018).

What was behind the advent, development, consolidation and impact of an underground organization in a country like Uruguay that had enjoyed political and social stability for decades? What were the reasons for the development of a revolutionary project in a society in which dialogue had been hitherto the basic tool for resolving conflicts and in which Parliament and

the political arena were effectively spaces for negotiation, consensus and inclusion? Why was it relatively successful in a country that neither had any recent tradition of the use of terrorism as a political tool, nor significant rates of violence or any potentially dangerous social divides?

This chapter will address these questions in an attempt to understand not only why an organization of those characteristics emerged, but above all why it became a relevant political actor and how it managed to transform itself from a small conspiratorial group into a revolutionary organization.[2] To this end, it is first necessary to analyze the origins of the revolutionary project from 1962 to 1965, when the future founding members of the MLN-T discussed the viability of the armed struggle, its forms and its organization with other radicalized minority groups with leftist political convictions. It was the time of what was known as the 'Coordinador de los grupos', that unofficial forum of debate responsible for the first actions that would shape the revolutionary Left during the following years.

The second part will focus on the MLN-T, the main actor of the armed struggle in Uruguay, studying its strategy, repertoires, make-up and leadership, plus its evolution between 1966 and 1972, the year of its defeat. Lastly, a passing reference will be made to the organization's history from the coup d'état in 1973 until José Mujica Cordano, one of its historic militants, assumed the presidency in 2010.

It should be noted that this chapter focuses on the MLN-T not only due to the fact that it was the main revolutionary organization in Uruguay at the time, but also owing to space limitations and because it is in keeping with the spirit and letter of this book. Nevertheless, as already shown (Rey Tristán 2005), the new revolutionary Left in Uruguay was more complex and involved a broader range of actors who, albeit a political minority, were crucial both for the development and representation of the revolutionary ideas of the 1960s abounding in Uruguayan society at the time and for the country's future. Accordingly, passing reference will be made to other actors involved in the instructional period of the revolutionary Left and to the expansion of violence in the country from 1966 to 1973.

Origins

The MLN-T was the result of the deliberations of the non-communist Left with revolutionary tendencies during the first years of the 1960s. Its origins date back to 31 July 1963, when a small group raided Tiro Suizo, a gun club in the country's interior, with the alleged aim of obtaining rifles with which to support the protests of the sugarcane workers in the north.

That action marked, in retrospect, a qualitative leap forward in the activities that certain militants of different political persuasions had commenced a few months before. They included, on the one hand, those who, led by Raúl Sendic—a member of the Partido Socialista del Uruguay (PSU) and the leader of the sugarcane workers belonging to the Unión de Trabajadores Azucareros de Artigas since 1961—had discovered in those dispossessed agricultural laborers their revolutionary subject; and on the other, a group of people coming from the youth organization of the Movimiento Revolucionario Oriental (MRO) who supported their cause unconditionally. To these must be added another group belonging to the Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (FAU, created in 1955) and yet another who, abandoning the ranks of the communist youth organization after the Sino-Soviet Split, created the MIR in 1963.

The initial reason why these militants found common ground for discussion lies in the political situation at the time. First, notwithstanding the widespread demonstrations in support of Cuba since 1959, the Left obtained poor results in the 1962 elections, all of which not only underscored its lack of unity but also the crisis of the socialists who had lost ground to the communists. And secondly, the Left's growing frustration with the impossibility of promoting a

constitutional reform of a social nature and the meager results obtained by the sugarcane workers, despite their tenacious protests and marches on Montevideo. The latter had a huge impact on both the sugarcane workers and the capital's inhabitants, especially the young militants who joined the mobilization driven by the impact of the Cuban Revolution.

Their interpretation of those developments, in the context of the views on the possibilities for revolution circulating in the region, led many of those militants to believe that the system was there to stay. The electoral fiasco of the Left, which had not managed to break through its historical ceiling of votes despite the widespread protests of the period, was interpreted as evidence of the unfeasibility of the political-electoral route to power and, therefore, the need to organize and arm themselves, following the Cuban example, to change the system by other means.

Seen from that angle, the raid on Tiro Suizo in July 1963 was a game changer: to carry out an action that served as an unambiguous mission statement. Although the excuse was to arm the sugarcane workers, the ultimate aim was to move towards the commencement of underground armed activity. This was in consonance with an unofficial maxim of the MLN-T: 'words separate us, deeds unite us,' namely, paving the way for revolution through action, rather than ideological confrontation.

As to deeds, the Tiro Suizo action was not only a failure, but also forced Sendic underground. Nonetheless, it was politically relevant. Thenceforth, 'We were all heirs to a dangerous and confrontational legacy. We shared a secret that put our freedom on the line. So, we all began to depend on the discretion of the rest,' according to one of the founding members of the MLN-T (Fernández Huidobro 1987, I:82). It involved having to meet regularly, thus giving rise to the Coordinador, an informal institutionalization of those contacts that would take place as from the end of 1962.[3]

The Coordinador was formed by the four aforementioned groups and a number of former socialist militants. There was a general consensus on two issues: the rejection of the ballot box as a tool for political and social transformation, which set them at odds with the communist strategy, the main leftist party and the only one that was experiencing growth at the time; and the need to consider the option of taking up arms to transform the current reality.

The role of the armed struggle, the strategy to be followed and organizational matters were the main topics of debate during the following months, in which they also began to carry out small actions that served both to obtain resources for their underground activities (i.e. arms and cash) and as acts of propaganda or condemnation; the latter by means of minor attacks with explosives on US interests or Uruguayan export companies. The aim of these actions was more to gain personal experience and to equip themselves than to make political statements per se.[4]

The disagreements on how to proceed and, occasionally, on how actions had been carried out, finally led to a schism in the Coordinador in 1965. The main bones of contention were organizational and strategic issues and the role of armed action. Those who contended that it was necessary to create a new armed organization that, inspired by the Cuban example, developed the guerrilla struggle in Uruguay, ended up creating the MLN-T in January 1966 (with around 50 militants, approximately half of whom had participated in the previous discussions). And those who, believing that there was no need to do so with militants from other groups because their organization was already revolutionary and that armed action should be secondary to the mass struggle in the event of an insurrection, took a different path, as was the case with the anarchists and the members of the MIR.

For the former, the guerrilla struggle was inviable in Uruguay.[5] They defended the creation of action structures (an armed wing of the Left) that supported the struggle of the workers, the real revolutionary subjects, under their political guidance and without resorting to the

militarism to which they believed that the guerrillas were predisposed. As from 1968, they reorganized themselves by creating a mass student organization, the Resistencia Obrera Estudiantil, and an apparatus for direct action, the Organización Popular Revolucionaria 33 Orientales (OPR-33), an underground organization with insurrectional ambitions and a limited number of members—who were only increased when this was so required by the level of sociopolitical and labor unrest—whose purpose was to generate resources (through robberies) and bring pressure to bear on union conflicts through direct action (primarily kidnappings).[6]

Up until 1965, the members of the MIR had coincided in the need to take up arms and to begin to organize the underground organizations, in whose actions they also collaborated. But from then on neither did they agree with the plans of the urban guerrilla organization, destined to become the future MLN-T, nor did they create their own armed wing. Their scheme was also insurrectional, but their main task was to consolidate the future revolutionary vanguard (the revolutionary communist party that would guide the process) by focusing their activities on the workers.[7]

Lastly, mention should go to the MRO, which did not participate in the debates of the Coordinador. Founded in 1961 by Ariel Collazo—a former militant of the Partido Nacional turned prominent advocate and propagandist of the Cuban cause in Uruguay—its project was subordinated to the will of its leader, its ties with Cuba (where some of its members received training) and a precarious balance between politics and underground activity, insofar as it intended to hedge its bets: to maintain a small armed group, while engaging in legal political action through its alliance with the Partido Comunista de Uruguay (PCU). Neither did it have a clear-cut strategy nor did it manage to become a relevant political or underground actor. Its first armed initiative depended on Guevara's project in Bolivia in 1967, laying the groundwork to join his ranks once it had been consolidated. Che's death and the organization's outlawing soon afterwards convinced it to create its own armed group, i.e. the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Orientales. Neither a support group for the union and student struggles, like the OPR-33, nor an urban guerrilla, like the MLN-T, it only carried out a few minor propaganda actions until, after the lifting of the ban, the MRO joined the Frente Amplio (FA) with an eye to participating in the elections of 1971.[8]

The Consolidation of the Armed Approach

The MLN-T attracted those endorsing the armed approach in Uruguay and who considered that, to this end, it was necessary to create a new organization formed by all those leftists who were of the same mind. This meant that the organization's ideology was, from the outset, firmly rooted in the armed struggle: it would not be socialist, communist or anarchist, but 'revolutionary', insofar as it aspired to take the path trodden by Cuba, notwithstanding the fact that it did not share the main Castroist strategic approach—i.e. the Guevarist foquismo—which it intended to reinterpret.

In this respect, it represented a dual challenge to the established conventions: to communist hegemony, inasmuch as it defended the armed approach, and to Guevarism, since it rejected the foquismo as impractical in Uruguay. The first Tupamaros discovered their revolutionary subject in the sugarcane workers and their jungle in the cities. Furthermore, they understood that the Guevarist foco concept could be adapted, in a qualitative sense, as an activist and unifying core, in which their greatest asset would not now be military, but their ability to stir up the desire for revolution (Rey Tristán 2005, 178). A small urban action group was considered to be just as viable for unmasking the system's contradictions and developing the armed struggle, which would ultimately be an essential foundation for the main political struggle. The

Tupamaro foco was therefore ideological and propagandistic and it promoted action that would help to define political positions: those who wanted a swift and radical change and those who advocated for a long-term accumulation of forces.

Until 1967, the proponents of subversive action in Uruguay were still a minority. Their growth in number was the result of a complex combination of factors: the crisis in the second half of the decade; the lack of consensus on the state model and the way of reaching understandings and resolving conflicts through dialogue; the polarization of positions; and the advent of exclusionary projects—all of which gradually favored the consideration of anti-system options (at both ends of the political spectrum), their centrality in the debates and their growing relevance. The end result would be institutional breakdown in 1973.[9]

The debates, the actions, the political-ideological repositioning of many actors of the Left and the renewal of its strategies and tactics during the first half of the 1960s, led the armed approach as a tool for political confrontation to being viewed under a different light. As from 1968, this allowed the logic and act of taking up arms for the revolution in a traditionally pacific, democratic and stable country such as twentieth-century Uruguay to be seen as something normal in the collective imaginary of many militants and young people who had received their baptism of fire in the protests.

But in order that those ideas should really take root in Uruguayan society and politics other elements were required. First and foremost, a context that justified that interpretation and the individual and collective decisions of the following mobilization. Second, a militant space to which to adhere; to wit, the objective (although they were only considered as such by those using them to justify their stances, i.e. in the eyes of the beholder) and subjective (an organization to join) conditions.

For many militants, the former had been created by the country's political evolution. In 1966, there was a constitutional shift towards a presidential model (versus the previous collegial governance model) in an attempt to come to grips with the crisis. In December 1967, the president-elect died and his successor, Jorge Pacheco Areco, introduced a number of changes that had a profound social impact, triggering protests to which the state responded with repression. During his term of office, there were two key developments: soon after assuming the presidency, he outlawed all the non-communist Left after it had given its stamp of approval to the conclusions of the OLAS, which a few months before had endorsed the armed struggle as the basic revolutionary path in the region;[10] and six months later, he started to implement far-reaching economic policies and declared a state of siege to contain the social protests.

In mid-1968, the government's main concern was the student and worker mobilizations. The former would play a leading role in the protests in Montevideo in 1968. As from August, they were the first to suffer casualties due to the police crackdown following an escalation in the clashes. Thenceforth, those young people who had staged spontaneous demonstrations in the previous months would look for organizations to join as a way of coping with both the mobilization and the repression. Many ended up in the communist party's youth organization (Markarian 2012, 91–95); others sought out those who were already laying the groundwork for the armed struggle, considering that it was the only way of reacting to the police volleys under which several of their comrades had died.

They found what they were looking for in the MLN-T which, from the end of 1968 up until the beginning of the 1970s, grew exponentially. Previously, they had restricted their discussions to their close circle, among those with whom they had been politically or personally associated beforehand, for which reason they numbered a little over 100 at the beginning of the year. The MLN-T grew slowly but surely, given its contacts and methods of recruitment and training.

But, as from the end of 1968, it registered a huge influx of students, which meant that personal motivations, training and security issues changed.

This growth basically meant that it was necessary to transform the MLN-T's structures, with the subsequent increase in its operational capacity and the threat that it posed to the government. The organization began to evolve as from the beginning of 1967, goaded by the police's lucky strokes. Since it was a small organization, it was not compartmentalized, which was a security risk. Accordingly, it created columns, small self-contained organizations with all the necessary logistic, operational and intelligence services, formed by independent cells without horizontal links and with contacts solely between their leaders. That pattern was reproduced at column leadership and organizational levels in order to minimize security breaches. Members only knew what they had to know, a crucial principle in an urban underground organization.

From the start, the model proved its worth for improving organizational aspects and, in the following years, for its expansion. First, it allowed a large number of radicalized students to join its ranks as from the end of 1968; and once the columns had more than enough militants, it served to create mass organizations: Columna 70 formed by legal sympathizers with no links to the armed struggle; and the Movimiento de Independientes '26 de Marzo' (MI26M), through which the MLN-T participated politically in the FA and in the 1971 elections.

The MLN-T's efficient use of violence in the initial years (understood as its contained use in accordance with the conventions of a relatively conflict-free country like Uruguay) and its actions condemning the corruption in the midst of an economic and social crisis, enabled it to win over broad sectors of society, thus helping it to become a relevant political actor since 1970. If in 1968 the main concern of the government and its security measures had been the students and workers, two years later it would be chiefly the underground groups, above all the MLN-T which would be responsible for most of the armed activity in the country until its defeat in 1972.[11]

By 1969, the MLN-T had ceased to be a small conspiratorial group to become a revolutionary organization posing a real challenge to the system. The gradual escalation in the number of its actions, the boldness and efficiency with which they were carried out and the inability of the security forces to counter them, continued to be the case throughout August 1970. The developments during that month, with the kidnapping and murder of a US political assessor and the arrest of the organization's leaders, fanned the flames and ultimately obliged the MLN-T to change tack.

In the literature, there is some consensus on the fact that, with the MLN-T's historic leaders now in prison, in a certain sense the organization then began to take a more militaristic stance. According to Galiana Cano (2017), that moment marked the end of the armed propaganda phase and the MLN-T's first change in direction to adapt to the new circumstances. The truth is that the successive arrests of its leadership, the fact that the first project (defended by its historic leaders to explain the future defeat) had reached a dead end and its strategic limitations, among many other reasons, seem to indicate that the chances of success of the MLN-T's scheme to take power were very slim given the context.

The year 1971 was a watershed in the armed struggle. On the one hand, the Left, united in a sole electoral political project (the FA) for the first time, participated in the elections with good prospects, judging by the widespread social protests of the previous years. In view of the situation, the MLN-T ceased its actions and, as already noted, participated indirectly in the elections through the MI26M. But the results were disappointing. The FA only managed to win 18 per cent of the ballots cast (mostly in Montevideo), the victory went to the most conservative sector of the Partido Colorado (which in 1973 had seconded the military coup, the president-elect leading the dictatorship up until 1976) and that part of the political spectrum

understood as representing the revolutionary tendencies defended by the MLN-T (among others) only obtained 70,000 votes (23 per cent of those of the FA and 4.3 per cent of the total) (Garcé 2009, 186).

In the months prior to the elections, the MLN-T focused on prison breaks. The main action took place in September, when 106 Tupamaros escaped from the Punta Carretas prison (Montevideo). This was crucial because from then on the armed forces took over the counterinsurgency operations in light of the police force's bungling. They started to gather intelligence slowly but steadily which, in subsequent months, revealed the location of most of the organization's bases and operational procedures. When, on 14 March 1972, the MLN-T made an attempt on the lives of four people accused of belonging to the death squads, the armed forces launched a ruthless offensive that dismantled the organization, ending with the capture of the historic leader Sendic in September.

The Long Road to Parliament

On 27 June 1973, the coup d'état in Uruguay was complete. The armed organizations had been defeated or their members had had to flee the country. There was no internal security problem justifying this state of affairs; it was purely the result of the coming to power of one of the exclusionary political projects emerging in the previous decade, in both the local and regional ideological context of the period.

The dictatorship handed over power in the mid-1980s. During those years, the anarchists of the OPR-33 gradually disappeared without a trace in Argentina as a result of the coordinated repression of both regimes. Some of the Tupamaros met the same fate, although most of them were imprisoned or went into exile (Galiana Cano 2017, 99–103). The crackdown also affected the rest of the Left (the MIR, the MRO, the PCU, the PSU and the trade unions), who also ended up in prison or in exile, depending on the case.[12]

The Left's defeat and the repression of the dictatorship led to divisions. Some organizations, such as the FAU, the MIR and the MRO were never reorganized as such, although they had political sequels with other profiles. The Tupamaros split during the dictatorship but, with the return of democracy, started to reorganize themselves around their historic leaders who, although they had been kept in solitary confinement in extreme conditions, had remained aloof from the wrangling and finger-pointing over the defeat and had thus kept their political prestige intact (Galiana Cano 2017, 111). This allowed them to lead the reconstruction of the organization with a new project within the system. As with most of the leftist revolutionary movements in the 1960s and 1970s which had contested their democratic regimes regarding them as no more than a travesty of the ruling classes and the powers that be, the long antediluvian night of the dictatorship changed their perspective, encouraging them to abandon the idea of armed revolution and raise the flag of democracy, social reform and human rights, all issues hitherto absent from their discourse (Rey Tristán 2011).

The first decision that the MLN-T made in 1985 was to abandon the armed struggle and transform itself into a legal political organization.[13] Garcé distinguishes three milestones during that process. Between 1985 and 1989, it entered the system reasserting its traditions and debating on the approaches and scope of the new strategy. There were two main positions: that of the creation of a broad front through other political alliances, defended by Sendic; and that of the proletariats, who had greater reservations about the possibilities offered by the system and still envisaged an insurrectional future, with all the organization and structures that this would entail. A third approach, which acted as a fulcrum between the other two, was endorsed by those people who would become the organization's future leaders.

In 1989, a new phase began with several important developments in the span of a few weeks: Sendic died, the organization was accepted in the FA and it began to promote a new political movement, the Movimiento de Participación Popular (MPP). Without Sendic, the balance tipped in favor of the proletariats for a lustrum, while, in the following years, the MLN-T would share political space in the FA with tensions running high between them.

Owing to different developments and the confirmation of the country's democratic stability, finally as from 1994 the proponents of that third way—José Mujica and Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro—gradually took the organization into their own hands and began the definitive process of adapting it to electoral competition. This provoked the exodus of the proletariats from the MLN-T, spelt the end of the insurrectional imaginary and led to a reorientation of alliances in the FA and the advent of the so-called Mujica phenomenon: both his election to the Chamber of Deputies that same year and his greater presence in the media were behind his political ascendency and that of the MPP. Between 1997 and 2002, his sector received the greatest number of votes in the FA; in 2004, it topped the poll among the left-wing parties in the general elections, being key to the first electoral victory of the Left. Finally, in 2009, Mujica was elected as the president.

The former Tupamaro's assumption of the presidency and the representative political participation of the old leaders did not signify that they questioned their past. Quite to the contrary, they defended it by associating it with values that, since 1985, had been essential for their political inclusion (Galiana Cano 2017, 112). Garcé interprets the MLN-T's legal adaptation on the basis of four principles: pragmatism, internal pluralism, ambition and political dexterity, and a combination of innovation and tradition. For his part, Galiana opts for a long-term vision that highlights the organization's internal heterogeneity and strategic pluralism throughout its history; one of continuous changes, reorganizations and adaptations; of possibilism; and a history in which some fundamental aspects were always retained, thus allowing the organization to adapt to the times without renouncing its raison d'être and to argue that it still pursued the same objectives but by different means depending on the political climate at each moment.[14]

In the words of Galiana Cano (2017, 142), nowadays it is a Left that does not now speak of revolution, and only occasionally of socialism; that does not need the people to take power, but to win elections; and that has shifted away from the class struggle to pursue social goals. But in any case, it has seen throughout a generation how there were many paths to government, beyond doubting whether it has pursued political power to transform Uruguayan society as it claimed in its beginning. Its greatest challenge at the moment is generational renewal and adapting yet again to the forthcoming and inevitable absence of its historic leaders.

Notes

1. This chapter has been written in the framework of the Project HAR2016–77828-R (Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad—AEI and the ERDF), and the HistAmérica research group, University of Santiago de Compostela (Xunta de Galicia, 2017 GPC GI-1661).
2. This chapter is a summary of previous research (Rey Tristán 2005), which has been updated with further literature on the topic. For more information on the MLN-T, see also Fernández Huidobro (1987), Gatto (2004), And Labrousse (2009).
3. On the Coordinador, see Sasso (2010).
4. Concerning this issue, see Gracia Santos (2018, 317), who has identified as many as 17 actions between 1963 and 1965.
5. Author's interview with Juan Carlos Mechoso (Montevideo, Nov. 1999), a member of the FAU and the OPR-33.
6. Between a dozen and two dozen actions carried out by the OPR-33 between 1971 and 1972 have been identified. At the end of that year, the repression forced its members into exile in Argentina, where they disappeared without a trace soon afterwards. For further information on the FAU, see Mechoso (2002, 2005).
7. Author's interview with Julio Arizaga (Montevideo, Nov. 2000), a founding member of the MIR.

8. On the MRO, see Cortina Orero (2012) and Collazo (2004).
9. The best interpretation of the crisis of liberal Uruguay is still that of Varela Petito (1988). See also Cores (1999) and Nahum, Frega, Maronna and Trochon (1993).
10. The Acuerdo de Época was signed by most of non-communist Left—including all of the former members of the Coordinador—and published in the newspaper *Época* on 7 Dec. 1967. Five days later, the newspaper was closed and all of the signatories outlawed.
11. Of all the MLN-T's actions from 1963 to 1972, only 10 per cent were carried out before 1968; 20 per cent in the following two years; and the remaining 70 per cent between 1971 and 1972. The organization was responsible for 80 per cent of all the actions attributable to the revolutionary Left during that period. Most of them (almost half) were robberies to obtain funds and weapons, followed by propaganda activities (20 per cent), plus bombings, attacks on property, kidnappings and prison breaks (20 per cent), all of which had a high political and social impact irrespective of their number. For a more detailed description of the violent activities of the Uruguayan revolutionary Left, see Rey Tristán (2005, 313–343).
12. About the Uruguayan exiles, see Dutrenit Bielous (2006). On the dictatorship, see Caetano and Rilla (1987).
13. With respect to the MLN-T's process of adaptation to the law and electoral competition, see Garcé (2009) and Galiana Cano (2017, 95–156), from whom the following lines are drawn.
14. According to the founding member and historic militant of the Tupamaros Julio Marenales (author's interview, Montevideo, Aug. 1998).

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10

GUERRILLAS IN ARGENTINA

A History of Four Decades (1950–1980)

Hernán Confino and Marina Franco

Introduction

The history of armed organizations in Argentina encompasses four crucial decades in the twentieth century. Guerrilla groups were part of this period of extreme political turmoil, as well as its main victims. Interpretations of both guerrilla and armed violence in Argentina are controversial issues, and objects of contention still present in the public sphere and state policies to date.

The subject of armed groups in Argentina is multi-faceted and complex, partly because of the diversity of groups and ideological constellations involved, the way the respective paths intertwined with national and regional history and, finally, because of the tragic closure of this political cycle with state terrorism (1975–1983).

A series of factors should be considered in order to understand the phenomenon of armed organizations in Argentina. Their history can be explained through a dense network of political, cultural, social and ideological processes, both regional (Latin America) and national. First, their origin cannot be separated from the growth of revolutionary movements in the Third World, especially the Cuban Revolution (1959), or the influence of Maoism and the Vietnam War (1955–1975). In turn, those third world and anti-colonial struggles formed part of the overall Cold War context, for which reason the rising of political-military organizations was regarded by certain historical actors as a sign of advancement of Communism and Marxism in Argentina.

Second, the national context between 1955 and 1983 was deeply marked by the alternation between highly repressive military dictatorships and fragile constitutional governments, unable to handle political conflict and guarantee economic growth. The profound conflict between Peronists and anti-Peronists, which crosscut Argentinian history in the second half of the twentieth century, deeply influenced that period. Before finishing his second mandate in 1955, President Juan D. Perón was overthrown in a coup d'état. For many years thereafter, Peronism was banned from elections, and was subjected to repeated attempts to suppress it from the national scene as a popular political identity and as a political movement. Electoral exclusion and a systematic political persecution of Peronist organizations, together with a greater military conservative authoritarianism in the 1960s, were all key factors for the development of left-wing armed experiences in the country.

Third, another key factor to understand the guerrilla history is that it forms part of a broader context of the rise and growth of a 'new left' in Argentina throughout the 1960s, especially at

the end of the decade. Indeed, the process gained momentum from 1969, as consequence of a massive social uprising in Córdoba (the *Cordobazo*) against the dictatorship of the 'Argentinian Revolution' (Revolución Argentina) (1966–1973).[1] Its political impact cannot be overlooked, as it speeded radicalization, while the growth of antiestablishment groups alarmed the political elites. Thus, this 'new left' was a varied and hazy phenomenon that involved the politicization, social mobilization, cultural uprising and radicalization of groups from different origins (traditional left, Peronism, nationalism, Catholicism and cultural vanguards). All of them converged in a challenging stand against the current political system, the search for new forms of action and change, and the use of a revolutionary and antiestablishment language, focused on issues such as 'socialism', 'national liberation' and 'popular struggles'. This radicalization generated an increasing social mobilization and the rise of new political and cultural organizations in different milieus: working-class, higher education, professional middle-class, rural and religious sectors, intellectuals and artists, with strong participation of the youth segment (Tortti 1999; Manzano 2018). In sum, guerrilla organizations and the choice of armed struggle were part of a broader scenario in Argentina. Due to their historical weight and tragic ending, guerrillas are still the most visible tip of that iceberg of the antiestablishment movement.

A Brief History of Armed Organizations

The first period of Argentinian guerillas starts in 1959, concurring with the Cuban Revolution; it was marked by the emergence of small armed groups which organized scattered and short-lived operations in different parts of the country. Among them stood out the 'Uturuncos', who demanded the return of Perón—banned since 1955 (Salas 2003). The EGP was born three years later, inspired in the Cuban Revolution. It tried to establish a rural guerrilla group in the northern Salta province, with the purpose of connecting with Ernesto Guevara's operations in Bolivia (Rot 2010). In 1964 the EGP had been completely dismantled.

This embryonic period was succeeded by another one in mid-1960s, with marked differences, especially in the international scene. The rise of a 'new left' deeply impacted on numerous Argentinian militant youth groups who challenged Leninist instructions to seize power as well as the declarations of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965)—the origin of liberation theology (Campos 2016). Moreover, local factors added to this international scenario, such as the ban on the Peronist Party and the increasing authoritarianism after the coup d'état in 1966, which fueled social unrest. This period witnessed the origin of both networks and groups that led guerrillas to their peak of activity in the 1970s. In those years, the nature of these groups changed, as the rural and nomad guerrillas of the first years developed into the military-political organizations operating in urban areas. The failure of the first groups and the murder of Guevara in Bolivia in October 1967 led to the neglect of an 'internationalist' vision and a critical view of the foquismo. Henceforth, the proposal of revolution was redirected to thinking and acting according to the national context. We shall resume the analysis of the groups in this period when examining the main guerrilla 'families' in Argentina.

The Expansion of Armed Organizations and the Two Main 'Revolutionary Families'

The third period, in which guerrillas reached their peak, started ca. 1970, featuring two different phases: the first, between 1970 and 1973, and the second, between 1973 and 1976.

The years 1970–1973 witnessed the political growth of revolutionary organizations caused by a process of general radicalization and anti-authoritarian turmoil. Let us remember that there

was a military authoritarian regime in power since 1966, deeply anti-Communist and imbued in national security doctrines. This period ended in 1973 with the call for national elections and the return of Peronism to government.

Two main groups prevailed during this stage: the PRT, who in turn founded the Marxist-Leninist ERP in 1970, and the Peronist Montoneros.[2] Each of these groups fed on different ideological currents (although some were common to both), and differentiated themselves for their stands regarding Peronism, Marxism, Trotskyism, Maoism, Castroism and Catholic Renewal, among others. However, the PRT-ERP and Montoneros were not the only guerrillas throughout this period, for there were many other groups, small groups, dissidents and merges. In sum, the period 1970–76 featured a diverse, rapidly-evolving scenario of organizations. In any case, both political constellations—Marxism and Peronism—encompassed the majority of the organizations that depended on armed action as a means of political construction in the 1970s.[3]

The Marxist 'family' was mostly represented by the PRT. It developed in 1965, as a result of the merge between the Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular (FRIP), based on a Latin American anti-imperialist ideology, and Palabra Obrera (PO), inspired in Trotskyism. Although the FRIP and PO had taken different paths, they both shared the ideal of an anti-imperialist and socialist revolution in Latin America; neither of them believed in the Soviet-style 'two-stage revolution', or in the role played by national bourgeoisie in that process. They claimed the need to build a unique and centralized organization that led to the revolutionary proletariat. The PRT based the decision-making process on the Marxist-Leninist ideology and democratic centralism (Carnovale 2011). However, there were no internal agreements within the PRT regarding the 'armed struggle'. Its two main leaders—Mario Santucho in the FRIP and Nahuel Moreno in the PO—disagreed on the future political strategies. Toward 1967 they established two internal trends. While the former promoted rural guerrilla action, the latter sought to reinforce trade union and strike action. By February 1968, the breakup had already taken place. Santucho's current took the name of PRT-El Combatiente, based on its armed proposal. Moreno's took the name PRT- La Verdad, the name of the partisan journal edited by the organization.[4]

Since the IV Congress of the PRT-El Combatiente in 1968, a political redefinition regarding some leading precepts of the organization took place. Basically, the PRT conceived revolution as revolutionary war, replacing the previous insurgency-oriented approach. This change led to the foundation of its popular army during the 1970s: the ERP.

The second big 'family', of Peronist origin, had Montoneros as its core organization; they became publicly known in 1970. Their first major performance was the kidnapping and execution of the retired military officer Pedro E. Aramburu. Aramburu was the former de facto president of the military government that had overthrown Perón in 1955, and a symbol of anti-Peronist persecution and repression. Besides propaganda, through this operation Montoneros sought to win the favor of the 'Peronist people', who—puzzled at first—celebrated the action. Thus, Montoneros appeared as the continuity of 'Peronist Resistence', an inorganic movement against the coup d'état in 1955 that burgeoned between the late 1950s and early 1960s.

However, there were other organizations within the 'Peronist family' until 1973: the Descamisados (Shirtless), Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas (FAP) and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR).[5] In 1973 all the Peronist guerrillas merged under the name of Montoneros.

Montoneros became the most radicalized expression within the Peronist wide ideological spectrum, closely linked to nationalism and reformed Catholicism. A considerable number of young people, many of them born to anti-Peronist families, became prone to the armed militancy proposed by the 'Revolutionary Peronism'. Some of them had collaborated with the

post-conciliar Catholic Church. In their view, both the coup d'état of 1955 and Perón's exile were the soundest proof of injustice in the prevailing political model, as it silenced the first electoral majority. The Cuban Revolution convinced the most radicalized militants of employing direct action methods to conduct political struggle. Besides, Montoneros also served as a bridge between the left, nationalism and Peronism (Lanusse 2005).

In this context, the 1966–1973 dictatorship acted as a catalyst for the revolutionary ferment that Perón's proscription, the Cuban Revolution and post-council Catholicism had encouraged. During this government, for instance, banning politics in universities fueled a student–workers interaction that acquired visibility during the *Cordobazo* in 1969. At this point, many students were 'Peronized', convinced of the need of political struggle next to a massively Peronist working class (James 1990). Moreover, in exile, Perón took advantage of this situation, encouraging the radicalized youth to ignite the spark of revolution, while relating Peronist politics with the struggle for national self-determination present in many Third World countries.

In sum, after the 'Cordobazo', the guerrilla in Argentina finally consolidated. According to the few available statistics, armed operations were tripled in 1969 and 1970, at a rate of one every five days (Lanusse 2005). Between 1971 and 1973 guerrillas became more visible, while their actions sparked empathy among some segments of the Argentinian population. Later, between 1973 and 1975, organizations reached their peak. Despite the lack of accurate data due to the political secrecy in which the whole process developed, the PRT-ERP assembled between 2,500 and 5,000 members approximately, according to diverse sources (Pozzi 2001; Seoane 1991). In turn, Montoneros seems to have reached a similar number at the peak of their activity (Gillespie 1987). However, the spheres of influence of both guerrillas greatly exceeded their organic militancy.

Generally speaking, operations by both organizations sought to attack 'symbolic' targets of repressive state violence and implement 'armed propaganda' to help them draw closer to the people. A typical operation was the seizure of materials and goods from certain companies, to be distributed in poor neighborhoods. Through extortive kidnapping of renowned businessmen, the operations were also meant to provide financial support to clandestine organizations and their members. Even so, the pathways taken by these two main organizations diverged.

The PRT-ERP, organized both as party and army, sought the predominance of the ERP armed action inside the factories, in connection with trade union militancy, without giving up on non-armed actions. They advocated the power of the 'masses', presenting themselves as their vanguard. Montoneros had consolidated as a national federation of groups, transformed into a political-military organization, with a significant political development in Córdoba, Santa Fe and Buenos Aires provinces. The organization played a prominent role orchestrating Perón's return to the country, as it positioned itself within the Peronist political spectrum. Thus, it displayed the so-called aboveground organizations within Peronism—in opposition to the clandestine military structure—assembling high school and university students, workers, and women. Between 1970 and 1974, after the merge of different revolutionary Peronist organizations, the public structures conducted by Montoneros as well as their clandestine apparatus increased dramatically. The organization and its related legal sectors formed part of the new Peronist government in 1973.

The second phase, from 1973 to 1976, is crucial to understand the boom of guerrillas in Argentina. In 1973 the 'Revolución Argentina' dictatorship had ended, Perón returned to the country, and Peronism was no longer banned from elections. It was the beginning of a new constitutional period. This marked a significant difference between Montoneros and the PRT-ERP. The former were convinced that the realization of the 'Patria Socialista' depended on Perón's return and took active part in his electoral campaign.[6] The latter denounced the

elections as a strategy of the ruling class to distract the people from the true class contradictions, taking away their revolutionary potential (Carnovale 2011).

The new Peronist government included diverse internal fractions, from the revolutionary youth clustered around Montoneros to more orthodox segments, some linked to traditional trade unions, and some from right-wing Peronism, deeply anti-Communist. This situation generated growing internal conflicts that rapidly exploded around the dispute over who was leading the true Peronism. Such high level of conflict plus the increasing frictions against the diverse modes of the 'new left' unleashed legal and illegal repression from the government. Right-wing Peronism assembled around parastatal groups such as the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (also known as Triple A) and some youth and trade union groups, repressed sectors that formed part of both legal and clandestine structures of left-wing Peronism. And, in general, it persecuted politicians, professionals, students, and artists accused of 'Marxists'. In this context, in September 1974 Montoneros decided to go underground again for an armed confrontation against the Peronist government it had once supported (Franco 2012).

On the other hand, the PRT-ERP had not ceased their activity in 1973, but had reorganized its goals instead: it decided not to attack the elected government, for it was the result of people's will, but to keep confronting both the companies and the armed forces, whom they considered 'enemies of the country'. In this scenario, in January 1974 the ERP attacked the military headquarters in Azul, in Buenos Aires province. This action marked a turning point in Perón's government, which increased its repressive response and—consistent with its anti-Communist tradition—regarded the revolutionary groups as threats to 'national security'.[7]

In the forthcoming years, the PRT-ERP and Montoneros found other limited areas of agreement. The armed action of both groups increased at the same pace as the government's repressive responses. Both Montoneros and the PRT-ERP focused their actions particularly on military targets, attacking installations and leading figures of armed and police forces. These strategies, and the repressive scenario in which they unfolded, contributed to the progressive political isolation of the organizations. The period of political growth and of certain public support had come to an end with Peronism's return to power. In the view of broad social segments, only a dictatorial government could justify armed action. Instead, these armed groups considered that their revolutionary and socialist project was beyond a liberal democratic government. At this point, the PRT-ERP and Montoneros, once ideologically apart, became closer because of their mutual clandestine condition and their shared intentions of overthrowing the Peronist government by force of arms.

In March 1974, the PRT-ERP established a rural guerrilla camp in the wild forest in southern Tucumán province (northern Argentina): the Compañía del Monte 'Ramón Rosa Jiménez'. In 1975, the armed revolutionary action in the country peaked; that year also marked the beginning of the harshest repression. The government and the armed forces responded by defusing the PRT-ERP guerrilla camp, commanding the Army to 'annihilate the action of subversive elements.' The military operation, called 'Operativo Independencia', started in February 1975, claiming that the country was at war. All possible forms of illegal repression—kidnapping, seclusion in clandestine detention centers, missing bodies and traces—were implemented by state terrorism. In this way, the armed forces gradually took the internal security of the state into their hands. In October that same year, the 'anti-subversive struggle' and the Army's discretionary power spread all over the country.

In late 1975, the PRT-ERP carried out the major guerrilla action in Argentinian history: they attacked an army battalion in Monte Chingolo, in southern Buenos Aires city. The operation was infiltrated and soon thwarted by the armed forces. The ERP lost nearly 90 troops, between the murdered and the missing, thus becoming extremely weakened.

Amidst an atmosphere of economic and social crisis, political violence and a Peronist government with an internal breakdown, the armed forces seized power on 24 March 1976. Guerrillas had been harshly stricken by repression and lacked substantial public support by then. Public speeches against 'subversion', repression and the way in which organizations took part in the escalating political violence the previous years left guerrillas bereft of social support.

The End of Armed Organizations: Repression and Defeat

Both Montoneros and the PRT-ERP foresaw the military coup d'état and understood that the response to dictatorship had to be military. They agreed on two aspects: first, the impossibility of conducting legal policies due to aggressive state repression and, second, their belief that sacrifice and the force of arms were the only way out. The PRT-ERP defined the new situation as a 'generalized civil war', within which the 'armed struggle is at the core of politics' (Carnovale 2011). Montoneros, which interpreted this circumstance as a 'comprehensive people's war', also claimed that the 'main method was the force of arms' (Salas 2006).

In July 1976, the military government executed the main leaders of the PRT and kidnapped others, leaving the organization on the verge of disintegration. Until then, the leadership of the PRT and Montoneros, together with the Trotskyist group Organización Comunista del Pode Obrero had attempted to create the Organización para la Liberación de Argentina—inspired in the PLO—to join forces (Cormick 2014). The project was frustrated due to repressive action of the dictatorship.

In this scenario, both organizations opted for the exile of their most important militants to avoid repression. In late 1976, the party structures of Montoneros and the more weakened PRT-ERP fled the country. Henceforth, they made use of their stay abroad to denounce state terrorism in Argentina, and to organize their return to fight dictatorship. The most frequent destinations were Mexico, in the case of Montoneros, and Italy, in the case of the PRT-ERP. However, many militants also took refuge in Spain, France, Sweden, Cuba and Venezuela. In exile, they created solidarity organizations for political prisoners and the newly arrived Argentines and discussed the national political situation.

In April 1977, in Rome, Montoneros founded the Movimiento Peronista Montonero, as an attempt to broaden their political space and refresh their alliance with Peronism. In turn, also in April and in Rome, the PRT organized their last Executive Committee meeting. In Argentina, the military regime kidnapped the PRT's leaders who were in the country, and practically eliminated the organization from the local political scene. From then on, their activity would only take place abroad and in prisons (Carnovale 2014).

Montoneros kept their main leaders abroad and remained active a while longer. Although weakened, after two years of military government, the organization planned its 'Strategic Counter-offensive'. The operation consisted in returning to the country to defeat the military government. To that end, it organized its mission in different areas: the military section had to attack the economic cabinet of the military regime, and the political section had to counteract dictatorial censorship with the clandestine interference of Montoneros propaganda. Militants were recruited and trained abroad; they returned to the country in two groups, in 1979 and 1980. The 'Counter-offensive' was ineffective; the military regime executed and disappeared nearly half of the two hundred militants who had returned (Confino 2018).

Because of the failure of the 'Counter-offensive', Montoneros faced internal dissent, exposing its waning representativeness among militants. In turn, what was left of the PRT—established abroad—experienced a 'partisan schism' in 1979. By the end of 1970s, those formerly powerful guerrilla groups had been practically disarmed, with a considerable number of executed and

kidnapped militants. Finally, the stronger resistance against dictatorship did not come from these groups but from human rights organizations and, to a lesser extent, from trade union pressure.

Concluding Remarks

After the return to democracy in 1983, torn by repression and by a sentiment of defeat and failure, the remains of these organizations were neither active in the political arena, nor reassembled in new political forces. Most of the guerrilla militants were victims of state repression. Many remain missing to date. Once democracy was established, some former militants who had managed to survive faced legal actions due to their activities during the former decade (although this mainly affected those militants responsible for crimes against humanity). Politically, survivors joined Peronist groups, or minor left-wing parties, proving that the history of armed organizations and their revolutionary project had come to closure along with dictatorship.[8] Other militants channeled their political drive in the struggle for human rights in the following decades. Consequently, unlike Uruguay or Brazil, post-dictatorship political life was reorganized around the traditional political parties. Furthermore, unlike other countries, after the dictatorship, large sectors of Argentinian society stigmatized the former militants as 'subversive' and 'terrorists'. This spread to exiles and political prisoners who had been victims of repression.

In modern-day Argentina, the experience, impact and tragic end of armed organizations are still matters of political, legal and intellectual contention, also present in heated debates within the left and among old militants.[9]

Controversy over the responsibility of armed forces, extreme violence and the causes of a defeat that led to the death of so many men and women is still at the core of an open-ended and painful history. For this reason, the history of armed organizations in Argentina cannot be separated from state terrorism and state responsibility for massive violations of human rights in the 1970s.

Notes

1. This revolt is related to the cycle of international protests of 1968 (May 1968, Prague Spring, and the Mexican Tlatelcoco). Although they all share a juvenile and antiestablishment spirit, the 'Cordobazo' was influenced by the political dimension of the anti-dictatorial struggle (Manzano 2018; Tortti 1999).
2. Reference works for each of these groups are: Carnovale (2011) and Pozzi (2001) on the ERP; Gillespie (1987), Lanusse (2005), and Slipak (2015) on Montoneros; and Oberti (2015) on revolutionary organizations and gender. Further references regarding different aspects of each group shall be mentioned throughout the article.
3. Montoneros had four internal dissenting groups: Columna Sabino Navarro in 1972 (Seminara 2015), the Juventud Peronista Lealtad in 1973 (Pozzoni 2013), the Peronismo Montonero Auténtico in 1979 (Slipak 2017) and Montoneros 17 Oct. (Confino 2018). The PRT-ERP had three derivations: the Grupo Obrero Revolucionario in 1970 (Cortina Orero 2011), Fracción Roja in 1973 (Cormick 2012) and ERP 22 Aug. (Carnovale 2011).
4. In 1972, the PRT-La Verdad integrated the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, a revolutionary organization that did not ascribe to armed struggle.
5. The FAR was a derivation of the Ejército Nacional Revolucionario (ENR) with the specific goal of meeting the forces of Guevara in Bolivia. The plan was foiled after Guevara's death, and the group remained in Argentina. Originally Marxist, the FAR became 'Peronized' in 1972, and merged with Montoneros (Gillespie 1987; González Canosa 2012).
6. The winner in the first Argentinian election of Mar. 1973 was Héctor Cámpora, Perón's personal representative in Argentina, given that Perón was still banned. However, once all the electoral restrictions were suppressed, the same Peronist Party obliged Cámpora to step down, and Perón was elected president with 62 per cent of the votes in Sept. 1973.

7. At the same time, the armed organizations in the region had established closer links among them. In 1974 the JCR was formed by the PRT-ERP, the Uruguayan MLN-T, the Chilean MIR, and the Bolivian ELN. However, it was a short-lived organization, with practically no political or organizational impact (Marchesi 2017).
8. However, there was a last armed action. Several years after the end of the dictatorship, in 1989, the Movement 'Todos por la Patria', a small revolutionary group led by Enrique Gorriarán Merlo (a former PRT militant), attempted to take over the military headquarters in La Tablada (Buenos Aires province). This operation aimed to encourage a popular uprising, which was violently suppressed by the Armed Forces, leaving dozens dead and missing. It still remains unclear who were those responsible for the violation of human rights in this historical event.
9. Among the most relevant discussions, see the debate 'No matar' (AAVV 2007–2010), and political-academic contributions, such as Calveiro (2005) and Hilb (2014).

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11

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED LEFT IN CHILE (1965–1990)

Igor Goicivic Donoso

Introduction[1]

The historical trajectory of the Chilean left is broadly identified with its vocation and commitment to democratic institutionality. Both the Partido Obrero Socialista (1912), later to become the Partido Comunista de Chile (PCCh 1922), and the PSCh (1933), were political organizations that privileged their insertion in the mass movement, especially in the union movement and in the institutional structure, through the election of representatives in the National Congress and in the different municipalities of the country (Grez 2011, Drake 1992).

However, since the mid-1930s, both within these organizations and on their periphery, more radicalized tendencies have been organized, sustaining the need for armed struggle as a resource to achieve power (Palieraki 2014). This was the approach developed by the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (1937), which filiated in the Trotskyist tradition; of the 'Reinosista' tendency within the PCCh during its stage of political proscription (1948–1958); and that of the social and political movements that emerged in the heat of the Cuban Revolution (1959). Contrary to the passionate proclamations that many of these organizations made public, none of them created an organization willing to deploy the armed struggle in Chile. Not even the MIR, founded in 1965, took serious steps in that direction—not until 1973 at least (Goicovic 2016). In this way, the cycles of armed struggle in Chile distance themselves in an important way from those verified in Latin America between 1961 and 1967 (foquismo) and 1970–1976 (politico-military organizations).

An exceptional case was the VOP (1969–1971), which carried out its armed action (otherwise ephemeral) during the government of the Unidad Popular (UP). Meanwhile, the main armed deployment of the MIR took place during the consolidation phase of the Chilean civic-military dictatorship between 1978 and 1984. Other armed organizations that emerged in the heat of the dictatorship extended their operational actions until the early phase of transition to democracy. These are the cases of the FPMR (1983–1996) and the Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria Lautaro (MAPU-L, 1983–1996).

In this chapter I analyze the first two cycles of development of the armed insurgency in Chile (1969–1973 and 1973–1990), revealing the historical context in which it was deployed and the political profile of the organizations that played a leading role.[2]

The Emergence of Armed Organizations in Chile (1965–1973)

By the mid-twentieth century both the developmental strategy of economic growth and the populist model of political action were severely questioned, especially by the radical left. In this context, the Cuban Revolution came to modify, in a profound manner, the way of doing politics in the region. Indeed, the conquest of power by the Castro's M26J significantly transformed the tactical-strategic guidelines of an important segment of the Latin American left, thus creating new tendencies and organizations (Pozzi and Pérez 2012).

In the case of Chile, the ideals and model of political action proposed by the Cuban Revolution were embodied early on by the MIR, an organization that burst onto the national political scene in August 1965. On that occasion, a large and heterogeneous group of revolutionary organizations took on the task of building a new organic instrument that would dispute the leadership of the popular movement with the traditional left (Palieraki 2014; Álvarez 2015). The MIR, based on the orientations established by its main leader, Miguel Enríquez, proposed the armed popular insurrection as a way to overthrow the capitalist regime and advance towards the construction of socialism (Cerda and Torres 1999). However, from 1970 onwards the MIR focused its political action on mass work, postponing the implementation of the armed struggle.

The MIR maintained that with the arrival of the UP government (1970–1973), a new cycle was opened in the class struggle in Chile, which forced the organization to turn to mass work and, therefore, to define a new model of organic articulation (MIR 1970). To this end, the Grupos Político-Militares were formed, which were intermediate organic structures that articulated bases of masses, operations and techniques and infrastructure.[3] At the mass level, the sharpening experienced by the class struggle was used to penetrate the most radicalized sectors of the popular movement and a line of intermediate fronts was articulated: Frente de Trabajadores Revolucionarios, Movimiento Universitario de Izquierda, Frente de Estudiantes Revolucionarios, Movimiento Campesino Revolucionario and the Movimiento de Pobladores Revolucionarios, destined to systematize popular demands and to lead their struggles. As a result, the MIR experienced a qualitative growth among the student population and Mapuche peasant sectors, while at the same time strengthening political relations with some organizations and leaders of the government coalition.

Based on these political definitions and taking as a reference the inevitability of the armed confrontation, the MIR proposed the construction of a revolutionary social force that would be capable of creating a new political situation and, from it, the construction of a new legality, as the only way to solve the problem of power. In this way, the slogan of 'popular power' acquired a strategic dimension, as soon as it crystallized as a manifestation parallel to the bourgeois state, based on the autonomous social organizations and forces of the proletariat and the people (Gaudichaud 2016).

It concluded that the power crisis must necessarily be resolved through armed confrontation, which was conceived in the early 1970s as an 'irregular and prolonged revolutionary war'.[4] Towards 1973 the MIR, as a result of its analysis of the national political situation and of the evaluation of its ranks of insertion and conduction in and on the mass movement, concluded that there were only two ways for the development of the class struggle in Chile: the reformist capitulation in front of the pressures of the bourgeoisie (return of taken companies and call for a plebiscite to settle the political conflict) or the revolutionary counteroffensive. If the latter triggered the coup d'état, it was believed that there was the necessary force to crush it.[5]

Despite the above appreciation, the response of the mass movement and the MIR to the September 11, 1973 coup d'état was not as expected. The disconcerted, beaten and fragmented mass movement remained mostly passive, frightened and did not develop armed resistance,

while the vanguard sectors in the industrial neighborhoods, in towns and in some rural areas, which occupied their fronts of struggle waiting for leadership and armament, were later evicted and violently repressed (Vidaurrázaga 2013). In any case, the immediate balance carried out by the MIR diagnosed that the strategy that had failed in Chile was that of reformism, but not the revolutionary strategy, which although exposed to the ebb and flow experienced by the popular struggle, appeared politically and morally legitimized. From this characterization the policy of 'popular resistance' was promoted, which inserted armed action as a fundamental strategic dimension of the struggle against the dictatorship.[6]

A different dynamic of political action is offered by VOP. Indeed, this organization, which emerged around August 1968 from a series of splits of militants from the MIR, the PCCh and the PSCh, carried out its main armed actions (assaults on financial institutions, attacks on police barracks and political assassinations) in the cycle between 1969 and 1971. The VOP assumed that the scenario opened up by the rise of popular struggles, starting in 1967, demanded the implementation of armed struggle. From this perspective he criticized the 'mirista' reluctance to adopt this path, emphasizing that this was due to the mostly petty-bourgeois composition of the party leadership. The VOP, on the other hand, recognized itself as an 'organization of armed proletarians', who through urban guerrilla warfare were preparing to seize power and build socialism (Guerra 2018).

With a very weak insertion among the mass organizations of the period and ideologically and politically distanced from both the parties of the UP and the MIR, the VOP waged an apparatus struggle against the police agencies of the state, which reached its highest point of development in 1971. During that year, attacks on Carabineros and police officers were intensified in order to recover weapons, while in June they carried out the execution of Eduardo Frei Montalva's former minister of the interior (1964–1970), businessman Edmundo Pérez Zujovic. After the murder of Pérez Zujovic, the administration of Salvador Allende carried out an intense repressive raid against the VOP, as a result of which their main leaders, the brothers Ronald and Arturo Rivera Calderón, lost their lives, while the bulk of their militancy was imprisoned, thus marking the eclipse of this organization (Pomar 2010).

The Dictatorship and the Development of Armed Struggle in Chile (1973–1990)

Immediately after the coup d'état of September 11, 1973, the organizations of the left, and particularly the MIR, were subjected to a brutal repressive policy, which led to their disappearance as political actors (Goicovic 2016). However, from 1978, in the framework of the so-called Operacíon Retorno (Operation Return), the MIR managed to recover part of its operational intervention capacity by installing politico-military cadres in the country, with military training abroad.[7] These cadres formed the so-called Estructura de Fuerza Central (EFC), an operational unit which, together with the Milicias de la Resistencia Popular (MRP), contributed considerably to the revival of the anti-dictatorial struggle.

From that moment on, the 'special tasks' deployed by the EFC became increasingly important. These included the execution of the Director of the Escuela de Inteligencia del Ejército, Colonel Roger Vergara, on July 15, 1980,[8] the execution of the Central Nacional de Informaciones (CNI) agent Carlos Tapia Barraza, verified on 6 July 1981 (MIR 1981), and the ambush of November 18, 1981, in which three members of the Policía de Investigaciones e Police who guarded the house of Army General Santiago Sinclair lost their lives.[9] This cycle of development of the operative action closed in August 1983 with the execution of the Mayor of Santiago, Major General Carol Urzúa and two members of his escort. Urzúa was politically responsible

for the repression of the popular protests that took place between May and August 1983, in his capacity as Mayor of the Metropolitan Region.[10]

This important level of development of the operational actions of the EFC of the MIR was accompanied by an increasing degree of intervention by the Milicias de la Resistencia Popular. Sabotages to the installation of public lighting, as well as roadblocks through the erection of barricades, the placement of explosive devices, the scratching of anti-dictatorial slogans and the use of Molotov cocktails in demonstrations began to become habitual. In the same way, the capture of food transport vehicles and their subsequent distribution in the popular districts of Santiago, Concepción, Valparaíso and Viña del Mar generated an important degree of adhesion of the inhabitants to the actions of the resistance.

From this moment on, the resistance committees began to multiply, and together with them, mass organizations emerged and developed. The trade union struggle was revived, especially after the workers' strikes in the textile sector (Panal Industries 1980) and the workers who operated in the construction of the Colbún-Machicura Hydroelectric Plant (1982–1983). In the same way the students in the higher education centers initiated processes of grouping and mobilization around the rejection of the la Ley General de Universidades (1981). At the same time, in the outskirts of large cities, the first land occupations began to develop. It should be noted that between 1980 and 1982, anti-dictatorial rallies multiplied, especially for emblematic dates such as May 1 and September 11, and the first street demonstrations were held, known as the 'hunger marches' (Silva 2011; Palma 2012).

One of the fundamental components of Operation Return was the installation of two guerrilla fronts in southern Chile; one in the Nahuelbuta Mountain Range, near the industrial conurbation of Concepción-Talcahuano and the coal basin of Lota and Coronel and the other in the interior of Valdivia, near the Panguipulli Wood and Forest Complex, one of the areas in which the MIR had experienced a high degree of settlement before the 1973 coup d'état (Bize 2017). The installation of these fronts was directly related to the strategic definitions of the MIR, since it was a question of having permanent military forces capable of disputing the territorial control of certain areas of the country from the bourgeois state (MIR 1982).[11] The experience of the exploratory squadron installed in the Neltume area was disastrous. Denounced by the peasants of the region, the guerrillas were first detected and later executed in a combined maneuver of the Army and the CNI. Between September and October 1981, nine militants of the MIR lost their lives in the encirclement and annihilation actions, among them the leader of the group, Miguel Cabrera Fernández (nom de guerre Paine).

In this way, along with the revival of social movements and anti-dictatorial resistance, repressive action also increased. The dictatorship, questioned in one of its fundamental supports (repressive politics), placed the MIR in the focus of its attention. More than 46 militants were killed in the course of the 1979–1983 cycle, in real or simulated armed confrontations. Most of them belonged to the organization's military commands. Others were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms by military courts (Rettig 1996). The Central Force guerrillas were practically decimated, and their contingents had to be relieved with militants from the ranks of the resistance. Both phenomena had projections in the immediate future of the MIR. On the one hand, the capacity for operational intervention in major tasks decreased, while on the other hand, the popular resistance experienced a systematic drain of cadres, which affected the relationship between the party and the mass fronts.

Between 1983 and 1987 popular discontent with the dictatorship was expressed through a series of popular street demonstrations that acquired increasing degrees of violence (Bravo 2017). The social and political confrontation became more acute and, under its protection, the political opposition to the regime managed to rebuild its ties with Chilean society. In this

context, two alternatives for overcoming the dictatorship were outlined: one represented by the Movimiento Democrático Popular grouped the parties of the historical left: the PCCh and the PSCh, to which the MIR joined. Its program involved the overthrow of the dictatorship, using all forms of struggle (including the armed insurgency) and the construction of a popular democracy, introducing political, social and economic reforms that would once again guide the country on the road to socialism.

The other, represented by the Alianza Democrática (AD), had as its hegemonic referent the Democracia Cristiana and was joined by the social democratic fraction of the PSCh and the former Partido Radical (PR). His political program proposed the end of the dictatorship through social mobilization but without using armed struggle. Its goal was to restore the democratic system in force in Chile until before the military coup of 1973.

In September 1986, the attempted execution of Augusto Pinochet by an FPMR commando not only unleashed a violent repression of the opposition movement. It also made it clear to all Chilean political actors and to those concerned about the political situation in Chile from abroad (especially the United States) that social outbursts and insurgent actions were rapidly shifting towards the generation of a low-intensity war scenario. Under the auspices of the US Department of State and intermediated by the leadership of the Chilean Catholic Church, representatives of the opposition political parties (articulated around the AD) and the political representatives of the dictatorship were summoned to agree on a 'great national agreement' that would prevent the outbreak of a civil war by politically isolating the 'extremist groups', temporarily limiting the military mandate and restoring a diffuse democratic system (Gómez 2010).

Between 1987 and 1988, negotiations between the two sectors resulted in the democratic parties' acceptance of the political calendar and the institutional framework defined by the military authorities to restore democracy. For its part, the dictatorship, which aspired to extend its political mandate until 1998, accepted the adverse decision of the ballot boxes in the plebiscite of October 1988 and the electoral results of December 1989, which gave the winner to the representative of the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (the continuation of the AD), Patricio Aylwin Azocar, and handed over the government in March 1990. This opened the way for a political transition to democracy (Mella 2011).

In this cycle the military operations of the MIR decreased (Palma 2012). The failure of the installation of the guerrilla contingent in Neltume (1981) and the strong repressive blows on the EFC considerably reduced the operational capacity of the group. Thus, when the general insurrection of the popular camp was inaugurated, after the protests of 1983, the military detachment of the MIR was already practically dismantled. Other armed groups, such as the FPMR and the MAPU-L Complex, relieved the MIR of the leading role in the armed struggle.

The scenario opened by the dictatorship provoked a wide debate within the left. Some sectors gave up the socialist project early on and affiliated their organizations with the political center. This was the case of MAPU and part of the PSCh (Moyano 2010); others, on the contrary, moved towards armed struggle. Indeed, in the heat of the internal debates developed around the defeat of the UP in 1973, the PCCh began to develop a theoretical reflection and then to implement a political strategy substantially different from the one that had accompanied its development since the mid-1930s. The so-called mass popular rebellion policy emerged. This design involved a broad process of accumulation of social and political force of an anti-dictatorial nature, which was to culminate in a general insurrection that overthrew the dictatorship and created the conditions for the formation of a 'provisional patriotic government of national unity' (Álvarez 2011; Rojas 2011). In this scenario, the mass movement had to have a military detachment to accompany this process. This detachment, conceived as the armed arm of the party, was the FPMR. Since its public appearance in December 1983, the FPMR

deployed an active political and military intervention, both in the protection of mass mobilizations (through the so-called Milicias Rodriguistas), and in the implementation of armed operations of great national impact: destruction of the electricity line, execution of collaborators of the dictatorship, kidnapping of military personalities and the assassination attempt against the dictator, Augusto Pinochet, in September 1986 (Rojas 2011).

However, the failure of the insurrectionist policy in 1986, which included the discovery by the security apparatuses of the dictatorship of the massive introduction of weapons by the coastal locality of Carrizal Bajo (Atacama Region) and the failure of the attempt to execute Augusto Pinochet generated a deep crisis inside the PCCh and, by extension, in the FPMR. As a result, the command of the FPMR, headed by Raúl Pellegrin Friedmann, broke with the PCCh and began to develop its own military policy, which became known as the Guerra Patriótica Nacional in 1988.[12]

But the process of evaluating the failed experience of the UP did not only summon the PCCh. Precisely one of the political groups that most intensely experienced this process of self-criticism was MAPU. In fact, to date, the most rigorous work that exists on the subject establishes that MAPU was a fundamental factor in the process of democratic renewal of socialist thought in Chile (Moyano 2010). However, this process was marked by a series of tensions that gave rise to the most varied political positions, from those who committed themselves to the institutional scenario defined by the dictatorship, to those who, on the contrary, opted for the armed struggle to overthrow the capitalist system.

It was this second option that guided the leaders who later founded MAPU-L. This party conglomerate began to develop at the end of the 1970s, within the MAPU Youth Commission, and was articulated around the activity that the party developed between the Christian Base Communities of the south and west of the city of Santiago. In 1982, the MAPU Youth Commission formed the Movimiento Juvenil Lautaro (Moyano 2008). This way, the bet of this sector to deploy a strategy of insurrectional character to confront the dictatorship and the tendency to converge in the renewed socialism of the bulk of the political direction of the MAPU concluded with the split of both groups in August of 1983.

The first operational actions of MAPU-L were carried out within the framework of popular protests against the dictatorship, during the 1983–1987 cycle. In this scenario, MAPU-L introduced a series of innovative tactical experiences, justified in what they called 'the seizure of necessities', i.e. the seizure of production centers and vehicles of companies of different categories, in order to distribute among the poorest footwear, food, beer, material for the construction of roofs, condoms, etc. This type of action, closer to the requirements of the popular world, allowed MAPU-L to grow, especially among unemployed or underemployed young people in the country's big cities. From this tactical model a peculiar strategic definition was advanced: 'the takeover of Chile', which meant the development of an insurrectional war in which the fundamental component was not the guerrilla, but the social movement of the masses (Acevedo 2015). The rise in popular struggle during this period and the increasing levels of political violence experienced between 1986 and 1987 stimulated in MAPU-L the creation of its own military apparatus (1987), which was called Fuerzas Rebeldes y Populares Lautaro. Thus, while the classic insurgency (represented in the MIR) was experiencing increasing wear and tear as a result of repressive action, and while the insurgency born in the heart of the PCCh was politically resenting its 1987 split, the MAPU-Lautaro, on the other hand, was strengthening its organic structure and growing among the most radicalized fringe of the popular youth world.

All these insurgent organizations observed with suspicion the negotiation process between the opposition and the political representatives of the dictatorship, and at the moment of defining

the itinerary of the transition, after the triumph of the NO option in the plebiscite of October 1988, they prepared themselves to continue the armed struggle.

Conclusions

The formation of organizations oriented to the execution of the armed struggle in Chile was later verified with respect to other similar experiences in Latin America. This was undoubtedly the result of the long inter-institutional trajectory followed by the political organizations of the left, especially the communist and socialist parties. However, since the mid-1930s, these organizations have formed trends and fractions that demanded the use of political violence as a method of gaining power. But these organizations only agitated violence as a propagandistic resource, without being able to implement in a serious or systematic way actions that were consistent with their speeches. Not even the growing influence of the Cuban Revolution generated a significant change in the political practice of the left. Moreover, radical organizations, such as the MIR, which claimed to be heirs to the revolutionary impulse generated in Cuba, opted, during the UP government, to build themselves within the mass movement and from there advance towards a hypothetical scenario of people's war.

But the coup d'état of 11 September 1973 brought about a profound change in Chilean society and, together with it, in the forms of political representation. The political organizations of the left were outlawed and their militants persecuted and, on many occasions, imprisoned or assassinated. This accelerated the transit of several organizations from the left to the armed struggle. At first, the MIR stood out, which held the weight of resistance against the dictatorship until the mid-1980s, and was later replaced by the FPMR and the MAPU-L. These last two organizations also extended insurgent action until the transition to democracy. The shift towards armed struggle resulted in profound changes in the structure of political organizations and the ways in which recruitment and relations with the mass movement were produced. In this way, the logic of clandestine and conspiracy policies distanced the armed organizations from the more classical social nuclei, such as the workers' unions, but favored their growth among the young and the urban poor.

It should be noted that the armed organizations were gradually dismantled during the 1990s. The MIR, fractured by its internal divisions of the second half of the 1980s, ceased to be a relevant political actor, currently surviving as a series of independent cells with contradictory political programs. Meanwhile the FPMR and the MAPU-L, isolated from their bases of support, succumbed to the war of assaults on the security agencies of the state between 1990 and 1996. After long prison sentences, their militants were liberated in the early 2000s. Many of them left politics and others became members of the new social labor, environment and neighborhood movements in Chile after 2006.

Notwithstanding, looking at the political culture built around the armed struggle in perspective, although it is configured in a very limited historical time, it left a deep mark both on the political memory of the organizations that took part in it, and on Chilean society as a whole.

Notes

1. This work is part of the FONDECYT 1171042 Research Project.
2. Political violence during the transition to democracy is discussed in Goicovic (2010).
3. MIR (1970, Oct.). El MIR y el resultado electoral. [document] Santiago de Chile.
4. MIR (1973, Dec.). La táctica del MIR en el actual período. [document] Santiago de Chile.
5. MIR (1973, May). Resoluciones sobre la situación política nacional. [document] Santiago de Chile.
6. MIR (1973, Dec.). La táctica del MIR en el actual período. [document] Santiago de Chile.

7. MIR (1979, Oct.). Mensaje a los miembros del MIR y a los revolucionarios chilenos en el quinto aniversario de la caída en combate de Miguel Enríquez secretario general del MIR. [document] Santiago de Chile.
8. MIR (1980). Los crímenes se pagan. *El Rebelde*, 165, Aug., p. 13.
9. Ibid.; MIR (1981). La justicia popular actúa. *El Rebelde*, 177, Aug., p. 9; MIR (1982). Acciones antirrepresivas. *El Rebelde*, 182, Jan., p. 4.
10. Unknown (1983). Comando de la Resistencia Popular se adjudicó el crimen. *La Tercera*, Aug. 31, p. 17.
11. MIR (1982). Una guerra invencible. *El Rebelde*, 183, Feb., pp. 15–19.
12. The rupture within the FPMR and the unleashing of the so-called Guerra Patriótica Nacional (GPN) are analyzed in Palma (2001).

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PART 3

Third Revolutionary *Ripple*

Learning From Experiences and New Influences

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CIVIL WARS

Alberto Martín Álvarez

With the exception of Costa Rica, at the end of the 1950s Central America was a region dominated by different types of authoritarian regimes that were an expression of the alliances between the landowning elite and the armed forces. The political exclusion and persecution of dissidents, together with the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the agrarian oligarchies, were the distinguishing traits of the small Central American republics. State control and the disciplining of the rural labor force by the military were strategic assets for the economic elites who depended on them to continue reaping huge profits. In this sense, the ban on agrarian trade unions and opposition parties, which might have shaken the foundations of these politically constructed ownership systems,[1] was crucial for maintaining these social formations.

In such circumstances, armed rebellion formed part of the action repertoire of certain sectors of the political opposition, including traditional political parties like, for instance, the Nicaraguan conservatives. In relation to the Marxist Left, the Partido Comunista de El Salvador (PCS) had already resorted to insurrection back in 1932 as a way of bringing about political and social change. As the 1950s drew to a close, however, the region's communist parties defended the need to fight, first and foremost, for the democratic revolution in alliance with the local bourgeoisie and relied on pacific strategies for 'accumulating forces'.

The victory of the Cuban Revolution and, above all, its radicalization from 1961 to 1962, questioned the strategies and action repertoires of the Central American communists, thus leading to deep divides in their organizations. This obliged them to reassess the problem of the 'character of and path to revolution' and, particularly among the youngest militants, led to realignments and schisms resulting in the creation of new organizations that assumed the banners of socialism and the armed struggle as badges of distinction. Their militants included young dissidents of the communist parties, university students and, to a much lesser extent—and in some cases symbolically—workers and peasants. In the Guatemalan case there was also a number of low-ranking military personnel among the founders of the first guerrillas. With the emergence of this new Left, the Central American communist parties lost their monopoly over the interpretation of Marxism that they had had since their beginnings.

The creation of the Frente Sandinista in Nicaragua in 1962, on the one hand, and the MR13 and the FAR in Guatemala the following year, on the other, marked the beginning of the wave of the revolutionary new Left, which would last for nearly 40 years and which would have implications for Central America as a whole.[2] The wave's inception was strongly influenced by

Guevarist foquismo, which involved introducing armed contingents in mountainous areas far removed from the main cities. Their clandestine nature, the geographical remoteness of their areas of operation and, above all, their social isolation led to their fairly swift elimination by the armed forces at the end of the 1960s.

Precisely at the moment when these first armed groups were being stamped out, a number of fundamental developments that would leave a deep mark on the new generation of militants, destined to reconstruct the revolutionary Left as from the beginning of the 1970s, were already unfolding. On the one hand, the escalation of the Vietnam War since 1965 and, in particular, the FLN's success in opposing the United States, contributed to convert the people's prolonged war into a successful strategy in the eyes of different liberation and guerrilla movements all over the world, including some Central American ones.

Among many other elements, this strategy placed the accent on the need to create popular organizations under the control of the revolutionary movement, linked to the needs and grievances of different sectors of the population. That close connection between the guerrilla and the popular movement would thenceforth be one of the chief strategies implemented by several leftist revolutionary movements in Central America.[3] In addition to Vietnam's growing prestige, it is important to mention other processes and developments in the closing years of the 1960s: the escalation in the armed struggles of liberation movements in Portuguese Africa, the rise of the Palestinian resistance and the holding of the Tricontinental Conference in 1966 and the First Conference of the OLAS in 1967. Jointly, they contributed to breathe new life into the armed struggle as a strategy for taking power, at a moment when, paradoxically, the first cycle of activity of the Latin American guerrillas was being suppressed by the armed forces and security bodies throughout the region.

Similarly, and as noted at the beginning of this book, since the end of the 1960s dependency theory had become the theoretical discourse of the revolutionary Left. The prestige gained by the Latin American sociologists who theorized on dependency reinforced this theory's credibility and thus favored its dissemination among Latin American university students at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the following decade, whose most radical sectors assumed it as an explanatory framework for their political positions and their commitment to the armed struggle.

Furthermore, for many young Latin American leftist militants the student protests of 1968 were a reaffirmation of the potential that the young had to construct a new revolutionary subject. The students had the chance to be the new vanguard substituting an all but non-existent proletariat in many Latin American countries.

It should also be noted that, although the foquista guerrilla was plainly proving to be ineffective, other new strategies for the armed struggle appeared to be working. In particular, the huge popularity achieved by the Uruguayan Tupamaros among certain sectors of university students in the region as a whole helped to convey the idea that the armed struggle was actually the correct method and that the problem hitherto had been its incorrect application.

On a separate issue, at the end of the 1960s Liberation Theology emerged with force, subsequently leading to the creation of popular church movements in the region. These movements, and particularly those of the secular apostate youth organizations, provided the Central American guerrillas with valuable cadres with organizational experience and strategic links to different organized social sectors.

Lastly, it should be recalled that the major social and political problems that the revolutionary Left intended to resolve—political exclusion, authoritarianism, inequality and imperialism—were still present and even seemed more evident at the beginning of the 1970s as a result of the crackdown on the leftist opposition by the region's regimes.

All these factors explain why, despite the failure of the foquista strategy, a second cycle of activity of the Central American revolutionary Left would be triggered at the beginning of the 1970s. In Guatemala and Nicaragua, it was the surviving cadres of the leftist armed organizations who were responsible for rebuilding the revolutionary movement. Even though foquismo was still present at the beginning of this reconstruction phase, there were several important developments. In Guatemala, the revolutionary movement endeavored to recruit the indigenous population, a majority in the countryside of several regions of the country but to whom it had paid little attention in the 1960s. On the other hand, in this country, as in Nicaragua, the guerrilleros sought to forge ties with the associations created by the Catholic Church in the countryside and the urban slums, resorting to the collaboration—and occasionally the active militancy—of priests and young cadres of the student and Christian base movements. In both Nicaragua and Guatemala, the ability of the cohort of founders of the revolutionary organizations of the 1960s to connect with younger cohorts of activists of the student and leftist Catholic peasant movements was quite remarkable. It was these new cohorts of militants, often acquainted through their previous activism in organizations belonging to the popular movement, who enabled the guerrillas to construct a broad social base in the countryside. A base that would, in the long run, become one of the main pockets of resistance against the state.

Notwithstanding the fact that the insurgency appeared later on in El Salvador (i.e. as from 1970), it was where the revolutionary movement was able to establish closer relations with popular movements by implementing a strategy—already tested by the Vietnamese—involving the creation of popular fronts. These fronts united popular organizations founded or controlled by different revolutionary organizations whose public activity focused on defending union or sectoral demands, but whose real objectives included exerting pressure on the authorities in the streets, radicalizing activists and serving as sources of recruitment for the revolutionary movement. As in the two previous cases, in El Salvador the popular church networks were fundamental for the connection between the guerrilla and the social movement.

Even though it was never capable of creating a powerful guerrilla force, the Nicaraguan revolutionary Left gradually gained influence among broad sectors of the population in the context of the crisis into which the Somoza regime was plunged at the end of the 1970s. This patrimonial dictatorship's political and social isolation and its increasingly more punitive character facilitated the growth of the opposition. Moreover, the unification of the Sandinista tendencies and its wise strategy of building alliances with very diverse social groups, including sectors of the economic elite displaced by the Somoza clan, converted the FSLN into the main pole of attraction for dissidents and the principal rallying point in the struggle against authoritarianism.

The Sandinista victory in July 1979 had a profound impact on the revolutionary Left. In Central America, it contributed to an escalation in the activity of the revolutionary movements in Guatemala and El Salvador, which went on the offensive in 1981 and 1982 in an attempt to emulate the Nicaraguan example, although without success. In the rest of Latin America, it helped the revolutionary Left to regain confidence in the armed struggle as a strategy for taking power, influencing revolutionary groups in Peru, Colombia, Chile and Ecuador—the countries where this effect was most visible—in their choice of action repertoires.

In Europe, the Sandinista Revolution led to a new wave of internationalist solidarity and militancy, which served as a sort of substitute for the third-worldism that had encouraged sectors of the European revolutionary Left throughout the 1960s and the initial years of the following decade and which was now in evident decline. This solidarity with the revolution also emerged in the United States, although in this case it mainly involved Christian base movements and the Central American diaspora.

The war unleashed by the Contras (1983–1990), armed and bankrolled by the Reagan administration and favored by the mistakes made by the Sandinista government, particularly as regards its handling of relations with the indigenous population inhabiting the Atlantic region, gradually undermined the revolutionary project, which was ultimately defeated in the elections held in 1990.

In El Salvador, the different leftist revolutionary organizations, grouped together in the FMLN, sustained a protracted confrontation with the state between 1981 and 1992. The insurgency managed to retain its peasant following, to whom it owed its considerable military strength, throughout the conflict. However, its lack of cohesion at key moments, plus the huge amount of military aid that the Salvadoran government received from the United States, led the conflict to a virtual military stalemate that was resolved in a negotiated manner with the Chapultepec Peace Accords.

In Guatemala, the revolutionaries suffered a strategic defeat with the elimination of their peasant supporters between 1978 and 1982, due in part to their failure to convert them into a real popular army. Furthermore, the Guatemalan armed forces, less conditioned by external constraints vis-à-vis operational matters than their Salvadoran counterparts, implemented a scorched-earth policy that included the murder of thousands of peasants who, although they formed part of the guerrilla's support structure, were basically unarmed civilians. All in all, the revolutionary organizations continued to operate and, although they would never again pose a direct threat to the Guatemalan state, they were able to force it to negotiate the conditions for ending the conflict.

In Guatemala and El Salvador, the insurgencies promoted by the revolutionary Left played a key role in the political democratization of both countries through peace negotiations. Nevertheless, the objective of a more far-reaching social and economic transformation, which the revolutionary movements had pursued since their advent, fell by the wayside. The guerrillas were not only incapable of taking power, but also negotiated peace in the midst of a widespread crisis effecting Marxism, sundry national liberation movements and the state socialism of Eastern Europe that, although it was not exactly the societal model that they had in mind, was a sort of indisputable benchmark. Their demobilization therefore coincided with the crisis of their political projects.

Nonetheless, the social formations of both countries were transformed by both the effect of the wars and that of the more sweeping changes brought about by global capitalism since the 1970s. The former landowning oligarchies turned over a new leaf. Some of the elite families abandoned the old export crops because of the presence of the guerrilla or military operations. Others diversified, investing their wealth in new activities such as the maquila sector or financial services. The region's forms of social and political domination changed, the armed forces and security bodies ceasing to be essential for disciplining the labor force in the context of economies in which agrarian production was no longer a key component.

In Nicaragua, the revolution transformed its political, social and economic structures for a decade, although most of those transformations were reversed after its defeat.

Its military defeats and inability to take power, combined with the disrepute of Marxism and the challenging of revolutionary and socialist ideals, contributed as a whole to the decline of the revolutionary Left. To this should be added many other factors, such as the aversion of the new generations towards the hierarchical and militarized organizational forms characteristic of this Left and the dwindling relevance of the party model—a movement as a unique expression of the will of the people—in favor of the political pluralism associated with representative democracy. The wave of the revolutionary Left ran out of steam after nearly four decades, leaving a complex legacy that has barely begun to be understood to its full extent, in its wake.

Notes

1. This concept was coined by the Canadian Marxist historian Ellen Meiksins Wood.
2. Although it was in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua where the revolutionary Left developed most, it was also marginally present in Costa Rica and Honduras. In the latter, albeit never large, there were different armed organizations since the mid-1960s.
3. In a more developed fashion in the case of the Salvadoran Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL) and at a later date and in a less systematic way in those of the Guatemalan EGP and the Prolonged Popular War tendency of the Nicaraguan Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN).

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THE SANDINISTA GUERRILLA, REVOLUTION AND LEGACY

Dirk Kruijt and Alberto Martín Álvarez

Introduction[1]

Besides its Cuban guerrilla counterpart, the Nicaraguan guerrilla movement has been the only other successful one in Latin America. In both countries, a unified insurgency achieved a resounding victory: a counterinsurgent army imploded, a detested dictator had to flee for his life and a regime change took place. The jubilant guerrilla radically transformed the economy, society and the political system. The United States tried to break these revolutionary regimes militarily and politically; in both cases they survived, but at an enormous social and political cost.

This chapter examines the long period from the insurgency to the post-insurgency: the guerrilla war that raged for 20 years; the long decade of the Sandinistas' first period in government; the 17 years that they were in the opposition; and the 16 years of their second period in government. The accent is also placed on the transformations that the party and its leader Daniel Ortega have undergone over the past 40 years. This story of struggle, triumph, alienation and deception begins with the armed opposition against the reviled dictator Somoza and ends in 2018–19, when the Ortega government was confronted by protest marches in which students chanted, 'Ortega and Somoza are one of the same.' Nicaragua seems to have come full circle, with the person responsible for ousting the former dictator in 1979 now (August 2019) being regarded as Somoza's successor.

The Sandinista Guerrilla (1959–1979)

Augusto César Sandino is Nicaragua's undisputed revolutionary icon. Between 1927 and 1933, General Sandino commanded an irregular rebel force against US marines. In 1934, he was murdered by officers of the National Guard (a combined army and police force), led by General Somoza who then became dictator and was subsequently succeeded by his two sons Luis and Anastasio. The power base of the Somoza dynasty was fourfold: first, direct control over the National Guard that repressed all political dissent; second, steadfast US support of the regime; third, control over Nicaragua's economy based on family empires encompassing most of the county's profitable industries; and fourth, an unspoken political pact between the (Somoza's) Partido Liberal Nacionalista (PLN) and the opposition parties, resulting in a pre-established distribution of parliamentary seats and an similar system of appointments in the public sector.

The Early Guerrilla

In 1957, when Luis Somoza assumed the presidency, the prospect of the regime's perpetuation drove some sectors of the opposition to take up arms against it. In the early months of 1959, their representatives sought the support of the new revolutionary government in Cuba. Later that year, a guerrilla column under the personal supervision of Che Guevara and of which Carlos Fonseca Amador was part, invaded Nicaragua from Honduras before being crushed in a joint operation launched by the Honduran and Nicaraguan armed forces. Other anti-Somoza forces, inspired by Sandino and with Cuban backing, also suffered the same fate.

The extermination of Borge's guerrilla column triggered a major student protest which was brutally repressed by the National Guard. This radicalized the national student movement, particularly in León where Fonseca had formed a study group that would become one of the forces of the Juventud Revolucionaria Nicaragüense. Some of its founding members received military training in Cuba in the mid-1960s. Other young anti-Somoza students and workers, inspired by Sandino and the Cuban Revolution, founded the Juventud Patriótico Nicaragüense, several members (Daniel Ortega for instance) of which were destined to become senior guerrilla comandantes. The two groups merged to form the Movimiento Nueva Nicaragua—which would later become the FSLN in 1963—whose members were not only recruited from the student movement, but also included young blue-collar workers and a number of peasants (Borge 1989, 71, 111–119).

The Foco Strategy

Convinced of the wisdom of Guevara's foquismo, the young militants formed a guerrilla column with some 50 combatants commanded by Santos López, a veteran colonel of Sandino's army. But it operated in an isolated region inhabited by the Miskito people, whose language they did not speak (Pomares 1989, 46). They also lacked sufficiently strong links with other opposition movements in the country. This guerrilla effort failed but the remaining members rebuilt the revolutionary movement, with Carlos Fonseca emerging as its charismatic leader until his death in November 1976. Although he did not openly define himself as a Marxist, he called for an anti-imperialist and popular revolution (Fonseca Amador 1964, 237). A group of militants received training from the Guatemalan FAR in 1966. That same year, a FSLN mission attended the Tricontinental Conference in Havana where they forged more international ties, for instance with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In August 1967, the FSLN also sent a delegation to the conference of the OLAS.

However, the lack of military experience and a blind adherence to the foquismo led to a long string of defeats at the hands of the highly trained National Guard and the death of almost all of the FSLN's leaders. In September 1967, the National Guard carried out a search-and-destroy mission in the Pancasán area near Matagalpa and killed most of the FSLN's cadres. The national leadership of the FSLN was thus continually renewed. In the early 1970s, the movement was so small that all of the members of the national leadership participated in officer training courses, with graduates immediately becoming trainers of new recruits.

New Cadres

The Pancasán disaster evidenced the FSLN's failure; simply introducing an armed group in the mountains was not going to trigger a nationwide uprising (Cabezas 2006). The surviving leaders needed a new war strategy and international collaboration. In 1968, some 30 militants

traveled to Cuba to train in the Escambray Mountains and, in 1969, the FSLN renewed its contacts with the future PLO. In 1970, the Sandinistas sent a contingent of militants to train in the camps of the then PFLP in the Lebanon. FSLN militants also participated in PFLP actions (López de la Torre 2014).[2] In the mid-1970s, the PLO supplied the organization with money and weapons while in 1971, another group of militants travelled to North Korea for training.

The need for a radical change in strategy was more than evident in 1970 when all of the FSLN's principal urban networks were destroyed. Following this, the organization embarked on a four-year period of 'silent accumulation of forces', building clandestine structures linked to social sectors and avoiding clashes with the security forces. In 1969, the FSLN took control of the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario, the country's leading university student organization, and in 1971 it created the Movimiento Estudiantil de Secundaria. For those students, the Vietnam War and the revolutionary year of 1968 in Europe, also famous for its student demonstrations, had a rousing effect.

The Religious Factor

The student movements served as recruiting platforms. The new student cohorts, born in the late 1940s and early 1950s, embraced the anti-imperialist postulates of Latin American dependency theory which was popular at Nicaraguan universities at the time. Moreover, the FSLN decided to expand its reach to specific sectors, including Catholics, women, primary school teachers and slum dwellers. The newly recruited FSLN militants spent time in the urban neighborhoods, participating in the community by helping to resolve the population's most pressing needs. The revolutionary path trod by Comandante Mónica Baltodano, who liberated Nicaragua's most important southernmost city Granada in 1979, is illustrative:

> I remember [Father] Fernando Cardenal well. I was a member of the secondary school movement of Young Catholics who questioned their Christian faith in such an unjust and unequal society. Once I had joined these movements, we were involved in disputes with the Sandinista Frente, whose student organization was the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario. When I entered university . . . I asked them to recruit me. [That is how, by 1971] I became involved in the Frente, continuing to work for the Catholic movement. My primary responsibility consisted in community work, under the cover of the Catholic movement.[3]

Here, the importance of both the student movement and liberation theology can be clearly observed. Many religiously inspired middle-class students eventually joined the ranks of the FSLN. The brothers Ernesto and Fernando Cardenal, both priests, were undoubtedly instrumental. After 1979, both joined the cabinet, as ministers of culture and of education, respectively.

The FSLN succeeded in attracting many young religious activists critical of the Somoza regime. These new members formed the Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario, which focused its efforts on the working-class neighborhoods of the major cities of León and Managua, thus contributing to radicalize these communities and to attract hundreds of popular neighborhood leaders to the FSLN.

The Rift

These new cohorts of militants attained leadership positions in around 1975–76 but had markedly different political ideas as regards ideology and revolutionary strategy. Three tendencies emerged as a result: that of the Prolonged People's War, the Proletarian Insurrectional tendency,

and the Tercerista (Third Way). This caused deep rifts due to the fact that some believed that the veteran founders were orchestrating the war from abroad and misreading what was really happening in the country, which had led them to call for inappropriate actions. Eventually, the three FSLN factions were reconciled, under the auspices of a Cuban delegation, six months before the final triumph in 1979. In February 1979, the formal unification was proclaimed in Havana at a meeting between Fidel Castro and the Sandinista leadership.

With Somoza increasingly discredited, the FSLN emerged as a plausible option in the eyes of various Latin American governments, including those of Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela, which began supporting the organization. Somoza's large-scale misappropriation of the aid relief offered by the international community after the earthquake in 1972, his rigging of the 1974 elections and the increasingly more suffocating levels of repression imposed by the National Guard pushed both the Catholic authorities and the economic elite to adopt a critical stance vis-à-vis the regime, which would very swiftly grow into open opposition (Martí i Puig 2004, 104).

The ideas of the Terceristas proved to be the most successful of all. First, they dissolved their rural frentes and formed urban guerrilla commands (the so-called Frente Interno, commanded by Joaquín Cuadra) that took the lead in subsequent insurrections in the main cities. Second, they formed an alliance with a group of 12 prominent civilian leaders (the so-called Grupo de los Doce) whose support was crucial in securing international support and, especially, an accommodation with the Carter administration in the United States.[4] Thirdly, they commanded the Frente Sur under Humberto Ortega (brother of Daniel), on the border with Costa Rica. This was the most organized military force of the FSLN with around 1,000 guerrilleros, mostly Nicaraguans but also internationalists from Argentina, Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala. Many of these foreign combatants arrived from Cuba where the FSLN had sent them for training.

The Urban Guerrilla

The (late) development of a dense underground urban network by the Sandinistas was key, inasmuch as it formed the insurrectional movement's backbone. Stemming from a document written by Humberto Ortega in Cuba questioning the wisdom of foquismo, it was one of the causes behind the rift between the three factions. But he was right, as one of the senior comandantes Victor Tirado ruefully remarked, 'For 15 years, the slogan of the FSLN had been, 'We will bury the heart of the enemy in the mountains'. But what happened instead was that the enemy buried us in the mountains.'[5] The Terceristas decided to disband their northern (rural) frente and transfer all of their militants to the urban centers. Joaquín Cuadra, the leader of the urban guerrilla, recalled,

> But who knew how to mount an [urban] insurrection? We didn't have a clue. There was no guidebook or manual—no procedure to follow. In one way or another we would fight the National Guard—ambush them in one of the poor neighborhoods. And the people would come out and shout in support. But when we wanted to leave we weren't able to, because all of the people were there. So, we stayed and did work among the people: organizing, teaching as best we could. Everyone cheered us on, gave us something to eat and drink. The bond between the [guerrilla] fighter and the people is something that arises spontaneously in this way.[6]

The final phase, between 1978 and 1979, was marked by a string of urban uprisings with growing popular support, with hundreds—later thousands—of young militia members aged between 15 and 16 joining the skeleton staff of the FSLN in the cities.[7] Abandoned by the United States, the Somoza regime finally collapsed in July 1979, toppled by the massive insurrectional

movement furthered by the FSLN. Somoza's campaign had caused 50,000 deaths, 100,000 wounded and serious damage to the country's major cities.

The National Guard, comprising 9,000 demoralized men, had fled from the capital and the southern front, abandoning their wounded and dead. The guerrilla columns had approximately 2,800 persons, while the spontaneously formed militias may have totaled 15,000 in all, including adolescents and young men and women. Their first task was to disarm civilian looters.

The triumph of the Nicaraguan guerrilla, the second in Latin America following the Cuban experience 20 years before, can be explained as the result of a particular constellation of factors: the innovative concept of urban guerrilla strategy that broke with the conventional foquismo; the flexible and dynamic urban guerrilla leadership; the massive support of young urban militias; a multi-class alliance with other adversaries of Somoza; widespread domestic popular support; and substantial assistance from other Central and Latin American governments.

The Sandinista Government (1979–1990)

The atmosphere during the weeks and months following the Sandinista victory was one of collective euphoria. The FSLN enjoyed widespread popular support. While the Sandinistas took government matters in hand, their sympathizers were convinced that they would guide the country to a new society, forged by the New Men heralded by Che Guevara. The new Junta de Reconstrucción (a collective presidency) launched a literacy program led by Father Fernando Cardenal. Tens of thousands of urban youths volunteered as 'brigade members', with 2,000 Cuban volunteers assisting them—by the way, even more volunteers participated in the cotton harvest. While in 1983, 73,000 youths joined the ranks of the Brigadistas de Salud under Comandante Dora María Tellez, the then minister of public health.

The FSLN organized government employees, along with other segments of the population—small business owners, industrial workers, rural laborers, women and young people in general—in government-sponsored associations whose task it was to perform voluntary work on 'red and black Saturdays' (named after the colors of the FSLN) throughout the 1980s, albeit with growing reluctance on the part of the workers. Yet, uniting the nation's population in revolutionary organizations was accompanied by a gradual exclusion of certain social classes, categories of persons and institutions.

The Dirección Nacional

It is true that in the construction and consolidation of a new social and political order, the party elite—above all the Dirección National of the nine comandantes of the revolution—gained and retained decisive control over the state, party and government bodies.[8] Moreover, the appointments to key positions in the army and the police, the cabinet and the Sandinista party reflect the dominance of the revolutionary aristocracy over both the government and the state apparatus. The same process can be observed in the new mass organizations: it is impossible to deny their subordination to the state and, by extension, to the ruling FSLN elite.

Equally interesting is the relationship between the army (commanded by Generals Humberto Ortega and Joaquín Cuadra), the domestic security forces (led by Tomás Borge, with Daniel Ortega's best friend Lenin Cerna as the chief of state security) and the general party leadership. The comandantes of the revolution were being appointed to key positions, 30 of them occupying the most important posts on the general staff and in the intelligence and security branches of the nation's new army and police force. Others held cabinet portfolios or were appointed vice-ministers.

As Humberto Ortega bluntly put it, 'We established the rules; our appointments reflected the real power balance.'[9] For her part, Dora María Téllez was more circumspect when concluding, 'The Dirección Nacional, which controlled the party and which had a fair measure of power within the State itself, basically decided what would happen.'[10] Nor did Borge mince his words when referring to the popular organizations: 'highly subordinate, exercising very little initiative—subordinate to the party'.[11]

All this provoked resistance. A year after the Sandinista triumph, the first signs of protest were dimly, yet unmistakably, visible. Nor did it escape the public eye that issues concerning the army, state security, changes in the economy and the creation of popular organizations were first consulted with Cuba and, later on, with the Eastern Bloc countries. Consequently, in the early 1980s the Contras, right-wing rebel groups generously funded and trained by the United States, began to appear in the northern rural region of the country, along the border with Honduras and on the Atlantic coast, where they would operate for a number of years (1983–1989).

The Mass Organizations

As in Cuba, the FSLN wanted to 'integrate the masses' into the revolutionary process by forming unified mass organizations,[12] while the government unionized other key sectors of the workforce. Of all the organizations that were created, the Sandinista Revolution pivoted on the Comités de Defensa Sandinista, modelled on the Cuban Comités de Defensa de la Revolución. Initially emerging spontaneously during the uprisings of 1978 and 1979, these were now organized by the FSLN and led by Comandante Ómar Cabezas. They were essentially community watchdog organizations that functioned as 'the eyes and the ears of the Revolution'.[13]

Army, Police and Intelligence

General Humberto Ortega was the minister of defense and the commander-in-chief of the new Ejército Popular Sandinista (EPS), with three armed services, army, navy and air force, under a centralized general staff. General Joaquín Cuadra organized,

> the guerrilla formations, allotting bases to each of them in Managua in order to help establish the regime, attempting to control the huge number of militiamen who had spontaneously formed units [. . .]. The military ranks were established according to time served as guerrilla fighters. There were only two of us who were generals—Humberto Ortega and me. After that, everyone was a colonel. . . . Very quickly, before the end of the first year, the first Cuban military mission arrived. We then proceeded to work with them to organize the Army. The Cubans were just advisers. . . . At the first signs of the counter-revolution, we began fighting. We speeded up the training of officers. At that point, the Cubans began arriving here *en masse*. We sent hundreds of officers to Cuba for training.[14]

The EPS was both an armed institution of the state and a party organization, as was the case with the Ministry of the Interior (MINTER).[15]

The Role of Cuba

Cuba leant Nicaragua's defense and intelligence apparatuses enormous support. While it also assisted many essential government institutions, Castro had explicitly forbidden any involvement in Sandinista party affairs.[16] During the months immediately after July 1979, Cuban

airplanes maintained a kind of airlift. Earlier on in 1979, Cuba had dispatched a military mission under General Pérez Lezcano to transform former guerilla officers into military commanders. During the Contra War (1983–1989), the island reinforced its military mission under General López Cuba,[17] while Cuban personnel trained the general staff and regional commanders, acted as advisers at the military schools and accompanied the Nicaraguan brigades.[18]

Borge's ministry was, in a certain sense, 'adopted' by its Cuban counterpart. Fabian Escalante Font, the head of the Cuban State Security Department, was intermittently Borge's senior adviser in Havana and Managua. So, intelligence and counterintelligence were, in some measure, handled by the Cubans. Renán Montero, a Cuban officer turned Nicaraguan comandante, managed the foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence office in Managua, operating directly under Lenin Cerna, the vice-minister in charge of state security.[19] Cuba would lend its support to MINTER during the entire period of the Sandinista government (1979–1990).

Managing the Economy

The nation's economic policy was designed by Sergio Ramírez, a member of the Junta (1979–84) and then vice-president (1984–90). In daily practice a group of ministers—of finance, economics/commerce/industry, and planning—each implemented their own policies, while the Central Bank also acted independently. The inevitable result was a labyrinthine decision-making process in which each minister tried to impose his own ideas and policies. Additionally, the powerful Comandante Jaime Wheelock was a kind of super-minister in charge of agriculture and agrarian reform. The planning ministry, which until 1985 would be under the baton of Comandante Henry Ruiz, tried to bring some order to this chaotic situation. Tired by the daily disputes and the contradictory arguments of his colleagues, he appointed Néstor Avendaño, a genuine technocrat, as his vice-minister:

> I found myself in a ministry that was filled with the so-called 'internationalists'—Chileans, Argentines, Uruguayans, [people] from the former East Germany—who didn't have a clue about the market economy. . . . The minister of planning at the time, Comandante Henry Ruiz, had a great deal of personal and professional confidence in me. . . . Because I corrected all these advisers in front of the minister. . . . I went as far as to say to the president of the republic: 'Please learn how to say *no* to your ministers. [This and similar disagreements] cost me my position as vice-minister.[20]

The Building of an Opposition

Since a large proportion of the population continued to identify with the regime, the Sandinista government still enjoyed plenty of support. In the 1984 elections—in which several opposition parties declined to participate—the FSLN presidential ticket (Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramírez) obtained 67 per cent of the ballots cast, corresponding to 61 of the 96 seats in parliament.

But opposition elements had already begun to emerge shortly after the Sandinistas had come to power. There was also dissent in the private sector, the Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (COSEP), i.e. the national association of entrepreneurs, gradually becoming one of the focal points of opposition to the government. The policy of expropriations affected not only those who had supported the Somoza regime, but also those who, for whatever reason, broke ranks with the FSLN. As a result, some political parties simply withdrew from public activity. There was also opposition from the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church, a weighty

factor in an overwhelmingly Catholic country. The pace and course of the revolution, the emphasis on the 'Church of the Poor', the grassroots communities of progressive priests and the presence of four priests in key cabinet posts infuriated the cardinal of Managua, Miguel Obando y Bravo.

An even more vexing problem arose in the shape a large number of disgruntled farmers, cattle ranchers, small landowners and peasants, especially in the northern regions. In the case of the indigenous peoples of the Atlantic coast, this opposition gradually led to open hostility. The FSLN had clearly underestimated the important role of the ethnic, religious and linguistic identities in the Atlantic regions, especially the Miskitos, Sumos and Ramas. Comandante Jaime Wheelock reflected ruefully,

> Those in the indigenous population were not interested in land. They had enough land. The agrarian problem was not something related to land. We [only] wanted to legalize [the de facto situation]. But they were highly suspicious, because they believed the American and Contra propaganda that we had come to take away their lands, their property. That we would confiscate their families, their children and even their wives. That we would organize them into communes. There was a cultural problem involved here, a clash between a modernizing, innovative and, in some ways, extremist, culture against a culture that was traditional, patriarchal, cautious, very family-oriented and very rural—a culture that sensed its own world falling apart. Where we saw a utopia, they saw a hell on earth.[21]

The Contra War (1983–1989)

This all degenerated into civil war—the Contra War—in which between 20,000 and 30,000 Contras fought against a standing army of Sandinista counterinsurgency troops, there being no doubt that the former instigated hostilities. The first to provide the Contras with military aid was the Argentinean military junta who sent advisers to reorganize the remnants of Somoza's Nicaraguan National Guard, then living in exile in Honduras (Rostica 2018). Afterwards, CIA experts took over. By December 1982, the Contras already had 4,000 troops who periodically raided settlements. With the moral support of the COSEP and the Catholic hierarchy, the CIA consolidated an anti-Sandinista political platform, eventually named the Unión Nicaragüense Opositora (UNO), in 1985, while also providing the various groups, which together received the name of Contras, with advisors, technical assistance and financial aid.

In the final months of 1983 and the first of 1984, the Contra forces had the upper hand on the EPS comprising hastily assembled volunteers. Following a bitter dispute in the Dirección Nacional, the military leaders raised a large army by introducing two years of compulsory military service, while Borge's MINTER mustered special forces. From then on, the EPS gradually began to function as an autonomous entity, evading the cabinet's and the party's direct control. There was also a change in war strategy—one that would have long-term consequences. Indeed, economic, social and agrarian policies were sacrificed for the sake of victory:

> We organized everything, all in the service of the Military Plan . . . : 'Gentlemen, here is the Plan for the following six months. Here are the Contras, here is the zone that we control, and here is where I want there to be an Agrarian Reform. Agree as to the specific day that you deliver the [land] to peasants and give them a rifle and fifteen days of training. These men then immediately became enemies of the Contras.' In this way the Agrarian Reform

> was carried out in function of the war, and not as [an independent] economic concept. And that's why it was never successful over there.[22]

Finally, the Sandinista army launched an operation in Honduras during which they managed to destroy the larger Contra camps located 18 km inside the border.

Defense expenditure skyrocketed from 20 per cent of the national budget in 1980 to 46 per cent in 1987, before subsequently accounting for more than half of it (Núñez Soto 1998, 448). By 1986, 250,000 people had already been forcibly displaced (Wheelock 1990, 61) and around 150 Contra villages were destroyed (Bataillon 2013, 196). The economic disaster, followed by hyperinflation, the dead, the wounded and those who disappeared without trace, all left a very deep mark on the nation's collective memory. The war produced approximately 150,000 victims, including the dead, the wounded and crippled, the widows and orphans, without counting the number of missing persons.[23]

In April 1989, an agreement was reached among all of the forces opposing the FSLN to form a broad-based political coalition, the UNO. Violeta de Chamorro, who in 1979 had been a member of the Junta de Reconstrucción, led the opposition campaign. In February 1990, general elections were held. The war costs weighed more heavily with the electorate than revolutionary ideals, with the UNO winning with 55 per cent of the ballots cast versus the FSLN with 41 per cent.

The Sandinistas in Opposition (1990–2007)

Transition Agreements

The final peace negotiations in Nicaragua were conducted between the Contras and Chamorro's son-in-law Antonio Lacayo, who was the equivalent of a prime minister. The major problem, however, was that the army and the police were still both government and party institutions. Former President Carter brokered a transition agreement between the FSLN (led by Humberto Ortega) and a government delegation (led by Lacayo). Although the EPS was still the country's only armed institution under its own commanders, its officer corps and rank and file were drastically reduced. All formal relations between the EPS and the FSLN were abruptly severed and the former was renamed the Ejército Nacional de Nicaragua. More than 200,000 reserve troops were immediately demobilized and, in 1992, the 80,000–strong standing army was reduced to 12,500. For its part, the Sandinista police force, re-organized as the Policía Nacional, was also downsized.

The Political Pact

After losing the elections in 1990, Daniel Ortega announced that he would 'govern from below'. As a matter of fact, he still exercised a great deal of de facto political power in Nicaragua. Streetwise but lacking charisma in public speaking, his ability to outwit party rivals and his unscrupulous deals with any politician in power made him something of a 'co-president' during the terms of office of Violeta de Chamorro (1990–1997), Arnoldo Alemán (1997–2002) and Enrique Bolaños (2002–2007).

The FSLN controlled a substantially large sector of the neighborhood organizations, the trade unions and the student movement. Daniel Ortega instigated urban unrest on two separate occasions. In each instance, the government had to seek the intervention of the army, commanded by his brother Humberto. General Cuadra, who succeeded Humberto early in 1995, consolidated the army's position as a constitutional and apolitical institution. The new army had

to confront the armed rebellion of former Contras and ex-members of the EPS who sometimes joined forces to plague the country as social bandits.

By the mid-1990s, the political landscape in Nicaragua was changing. In the subsequent elections, with the UNO now water under the bridge, Somoza's PLN, reconstituted by Arnoldo Alemán, emerged as a powerful right-wing political force. Meanwhile, Ortega had gained ascendency over the FSLN, but his authority did not go uncontested. In 1993, the FSLN faction in parliament split into two groups: Sergio Ramirez and Dora María Tellez led a breakaway faction that would eventually be called the Movimiento de Renovación Sandinista. The exodus of many comandantes and cadres was either due to party purges or to personal disenchantment with the party elite's fraudulent practices. Ortega had surrounded himself with a group of 'Sandinista entrepreneurs', he and his wife Rosario Murillo accumulating investments in radio and TV stations, telecom enterprises, shopping malls and supermarkets.[24] He had thus become part of Nicaragua's economic elite, an amalgam of the old oligarchy and the new post-1990 entrepreneurs.

Ortega's reputation received another blow when his stepdaughter Zoilamérica Narváez publicly accused him of sexual harassment when she had been a young girl. Ortega and Alemán reached a gentlemen's agreement. While Alemán was handled with kid gloves after his involvement in a mega-million-dollar corruption case, Ortega was protected against any backlash from the Zoilamérica case. This pact also resulted in the division of spheres of influence between the two major political parties: equal representation on the Supreme Court, the Electoral Tribunal and the Constitutional Court, as well as in the Office of the Comptroller.

The Electoral Triumph

Yet, Ortega continued to amass political capital, in part because of the consequences of three consecutive neo-liberal governments. After a split in the PLN, Ortega signed a pact with President Bolaños (Alemán's successor), while maintaining his alliance with Alemán. His wife Murillo reached an understanding with former adversary (emeritus) Cardinal Obando, the prelate consecrating their marriage in a religious ceremony in 2005. Also in 2005, the FSLN won a landslide victory in the local elections.

Ortega remained the undisputed leader of the FSLN with a loyal following of at least a third of the electorate (another third continued to support the parties led by Alemán and Bolaños). He sometimes employed 'order troops' from the Juventud Sandinista for domestic use. Already a prominent member of the national economic elite, he also remained the tribune of the people, always achieving some or other pay increase or favorable solution for his following, which partially explains his long-lasting popularity. Ortega made another alliance, this time with the Contra leadership, appointing former Contra spokesperson Jaime Morales Carazo as his running mate in the 2006 elections. His flawlessly engineered electoral campaign, under the slogan of 'Peace and Reconciliation', was supervised by Murillo, now the second most powerful figure in the FSLN. Ortega won the elections, assuming the presidency for the third time in 2007.

The Ortega-Murillo Regime (2007–Present)

Massaging State and Party

In 2009, Ortega convinced the Supreme Court to lift the ban on consecutive reelection. His vice-president during his fourth presidency (2012–2017) was General Halleslevens, a recently retired army commander. It was a clever move because the army had taken a completely apolitical stance under Joaquín Cuadra (2005–2010). Ortega quickly befriended Hugo Chávez and

joined the Cuban-Venezuelan ALBA in 2007. Subsequently, he received generous Venezuelan petro-dollar aid, part of which was used to finance his social programs. Indeed, according to data released by the UN office CEPAL in Santiago de Chile, while the proportion of the population below the poverty line had gradually declined between 2001 and 2009–from 65 per cent in 2001, 63 per cent in 2005 and 58 per cent in 2009—there was a much more significant drop between 2009 and 2014—reaching 46 per cent in 2014 (CEPAL 2018, 215).[25]

Ortega's opponents, who contended that his continuing government was authoritarian and corrupt, complaining about the private appropriation of Venezuelan oil revenues and the centralization of political power, grew stronger. But the opposition languished and the FSLN won more seats in all of the following elections. The Sandinista parliamentary majority authorized the president to govern by decree. A sustained process of power centralization increased Ortega's control of all key government institutions, including the National Court of Auditors, the Electoral College and the Supreme Court (López Campos 2018). Ministers and vice-ministers, mayors and trade union leaders became in fact diligent officials executing orders from above. In the meantime, Rosario Murillo, mockingly called *La Presidenta*, became her husband's chief of staff and government spokesman. And, in 2016, during the last presidential election campaign, she was even Ortega's running mate.

The Crisis of 2018/19

The couple Ortega-Murillo won the elections with 72 per cent of the ballots cast and were sworn in as president and vice-president, respectively, in January 2017. Shortly afterwards, the Nicaraguan economy began to stagnate. As a result of the economic crisis in Venezuela, the subsidies on which the social programs relied rapidly diminished leading to a spike in poverty.[26] Dissatisfaction with the autocratic government style of the couple had been long dormant. Agricultural, environmental and feminist movements and human rights and non-governmental organizations were obstructed by the government. The umpteenth re-election and the purported real estate empire of the presidential couple fueled the anger. And, to make matters worse, the entrepreneurial association COSEP was now hit by the measures implemented by the Trump administration.

A wave of demonstrations in April 2018 triggered a nation-wide protest. Nicaragua was plagued by forest fires and, when the government remained aloof, farmers and environmental movements joined the protests. Then, the government announced an increase in the retirement age and a reduction in pensions. It was out of the frying pan and into the fire: at least 100,000 people participated in continuous protest marches. Students in all of the country's university cities took to the streets and erected barricades. The government reacted by brutally repressing them all.

But the army refused to open fire on the demonstrators and announced its neutrality. Observers noticed heavily armed masked groups shooting demonstrators under the watchful eye and sometimes with the participation of the police. By September 2018, the death toll had risen to 325 (mostly students) and the number of wounded to 3,000 (OACNUDH 2018).[27] Between April and June 2018, 23,000 Nicaraguans requested political asylum in neighboring Costa Rica. The president managed to sneak a law through a docile parliament sanctioning those of his opponents providing foreign journalists with information.

A round table was established with the participation of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, the entrepreneurs of the COSEP, the leaders of the opposition parties and the representatives of social organizations, plus a taciturn president Ortega and his delegation. The talks were interrupted, before being resumed between the recently established Alianza Cívica por la Justicia y la Democracia and a government delegation, with Carlos Tunnerman (a member of the Grupo de los Doce back in 1979) as chair, in March 2019.

While the demonstrating students chanted, 'Ortega and Somoza are one of the same,' it looked as if Nicaragua had come full circle. The power base of the Somoza dynasty was fourfold: repressing all political dissent by force of arms; the steadfast support of foreign regimes; control over the country's economy, based on family empires; and a silent political pact with the country's opposition parties. Ortega's power base was similar: the armed repression of political adversaries; the unconditional support of foreign regimes (not the United States in this case, but Venezuela and Cuba); control over the country's economy, based on family empires; and alliances with other political parties.

At present, a new generation of students, peasant leaders, environmental and human rights activists, journalists and intellectuals are desperately seeking a way of ridding themselves of President Ortega without a civil war. But when and how? And what next?

Notes

1. This chapter draws from Kruijt (2008, 2017) and Martín Álvarez (2016). Unless otherwise indicated all interviews here were conducted by Dirk Kruijt.
2. FSLN members also participated in the well-known Dawson's Field hijackings. Furthermore, PFLP militants used Nicaraguan and Honduran passports during some of their spectacular attacks on commercial aviation (interview with Víctor Meza, the minister of the interior of Honduran President Zelaya, ousted in 2009 (Tegucigalpa, 26–27 Oct. 2010).
3. Interview with Mónica Baltodano (Managua, 11 May 2006).
4. The Grupo de los Doce, coordinated by Sergio Ramirez and from where the country's future civilian cabinet members during the 1980s would emerge, included Ernesto Castillo and Joaquín Cuadra Sr. (lawyers), Emilio Baltodano and Felipe Mantica (entrepreneurs), Fernando Cardenal and Miguel d'Escoto (priests), Carlos Tunnerman and Sergio Ramírez (academics), Casimiro Sotelo (architect), Arturo Cruz (banker) and Carlos Gutierrez (dentist). The idea was developed during talks held in 1975 and thereafter between Sergio Ramírez and Humberto Ortega. The Grupo de los Doce was very instrumental in drumming up Central and Latin American political support.
5. Interview with Victor Tirado (Managua, 3 Mar. 2006) and Humberto Ortega (Managua, 15 May 2006).
6. Interview with Joaquín Cuadra (Managua, 10 and 16 May 2006).
7. For further details, see Flakoll and Alegría (2004, 313- ff.). Concerning the young militias, see Bataillon (2013).
8. The nine members of the Dirección Nacional were the comandantes of the revolution Bayardo Arce, Tomás Borge, Luis Carrión, Víctor Tirado, Carlos Núñez, Daniel Ortega (coordinator of the Junta and after 1984 president), Humberto Ortega, Henry Ruiz and Jaime Wheelock. The three most senior comandantes of the three Sandinista factions had appointed themselves as members of the party's all-powerful Dirección Nacional.
9. Unknown (2006). Interview with Humberto Ortega. *La Prensa*, Managua, 18 July.
10. Interview with Dora María Téllez (Managua, 4 May 2006).
11. Interview with Thomas Borge (Managua, 24 Feb. 2006).
12. Concerning this process, see Núñez Soto (1998, 238).
13. According to the party newspaper *Barricada* of 23 Sept. 1979.
14. Interview with Joaquín Cuadra.
15. Interviews with Thomas Borge and Humberto Ortega. This is confirmed in interviews with the vice-minister of external cooperation with the socialist countries José Angel Buitrago (Managua, 5 Dec. 2006).
16. Interview with Julio López Campos, the chief of the Sandinista Department of International Relations during the 1980s (Managua, 2 June 2011).
17. The Soviet Union provided heavy equipment and oil imports.
18. Interview with Fernando Ravelo Renedo, the then vice-chief of the Departamento América (17 Oct. 2011), in Suárez Salazar and Kruijt (2015, 120–135).
19. Interview with Fabián Escalante Font (Managua, 21 Dec. 2011), who also became an adviser to Humberto Ortega; see Suárez Salazar and Kruijt (2015, 484–480).
20. Interview with Nestor Avendaño (Managua, 26 Apr. 2006).
21. Interview with Jaime Wheelock (Managua, 9 May 2006).
22. Interview with Joaquín Cuadra.
23. Fernández, R. (1993). Nicaragua. Una asignatura pendiente: desaparecidos de guerra. *Envío Digital*, 183, June. [online] Available at: www.envio.org.ni/articulo/788 [Accessed on 25 Feb. 2019].

24. Sáenz, E. (2019). Estimating Daniel Ortega's Fortune. *Confidencial*. [online]. Available at: https://confidencial.com.ni/estimating-daniel-ortegas-fortune/ [Accessed on 3 Mar. 2019].
25. CEPAL amended Nicaraguan national statistics indicating that 30 per cent of the population were below the poverty line in 2014.
26. Since 2015, ECLAC/ CEPAL has not included the official poverty figures for Nicaragua and Venezuela in its annual reporting (see CEPAL 2017, 91).
27. After the publication of this report, the High Commissioner for Human Rights was declared persona non grata.

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13

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN EL SALVADOR

Alberto Martín Álvarez

Introduction

The Salvadoran revolutionary Left emerged at the beginning of the 1970s in the context of a dual process of political liberalization and economic modernization implemented by Coronels Julio Adalberto Rivera (1962–1967) and Fidel Sánchez Hernández (1967–1972). The limitations and contradictions produced by both processes led to the mobilization of different social sectors that leveraged the political liberalization to create a dense organizational network as from the mid-1960s. The industrial workers and state employees—especially teachers—whose relative importance had been going from strength to strength since the beginning of the 1950s, as a result of the developmental policies of the period,[1] were at the forefront of an important wave of protests between 1967 and 1972 (Almeida 2008).

In was precisely in the framework of this wave of protests that the organizations of the armed Left appeared. Their first militants, who participated actively and witnessed the repression of the protesters, basically came from those social sectors emerging from the process of capitalist modernization in the wake of the Second World War. Most were young middle- or lower-middle-class university students and, to a much lesser extent, workers. They were often the offspring of medium- or low-level state employees (professors, servicemen, etc.), small traders, liberal professionals (physicians, lawyers, etc.) or office workers employed in the private sector (accountants, clerks, etc.). Only later on, in the mid-1970s, did cadres from the country's peasant organizations begin to join the guerrilla. Their participation in the protests contributed to radicalizing these young people, most of whom hailed from the university student movement or were militants of the youth organizations of the PCS or the PDC. It was precisely the stance adopted by these two parties against the war between El Salvador and Honduras in the summer of 1969 that caused many of them to abandon their home organizations and join the new armed revolutionary movements. The decision to create guerrilla groups can also be explained by the advent of a new political culture of opposition and resistance (Foran 2008, 237) among the university students, grounded in an amalgam of influences such as Marxism-Leninism, dependency theory and liberation Christianity, which contended that any attempt at reforming the regime through peaceful protest was pointless. Notwithstanding their internal differences, the most radicalized militants of the student movement shared the conviction that it was impossible to achieve social justice in the context of capitalism and assumed that the armed struggle

spearheaded by professional revolutionaries would be capable of defeating the regime's army, seizing control of the state apparatus and guiding the country down the path to socialism (Grenier 1999, 75).

However, the new revolutionary Left's diagnosis of El Salvador's reality was not a mere intellectual construct. Indeed and despite the military regime's attempts to transform the economy, at the beginning of the 1970s it was still fundamentally agrarian, dominated by a landowning elite closely associated with the army, on which they depended to guarantee the continued extra-economic coercion of the peasantry (Cardenal 2002; Wood 2001). The regime's democratization involved organizing the country's rural labor force in unions, thus posing an indirect threat to the survival of the elite's vital interests, which in turn explains the violent resistance of those opposing any attempt at democratization. Under domestic and international pressure,[2] as from the mid-1960s the regime made—albeit not much—room for the opposition in the political system, but it was never envisaged that this might endanger the military's domination of the state institutions and, what was more important, their social and political control of the peasantry.

The Creation of the Guerrillas

Although its origins date back to 1970, the ERP, mainly formed by ex-activists of the social-Christian and Christian-democratic university student movement, appeared on the public stage in March 1972. They were joined soon afterwards by a number of militants from the youth organization of the PCS and activists of the university student movement who had played a leading role in the Huelga de Áreas Comunes at the UES in February 1970 (Martín Álvarez and Cortina Orero 2014). The diverse backgrounds of the ERP's militants, plus the quasi-federal organization that it adopted during its first years of existence, explain its ideological heterodoxy. Even though they initially declared themselves Marxist-Leninists, as it happens the small leftist collectives that founded the organization did not see eye to eye on the issue of revolutionary strategy. In its early days, it should be noted that the ERP tended to give priority to armed actions and its military development at the expense of the task of organizing the masses. This was, in turn, related to the predominance of an insurrectional strategy, according to which the conditions for a popular insurrection did indeed exist in the country, for which reason the vanguard should focus on the military actions that were supposed to ignite the popular uprising. It was an approach that coexisted with another strategy that identified more with the Vietnamese prolonged war of the FLN. As from the end of 1973 or the beginning of 1974, the latter—called the Resistencia—led to efforts to infiltrate different social sectors—especially those of the university students and workers—with a view to building a semi-clandestine political base for the guerrilla. The very organizational structure of the ERP made it possible to do so without the support of the sector prioritizing the military development approach.

These strategic differences of opinion led to a power struggle in the ERP which ended in the murder of two outstanding militants—Armando Arteaga and Roque Dalton—in May 1975 and the creation of a new organization by the dissident sector: the Fuerzas Armadas de la Resistencia Nacional (FARN). Shortly before, at the end of 1973, another group of militants led by Francisco Jovel, among others, who had abandoned the organization due to similar disagreements over the armed group's strategy, formed the Organización Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores, whose armed wing was the Fuerzas Revolucionarias Armadas del Pueblo (FRAP). Its militants would end up either joining the FARN or contributing to the efforts to create a new organization, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos (PRTC), founded in 1976.

The FPL made its presence felt for the first time in August 1972, when its militants placed explosives in the Argentine Embassy in San Salvador, in protest against the Massacre of Trelew. However, its origins date back to 1 April 1970, the moment at which Salvador Cayetano Carpio, the then-secretary general of the PCS, and a small group of militants abandoned the organization to form a new revolutionary group. Their reasons had to do with the diverging views in the party as regards the revolutionary strategy, plus its stance on the Soccer War between El Salvador and Honduras in July 1969.

Since its inception, the FPL considered waging a 'prolonged popular war' whose main theater would be the countryside. Inspired by the example of Vietnam, from the outset this strategy implied creating guerrilla support groups tasked with handling the logistics of the armed commandos and setting up communication channels with the mass movement (trade unions, students, peasants, etc.). Unlike the ERP, the FPL was at first a very disciplined organization with a personalist leader—Carpio—thus guaranteeing the implementation of the aforementioned strategy. To this should be added the care with which the FPL trained and indoctrinated its militants, which expedited the transmission and dissemination of a well-defined organizational culture.

Finally, as from March 1980, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación (FAL), the armed wing of the PCS, began to be organized in the context of a progressive rapprochement between all the tendencies of the revolutionary Left.

Despite sharing many ideological and political beliefs, during the 1970s relations between the different groups were characterized by mistrust and even confrontation. Although the ERP and the FPL found common ground between 1973 and 1974, this detente was frustrated in the middle of 1975 following internal disputes in the former which ended in its split. The violent resolution of that conflict isolated the ERP from the rest of the armed organizations until 1979, when talks got underway on the creation of the FMLN. Since its advent, the FARN had kept the ERP at arm's length, while maintaining limited contacts with the FPL. Furthermore, the relations between these organizations and the PCS were very tense throughout the 1970s, since the former accused the latter of being revisionist and defending a conservative stance that played into the hands of the army. The lack of consensus on alliances and the mobilization strategy explain, in part, the revolutionary movement's lack of unity, although the hegemonic pretensions of the different revolutionary groups that aspired to set themselves up as the authentic interpreters of Marxism-Leninism and exponents of revolutionary purity were just as decisive.

From Urban Guerrilla Movements to Politico-Military Organizations

Between 1970 and 1974, the armed groups were small, militarized vanguard parties with a few dozen fully committed combatants operating largely in urban and suburban areas. In parallel, the guerrilleros gradually forged clandestine links with the organizational structures of the social movements, above all those created since 1969 by networks of priests and laypeople committed to liberation Christianity, forming the core of the Salvadoran Popular Church movement (Chávez 2017, 88). The pastoral work of these networks had led to the establishment of cooperatives, the creation of Christian base communities and the training of peasant leaders. In turn, this instruction and the discussions between peasants, priests and student activists, who often participated in training activities, contributed to the 'cognitive liberation' (McAdam 1982, 51) of the peasants involved in this community work.

Thenceforth, the leaders emerging in this phase of the base community work would be involved in the revival of peasant organizations and the training of their members for the communal defense of their rights against the state and the landowners. Thus, as from the beginning

of 1974, Catholic peasant activists began to establish local groups of the Federación Cristiana de Campesinos Salvadoreños (FECCAS) in the area of Aguilares, while at the same time extricating this organization from the influence of the PDC (Pearce 1986, 120), to which it had been linked since its foundation in 1964. The FECCAS expanded swiftly to other departments in the country's heartlands, mainly Cabañas, Cuscatlán and La Libertad and, by the end of 1975, had already begun to mobilize its cadres. These mobilizations initially took the form of protests against the high cost of living in a context marked by the stagnation of real wage rates and the increasing lack of arable land, due to the return of tens of thousands of Salvadoran peasants after the war with Honduras.

Simultaneously, in the north (Chalatenango), central-west (San Vicente) and east (Usulután) of El Salvador, there was a similar process of peasant mobilization mediated by the Catholic Church, which led to the creation of the Unión de Trabajadores del Campo (UTC). However, the UTC formed part, almost from its inception, of the guerrilla's strategy, above all that of the FPL (Ascoli, undated), which was linked to the Church's pastoral work in the region through student militants belonging to Acción Católica Universitaria Salvadoreña (ACUS). It should be noted that the social action and 'lay apostolate' movements of the Catholic Church, such as ACUS itself, Juventud Estudiantil Católica and Juventud Obrera Católica, had been following the dictates of the Second Vatican Council and the Medellín Conference since the mid-1960s, mostly as a result of the arrival of Belgian priests trained in the worker-priest tradition.[3]

On the basis of a radical interpretation of the Gospels, these organizations contributed to the development of an anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist thinking among the country's middle- and upper middle-class youth. It was thanks to the social work that they undertook in peasant communities and urban slums, including literacy and education programs, that it was possible to forge social links between peasant leaders and urban activists—i.e. secondary school and university students. Between 1970 and 1972, a significant number of urban activists from the Catholic social action movements joined—from university or secondary school—the guerrilla, placing the social networks that they had built up in the countryside and in the slums on the outskirts of San Salvador at the service of the revolutionary organizations. Moreover, in the cities the armed organizations infiltrated trade unions, neighborhood organizations and student groups, through both the *dual* membership of their cadres (Pirker 2017) and the new organizations created by the guerrilleros. By 1974, this strategy had already been clearly successful in terms of the greater ability of the revolutionary organizations to get their message across to the popular movement. From then on, the guerrilleros encouraged the creation of popular coordination committees for the purpose of pooling the efforts of the different organizations under their control or influence. Thus, the Frente de Acción Popular Unificada (FAPU) came into being in 1974, to a great extent—albeit not exclusively—thanks to the initiative of the FAPU activists of the ERP, who later on would form the FARN, the Bloque Popular Revolucionario promoted by the FPL in 1975, the ERP's Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero in 1977 and the PRTC's Movimiento de Liberación Popular in 1979.

The authoritarian drift of the regime under the presidency of Coronel Arturo Armando Molina, characterized by the stepping up of the repression and election rigging on a massive scale (in 1972 and 1977) to prevent the victory of a political opposition that now stood united, led to a rapprochement between the popular movement and the guerrillas.[4] This prompted the former to step up its demands, calling for their grievance to be heard and interpreted in a different light, which also facilitated the emergence of a new collective identity now not focusing on sectoral demands but on a total change in the political and economic system. The trade union, student and peasant organizations radicalized their demands and forms of protest in response to the closing of political spaces, which in turn allowed the guerrillas to

appropriate the popular movement's structures. As from the second half of 1977, this appropriation process gathered pace in parallel with the mounting repression of the regime, now under the presidency of General Carlos Humberto Romero. Following the promulgation of the Ley de Defensa y Garantía del Orden Público that same year,[5] the number of murders, arrests and disappearances of unionists, members of peasant organizations and activists of student organizations at the hands of the country's security forces and paramilitary groups increased exponentially.[6]

The political situation changed drastically following the coup d'état on 15 October 1979, which put an end to an authoritarian regime whose origins can be traced to 1932.[7] After the coup, a civilian-military junta formed a government with representatives from the center and center-left of the political spectrum, together with progressive servicemen—and the support of the PCS—although the army and the domestic security forces remained under the control of a sector of the armed forces advocating for the repression of the social movements and the annihilation of the guerrilla. It was precisely its lack of control over the military and paramilitary apparatuses that prevented the government of the junta from halting the repression, which intensified thenceforth. Consequently, the junta's civilian members abandoned the government at the beginning of January 1980, forming a new one with representatives from the PDC and the armed forces.

On the other hand, in December 1979 the guerrillas, through the good offices of the Cuban government,[8] opened talks with an eye to establishing a coordination platform that made room for all of them. As a result of these negotiations, on 17 December 1979 the PCS, the FARN and the FPL took the lead with the creation of the Coordinadora Político-Militar, which was announced on 10 January 1980. The following day, the mass fronts under the control of the guerrillas followed suit with the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas, whose aim was to stage an armed insurrection as a way of resolving the regime's crisis.

The subsequent murder of the archbishop of San Salvador Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez on the 24 March 1980—in the context of a wave of persecution unleashed by the army and the far-right paramilitary groups—paved the way for an understanding between the center-left opposition parties and the guerrilla, under the hegemony of the latter. This resulted in the creation of the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR) in April, which included, among other organizations, the Movimiento Popular Social Cristiano—with Rubén Zamora as its prominent leader—the social-democratic MNR, led by Guillermo Manuel Ungo, the Jesuit Universidad Centroamericana and the UES, plus the coordination structures of the social movements controlled by the guerrilla. On 22 May 1980, the Dirección Revolucionaria Unificada, grouping together the FPL, the RN, the ERP and the PCS, came into being. And lastly, on 10 October 1980 and not without some difficulty, the FMLN was established, which was then joined by the PRTC in December of the same year.

Similarly, at the end of 1980 the FMLN and the FDR established a strategic alliance that would last throughout the war. This alliance adopted the Plataforma Programática del Gobierno Democrático Revolucionario, a consensual program negotiated between the guerrillas and the social movements—democrats and Christian democrats with representation in the FDR, who sought to disband the army and the security forces, to plan the economy, to implement agrarian reform, to curtail state powers and to promulgate a new constitution.

On 10 January 1981, the FMLN launched a nationwide military offensive in an attempt to topple the government and take power.[9] After failing to achieve this, the guerrillas were forced to militarize all of their support networks and to create a safe rearguard in the rural areas of the northern, central and eastern regions of El Salvador where they could count on a certain degree of support from the peasant organizations under their control there. In these areas, they

succeeded in raising an irregular army that maintained the initiative in the war between 1982 and 1983.[10]

The Revolutionary War

In 1982 and 1983, the FMLN dealt the armed forces a number of heavy blows, obliging them to adapt to guerrilla warfare as quickly as possible with massive financial support from the US government.[11] During this same period, the new political regime stemming from the coup d'état in October 1979 began a process of institutionalization with the passing of a new constitution in December 1983. The establishment of an officially democratic regime formed part, in turn, of a broader strategy sponsored by the US government whose aim was both to undermine the political and economic foundations of the landowning oligarchy and to defeat the guerrillas. This strategy hinged on the implementation of agrarian reform—commencing in March 1980—the establishment of a representative democracy and boosting the fighting power of the Salvadoran armed forces through massive funding, training and advice. The PDC—which led the government between June 1984 and June 1989—became the most suitable political tool for implementing this strategy, inasmuch as the far-right parties, i.e. the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA) and the Partido de Conciliación Nacional, were neither a loyal nor reliable opposition during the initial years of the 1980s.

During the first years of the conflict and despite almost permanently maintaining the initiative, the FMLN was incapable of vanquishing the armed forces. Although the external support received by the latter was a crucial factor, to this should be added the insurgency's scant presence in the cities, after having transferred its cadres to the countryside and, above all, the inability of the armed organizations to achieve higher levels of coordination or the total integration of their forces. The FMLN functioned alone as an umbrella under which each organization maintained the independence of all of its structures. It is true that the revolutionaries established joint commissions and bodies, such as the Comandancia General, the Comisión Político-Diplomática and a series of specialized commissions. Nonetheless, there were still differences of opinion as regards military strategy and the conception of the revolutionary party and, in particular, the hegemonic ambitions of the larger organizations, namely, the FPL and the ERP.

Additionally, the failure of the 1981 offensive and the dwindling prospects of a swift military victory exacerbated the frictions between the organizations with respect to whether they should continue with a strategy focusing solely on the military defeat of the state or whether it was necessary to combine this with some type of negotiation to resolve the conflict. Everything suggests that, in the middle of 1982, there was already an almost general consensus among the comandancia of the FMLN on the convenience of combining military pressure with negotiation to end the war. At a meeting held in Havana in the summer of that year, only Carpio, on behalf of the FPL, was against such a solution.[12] This change in strategy and revolutionary objectives triggered a profound crisis in the FPL during 1983.

At the time, there were two stances in FPL on negotiation as a way of ending the conflict and the need to accelerate the unification of the guerrilla. On the one hand, its secretary general Carpio believed that the organization should have a nationwide presence, as it was the group around which a future unification of the revolutionary movement should revolve. On the other, the rest of the FMLN proposed dividing the national territory among the different organizations. By the same token, for Carpio and his closest supporters, negotiating with the government was tantamount to betraying the revolutionary movement and should only be resorted to for tactical purposes. For her part, Mélida Anaya Montes ('Ana María'), the FPL's second in command, together with other leaders, raised the need for a political opening and

eventual negotiations with the government under certain conditions, including the integration of a national unity government with other political parties unrelated to the revolutionary movement. The prolongation of the war bolstered the position defended by Anaya in the FPL's political commission.[13] Carpio's viewpoint was rejected at a meeting of FPL's central committee held in Managua from January to February 1983. Even so, he decided to launch a major nationwide offensive of the FPL,[14] for which reason he needed to find logistic and financial support from abroad. It was precisely when he stopped over in Managua on his way to El Salvador, after returning from an international trip to get funds and weapons, that Anaya was murdered in the Nicaraguan capital, in still unexplained circumstances, on 6 April 1983, followed by Carpio's suicide six days later.[15]

In all likelihood, Carpio's death precipitated a change in strategy in the FMLN which, during the final years of the 1980s, would exert military pressure in order to negotiate with the state in the best possible conditions.

Other processes also had a considerable influence on that change in strategy. Between 1984 and 1985, the greater military effectiveness of the Salvadoran armed forces obliged the guerrilla to break up the large units created between 1982 and 1983 into smaller, more mobile ones. As a result, the guerrilla managed to wage war in the countryside of ten of El Salvador's 14 departments, thus preventing local authorities from being established in almost half of the municipalities (Byrne 1996, 159) and bringing approximately 25 per cent of the territory under its control by the end of the 1980s.[16] In the cities, on the other hand, it presence was insignificant at least until 1986 and, even afterwards, it would never be capable of reaching the same levels achieved in around 1980.

The guerrilla's inability to obtain a military victory, the drop in popular support due to the fact the Salvadorans were beginning to grow weary of the war, an international climate favoring negotiation and the establishment of representative democracies in the region, among other factors, led to strategic, political and ideological changes in the Frente. In turn, the FMLN went from defending revolution and socialism as the only possible solution to the country's problems and the armed struggle as the only way of reaching those objectives, to considering, around 1983, political negotiation as an alternative to military victory. Subsequently, in 1988 or thereabouts, the holding of fair elections, an independent judiciary and demilitarization became the main objectives of its struggle, one that was supposed to combine negotiation with military pressure. The implementation of reforms in the framework of a representative democracy and market economy became identified with a revolution defined thenceforth as democratic.

This gradual shift in the FMLN's objectives explains its willingness to negotiate 'strategically' after the failure of the nationwide offensive that it had launched in November 1989. As a matter of fact, it is possible to claim that it was an essential prerequisite for its participation in a negotiation process commencing in 1990 and ending with the Chapultepec Peace Accords on 16 January 1992, which envisaged, among many other provisions, the conversion of the FMLN into a political party, which was formalized on 1 September 1992.

The FMLN as a Political Party

With the advent of peace, it was clear that it had been the presence of a common external enemy that had encouraged the guerrillas to maintain their alliance during the 1980s. The internal differences in the FMLN came to light during its first ordinary convention held in September 1993, when the ERP—now under the new name of Expresión Renovadora del Pueblo—officially abandoned Marxism-Leninism and proclaimed its support for social democracy. At the time, its secretary general Joaquín Villalobos argued that the fall of the Eastern Bloc countries, the crisis of Marxism-Leninism and the new situation in El Salvador arising from the

peace accords required a renewed Left far-removed from extremisms. In contrast, the PCS, the PRTC and the FPL reasserted themselves as revolutionary Marxist organizations whose objective was the construction of socialism.

The results of the March 1994 elections, in which the Frente with little more than 31.6 per cent of the ballots cast in the presidential elections and 25 per cent in the legislative elections failed to meet its own expectations, contributed to exacerbate the party's crisis. In August, the ERP and the Resistencia Nacional (RN) proposed to redefine their ideology, to disband the five groups and to found a new social democratic party, a proposal that was turned down by the rest of the organizations. Consequently, the ERP and the RN abandoned the Frente in December to create, along with the MNR, the Partido Demócrata in March 1995.

In 1995, the three organizations still remaining in the FMLN decided to disband. From then on, the Frente functioned as a unified party with internal tendencies whose power struggles and ideological discrepancies would mark developments until 2001. Those years were characterized by the expulsion or voluntary exodus of some of the organization's most relevant leaders and consequential militants. The party remained in the hands of a leadership coalition formed mostly by ex-cadres of the FPL and the PCS, who vindicated—rhetorically—the revolutionary and socialist character of the FMLN, versus the proposals to align with social democracy made by most of the dissidents who had left the organization.[17] Notwithstanding its internal divisions, the Frente succeeded in winning and maintaining a majority in the Legislative Assembly from the year 2000 to 2012, a position that the ARENA had occupied interruptedly since 1989.

After 15 years in the opposition, the FMLN managed to win the 2009 presidential elections thanks to its alliance with a social democratic candidate who had neither political experience nor revolutionary pedigree: the journalist Mauricio Funes. His government cabinet included historic leaders of the FMLN—with Salvador Sánchez Cerén[18] as vice-president—plus progressive figures unlinked to the party. The Funes government performed discreetly. The main problems affecting Salvadoran society (violence, poverty and unemployment) were not resolved although the government invested in public health and education, above all in the rural and deprived areas, and attempted to improve the situation of thousands of informal sector workers living in the Salvadoran cities.

The electoral victory of Cerén in 2014 led to a second FMLN government which further developed some of the social policies implemented during Funes' presidential term of office. For instance, the government funded free school meals and supplies school supplies programs and increased the minimum wage rate of the most badly paid workers. On the negative side, however, there was its heavy-handed treatment of the Maras, its failed pension reform, its cronyism and the shadow of corruption that the investigation of the Funes administration cast on its management.[19] In a context marked furthermore by the loss of its legislative majority and the opposition of the judiciary and the media, the FMLN quickly lost support. Its governments were incapable of modifying the country's economy which, since the 1990s, had depended on remittances from migrants, the *maquila*[20] sector and 'nostalgic' tourism. In those conditions, both administrations were unable to develop fully their programs for combating poverty—affecting 34 per cent of Salvadoran households—and reducing inequality due to a chronic lack of resources.

Finally, in 2019, the Frente suffered a historic defeat in the presidential elections, being relegated to third place—an unprecedented situation in the party's history. This electoral result has been the swan song of the founding generation of the Salvadoran revolutionary Left, whose retirement from frontline politics will presumably facilitate the renewal of an organization which, in its day, was one of the most powerful revolutionary movements in Latin America.

Notes

1. Since the end of the 1940s, the reformist sectors of the armed forces had devised a way of transforming the state in order to reduce the vulnerability of the country's mono-export economy based on coffee. As the aim of this development project was to build a modern industrial economy, the state undertook the task of increasing the population's level of education to adapt it to the new manpower requirements (Lindo and Ching 2012).
2. On the one hand, the pressure brought to bear on the regime by the US government in order that it should implement liberalization policies through the Alliance for Progress, and on the other, the destabilization caused by the protests that led to the fall of the government of Coronel José María Lemus and the brief interregnum of the government of the Junta de Gobierno that was formed immediately afterwards (Oct. 1960–Jan. 1961).
3. Specifically, the priests Jean de Plancke and Esteban Alliet, who arrived in El Salvador in around 1964, after being invited by the Nicaraguan priest Ramón Vega. Author's interview with Fernando Alfonso Rivas Mira (Colima, Apr. 2011).
4. The opposition parties' candidates stood for election under the coalition Unión Nacional Opositora (UNO), formed by the PDC, the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR) and the Unión Democrática Nacionalista.
5. Law for the Defense and Guarantee of the Public Order.
6. Between July 1977 and Oct. 1979, the state was responsible for 461 murders and the disappearance of 131 people (Almeida 2008, 151).
7. In contemporary El Salvador, the tradition of military heads of state dates back to the coup d'état staged by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez and the repression of the opposition in the famous *Matanza* of 1932.
8. The mediating role played by Cuba in the creation of the FMLN was confirmed by Medardo González Trejo, an ex-member of the political commission of the FPL (author's interview with González Trejo, San Salvador, Oct. 1998).
9. The timing of the offensive was chosen in an attempt to gain victory before Ronald Reagan came to power in the United States, since the revolutionaries foresaw that the new US administration would look upon the FMLN with a jaundiced eye or might even decide on military intervention in El Salvador.
10. US intelligence calculated that the FMLN had 10,000 combatants by the end of 1983, of which 7,000 were well-armed and trained. Central Intelligence Agency (1986). *A Net Assessment of the War*. [pdf] Document declassified under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). [online] Available at: www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP04T00794R000100040001-4.pdf [Accessed on 29 Apr. 2019].
11. According to McClintock (1998), that aid totaled US$ 3,600 million throughout the 1980s.
12. A declassified cable of the CIA confirms that meetings were being held between the guerrilla comandantes in Havana in the summer of 1982. However, US intelligence was unfamiliar with the items on the agenda. Central Intelligence Agency (1982). National Intelligence Daily, cable# 82–192C. [pdf] Document declassified under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). [online] Available at: www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC0000808526.pdf [Accessed on 29 Apr. 2019].
13. Author's interview with Facundo Guardado (San Salvador, Aug. 2008), a former member of the political commission of the FPL.
14. According to the testimony of an anonymous informer, a founding member of the FPL very close to Carpio (author's interview with the author, Sept. 2015). Carpio had looked to Libya, among other countries, for support, from where he had just returned when the Managua incidents occurred.
15. In light of the results of the initial investigation conducted by the Nicaraguan security forces, the FPL's political commission blamed Carpio for the murder, for which reason he decided to commit suicide, according to the testimony that he had left. The subsequent investigation conducted by a Managua court concluded that the crime had been masterminded by Rogelio Bazaglia (Comandante Marcelo), Anaya's own chief of security, who had acted on his own motivated by his disagreement with the political line imposed by his boss in the FPL. Morales Carbonell, J. (2008). Aclaraciones necesarias. *Diario Colatino, 12 de febrero*. San Salvador.
16. In the Salvadoran case, territorial control refers to the political control of the population, since there were never any real 'liberated areas'. Due to the lie of the land, the armed forces were able to penetrate the rearguard areas of the FMLN throughout the war, although they could not remain there for long without suffering heavy casualties.
17. For a detailed account of this period, see Allison and Martín Álvarez (2012).
18. The FPL's number one from 1983 to 1995.
19. In 2016, Funes was investigated and prosecuted for corruption by the Salvadoran Prosecutor General's Office.
20. Assembly industries characterized by low wages and poor working conditions.

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14

THE SECOND CYCLE OF THE GUATEMALAN INSURGENCY (1970–1996)

Mario Vázquez Olivera and Fabián Campos Hernández

Introduction[1]

The first cycle of the Guatemalan insurgency ended in the defeat of the rebel forces emerging in the 1960s. The second and more intense cycle began in the early 1970s and ended in 1996 with the peace accords and the demobilization of the guerrilla. This cycle, however, had a clear break in 1984, when the defeat of the revolutionaries was evident (Thomas 2013). Although there is a general consensus on its causes, there are different interpretations of the period between 1985 and 1996. This last period is considered here as the third phase of the insurgency.

The Second Cycle of Insurgency (ca. 1970–1984)

New Actors

In the late 1960s, the Guatemalan revolutionary movement was immersed in a deep crisis. The FAR had suffered many casualties and the exodus of several of its leaders and important cadres. Furthermore, the MR13 and the PGT had also suffered notable losses. The situation went from bad to worse from 1970, following the election of General Carlos Arana—who would earn himself the sobriquet of 'the Jackal of the East' because of his counterinsurgency campaigns—as the president of Guatemala. With Arana in power, the army felt reinforced and its top brass prevailed over the state apparatus (Rosada 2011, 130).

During the Arana government (1970–1974), the persecution of the guerrillas was stepped up, with the M-13 receiving the brunt of repression. Its principal leaders were all promptly eliminated and, by mid-1973, the movement had ceased to exist. But the guerrillas were still a force to be reckoned with. According to intelligence reports, around 1970 some 200 combatants were still active (Figueroa, Paz and Taracena 2013, 75, 98). This figure is consistent with testimonies and internal information coming from the armed organizations. Moreover, the rebels still had the sympathy of the people and support networks. Despite the setbacks, they continued to launch military operations and even resumed their organizational activities. Their aim was not only to survive the repression, but also to formulate new strategic plans. Doctrinal differences and disputes prevented the armed organizations from working together and pulling in the same direction, since they were suspicious of one another and also suffered from internal divisions.

In its fourth congress, the PGT reiterated its commitment to the armed struggle but was very critical about foquismo (PGT 1972, 35), insofar as it preferred political action with trade unions, peasants and students. Its military structure was reserved for support actions: executions, armed propaganda and 'economic recovery operations'. As to the FAR, foquismo was also challenged and, at its 1971 congress, it was agreed to develop party structures and forge closer links with the social movements. 'We do not believe that we can wage war with only tiny mountain detachments. Not until the incorporation of large popular sectors is achieved, will we have substantial military strength.'[2]

This shift favored the collaboration between the FAR and the PGT. Both participated in the revival of the trade union and peasant movements, their cadres playing a key role in the Central Nacional de Trabajadores. They were also behind the creation of the Comité Nacional de Unidad Sindical, the unified Guatemalan labor organization. Another point of coincidence between the FAR and the PGT was their flexible alliance policy, both collaborating with the opposition front in support of the presidential candidacy of General Ríos Montt in the 1974 elections.

Meanwhile, both the FAR and the PGT suffered serious reversals. In the case of the guerrilla group, its internal disagreements led to the exodus of many militants. The organization lost a rural front—that of the western region—as well as part of its urban structures. Only a small group continued under the leadership of Comandante Pablo Monsanto (the nom de guerre of Jorge Soto García). As for the PGT, in 1972 the police were behind the 'disappearance' of its secretary general and five other leaders. Two years later, the new secretary general was assassinated, as well. In the mid-1970s, the FAR and the PGT went into rapid decline. Even so, by developing another strategy, instead of blindly following foquismo, they made a contribution to the insurgents' cause. Over time, participation in mass organizations would prove to be crucial for the development of the revolutionary movement (Figueroa, Paz and Taracena 2013, 100).

In 1972, two new groups—the NORC and the future ORPA, a splinter group of the FAR in the country's western region—suggested renewing the armed struggle from a different perspective. Both considered that drumming up support among the masses was a mistake. Instead, they focused on consolidating rural detachments and clandestine support structures, an approach similar to the Guevarist foquismo. However, there was a substantial difference in comparison with the previous decade. The two organizations considered the active participation of the Mayan peasants as a core element of the revolutionary war.[3] 'Paraphrasing Mao,' said a founding member of the NORC, 'it is possible to say that whoever wins over the indigenous people will conquer Guatemala.'[4]

The NORC was created in Cuba in 1968. Its approximately 40 members included veterans of the guerrilla of the 1960s, upper-class radicalized Catholics and former PGT militants. Their two leaders were Julio César Macías (whose nom de guerre was César Montes), a former leader of the FAR, and Ricardo Ramírez (whose noms de guerre were Orlando Fernández and Rolando Morán). The latter had been a representative of the FAR in Cuba and had close ties with its government. After training in Cuba, North Korea and Mexico, the NORC commenced operations in Guatemala in 1972. Its deployment followed the typical Guevarist pattern. Fifteen combatants were introduced in the Ixcán jungle, an area they scarcely knew, while another group made their way to Guatemala City to initiate their underground activities. Some militants proposed to liaise with the popular movements, but Macías and Ramírez strictly prohibited them from doing so. Those who did not share this neo-foquismo were forced to abandon the organization.[5]

The NORC's deployment was a success and, for a while, its rural detachment managed to avoid engaging in combat. It organized support networks among the peasants of the Ixcán

region and the indigenous communities of the northern El Quiché region. Guerrilla structures were consolidated in Guatemala City and new militants were recruited, as well as establishing clandestine networks on the Pacific coast. Although it initially had to rely on its own resources, the NORC subsequently received logistic and financial support from the Cuban government. It also made alliances with similar groups in the region, especially with the Salvadorian FPL. In 1975, the NORC changed its name to the EGP.

Differences of opinion between the regional cadres and the national leadership led to the split of the FAR's Regional de Occidente. The dissidents criticized the existing bad practices with respect to the local communities and the erroneous management of the war. At the same time, they rejected a rapprochement with the PGT, opposing its politics of alliances and new ideas about 'working with the masses'.[6] The resulting splinter group decided to operate in strict secrecy and did not even have a name until 1979, when it publicly emerged as the ORPA. Like the NORC, this organization built up a guerrilla base in the mountains of the department of San Marcos (Kruijt and Van Meurs 2000, 38). Reinforced by other dissenters of the FAR and new recruits, the group also managed to extend its rural and urban support networks.

In the ORPA, veterans of the urban guerrilla, intellectuals, professionals, young Catholics and university students were joined by indigenous guerrilleros. Its founders included Rodrigo Asturias (whose nom de guerre was Gaspar Ilóm) whose leadership consolidated the group and whose national and international contacts soon allowed it to emerge from its political isolation. Without renouncing Marxism, the ORPA distinguished itself by promoting heterodox theses about Guatemalan society. Asturias contended that racism was a structural component of capitalist domination and, in light of this, the main force of the Guatemalan revolution had to be precisely the 'original peoples' (Thomas 2013, 134).[7]

The Guerrilla and the Masses

During the second half of the 1970s, the Guatemalan Revolutionary movements mushroomed. This process had two expressions. The first was the survival and evolution of the rural detachments of the ORPA and the EGP. The transformation of the initial focos into guerrilla frentes was the exclusive result of their patient political activities. Converted into preachers, organizers, teachers and doctors, the guerrilleros devoted much more time to building up a social base than to military matters. In some places, the locals' acceptance of the guerrilleros was influenced by the previous activities of progressive priests and nuns. While in others, it was the community leaders who prepared the ground. This 'deep support' of the indigenous communities explains their success (Thomas 2013, 172). For in these remote and deprived areas, the appearance of the guerrilla raised great expectations of social redemption.

The second expression is to be found in the insurgents' links to the organized popular movement, allowing them to extend their support networks and to recruit militants. Through these contacts, they not only influenced the activities of important social organizations, bringing them into line with the insurgency's strategy, but in many cases also founded new ad hoc organizations, which they financed and allowed to mature, while guiding their actions. This influence resulted in the actions of trade unions and peasant associations taking on a belligerent and sometimes insurrectional character.

The EGP was the armed organization that expanded most. First and foremost, it consolidated its presence in the jungles and mountains to the north of the department of El Quiché, before expanding to neighboring departments. In 'organized communities', it founded power bases and auxiliary militias, the so-called Fuerzas Irregulares Locales. It thus established support networks in a large swath of North-Central Guatemala, a region where half a dozen Mayan

languages were spoken. This territorial expansion was reinforced by selective executions of informers and government agents, a recurrent practice that the EGP never tried to conceal.[8]

The EGP also concentrated its activities in Guatemala City, where it established its high command and main underground structures (workshops, propaganda, communications, logistics, intelligence, etc.). The city was not only perceived as the rearguard but also as a war front. There, EGP commandos hit hard, executing senior military officers and kidnapping entrepreneurs, which was a crucial source of funding for the organization.

While fine tuning its operational structures, the EGP substantially changed its stance towards the mass movements. The earthquake of 1976 had a devastating impact on the impoverished areas of the central highlands. Catholic groups and leftist social organizations led the solidarity activities in the affected communities, a state of affairs that the EGP leadership decided to leverage. Its subsequent contacts with these popular movements would result in major politico-organizational initiatives. The discussions and exchange of experiences between the EGP and the Salvadoran FPL were behind this change of heart. As with the FPL, the EGP would involve the peasants and farm workers in organizational activities, while depending heavily on the work of radical priests and nuns.[9]

The EGP assigned a large number of cadres and considerable financial resources to the mass organizations. Under its auspices, the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC), the largest and most combative peasant and farm workers' association in Guatemala was founded. Consequently, the EGP achieved a significant presence in circles of organized labor and among university students. The influence of the EGP served as a catalyst. While the FAR's and the PGT's approach to the masses was legalistic, the EGP was determined to radicalize the popular movements from the very beginning, with the intention of transforming a program aimed at improving salaries and labor conditions into a 'revolutionary struggle'.[10]

Unlike the EGP, the ORPA stuck to its original decision of non-engagement with the mass organizations. Instead, it focused on consolidating its operational structures in absolute secrecy. Yet, it knew how to take advantage of the radicalism prevailing in certain circles and strata to swell its ranks. The ORPA attempted to deploy guerrilla units throughout the rural region of the Sierra Madre, from the Mexican border to Lake Atitlán. According to Comandante Gaspar Ilóm (the nom de guerre of Rodrigo Asturias), this decision was strategically sound, insofar as the Sierra Madre was the 'country's backbone', connecting the indigenous highlands with important coffee and sugar producing regions (Harnecker 1983, 142). In the mountain villages, the ORPA organized support networks and underground militias, but was careful to draw a veil over this connection with those communities (Kruijt and Van Meurs 2000, 36).

Like the rest of the country's revolutionary organizations, the ORPA's nerve center was located in Guatemala City, its ranks being drawn from university students, professionals, intellectuals and Catholic activists. During its years of clandestine growth, it recruited and trained fresh guerrilla cadres and specialized personnel, some of its first cadres receiving training in Cuba. The ORPA also conducted 'economic recovery operations' (not publicly acknowledged) which provided it with a respectable war fund.

A small group of ORPA militants broke with Asturias in 1976, resulting in the creation of the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo—Ixim (MRP-Ixim, sometimes just Ixim), whose ethnic demands were more radical than those of the ORPA. Although it was never large, its military and political activities in several parts of the country contributed, to some extent, to the guerrilla boom of the period (Morales 1998). Two other small groups involved in guerrilla activities at the time were the Guatemalan branch of the PRTC, whose main force was Salvadorian, and the Movimiento Indio Tojil, an indigenous guerrilla force of Quiché and Cakchiquel militants, whose ethnic radicalism was not appreciated by the EGP (Macleod 2008, 229).

The PGT was fully engaged in the social movements, an activity that strengthened its regional sections and its dynamic youth organization. A sector of its militants claimed that the party would openly participate in the insurgency. In 1976, the PGT reinstated its Military Commission (COMIL), reinforcing it with cadres from the mass movement. With these new militants, the clandestine party units increased their power and gained autonomy. But this did not resolve the basic problem. Two years later, the party split into two tendencies: on the one hand, the PGT 'Comité Central' which preserved the official structures and maintained a moderate stance; and, on the other, the COMIL and the PGT 'Núcleo de dirección' which opted for armed struggle (Vázquez 2017, 69–70).

For the FAR, this was an important period of recovery and growth after its previous misfortunes. Through its political strategy, it attracted new guerrilla members, including trade unionists and university students, as well as former militants of the Christian democrats, fundamental for renewing cadres and leaders. It also used its connections with the social movements to extend its presence to new regions of the country, establishing itself in the peasant cooperatives in the jungle of El Petén, where its principal armed detachment would later operate. But, for the time being, it still had not created rural fronts, its military wing focusing on 'financing operations'.[11]

The Revolutionary Zenith

The mass protests came to a head when General Laugerud's term in office (1974–1978) ended and power was transferred to General Romeo Lucas (1978–1982). The March 1978 elections were accompanied by demonstrations in the capital, stoppages in the factories and the sugar plantations, and civil service strikes. A novel feature was the participation of a numerous and combative contingent of indigenous demonstrators in the 1 May parade, with the CUC making its first public appearance. One month later, 100,000 people participated in a protest march against the massacre of peasants in the village of Panzós, an action that had made it blatantly clear that the regime had no qualms about resorting to indiscriminate bloodshed to contain the masses. But that did not put a stop to the mobilizations. In October of that year, violent protests broke out in Guatemala City against the increase in public transport fares. During a week, the protesters clashed with the police with grim results. It was the greatest challenge that the military regime had ever faced (Torres-Rivas 2011, 416).

The escalation in mass protests in Guatemala ran parallel to the culminating phase of the anti-Somoza uprising in Nicaragua. The progress of the Nicaraguan revolution fueled the enthusiasm of the Guatemalan revolutionaries. Additionally, the Sandinista experience had established some guidelines that the insurgents were keen to follow: unifying 'the vanguard', forming broad alliances, isolating the regime and connecting the guerrilla war with the civil unrest. Accordingly, the FAR, the EGP and the PGT-Núcleo set up a coordinating body at the end of 1978 and, early the following year, went on to create a unitary mass organization, the Frente Democrático contra la Represión (FDCR), thus bringing all of the social organizations, some of which were Catholic and social democratic, under one umbrella. The FDCR was supposed to have been led by the moderate politicians Alberto Fuentes Mohr and Manuel Colom Argueta, but both were murdered by death squads.

In the final phase of the Sandinista offensive, the EGP carried out armed propaganda actions, sabotage and attacks on police stations. In a much-commented operation, it killed General David Cancinos, the chief of staff of the army and Lucas García's probable successor in the presidency.[12] Even though the FAR and the ORPA had suspended armed actions during those months, they supported the FSLN with money and combatants. The Guatemalan guerrilla

exploited the Sandinista triumph to take the initiative. In August 1979, the FAR announced that it would be resuming its military operations and, a month later, the ORPA launched armed actions in different parts of the country.

The successful strike of the agricultural workers on the south coast in early 1980 was not only the labor mobilization's crowning moment, but also its watershed. On 1 May, the FDCR launched the incendiary slogan, 'Lucas! Assassin! Out of office! For a revolutionary, popular and democratic government!' That was the last time that the unions appeared in public. The systematic assassination of their leaders and activists paralyzed the social movements in the cities. Nor did the peasant organizations manage to evade the state's terror tactics. The CUC disappeared from the public stage, but its retirement allowed it to morph into an insurrectional variant that had not been envisaged hitherto. In the central highlands, numerous communities affiliated to the CUC openly joined the EGP. In the northern reaches of the departments of El Quiché, Huehuetenango and Alta Verapaz, a similar phenomenon occurred between 1980 and 1981. The enthusiastic adherence of indigenous communities successfully completed its organizational strategy. According to EGP data, at the time more than half a million people were coordinated in one way or another by its structures.[13] However, there was a yawning gap between the insurrectional drive of the peasantry and the military capability achieved by the guerrillas.

In the second half of 1980, the FAR, the ORPA, the EGP and the PGT-Núcleo, backed by Cuba and Nicaragua, prepared an ambitious joint plan to intensify the war. This envisaged extending the guerrilla fronts, forming regular columns and establishing a liberated territory near the border with Mexico. Another proposal involved forming a Frente Nacional destined to play a role similar to that of the Grupo de los Doce in Nicaragua. The four organizations agreed to unify ranks at the end of that year. However, for tactical reasons the creation of the URNG was kept under wraps until February 1982. To prepare the offensive, hundreds of combatants traveled to Cuba to receive training, while the Sandinista government promised to supply a considerable amount of weapons. Accordingly, the insurgents upgraded their logistic structures, preparing warehouses, air strips and delivery points in several parts of the Guatemala.[14]

To fill their war chest, the insurgents embarked on a high-impact kidnapping campaign. They also trained more combatants in order to step up their rural and urban actions. The first weapons shipments arriving from Nicaragua made it possible to increase the number of guerrilla units. In the northern jungle department of El Petén, the FAR formed three guerrilla platoons. It also sent contingents to the south coast and the central highlands. For its part, the EGP announced the creation of a new front in Alta Verapaz and the creation of its first column of 'regular forces', with more than 100 combatants, in the northern reaches of El Quiché. A month later, the guerrilla alliance launched a campaign to support the FMLN's 'final offensive'.[15]

February 1981 saw another wave of offensive actions lasting several months, with the insurgents displaying considerable firepower and launching larger operations. In July, the creation of the Frente Augusto César Sandino (FACS) was announced. It covered a vast area of the central highlands where indigenous communities had enthusiastically joined the EGP. In addition to its relative proximity to the capital, the FACS controlled several important roads and towns. It was also close to the operating areas of the FAR, the ORPA, Ixim and the PGT. Although the FACS only had three permanent platoons, it could also rely on militia forces and was accompanied by several thousand unarmed civilians (Thomas 2013, 173).

By then, the insurgents were operating in 19 of the country's 22 departments. Their armed actions made the news on a daily basis: attacks on permanent army and police quarters and troops on the march, actions of sabotage and executions. The army, the police and their civilian collaborators suffered hundreds of casualties. It should be noted that in addition to the FAR, the ORPA, the PGT-Núcleo and the EGP, the Ixim, the PGT-Comil and the PGT-Central

Committee also carried out their own actions. These groups had been excluded from the quadripartite alliance and were struggling to demonstrate their operational capacity.

Until then, the insurgency's strategic plan seemed to have been a success. A thousand permanent combatants had laid siege to the government forces. Thousands of militiamen and new recruits were waiting for the moment to join the guerrilla units. Yet, most of the necessary weapons still had to come from abroad.

Scorched Earth and General Retreat

At the very moment that the guerrilla offensive reached its high-water mark, the government forces delivered a crippling blow to the insurgency in Guatemala City. In a sequence of crushing actions during July and August 1981, the security forces dismantled some of the ORPA's and the EGP's most important operational structures. This counteroffensive continued for several months with devastating effect. The objectives of the army and security operations also included the south coast, causing irreparable damage to the rebel movement. Other organizations were also overwhelmed, with the revolutionary movement as a whole losing hundreds of members: 'Cadres, leaders, combatants, activists and support bases, as well as infrastructure and resources, were eradicated or fell into the hands of the enemy.'[16]

The operations in the capital and on the south coast formed part of a strategic plan to combat the insurgency. 'Thunder in the City' (the title of the famous book by Payeras 1987) was followed by a campaign against the EGP's rural fronts, starting in November 1981 and continuing throughout 1982. Initially, the army targeted the FACS, the guerrilla front nearest to Guatemala City. It then spread to the North: the departments of Huehuetenango, El Quiché, Alta Verapaz and the Ixcán jungle. During this campaign, presidential elections were held. Shortly thereafter, a coup brought General Ríos Montt to power. The coup not only settled old scores among the military top brass, but also transformed the entire government apparatus into an instrument 'at the service of the counterinsurgency efforts' (Thomas 2013, 180). The new government continued with the ongoing campaign, obtaining the first positive results.

The army's offensive against the EGP's rural fronts was part of a general strategy to take control of the territories and communities where the insurgent organization was based. Highly mobile task forces invaded the guerrilla zones and set up permanent patrol bases. Organized civilian auxiliary forces also accompanied the troops. But the decisive factor of the military campaign were the massacres of indigenous communities in those regions. There are no precise figures, but between 1982 and 1983 the death toll might have been as high as 20,000. The atrocious, systematic killing of civilians was not only a form of retaliation against their rebellion, but also served to smash the insurgency's organizational structures and collaboration networks. But above all the terror served to subjugate the indigenous communities. Many villages were relocated and brought under the control of the army. All adult men were forced to serve in the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), paramilitary groups that played a fundamental role in controlling the population and opposing the guerrillas. Throughout the conflict, the PAC had hundreds of thousands of members (CEH 1999, 190).

The military offensive took the insurgents by surprise and way surpassed their capacity to resist. In order to extend their presence throughout the national territory, they had deployed their forces on many fronts. Although they had thousands of recruits, since the weapons had not arrived from Nicaragua, they could not field any more combat units. At the start of the military campaign, the EGP's permanent forces comprised 600 armed guerrilleros at most. On the vast FACS, it had fewer than 100 combatants armed with rifles, dispersed in small units. Most of them and hundreds of militia members were killed in combat during 1982.

The EGP has been criticized for not protecting the civilian population during the scorched-earth campaigns. For some, the insurgents' response was 'a messy devil take the hindmost, a very ill-prepared flight' (Le Bot 1995, 201). But that is not true. No one can question the courage of the insurgents. On the mountain fronts, they fought to the bitter end, even when they had run out of ammunition. Within their capabilities, they had attempted to train communities in self-defense. And, in many cases, the cadres coordinated the exodus of thousands of civilians to mountain havens or Mexico. Apart from very specific situations, the EGP's main failing was not its immediate response to the military offensive, but the disparity between its political and military strategies, to wit, while it managed to garner the support of entire communities for its revolutionary cause, it had failed to prepare them for war (Torres-Rivas 2011, 454). And one may also ask why the Guatemalan insurgency planned its military consolidation relying entirely on external support. This aid was subject to ever-changing circumstances in Central America. For reasons that are still unclear, in 1980 and 1981 the promised weapons only arrived in a trickle and were insufficient to support the creation of a people's army.

The successive blows suffered in 1982 plunged the EGP into a deep crisis. Several regional command posts and combat units belonging to the rural fronts were left uncoordinated. And towards the end of the year, it evacuated its urban structures from the country to prevent any further disasters. The EGP leadership's strong differences of opinion caused two subsequent rifts in 1983 and 1984. In order to reorganize its military structures, the EGP ordered a general retreat into the jungle of Ixcán and the northern reaches of El Quiché. But not all of its combatants complied. In the mountains of the department of Alta Verapaz, some 100 guerrillas and militia units opposed the army offensive throughout 1983. Almost all perished. That same year, the dissenting comandante Camilo (the nom de guerre of Carlos López Arévalo) fell in combat in Guatemala City. His small group remained active for a year but ended up disbanding.

The EGP's crisis and retreat had a considerable impact on the entire revolutionary movement. This was only to be expected since it was the principal insurgent organization. The ORPA immediately reorganized its rural frentes, regrouping its forces in larger units to withstand an imminent offensive. Indeed, in 1983 and 1984 the army carried out continuous operations in the Sierra Madre, which the ORPA resisted successfully (Palma 2010). During the same period, the FAR maintained an active front between Chimaltenango and Sololá, while also reinforcing its guerrilla units in distant El Petén. Meanwhile, the EGP's units remained in the north of El Quiché and in the jungle of the Ixcán, attacking army troops on the move. But the fact remained that its military capability had been reduced nearly by half and that it was now cornered in remote regions.

The debacle of the revolutionary movement in the indigenous highlands marked the turning point in the history of the armed conflict in Guatemala. While the guerrilla certainly was not shattered, it could not prevent the consolidation of the PAC or the subsequent military control of the rural communities. Its efforts to rebuild its guerrilla structures in Guatemala City were unsuccessful. In 1984, the police dismantled yet again the underground networks of the ORPA, thus dealing a heavy blow to the urban front of the FAR and the PGT-Comité Central. In that same operation, other smaller organizations that were still active, such as Ixim, Tojil, the PGT-Comil and the PGT-Núcleo, were also taken apart. According to military records, more than 130 guerrilleros were either eliminated or disappeared in the capital (SEPAZ 2011).

Thereafter, the ORPA and the FAR only retained small support structures. The comandancia general of the URNG was established abroad in Mexico City, while the support channels (logistics, propaganda and communications) were moved to Mexico and Nicaragua. In a certain sense, it was a situation similar to that of the late 1960s. Although the rebel leaders refused to accept it, the movement had suffered a strategic setback (Payeras 1984).

The Last Cycle of the War in Guatemala, 1985–1996

'The guerrillas became socially and politically isolated, geographically dispersed in several parts of the national territory implementing survival tactics and carrying out isolated actions, without offensive coordination and languishing slowly' (Torres-Rivas 2011, 458). But the long period between the defeat of the insurgents in 1982 and 1983 and the peace accords in 1996 is too long to be considered as a mere sequel to the previous period, a prolonged agony after the defeat.

To our mind, those 13 years during which the insurgent movement resisted tooth and nail should be considered as the third cycle of the revolutionary struggle. During that period, the guerrillas were restructured and courageously continued the fight. But the war was substantially different from that of the previous cycle. After the blows suffered, the strategic capabilities of the insurgents were extremely limited in both military and political terms. The rebels strived to subsist as a belligerent force in a rather uncertain regional context. They had no chance of victory and were incapable of posing any serious threat to the government. Still, they successfully withstood the successive counterinsurgency offensives. This impasse ended when, in the early 1990s, Central America finally encountered the path to peace. The fundamental objective of the insurgency was to take advantage of the peace negotiations to contribute to the democratization of Guatemala.

Paradoxically, the insurgent forces reached their maximum operational capacity during this period. Once they had established efficient supply channels, they were able to rely on the influx of large quantities of weapons and munitions. Their units were now led by battle-hardened comandantes and experienced guerrilleros. The URNG substantially improved its communication systems as well. This allowed for efficient coordination between detachments, frentes and organizations. The guerrillas also managed to protect their support bases, the so-called Comunidades de Población en Resistencia, in the mountains. To these factors should be added another important one for the recovery of the insurgency which is not normally mentioned. In the borderlands close to Mexico, the URNG established its rearguard structures and military logistics. This was possible thanks to an understanding with the Mexican government, which doubtless tolerated and collaborated with the Guatemalan guerrillas for strategic reasons (Vázquez and Vázquez 2006; Campos 2016, 163).

This military restructuring and modernization enabled the URNG to take a stand against the general campaign launched by the army in 1987, with the intention of exterminating the guerrillas in their mountain strongholds, where they would prove to be invincible. As a result, the military high command was forced to accept the start of talks between the government and the rebels. As a matter of fact, a current favoring the negotiations emerged in the armed forces (Sandoval 2013). Later on, more important actions, such as the siege of the military barracks in Cuarto Pueblo and the creation of the Frente Unitario, which operated successfully in areas close to the capital (Santa Cruz 2006), served to restart the negotiations when these had got bogged down. In short, the guerrillas were not 'languishing slowly'.

The URNG also made substantial progress in its international outreach. Taking advantage of personal relationships, FAR members established contact with the president-elect Vinicio Cerezo in 1986. When, during the first few months of his term of office, the new president publicly declared his intention to enter into negotiations with the insurgency, the latter took the opportunity to break out of its international isolation. After intense negotiations, the URNG convinced the Spanish government to act as guarantor of the peace talks (Reyes 2013). Thenceforth, they were punctuated by guerrilla actions perpetrated as a show of strength.

At the behest of the URNG, other European governments joined Spain in furthering the negotiations. The guerrilla also gained international prestige when Rigoberta Menchú was

awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1992. This gave the URNG a political weight that it could never have achieved by arms alone. The comandantes of the URNG initially considered the peace negotiations as a way of proving that civilian governments were incapable of resolving the conflict (Sandoval 2013, 209). But its diplomatic-political commission signed a series of partial peace accords that would ultimately be decisive.

It is also true that as from the mid-1980s there had been a number of important political developments in Guatemala. After the overthrow of Ríos Montt in 1983, the slow process of dismantling the counterinsurgent state, the dominant model since 1954, got underway (Figueroa 1990, 115). In May 1985, a new constitution was promulgated, followed by democratic elections. New civil organizations flying the flag of human, social, ethnic, economic and cultural rights emerged under this political order. Furthermore, some of the iconic organizations of the revolutionary boom, such as the CUC, reappeared on the public stage. But even those groups once linked to the URNG distanced themselves from its belligerent discourse and actions, a paradoxical situation for the insurgency. Without doubt, the social movements' renaissance was an important achievement. But at the same time, neither did the emerging civil society agree with the URNG's radical agenda nor did they favor the recruitment of new combatants.

While negotiating with the government, the guerrilla command assumed a pragmatic attitude towards the reforms that could be implemented. For instance, during the talks on the important 'Agreement on the Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples', the comandancia general of the URNG decided not to consider a widespread agrarian reform as a suitable basis for the development of the Mayan communities. On the other hand, the signing of a general amnesty for the military rebels and the insurgents provoked a confrontation between the URNG and the human rights movement (Sandoval 2013, 241). Decisions such as these led to an increasingly greater estrangement between the URNG and relevant social movements, even before the final peace accords were signed.

These were finally signed in a poignant popular celebration held on 29 December 1996. The URNG surrendered 1,800 weapons and half a million cartridges and, by April 1997, 3,000 guerrilla combatants had been demobilized (Fundación Guillermo Toriello 2006, 42–43). These figures were inflated for political purposes, for in reality, by the end of the conflict, the URNG had less than 1,000 combatants. In 1998, the transformation of the URNG into a political party and its legal registration were successfully accomplished. But in the first presidential elections in which it participated, it did not do as well as expected, obtaining only 12 per cent of the ballots cast. Since then, it has never succeeded in attracting more than 4 per cent of the electorate.

There were three reasons behind that failure. First, there was the growing rift between the URNG and the new social movements as regards their perspectives and demands. The URNG, still marked by the ramifications of the war, failed to present a proposal that attracted the country's different progressive forces. Second, its two most important leaders, Ramírez de León (Rolando Morán) and Rodrigo Asturias (Gaspar Ilóm), died. The vital importance of a strong guerrilla leadership during the war between 1970 and 1996 also meant that there was a lack of cadres capable of succeeding them. Moreover, important mid-level cadres left the party to join non-governmental organizations. And, finally, the underlying dispute between the FAR and the EGP over the management of the URNG resulted in the departure of Jorge Soto García (Pablo Monsanto), a historic leader of the FAR, who went on to found the party ANN. Division, isolation and weak leadership all explain the URNG's delicate position on the Guatemalan political stage.

Notes

1. This chapter initially drew from many more primary sources (internal documents of the guerrilla movements and interviews with former leaders and combatants). The references only include the publications and interviews quoted here.
2. FAR (1973). Crítica a la crítica de la unidad de las fuerzas revolucionarias. [document]. Guatemala, p. 15.
3. In this regard, they followed a plan devised by Comandante Luis Turcios in the mid-1960s (Morales 1998, 49). In order to attract the Mayan peasants in massive numbers, the chief of the FAR relied on the work of progressive priests and nuns. Cuba and North Vietnam had promised to provide him with weapons. Authors' interviews with: Comandante César Montes [the nom de guerre of Julio César Macías] the commander-in-chief of the FAR and a founding member of the EGP (Guatemala, 2015); and Juan Lojo, the attaché to Comandante Luis Turcios in 1965–1966 (México, 2015).
4. Arriola, A. M. (1968). Secuencia de la cultura indígena guatemalteca. *Pensamiento crítico*, 15, p. 100.
5. NORC (1973). Declaración de La Huerta. [document, mimeographed] Guatemala. And authors' interview with Miguel Ángel Sandoval, a founding member of the EGP and presidential candidate of the Frente Amplio de Izquierda (the indigenous movement WINAQ and the URNG-Maíz) in 2015 (Guatemala, 2015).
6. Regional de Occidente (1972). Un llamado a la discusión sin detener la lucha. Críticas al documento 'La unidad de las fuerzas revolucionarias' de la Dirección Nacional. [document, mimeographed] Guatemala.
7. ORPA(1989). Racismo I. [document, mimeographed] Guatemala.
8. EGP (1982). Situación militar [document]. Nicaragua.
9. Authors' interview with Comandante Manolo [the nom de guerre of Gustavo Meoño], in charge of the mass movement activities of the EGP from 1976 to 1984; currently the director of the Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional de Guatemala, 2005–2018 (Guatemala, 2015).
10. EGP (1979). Línea de masas nivel I. [document, mimeographed] Guatemala, p. 10.
11. Authors' interview with comandante Nicolás Sis [the nom de guerre of Francisco López], a founding member of the FAR guerrilla frente in El Petén and a member of the national council of the political party Alternativa Nueva Nación (ANN, Guatemala, 2016).
12. EGP (1979). Comunicado al pueblo de Guatemala. [document, mimeographed] Guatemala.
13. Authors' interviews with: Comandantes Manolo (Guatemala, 2015); and Comandante Lola [the nom de guerre of Alba Estela Maldonado], the chief of the EGP's guerrilla frente Ernesto Guevara in Ixcán and a member of parliament from 2004 to 2008 (Guatemala, 2015).
14. See Comandante Manolo in Platero (2013, 171-ff.). Authors' interview with Comandante Tomás [the nom de guerre of Celso Morales], the military commander of the EGP as a whole and Ricardo Ramírez's deputy (Guatemala 2017).
15. EGP (1981). Cien acciones victoriosas en solidaridad con el heroico pueblo de El Salvador. [document, mimeographed] Guatemala.
16. EGP (1982). Situación militar. [document] Nicaragua.

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PART 4
Special Cases

SINGULARITIES AND TRANSVERSALITIES IN THE INSURGENT CYCLE

Dirk Kruijt

The final part of this book comprises four singular cases: the case of Colombia, the country whose history of insurgency is seven decades long; the case of Mexico, also a country with a tradition of rebellion since the Mexican Revolution accompanied by a tradition of political and non-political violence like in Colombia; the case of Peru in the last two decades of the twentieth century with two completely different guerrilla movements: Sendero Luminoso incomparable with all 'normal' Latin American movements, and the MRTA, an insurgent movement completely fitting in the regional tradition; and the case of the transnational liaison between four national guerrilla movements in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay, a unique phenomenon in the region, even more remarkable because of the fact that the Cuban influence on the coordinating junta was largely absent.

Colombia is the country with probably the highest number of victims during the Latin American insurgency and counterinsurgency cycles. The consecutive guerrilla movements emerged within the large tradition of rural rebellion. Like in Cuba and in the Dominican Republic the first guerrilla movements already had appeared before 1959. In Colombia the guerrilla movements of the 1940s and 1950s were irregular peasant armies, persecuted by conservative governments and the only military dictatorship in Colombia's post–WWII history (1953–1957). The large sequence of guerrilla movements in the 1960s and thereafter originated in the context of elected civilian governments. Also remarkable is that the first and most significant insurgent movement, the FARC, had its origins with the communist party and had only scarce contact with Cuba in its first two decades of existence.[1] The second guerrilla movement, the ELN, had direct roots in Cuba; in fact it was founded and trained at the island. M19, a non-Marxist guerrilla movement was originally an urban guerrilla and played a leading role in the guerrilla coordination and the quick succession of peace treatments of seven movements, the so-called called peace express. Additionally, M19 became the central focus of the legal Left which took roots after the Constituent Assemblée that was convoked as a consequence of the peace agreements. Colombia is also the country of multiple peace agreements followed by amnesty.

Also in Mexico there existed a tradition of peasant armies after revolution which continued until the 1930s. The rural guerrilla movements which appeared in the 1960s were local (in the sense of non-Cuban) movements but were inspired by the Cuban Revolution, also by Guevara's foquismo. The massacres of students in 1968 and 1971 resulted in the radicalization of the students' movements and it was in fact the reservoir of recruitment of the leadership in the

1970s. Like in Central America, the Liberation Theology and the role of radical Jesuits were recognizable. All forms of Marxism (Leninism, Trotskyism, Maoism) were present within the Mexican guerrilla. Cuba never supported the Mexican guerrilla because its diplomatic relations with Mexico were a lifeline and the only formal transport hub in the region. Mexico was also the country where easy contacts with representatives of the Latin American were facilitated until the second hub in Panama under Torrijos in the 1970s. Also like in Central America: liberation theology and leftist Catholicism (especially the Jesuits) played an important role. In 1994 a completely atypical insurgency of 12 days took place: the 'Zapatista' EZLN. The Mexican government prevented an insurgency-counterinsurgency cycle by offering a ceasefire and the EZLN changed its possible politico-military beginning for a transformation in a movement which requested indigenous rights. In the 1970s the Mexican government had granted amnesty for the guerrilla of the 1970s and repeated this gesture in benefit of the EZLN militants.

Also the two guerrilla movements in Peru in the 1980s and 1990s were atypical. The MRTA initiated a foco in the jungle area of jungle of the remote San Martín region (also a coca region). Maybe the MRTA whose leadership organized a spectacular assault on the Japanese embassy in 1997 had characteristics comparable with the Colombian M19; their leaders were friends (see ahead). The second and much more sinister movement Sendero Luminoso was a guerrilla group which emerged in the poverty-stuck department of Ayacucho. It was completely different from all other Latin American insurgent groups in the sense of a personal cult around philosopher-turned guerrilla warlord Abimael Guzmán who headed the movement with extreme cruelty; at first sight, in terms of horror and mercilessness it has a far resemblance with the Khmer Rouge of Kampuchea. The also ruthless counterinsurgency campaign by the armed forces erupted in a 'internal armed conflict' whose victims indicate the Central American civil wars. The (largely voluntary) indigenous paramilitary force of approximately 400,000 members were maybe even more decisive in crushing the guerrilla columns of Sendero Luminoso.

This section ends with the study of an astonishing phenomenon: the Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria, between the Bolivian ELN, the Chilean MIR, the Argentinean ERP, and the Uruguayan MLN-Tupamaros. Its existence was made public with a reference to Che Guevara's 'strategic ideas' adapted to the situation of the Southern Cone. The OLAS conference in Cuba had facilitated the initial contacts between national guerrilla movements operating in the four countries. In Bolivia, the first two Guevarist movements (of Masetti and Guevara; see the chapter on Bolivia) had failed but the founders of the four aforementioned movements professed their proposal of revitalizing Guevara's conception of a continental revolution. The JCR's political magazine was named *Che Guevara* and the leading movement was the Argentinean ERP. The heydays of the Coordinadora were between 1973 and 1976, when Argentina formally was a democracy. This period coincides with the life span of the JCR. After the Argentine coup in 1976, the persecution and internal disputes between the member organizations produced the disintegration of the Coordinadora. Moreover, Cuba's political distance contributed to its instability. In 1978 the JCR had perished. Its members went into exile; some participated in the Frente Sur of the Nicaraguan FSLN.

The idea of an international guerrilla alliance was reborn in Colombia with the creation of the Batallón América (BA) in 1985, this time as a 'Bolivarian' Latin American guerrilla army within Colombia (Villamizar 2017). In fact, it was the result of the friendship between Carlos Pizarro, leader of the Colombian M19 and Víctor Polay, leader of the Peruvian MRTA. It unified at least temporarily approximately 420 guerrilleros of various national politico-military organizations and nationalities. Guerrilleros came from members of the Colombian movements M19 and the Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame (MAQL), the Ecuadorian Alfaro Vive, Carajo!, a second Ecuadorian nameless group simply called 'Organización Político-Militar',

and the Peruvian MRTA. After some local victories, Colombian army contingents initiated a ferocious counterinsurgency campaign. The BA also had difficulties with supply and desertion; the MAQL and the Ecuadorian movements had second thoughts about their deployment of combatants in another country. In March 1986 the BA broke up.

Note

1. Marc Becker (2019, 16) remarks with reason: 'Surprisingly, the longest running insurgency—the FARC—has not been the subject of one single study that stands out above all others.'

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15

COLOMBIA

70 Years of Guerrilla Warfare

Darío Villamizar

Introduction[1]

The Colombian guerrilla movement is the oldest and most mature in Latin America. Unlike what happened in nearly all of the region's countries, its history did not start with the Cuban Revolution in January 1959. In Colombia, the first armed insurgency groups had already emerged in the second half of the twentieth century as liberal guerrillas and communist self-defense organizations. It was the reaction in regions with a large peasant population to the persecution of successive conservative governments (1946–1953), followed by the repression of the military dictatorship (1953–1957) and the bipartisan and exclusionary model of alternating liberal and conservative governments, known as the Frente Nacional (1958–1974).

Sectors of these guerrillas and self-defense peasant organizations were co-opted by the Partido Comunista de Colombia (PCCo), which gave their actions a more revolutionary slant. In 1966, they reorganized themselves as the FARC. Another rebel group, influenced by the Cuban Revolution, took up arms under the name of the ELN. Meanwhile, the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), faithful to Maoist postulates of prolonged popular war after the Sino-Soviet split, also emerged. And, for its part, the nationalist M19 commenced its urban guerrilla activities in the country's larger cities (Villamizar 2017).

During the 70 years of political armed conflict in Colombia, more than 30 guerrilla organizations came and went. There were mergers between them and they obviously had their differences of opinion and understandings. Thus, this chapter examines their idiosyncrasies, complexities and interrelations, as well as their different endeavors, defeats, dialogues, political negotiations and peace accords.

The opening section of this chapter deals with the initial armed response to the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the leader of the Partido Liberal Colombiano (PLC), and the complex period known as *La Violencia*, beginning with Gaitán's murder—aka *El Bogotazo*—and ending with the second term of office of the Frente Nacional in 1966. The following section covers the initial years of the three guerrilla organizations emerging from the revolutionary turmoil of the 1960s. The ELN fully embraced the theses proclaimed by the Cuban Revolution. In contrast, the FARC and the EPL were immersed in the global communist debate deriving from the confrontation between Moscow and Beijing: the theses of peaceful coexistence, protracted popular war, the division between the first, second and third Worlds, and theories on political non-alignment.

The focus then shifts to the guerrilla movements appearing in the 1970s and 1980s, a period that some theorists call 'the second wave', particularly the more original organizations more favorably disposed towards unified guerrilla warfare, like their counterparts in Central America, while placing the accent on political and military developments. Finally, as to the results of the armed struggle's evolution, the dialogues, peace talks and final accords reached between the Colombian government and the vast majority of the guerrilla organizations discussed here are addressed.

The Early Origins of the Guerrilla in Colombia

At 13:05 pm on 9 April l948, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the leader of the PLC, was murdered in a central street of Bogota.[2] At the same time, the 9th Pan-American Conference, which adopted the OAS charter and created the Junta Interamericana de Defensa, went into session in the Colombian capital. By coincidence, young Fidel Castro Ruz, then a student at the school of law of the Universidad de la Habana, was in town attending the Latin American Congress of Students. The murder of Gaitán sparked a wave of violent protests, a popular uprising that swept through many Colombian cities, provisional people's governments being established in some of them. Several weeks later, once the rebellion had petered out, the conservative government hit back, persecuting its liberal and communist enemies with the same fury. The reaction to the government's terror campaign was the formation of incipient, precariously armed groups closely linked to the communities that they defended. This was how *La Violencia* was born.

A mixture of peasant self-defense groups and guerrillas, normally young members of rural communities of liberal persuasion attempting to protect their lives and land, they emerged in the southern region of the department of Tolima. For the government, the Catholic Church, the country's conservative politicians and the police, they were mobs led by the liberals. In the departments of Cundinamarca and Tolima, another central western region of the country, something similar occurred, albeit with more agrarian appeal and a stronger communist influence.

In 1949, these two branches were unified creating a peasant and guerrilla commando called 'El Davis', with its own chief of staff to coordinate the resistance. But the ideas and interests of the liberals ('the clean') and the communists ('the commoners') were diametrically opposed and, finally, this led to a schism and a war with a death toll into the hundreds (Pizarro 1991).

Meanwhile, in the broad lowlands (the *Llanos*) to the east, an armed movement was organized with nearly 15,000 fighters, whose ideological beliefs went beyond the rather vague liberal ideals. Here, Guadalupe Salcedo, the most seasoned military commander, stood out among the leaders of the rebel movement. Under his command, major military actions were launched, such as the El Turpial ambush, on the banks of the river Meta, leading to the death of 96 soldiers. The lowland rebels distanced themselves from the PLC, basing their organization on simple rules and social consciousness. In 1953, given the political, organizational and military progress of the insurgents, the conflict was already getting out of hand.

The elites' reaction came in the form of a military coup on 13 June 1953, staged by General Rojas Pinilla. Consequently, Colombia was plunged into a profound political and social crisis, so when Rojas Pinilla offered the *Llano* guerrilleros peace terms, they accepted, demobilized and handed in their weapons. The liberals in southern Tolima followed suit and offered to help the new government to combat the communists, who promptly transformed their peasant guerrilla formations into armed peasant self-defense organizations. Albeit constantly harried, they resisted the attacks of bands of 'the clean' in the region of Villarica, before marching in armed columns to aid and protect the non-combatants, victims of the bombardments.

The First Guerrilla Generation

On 7 January 1959, one day before the columns of Fidel Castro's M26J arrived in Havana, there were massive popular protests in Bogotá against the public transport fare hike, decreed a week before. One of the leaders was Antonio Larrota, a middle-class student who in May 1957 had participated in the student protests leading to the fall of General Rojas dictatorship. A couple of months later, Larrota and other leaders of the youth movements of various political currents (including the Gaitanists, Marxists and Maoists) founded the Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil 7 de Enero (MOE).

In representation of the MOE, Larrota established relations with the fledgling Cuban revolutionaries, especially with Che Guevara who offered him political and logistic support to launch a guerrilla campaign in Colombia (Díaz 2013). His experience was the first foquista attempt, the object of heated debate among the more communist-oriented groups within or in the orbit of the PCCo and the Juventud Comunista (JUCO), who were more inclined to support the armed peasant self-defense initiative.

The liberal government of Alberto Lleras Camargo, the first president of the Frente Nacional, issued decree 0328 of 1958, by virtue of which the main self-defense rebel leaders were amnestied. The principal rebel leader, Jacobo Prías Alape, alias 'Charro Negro', a legendary guerrilla comandante of indigenous descent, was assassinated on 11 January 1960 by 'clean' hitmen subcontracted by local landowners and political bosses. After his death, his second-in-command, Pedro Antonio Marín—alias Manuel Marulanda Vélez or *Tirofijo*—succeeded him as the movement's leader.[3] He immediately made two decisions: to leave his job as an (amnestied) inspector of road work and to order his men to return 'to the mountains' and dig up and clean the weapons that they had hidden there (Alape 1989). A new cycle of violence had begun.

Meanwhile, Larrota had laid the groundwork for establishing guerrilla focos in the southwestern and northwestern regions of Colombia. At the first congress of his movement, held on 20 July 1960 in Cali, its name was extended to MOEC (the letter C standing for *campesinos*, i.e. peasants) so as to indicate a broader popular scope. Larrota himself commanded the first insurgency in a mountainous region of the department of Cauca, guided by one of the bandits of *La Violencia* of the 1950s, who would ultimately be his executioner. His death was a hard blow to the MOEC, which had already suffered its first internal divisions (Franco 2012). The second attempt was carried out in the strategic region of the northwest of the country in mid-1962, where the movement established a small foco under the military command of Roberto González Prieto, alias Pedro Brincos. The group carried out a couple of actions, like the assault on a police station where they stole 32 old rifles. Finally, their camp was attacked and, in successive battles, several guerrilleros were killed, including Gleydis Pineda—just 20 years old—and subsequently her brother Idolfo, Leonel Brand and Pedro Torres. They all became consecrated heroes in the guerrilla martyrology as the first to have laid down their lives for a cause that, from the start, promised to be a long and bloody fight.

A new attempt was led by Dr. Tulio Bayer Jaramillo, a legendary figure standing almost two meters high, who established another guerrilla foco in a secluded jungle region on the border with Venezuela. He was accompanied by a brother of Larrota and Rosendo Colmenares, one of the liberal guerrilla leaders in the eastern lowlands who had refused to accept another amnesty, that of 1954. Bayer's small group was crushed by a force under Colonel Álvaro Valencia Tovar, one of the best trained officers in counterinsurgency and psychological operations. Bayer and his combatants were the first contemporary guerrilla column to take a village: on Friday, 28 October 1961, they occupied Puerto Lopez in the department of Meta, set fire to the city hall

and the police station and freed the prisoners (Díaz 2013). Two months later, Bayer, alone and exhausted, was captured after differences and desertions in his group.[4]

The communist guerrilla led by Marulanda continued its march. The labeling of the peasant regions as 'Independent Republics' by the conservative leader Álvaro Gómez Hurtado in Congress presaged the government's harsh measures. Indeed, on 18 May 1964, government troops launched an attack on Marquetalia, the guerrilla's main theater of operations. The Plan Lazo, as the operation was called, was preceded by 'civic-military action', a counterinsurgency strategy whose purpose—by means of attending to primary needs and psychological action—was to win the hearts and minds of the peasants who, otherwise, might have leant their support to the communist self-defense columns. The first armed confrontation occurred on the 27th of the same month. For Marulanda and his combatants it was the foundational date of a movement that, two years later, would be known as the FARC, in allusion to the government aggression, and a qualitative leap forward from self-defense to guerrilla warfare (Alape 1989). Marulanda was accompanied by the also veteran Jacobo Arenas (the nom de guerre of Luis Alberto Morantes, a moderate communist, who had been sent by the PCCo as a political commissioner, and another famous FARC comandante).

The attack on Marquetalia did not affect the guerrillas' operational capacity and, to prove it, on 20 July 1964 they organized an assembly at which the 'Agrarian Program of the Guerrillas', a founding document, was approved. It categorically underscored the purpose of a social revolution with widespread popular support. In September of the following year, they constituted themselves as the Bloque Guerrillero del Sur. Between 25 April and 5 May 1966, they held a second conference in the region of the river Duda, in which they declared,

> we, the guerrilla detachments of the southern bloc, meeting at this conference have created the FARC, which will begin a new stage of struggle and unity with all the revolutionaries of our country, with all the workers, peasants, students and intellectuals, with our entire people, to drive the struggle of the great masses towards popular insurrection and the empowerment of the people.[5]

The advent of the ELN was quite different. In response to the Cuban government's offer of higher or continuing education scholarships, plus the opportunity to learn about and support the nascent revolutionary process, hundreds of Latin American students traveled to Cuba in 1962. Sixty young Colombians from middle- and working-class backgrounds and imbued with revolutionary ideals participated. When the Missile Crisis occurred in October, the government decided to send them back to their countries of origin, but not all of them accepted. Twenty-two members of the initial group chose to remain on the condition of receiving military training to participate in the defense of Cuba in the more than probable event of an invasion.

In the wake of the October Crisis, 11 of those who had participated in the basic military training program requested advanced training in guerrilla tactics and strategies in order to return to Colombia and take part in the revolutionary struggle. Finally, only seven successfully completed the eight-month course. They then went on to found in Cuba the Brigada de Liberación Nacional José Antonio Galán, led by Fabio Vásquez Castaño, a former bank employee (Hernández 1998). Like many other organizations in the region, the creation of the ELN was strongly influenced by the Cubans; ELN leaders claim that Che Guevara kept a close eye on the project from beginning to end. This group is regarded as a pro-Castroist, Guevarist or foquista organization. The Guevarist guerrilla foco thesis, aimed at winning a war against a standing army, and the insurrectional focus as an instrument to create the necessary conditions and climate in the rural areas for the armed struggle guided their activities over the coming years.

On returning home, they settled in a region of the municipality of San Vicente de Chucurí, in eastern Colombia, earmarked as the initial theater of operations, an agrarian colonization zone with a guerrilla tradition dating back to the 1950s and a large peasant population. On 4 July 1964, they formed the group's first column—already named the ELN—with 18 combatants, mostly poorly armed peasants. Six months later, on 7 January 1965, they made a public declaration of intent by assaulting the municipality of Simacota, where they disseminated a statement including the organization's program:

> We who constitute the ELN are struggling for the liberation of Colombia. The people, liberals and conservatives, will unite to defeat the oligarchy of both parties. Long live the unity of the peasants, workers, students, professionals and honest people who want to make Colombia a dignified homeland for honest Colombians. Liberation or death.[6]

In the final months of 1965, Camilo Torres Restrepo, a priest and leader of the Frente Unido movement which he had founded, joined the ELN. During that year, he witnessed the fervor of the people who heeded and understood his messages, unlike the Church hierarchies or the government which had barred him from the cities. So, he opted for the guerrilla struggle. On 7 January 1966, his (last) message from the mountains was made public. Thirty-nine days later, on 15 February 1966, he died during a clash with the army, together with five of his comrades-in-arms.

In the mid-1970s, the ELN was in deep trouble due to the ingrained ineptness and continuous errors of its first comandante Fabio Vásquez Castaño. This led to its definitive departure to Cuba in 1974 and its virtual disappearance (Medina 2008a, 2008b). In 1978, the movement had only 36 combatants in the rural areas. Then, in 1981, coinciding with the creation of a provisional national directorate under the leadership of the Spanish priest Manuel Pérez Martínez, the ELN began its process of reunification against all odds.

During this reconstruction phase, the ELN united with other guerrilla organizations. For instance, on 8 June 1987, it merged with the Movimiento de Integración Revolucionaria-Patria Libre (MIR-PL), one of the many Maoist groups that had appeared at the end of the 1970s. The ELN was renamed the Unión Camilista-Ejército de Liberación Nacional, a name that it would keep until one of its wings, the so-called renovators, formed the Corriente de Renovación Socialista (CRS), which would split from the ELN in September 1991.

At the end of the 1950s, the international communist movements were torn asunder by a worldwide schism. Once dominated by the Soviets, nearly all of them splintered into Maoist or pro-China movements, calling themselves confusingly Marxist-Leninist and, as independent organizations, distancing themselves from the traditional communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union. As could not be otherwise, these debates and conflicts also affected the PCCo.

Some of the members of the central committee, the regional committees and especially the JUCO censored the reformist, pacifist, evolutionary and revisionist positions of the 'agents of Soviet social imperialism' defended by those in the highest echelons of the party and its youth branch. In turn, the party's officialdom branded the Maoists as 'opportunists', 'ultra-leftists', 'guerrilla-minded' and 'petit-bourgeois'.

The Maoist dissidents and their new allies, abandoning the MOEC and other groups, convened a first meeting in which they decided to restructure or re-found the PCCo in March 1964. Officially, they embraced the Communist Party of China's postulates and Mao's thinking, together with the theses of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. In July 1965, they organized their tenth congress, euphemistically called 'Continuity of the Communist Party', adopting the name of Partido Comunista de Colombia (Marxist-Leninist), with the acronym PCCo(M-L):

> (a) We are living in times of transition from capitalism to socialism. Our patriotic, popular and anti-imperialist revolution marching towards socialism is framed in this global fact. . . . (c) American imperialism is the worst enemy of all nations and these must combat it as such. . . . (f) Revolutionary violence is the midwife of history. The current global political situation demonstrates the impossibility of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, particularly in Latin America.[7]

After its tenth congress, the party undertook the task of initiating the armed struggle. To this end, it created its first clandestine structures in a jungle region of northwest Colombia. The EPL was created on 28 April 1967 as the armed wing of the PCCo(M-L), encouraging a number of uprisings and land occupations by peasants (Villarraga Plazas 1994). As a guerrilla, it was not immune to the euphoria caused by the Cuban Revolution. However, loyal to their Maoist principles, its members claimed that the prolonged popular war strategy would inevitability lead to revolutionary triumph. During it foundational phase and thereafter, the organization was plagued with divisions and schisms. At its 11th congress in 1980, it implemented a change in strategy, breaking with Maoism and momentarily following the political theses of the Party of Labor of Albania and its leader Enver Hoxa. In national politics, it sought agreements with other guerrilla movements and showed interest in a political solution to the internal armed conflict through dialogue.

In this phase, relations between the guerrilla movements were scarce, each group immersed in its own activities and in solving its own internal crises. Whenever overtures were indeed made, issues pertaining to ideology and political prominence and a general atmosphere of mistrust prevailed. In some cases, it even came to blows with the kidnapping and murder of combatants. Although they become unitary coordination instruments years later, at the time clashes were common between those who remained in arms and those who preferred negotiations and demobilization, the latter being deemed as traitors.

The Second Guerrilla Wave

By the late 1970s or the early 1980s, the rural guerrilla movements had put their differences behind them and new armed organizations began to appear. Some of the newcomers gave priority to urban operations, while others opted for a combination of urban and rural actions: the M19, Autodefensa Obrera (ADO),[8] the Destacamento Urbano Pedro León Arboleda,[9] the PRT, the Frente Ricardo Franco, the MIR-PL, and the MAQL.[10]

While the Colombian guerrilla was expanding, the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua (July 1979) spelt the second victory in Latin America and the Caribbean after a successful guerrilla campaign. It was accompanied by two other significant revolutionary processes in El Salvador and Guatemala. In this second guerrilla wave or generation, it was the socialists, Christians (Catholics), nationalists and Marxists who found themselves united in the armed struggle, although with a less dogmatic ideology and greater international support. They fostered guerrilla unity, were less inclined to dwell on doctrinal matters and sought wider support on the international stage and not only from their communist allies.

The M19, the first urban guerrilla, was created by former members of the FARC and the Alianza Nacional Popular (ANAPO), a nationalist political movement founded in the mid-1960s by the ex-dictator Rojas Pinilla. Despite winning the presidential elections held on 19 April 1970, electoral fraud had prevented General Rojas from taking office again, this time as a civilian president. The founders of the M19 included the election date in the organization's name to underscore the impossibility of reaching power via the ballot box. In those elections, the last president of the liberal-conservative pact, known as the Frente National, was chosen.

The founder and first comandante of the M19 was Jaime Bateman, known by his nom de guerre Pablo García and nicknamed *el Flaco* (lanky) by his comrades-in-arms and friends. This charismatic guerrilla leader had been a JUCO and FARC member since its founding. He had been engaged in urban activities until mid-1972, when he left the FARC to create an underground organization linked to a broad political and social movement. Additionally, he was convinced of the necessity of unity and coordination in the guerrilla movement so as to overcome its paralysis and crisis at the time (Villamizar 2015). The M19 entered the Colombian political arena on 17 January 1974 with a bang: the theft of the sword of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar, whom they considered their guide:

> Bolivar's struggle continues, Bolivar is not dead. His sword slashes the cobwebs of the museum and plunges into the battles of the present. It has come into our hands, into the hands of the people in arms. And it is now pointing at those who exploit the people. At the national and foreign masters. At those who locked it up in museums to rust.[11]

Following the example of the Tupamaros in Uruguay and the Montoneros in Argentina, the M19 operated mostly in the cities, although four years later, when facing persecution by the authorities, it also established armed rural fronts. From the beginning, it assumed nationalist and Bolivarian positions, unaligned with revolutionary processes in other parts of the world, and was notorious for its spectacular actions. It was also the first armed organization to engage in dialogue with the Colombian people through interviews with and the public statements issued by its leadership.

The digging of a tunnel to raid a military garrison and make off with 7,000 weapons, the storming of the Embassy of the Dominican Republic, where 16 members of the diplomatic corps were held hostage for 61 days, the Palace of Justice siege which ended in the death of magistrates, civilians and guerrilla leaders when the army tried to recapture the building, and the distribution of food and toys in poor neighborhoods, were all actions that impressed the Colombian people and political actors. But the guerrilla paid a very high price: dozens of its leaders and hundreds of its combatants were imprisoned and tortured, many of whom are still missing and purportedly dead.

New Wars and Seeking Peace

The insurgency's political and military progress indicated that it was reaching maturity. The M19 was the first organization in Colombia to put forward and defend a possible negotiated solution to the political conflict. Furthermore, its leaders did so from a position of strength; at the time, the organization was still in possession of the Embassy of the Dominican Republic in Bogota. The military triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua was still a year off and the M19's leaders were not considering the option of waging a prolonged popular war. They believed that peacemaking was more revolutionary than warfare and that the real issue was the fight for democracy 'without [political] surnames', which was tantamount to heresy in the eyes of the traditional armed Left. The M19 advocated for a unified guerrilla, for joining forces with the ELN and the EPL, in contrast to the [usual] 'cannibalism' of the far left.

In 1982, when the FARC convened its seventh conference, it took a qualitative leap forward in terms of the creation of an army in its 'Strategic Plan for Seizing Power'.[12] This also involved redefining its relationship with the PCCo which, hitherto, had been the official international communication canal. The FARC's relations with Cuba, for instance, depended on what the PCCo or the JUCO leadership did and said. Moreover, the Cuban leadership was

clearly interested in establishing direct relations with the M19 and the ELN, organizations that were more in tune with Manuel Piñeiro, Barbaroja, the person in charge of guerrilla movements in Latin America.

In August 1982, Belisario Betancur (1982–1986) was sworn in as president, pledging to dedicate his term of office to the pursuit of peace, social justice and democracy for all Colombians. Later in November, he granted an amnesty (Law 35) and named a peace commission tasked with exploring options for negotiating an end to guerrilla violence in Colombia. The immediate results were positive and, in 1984, the government signed important agreements, such as the one with the FARC in La Uribe and the cease fire and truce with the M19, the EPL and ADO, including national dialogue, for approximately a year. The La Uribe and ceasefire agreements were the first of their kind between the guerrilla and the Colombian government (Arenas 1985). The one-year deadline was meant to provide the guerrilla with the opportunity 'to organize themselves politically, economically and socially, according to their sole discretion.' And indeed, in 1985 a new political movement emerged, namely, the civilian Unión Patriótica, yet the majority of its leaders and members were assassinated in the following years. Notwithstanding this, the La Uribe agreement was maintained, not without problems, until the end of the decade.

It should be noted that these agreements never implied disarmament or demobilization. The guerrilla used the time that they had been given to reorganize their forces, to recruit new combatants and to prepare future military offensives. Likewise, the Colombian military continued gathering intelligence on the insurgency and, despite the cease fire, repeatedly launched raids that ultimately led to the breakdown of the agreements.

By then, the first mergers had already got underway, countering, albeit not always successfully, the Colombian guerrilla movements' traditional penchant for division and feuding. The first experience, in 1984, was the Trilateral which united the three organizations that were the most reluctant to negotiate with the government: the ELN, the PRT and the MIR-PL. In 1985, the Coordinadora Nacional Guerrillera (CNG) was created without the participation of the FARC-EP, which was still at loggerheads with the Frente Ricardo Franco—this front had committed one of the most horrific crimes in the history of the guerrilla, murdering 164 of its own members in cold blood.

That same year, following the Guevarist thesis on continental revolution, the M19 created the Batallón América, which included members of the Colombian indigenous MAQL, the Ecuadorian group Alfaro Vive Carajo, and the Peruvian MRTA. Two years later, the CNG was disbanded to form the CGSB, this time with the participation of the FARC-EL.

Despite the setbacks, in the following years the M19 and other groups persisted in searching for a way out of the confrontation. In 1990, it was the first guerrilla cluster in Colombia—and in Latin America—to negotiate peace accords with a national government, dismantling its military structures and laying down its arms. As a consequence, a national constituent assembly was convened to substitute the 104-year-old constitution.

In this guerrilla cluster, the M19 played a leading role in the peace process and thus fulfilled its purpose of bringing about political change and establishing a democracy.

In the context of the National Constituent Assembly, a wider peace process was implemented, leading to the demobilization of the EPL, the PRT and the MAQL, plus other smaller groups. However, the two oldest organizations, the ELN and the FARC-EP, stuck to their guns. Instead of participating in this democratic process, they built up their military potential and strengthened and expanded their social bases and home territories. They thus managed to keep themselves intact and to survive, despite the state's periodic counterinsurgency operations and the narco-paramilitary groups active during the successive presidencies of Andrés Pastrana

TABLE 15.1 Colombian Revolutionary Groups

Spanish Name	*Founding Date*	*Type of Organization*	*Roots/Origins*	*Political Tendency*	*End of Organization*	*Principal Objectives*
MOEC	7 January 1959	Initially a social movement with economic demands. Afterwards a rural foquista guerrilla.	Popular protest against the urban transport fare hike. Ex-members of PCCo and JUCO, liberal students and ex-guerrilleros, Gaitanists.	Marxist-Leninist and Guevarist	Disbanded in 1965. Some of its members joined MOIR and ELN.	To free Colombia, dignity and justice.
Bloque Guerrillero del Sur	September 1964	Rural self-defense guerrillas.	Communist peasant self-defense in the 1950s.	Communist	Transformed into FARC, April 1966.	Agrarian Program of 20 July 1964.
FARC-EP	II Conference of the Bloque Guerrillero del Sur (April-May 1966)	Rural guerrillas, popular warfare and insurgency.	Bloque Guerrillero del Sur.	Communist	Negotiations 2012-2016. Demobilized 2016. Transformed into a political party.	Agrarian Program of the Guerrillas of 20 July 1964.
ELN	7 January 1965	Rural guerrillas with urban support.	Ex-members of PCCo and MOEC. Initially named Brigada pro-Liberación Nacional José Antonio Galán.	Marxist-Leninist and Guevarist	Still a guerrilla movement, irregular negotiations since 1990.	National liberation and nationalization of natural resources.
PCCo(M-L) - EPL,	As the PCCoM-L, 17 July 1965; as the EPL, 28 April 1967	Rural guerrillas. Prolonged popular war.	Ex-members of the PCCo and the JUCO.	Marxist-Leninist-Maoist	Negotiations in 1990. Peace agreement and demobilization in 1991. Transformed into a political movement.	Patriotic, popular and anti-imperialist revolution towards socialism.
M19	17 January 1974	Urban and rural guerrilla.	Ex-members of FARC and ANAPO.	Nationalist	Negotiations in 1989. Peace agreement and demobilization in 1990. Transformed into the Alianza Democrática M19 (AD M19).	Democracy and human rights.

ADO	14 September 1978	Urban guerrilla.	Activists in the National Strike of 14 September 1977.	Marxist workers	Participated with FARC, M19 and EPL in pacts with the government. Disbanded in 1986.	Social justice, structural change, democracy and the release of political prisoners.
PRT	1982	Self-declared political party with an incipient armed branch.	Ex-members of PCCo(M-L) and EPL.	Marxist-Leninist	Negotiations in 1990. Peace agreement and demobilization in 1991. Transformed into a political movement.	Socialist revolution.
MAQL	29 November 1984	Indigenous self-defense.	Members of the indigenous communities of northern Cauca.	Indigenist	Negotiations in 1990. Peace agreement and demobilization in 1991. Transformed into a political movement.	Full rights for indigenous communities: land, culture and organization for indigenous dignity.
CRS	1990	Rural guerrilla.	Ex-members of ELN.	Marxist and Guevarist	Negotiations in 1993. Peace agreement and demobilization in 1994. Transformed into a political movement.	Political solution to the armed conflict, broadening civil and political rights, and electoral participation.
BA	20 December 1985	Unified Latin American Guerrilla.	M19 (Colombia), MAQL, Alfaro Vive Carajo (Ecuador), MRTA (Peru).	Leftist	Disbanded in 1986.	Creation of a continental guerrilla army.
CNG	20 May 1985	Unified guerrilla.	ELN, M19, EPL, MAQL, ADO, PRT, FRF, MIR-PL.	Leftist	Expanded and converted into the CGSB.	Popular alternative for a new Colombia.
CGSB	23 September 1987	Unified guerrilla.	FARC-EP, ELN, M19, EPL, MAQL, ADO, PRT, MIR-PL.	Leftist	Last full meeting in 1993.	Most important forum of united guerrilla movements.

(1998–2002) and Álvaro Uribe (2002–2006, 2006–2010). In those years, both the guerrillas and the armed forces launched the largest insurgency and counterinsurgency operations of all time.

In particular, during Pastrana's presidency peace talks and negotiations with the two insurgent actors were stepped up. At the time, the FARC-EP had approximately 20,000 combatants and had reached the war of movements stage. Its two political wings, the Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia and the Partido Comunista Clandestino Colombiano had begun to look for new recruits among the civilian population. The government had ceded the territory of El Caguán to the FARC-EP—a region of over 42,000 km^2 including the urban and rural areas of five municipalities—for the duration of the negotiations. But the El Caguán talks (1999–2002) perversely involved 'negotiating during the confrontation'; viz. while they were discussing the points of the agenda, the number of killings, kidnappings and attacks on the civilian population multiplied.

On the other hand, the ELN, with approximately 4,000 troops, focused its attacks on the country's national grid and oil infrastructures, blowing up pylons and oil pipelines. Despite the enormous increase in the number and scale of their actions, these two organizations were never on par with the national armed forces. Besides, during the term of President Pastrana the United States increased its economic and military aid to US$ 7,500 million through the bilateral Plan Colombia. Thus, the Colombian armed forces were vastly improved in terms of size, technological innovation and performance.

The Zero Tolerance Policy and Options for Peace

In light of the military growth of the FARC-EP and the ELN, the political, economic, military and ecclesiastical elites backed the presidential candidacy of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, with the support of the United States. This young liberal politician, leading a coalition of right-wing parties, attracted a wide following by placing the accent on law and order and authority and pledging to implement a zero-tolerance policy vis-à-vis the guerrillas. During his two terms, he put his 'defense and democratic security policy' in practice, involving a network of collaborators and rewards for informants and guerrilleros who decided off their own bat to abandon the armed struggle (i.e. to desert). He effectively undermined the operational capacity of the insurgents and stymied their growth, which resulted in decisive setbacks for their leadership and the guerrilla frentes.

Meanwhile, the size and territorial control of the narco-paramilitary groups had also increased considerably, thanks to civilian and military support. The Uribe Vélez government opened negotiations with the paramilitary blocs of the so-called Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), i.e. the united paramilitary private armies. Between 2003 and 2006, Uribe's campaign led to the demobilization of 32,000 armed militiamen, a political success that was marred by the fact that a significant number of ex-combatants promptly resumed their illegal activities in the so-called *bandas criminales* (BACRIM).

But it was under the government's democratic security policy and its most ambitious strategy, the Plan Patriota, that the FARC-EP suffered its greatest misfortune. Historical leaders like the 'Negro' Acacio, Martín Caballero and even Raúl Reyes were killed thanks to intelligence gathering, the support of the air force or when their camps were attacked.[13] The operations Jaque and Camaleón, which resulted in the release of captured civilians and military personnel, only deepened the concerns that already abounded among the FARC-EP's high command.

Even more disturbing was the fact that the ELN had suspended talks with the Colombian government in Havana and now found itself engaged in a war with the FARC-EP in several of the country's departments. This bloody confrontation, which also affected the civilian

population, was only brought to an end when the senior comandantes of the two organizations signed a non-aggression pact in 2010. Thenceforth, the ELN would attend new meetings in search of peace, but without the internal consensus necessary for achieving an end to the armed insurgency and its demobilization.

Juan Manuel Santos, Uribe's defense minister and successor, also served two presidential terms (2010–2014, 2014–2018). One of his first achievements was to improve the then sour relations with Venezuela, after which he made overtures to the FARC-EP. A few months later, they held secret preparatory meetings for peace talks, with the assistance of Cuba and Norway as guarantor countries. Afterwards, a series of exploratory meetings took place between February and August of 2012. This coincided with the drafting of the war plan 'Espada de Honor' aimed at grinding down the guerrilla, thus neutralizing its operational capacity. In the context of the so-called Operación Odiseo, Alfonso Cano (2011), who had replaced Marulanda Vélez as the first comandante of the FARC-EP, met his death. He was replaced by Timoleón Jiménez who continued the peace talks with the government.

The talks resulted in the drafting of the document 'Acuerdo General para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera', which would guide the negotiations during the next four years, until 24 November 2016 when the final peace accord was signed (Villamizar 2017). This was followed by the FARC-EP's disarmament, demobilization and the social reintegration of its ex-combatants. The guerrilla movement then morphed into a political party with the same acronym but with a different meaning: Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común[14] (FARC).

Notes

1. This chapter is based on the monograph Villimizar, 2017. I also draw from Villamizar (1996) and Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas (2015). Of the history of several important movements in this chapter I used Calvo (1985) for the EPP; Espinoza (1996) and Tattay and Peña (2013) for Quintín Lame; FARC-EP (2005) for the FARC; Rampf, Castillo and Llano (2014) for the PRT; Restrepo and Contreras (2000) for the Corriente de Renovación Socialista; and Hernández (1993) for the la Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar.
2. Gaitán had been minister of education during the presidency of Eduardo Santos (1930–1934). Following this, he became the mayor of Bogota (between June 1936 and Feb. 1937) and minister of labor, health and social welfare during the second presidential term of López Pumarejo (1942–1945). In 1946, he was the presidential candidate for the PLC, whose leader he was at the time of his murder.
3. At the time of his death in Mar. 2008, Marulanda had been the one and only communist guerrilla chief of a movement that would eventually become the FARC. During those 48 years, Colombia had been governed by 12 presidents and the United States by seven, while the Catholic Church had elected five popes.
4. After being imprisoned and several new insurgent attempts, Bayer went into exile in Paris where, after suffering many hardships, he died in 1982, aged 58.
5. FARC (1966). Declaración Política de la II Conferencia del Bloque Guerrillero del Sur. [document] Colombia. [online] Available at: www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=4415 [Accessed on 13 May 2019].
6. ELN (1965). Manifesto de Simacota. [document] Colombia. [online] Available at: www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=3703 [Accessed on 13 May 2019].
7. PCCo(M-L) (1965). Resolución Política del X Congreso. [document] Colombia (in Villamizar 2017, 783–785).
8. This was practically a family organization, founded and led by the Brazilian Giomar O'Beale, whose nom de guerre was Juan Manuel González Puentes.
9. Urban Maoist dissenters of the EPL.
10. An armed organization of the indigenous communities inhabiting the north of the department of Cauca in the southwestern region of the country.
11. M19 (1974). Bolívar tu espada vuelve a la lucha. [document] Colombia. [online] Available at: www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=3718 [Accessed on 13 May 2019].
12. At this conference, the FARC added EP (Ejército del Pueblo) to its original name to underline the idea of a robust military force capable of engaging the official army.

13. Raúl Reyes was the third-in-command of the FARC-EP. His camp, located in the jungle region of northern Ecuador, was bombed on 1 Mar. 2008. That same month, Manuel Marulanda Vélez, the commander-in-chief and founder of the FARC-EP, died of natural causes.
14. 'Common' is a reference to the nickname given to the communists (commoners—*comunes*) in 1949, when the first liberals (the clean) and the communists (the commoners) took up arms.

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16

SENDERO LUMINOSO, THE MRTA, AND THE PERUVIAN PARADOXES

Martín Tanaka

Introduction

The armed insurgency of the PCP-SL (or just SL) and the MRTA emerged in Peru in the 1980s. It was precisely when this country and Latin America in general initiated its third wave of democratization. Moreover, SL was an extremely dogmatic, exclusionary and violent organization. Its leader, Abimael Guzmán, saw himself as the 'Fourth Sword of Marxism' and the insurgency that he commanded as the 'Beacon of the World Revolution'. Namely, very different from the MRTA and the rest of the Latin American armed uprisings which had regional and international references and links.

How should this trend, so unlike what was happening in the country and the region as a whole, be understood? To my mind, the answer to these paradoxes lies in analyzing the legacies of the military dictatorship of the 1970s. On the one hand, the national-popular character of this military government encouraged mass mobilization and offered the Left a strategy for taking power by violent means. This is very different from what happened in other countries in the region, where repressive dictatorships led to the abandonment of a revolutionary paradigm in favor of a democratic one (Lechner 1988). And on the other, the reforms of the military government radically changed the situation of rural Peru and gave rise to potentially conflictive situations (mainly associated with new social differentiation processes and the allocation of communal lands). This explains why SL acted in such an authoritarian and violent manner in its war zones.

The Peruvian Paradoxes

In comparison with other countries in the region, Peru is a country with many paradoxes or singularities that require an explanation. The insurgencies of SL and the MRTA possessed two idiosyncrasies: first, they emerged in the 1980s at the very moment when Peru, as with other countries in the South American region, was embarking on its 'third wave of democratization'. By 1978, the Andean country was in the midst of a transition to fully inclusive democracy in which the APRA and the Left could participate without restrictions. For the first time in its history, the country had universal suffrage, thus incorporating the illiterate population and establishing a political system in which the leftist parties were relevant actors. That was exactly

when SL and the MRTA decided to take up arms. For sure, Peru was not the only country affected by guerrilla warfare. In the 1980s, an insurgent movement began an armed rebellion in El Salvador. The guerrillas emerging in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua back in the 1960s and 1970s would continue their activities into the 1980s, a decade during which the Sandinista government in Nicaragua had to wage a counterinsurgency war against the Contras. But the history of Central America is somewhat different from that of South America. This begs the first question: how can Peru's particular course be explained?

Second, SL's unique profile is eye-catching. The MRTA could be regarded as a more conventional guerrilla, in some way the successor of the Peruvian guerrillas of the 1960s, in turn heirs to the Cuban Revolution. Similarly, it could be compared with the Central American guerrilla. The MRTA seemed to be relying on a politico-military structural logic similar to that in El Salvador, i.e. the relationship between the FMLN and its mass organizations. Thus, the MRTA did not break off relations with other groups of the Left and declared a truce following the election of Alan Garcia as president in 1985, responding to the plea of a government perceived as progressive. In its quest for legitimacy and popular acceptance, the MRTA's relationship with the population was also of a political nature.

SL, in contrast, was an extremely dogmatic, exclusionary and profoundly 'anti-political' and authoritarian group. Due to a schism in the Maoist factions, SL distanced itself from the rest of the movements of the Left, branding them as 'revisionists' while professing that its armed uprising was the 'Beacon of the World Revolution'. Its estrangement from the 'revisionists' also led to the murder of key officials, leaders and militants of the Left. Its action program was essentially based on terrorist actions in urban areas and the creation of rural support bases governed by authoritarian rules that were often imposed in an exceedingly cruel and bloodthirsty manner. Rather than attempting to gain the political support of the population and enhance its legitimacy in their eyes, it resorted to intimidation and terror tactics. In this sense, SL acted in a completely different way than other leftist armed groups in Latin America. Why was this so?

This chapter intends to contribute to the debate on the internal armed conflict in Peru by trying to explain the paradoxes in terms of the legacy of the military government of the 1970s. Unlike most of those imposed in other Latin American countries, this dictatorship had a progressive character. As a matter of fact, it belatedly implemented a national popular program, which had several consequences: on the one hand, it allowed for the growth of the Left and encouraged its revolutionary character, in contrast to developments in the Southern Cone. While embracing democracy, the Peruvian leftists took a very ambiguous stance on how the democratic project should be reconciled with the revolutionary one. With SL and MRTA, they shared a rhetoric in which the transition to a revolutionary order implied the use of violence, which signified that the legal Left's discourse in this regard was vague and contradictory.

On the other hand, one of the major transformations of General Velasco's dictatorship (1968–1975) was the agrarian reform which drastically changed the reality of Peru's rural society. This highly exclusionary, discriminatory and authoritarian reform eliminated the system of traditional powers which were already in decline. But it did not adequately replace them with an alternative new order, thus generating many latent conflicts. In a way, SL embodied the exclusionary, discriminatory and racist legacy of the leading provincial elites, triggering serious local conflicts that fueled a particularly violent and savage trend.

Origins and History of SL and the MRTA

Simplifying history, the Peruvian Left has had three major currents. The first had to do with the PCP, founded in 1928, with historical links to the Soviet Union. The second Maoist current

pertaining to the Partido Comunista del Perú-Patria Roja (PR) appeared in 1967 as a consequence of the Sino-Soviet split in 1963. And the third, the New Left, was made up of a patchwork of organizations under the influence of the Cuban Revolution and the Chinese Cultural Revolution.[1] SL and the MRTA were related to the second and third currents, respectively.

The origins of SL can be found in the Maoist faction of the PCP which emerged in 1964 as the Partido Comunista Peruano-Bandera Roja (BR). In 1969, a majority split from BR founded Patria Roja (PR). In 1970, another faction of BR broke away as SL, led by Abimael Guzmán and established in one of the regional branches of BR in the region of Ayachucho, in the southern Peruvian highlands.

As with the vast majority of Peruvian left-wing organizations in the 1970s, SL was socially and politically active. But, by 1977, it had started down a different path. Most leftist organizations opted to participate in the democratic transition process and fielded candidates for the Constituent Assembly in 1978 and in the 1980 general elections. On the contrary, SL disassociated itself from the other groups and decided to take up arms in 1980. A couple of years before, after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, SL had condemned the 'revisionist' tendencies in China, thus cutting itself off from other similar organizations and the international stage. One of the first actions of SL in Lima was to hang seven dead dogs in different parts of the city, one of them with its skull shattered and a cloth tied to it with the inscription 'Teng Siao Ping son of a bitch.'[2]

As to the MRTA, its origins can be traced back to the emergence of the MIR in 1962, itself a splinter group of the APRA and strongly influenced by the Cuban Revolution. The MIR began an armed uprising in 1965, which was repressed in the following months. In the following years, the MIR split into several factions, one of them the MIR-El Militante (MIR-EM). A radical fraction of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR), founded in 1976 by retired generals and cadres identifying with Velasco's reforms, also followed this political tradition. In 1978, when the PSR decided to participate in the elections of the Constituent Assembly, the new PSR Marxista-Leninista (PSR-ML), defending an insurrectional line, was founded. Subsequently, the MIR-EM and the PSR-ML began to see eye to eye, also as regards the issue of armed rebellion. This process led to the founding of the MRTA in 1982, whose first action was to raid a bank in Lima in order to finance its 'revolutionary actions'.[3]

From the very beginning, the profiles of SL and the MRTA were quite different. While the latter was similar to many other Latin American leftist guerrilla organizations, the former had a totally unique profile, perhaps closer to Islamic fundamentalism, in which 'the thoughts of Gonzalo' (Guzmán's nom de guerre) took the place of sacred and prophetic scriptures. The ideas and activities of the MRTA were those of a vanguard organization like many other leftist armed movements with which it would eventually coincide. It was inspired by other Latin American guerrilla experiences in the 1980s and was attuned to the Sandinista Revolution and the guerrilla warfare in El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia. With its actions, it sought legitimacy and popularity among the Peruvians, especially the popular sectors. Combining a certain degree of trade union action with armed activities, its militants were also relatively perceptive to the winds of political change.

Quite to the contrary, SL considered the entire Peruvian Left as 'revisionist', even the Maoist party from which it had split. Its discourse and practices were openly contradictory, even going so far as to kill its leftist adversaries. 'President Gonzalo' (Abimael Guzmán) publicly disqualified the entire Left, presenting his movement as the 'Beacon of the World Revolution' and himself as the 'Fourth Sword of Marxism' (after Marx, Lenin and Mao). Its actions were characterized by the use of intimidation and terror, resorting to high levels of violence with a total disregard for political legitimacy.

Compared with SL, the MRTA was a smaller and less important organization. It carried out some of its actions in the country's cities, particularly in Lima: bank robberies and the kidnapping of prominent figures with an eye to replenishing its war chest; and attacks against targets with a high symbolic value (like the residence of the ambassador of the United States in 1986). In consonance with foquismo, the MRTA chose the northern jungle of the distant San Martín region as its theatre of guerrilla operations per se. However, by 1989 it appeared to have been greatly weakened. In 1992, most of its leaders had been imprisoned and its last armed action was the assault on the residence of the ambassador of Japan on 17 December 1996, which was retaken in a rescue operation on 22 April 1997. According to the Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR 2003), the MRTA was responsible for 1.8 per cent of all human rights violations between 1980 and 2000.

SL would present a much greater challenge to the Peruvian state. Between 1980 and 1982, it extended its armed actions mainly to the mountainous region of Ayacucho, following the insurrectional Maoist 'from the countryside to the city' logic. Simultaneously, it carried out terrorist actions in Lima and other cities (destroying pylons, detonating car bombs and eliminating selected targets, among others). During this first stage and despite its highly exclusionary ideology, SL managed in part to win the sympathy of the peasant population by attacking certain symbols of power identified with situations of injustice. However, also from the start, its interpretation of territorial control imposed restrictions on the population, which rapidly led to clashes, murders and massacres.

At the same time, the state reacted with harsh and widespread repressive measures, with most of the population being caught between a rock and a hard place. But the repression also forced SL cadres to look for new fronts. Thus, the insurgency expanded throughout the southern highlands, opening fronts in the department of Puno, in the central highlands (Junín) and in the north (Cajamarca). By and large, this expansion struck an ambiguous balance: on the one hand, SL had extended its presence across much of the country, but on the other it had failed to build territorial rural support bases from which it could encircle the cities in a later stage. This expansion also brought SL to the Amazon region, the central jungle, where it engaged in genocidal practices against the indigenous Asháninka population. Moreover, it led to synergies between SL and drug trafficking, evident as from the 1990s to the present day.

In the early 1990s, SL announced that it had achieved a 'strategic balance' in the war against the Peruvian state, concealing its real situation of weakness. In those years, nevertheless, it carried out high-impact terrorist actions in Metropolitan Lima. But that ended abruptly on 12 September 1992, when police special forces captured Abimael Guzmán and many of the party's leaders in Lima, a feat that practically marked the end of SL's armed activity. Henceforth, dissident SL factions continued to operate in the central jungle, while groups associated with this movement tried to reintegrate it into national political life, doing their utmost to obtain an amnesty.

According to the CVR, SL was responsible for 46 per cent of the total number of deaths and disappearances occurring during the two decades (1980–2000) that the national armed conflict lasted; to wit, more than 30,000 out of an estimated total of over 69,000 (CVR 2003).

SL, the MRTA, the Left, Democracy and the Social Movements

The courses steered by SL and the MRTA are remarkable insofar as they went against the general trend of the majority of the left-wing forces in Peru and South America, which chose instead to form part of the democratic political system, abandoning revolutionary paradigms for democratic ones. This is even more striking given that the majority of the leftist forces not

only took the legal political route, but also did so successfully. For example, Izquierda Unida (IU) won the local elections in Metropolitan Lima in 1983, before becoming the country's second political party in the 1985 general elections, with good possibilities of victory in the 1990 elections. On the other hand, SL's singular insurgency is exceptional. Why was it so violent and fundamentalist and how did it succeed in posing such a significant threat to the Peruvian state?

To answer the first question, it is first necessary to consider the context in which the Peruvian Left evolved in the 1970s by offering a historical overview of its relations with the country's democratic order. Throughout the twentieth century, Peru's experience with democracy had been very sporadic under the long hegemony of a very exclusionary oligarchy, meaning that its history is closer to that of the Central American countries than to that of its South American counterparts. There emerged national-populist governments which engaged the popular sectors and made room for them in the political arena. As a matter of fact, the APRA, a national-reformist and popular political party, had been mobilizing and representing the popular sectors since the 1930s.

The PCP was a party with influence in the labor union world, but without widespread grassroots support. Towards the 1960s, an increasingly acerbic dispute between the APRA and the PCP, plus the influence of the Cuban Revolution, led to the emergence of groups of the then so-called New Left, which launched various guerrilla initiatives in the mid-1960s; however, they were all swiftly quashed. During the brief Peruvian democratic experience between 1963 and 1968, the introduction of agrarian reform eased the tensions in the rural highlands to a certain extent. On the other hand, the cultural, social and political gap between the guerrilla focos and the peasant population was also a decisive factor in their defeat.

In 1968, a new military government took power in Peru. During this period, military juntas inspired by the conservative and repressive National Security Doctrine were controlling, or had controlled, most Latin American countries. The harsh repression in the Southern Cone countries and the defeat of revolutionary experiences and insurrections (such as those in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay) led the Left to abandon armed strategies and to perceive democracy as a sort of political regime.[4] On the contrary, the military dictatorship of Velasco (1968–1975) in Peru was a comparatively late national-popular moment: Velasco nationalized foreign oil and mining companies and implemented industrialization policies and an ambitious agrarian reform, while also promoting the corporate organization of the popular sectors, in a similar way to other Latin American populist experiences in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Thus, Peru belatedly drifted towards the experiences of the Southern Cone countries, Mexico and Costa Rica, while moving away from those of the Central American states that still not had undergone a populist transformation.[5]

This is important to understand the legacy of the Peruvian military government. In the 1960s, the suppression of the dictatorships in the Southern Cone and their defeat of the revolutionary insurrectionary movements produced the appreciation of democracy. In these countries, it was the Right that was identified with authoritarian rule. In contrast, the military dictatorship of General Velasco (1968–75) did indeed manage to remove the traditional oligarchy as a social class by implementing agrarian reform, as well as promoting the active political participation of the hitherto excluded popular sectors, albeit through corporate schemes. Accordingly, leftist groups of different persuasions were offered a very encouraging context in which to further the efforts made in the early 1960s. The so-called second phase of the military government (1975–1980) was marked by a much more conservative governance style, accompanied by an economic crisis marking the beginning of a prolonged spiral of decline that would continue throughout the 1980s. This allowed leftist revolutionary groups to undermine Velasco's former control of the country's social movements. Nevertheless, they also developed the idea

that, given the limits of populism or 'bourgeois reformism', the alternative was some form of revolutionary insurrection.[6]

Thus, the transition to democracy in Peru was marked by a high level of social unrest and mobilization, led by the unions and associations controlled by different leftist groups (Bermeo 1997). Moreover, since these groups understood this process as being 'pre-revolutionary', the scenario of armed insurrection as a solution never seemed far away.

Accordingly, for the Peruvian leftists entering the democratic arena this was no more than an instrument for 'accumulating power', until the time was ripe for revolution. For their part, the rightists and liberals were more inclined to defend democracy as a government system. All this was expressed in the contradictions, ambiguities and tensions abounding in the legal Left as regards the use of violence to bring about social change and its position vis-à-vis the leftist armed insurgents, an issue that was never completely resolved.

For the legal Left, the 1980s were a time of growth and steadily greater influence over the social movements. Its candidates were elected mayors of Metropolitan Lima (1983) and other important cities. In 1985, the parliamentary Left won the second largest number of seats, with real hopes of victory in the 1990 elections. This overwhelming majority of left-wing forces united as IU, with the exception of the armed groups. But in IU, the aforementioned contradiction still lurked. Whereas some sectors clearly distanced themselves from SL and the MRTA and defended democracy, others, while condemning the 'excesses' of the armed rebels, never rejected their use of revolutionary violence or ruled out reaching some or other understanding with them in the future.

More recently in the 1990s, IU was more scathing in its criticism of SL and its terrorist activities, above all after the assassination of the social leader Maria Elena Moyano in Lima on 15 February 1992.[7] Towards the end of the 1990s, in contrast, some radicalizing factions of the Left considered democracy as a constraint that alienated them from the social movements and were enticed by the armed options of both SL and the MRTA. By the end of the 1980s, radicalized sectors of the legal Left approached the positions of both organizations. And although SL never made overtures to the legal Left, the MRTA never rejected this option outright.

Another important issue is the peculiar (dogmatic, fundamentalist and violent) character of SL, so different from the rest of the insurrectionary experiences in Latin America. Notwithstanding this, it succeeded in establishing some degree of territorial control and posed a significant threat to the Peruvian state. This brings us back yet again to the legacy of the Velasco government. As already contended, SL's origins are to be found in a highly ideologized faction of the Maoist BR in Ayacucho. Here, the importance of Guzmán's leadership in terms of the movement's rhetoric and strategy should be underscored. For, unlike other Maoist groups with a similar program, but without that cult of personality or fundamentalism, Guzmán devised a plan to take power 'from the countryside to the city', based on the violent coercion of the peasant population. His leadership was an important factor, often underestimated by scholars who tend to give precedence to structural or historical ones.[8] In fact, it is one of the keys to unravelling the SL enigma.

Let us now reconsider the military government of Velasco. In Peru, there had previously been a long tradition of exclusion, discrimination and racism towards the peasantry and indigenous population. Velasco's agrarian reform broke the power of the landowners, but not the rural mentalities, the regional political culture or the differences and perceptions of inequality and injustice. SL's leaders were recruited from the provincial elite who had traditionally held sway over the peasantry, which in part recalls the violence and disrespect with which aristocratic landowners used to treat the peasants. The agrarian reform destroyed traditional hierarchies in the countryside but did not adequately substitute them with others. Many latent tensions and conflicts of a very different nature still prevailed.

The emergence of SL in the Peruvian countryside after the agrarian reform triggered a new insurgency intermingled with conflicts and claims of a local nature, channeled through the different leading figures of the national armed conflict. This is a relatively generic pattern: beyond the clashes between SL and the army, inter- and intra-communal conflicts also played a role. As before, this had to do with the Peru's long tradition of resolving local controversies with violence. Thus, in an unexpected way, SL's dogmatism dovetailed with old traditions that allowed it to achieve territorial control and a capacity for recruitment.[9]

Final Reflections

In around 1992, the two insurrectionary projects were defeated, with the capture of practically all of their national leaders. But what is striking is the fact that the legal Left suffered a major defeat: IU, already divided in 1989, performed poorly in the 1990 elections and subsequently disappeared from the political map. In these elections, in which the Left should have come to power via the ballot box, Alberto Fujimori, a complete outsider, became president. He won the elections with an anti-political, anti-party discourse, which marked the beginning of the end for the existing party system. In 1992, Fujimori unexpectedly closed Congress, consolidated his power and converted Fujimorism into the hegemonic force of the 1990s. His 'competitive authoritarianism' turned the Left into a marginal force, which in some ways is still the case (Tanaka 1998).

Subsequently, the MRTA and SL did what was expected of them given their previous track records. In prison, several of the MRTA senior leaders offered a self-critical account of their experience, apologizing to the Peruvian population. They censored their vanguardism and militarism, both attitudes that in reality did not correspond to a decade during which the country had embarked on a still to be consolidated democratic experience. After serving their prison sentences, several MRTA leaders joined different leftist democratic groups.[10] For its part, SL has never been self-critical, beyond pointing out that a war was waged in the 1980s and excesses occur in all wars.

In Peru, there were never any peace talks or accords, as was the case in El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia, since the armed groups were defeated militarily and politically. From his prison cell, Guzmán raised the banner of a 'peace agreement', in search of 'reconciliation' through an amnesty for whom, in his view, were 'political prisoners'. He did not forge any links with other left-wing forces. There are still some SL factions, which have since ceased to recognize Guzmán's leadership and are now closely associated with drug trafficking in remote jungle regions. Several former SL leaders still serving prison sentences are developing some trade union activities, for example, among schoolteachers, gaining some visibility and influence. Others have tried to register themselves as political organizations, but have been turned down by the electoral authorities, reasoning that they are anti-democratic organizations. The best option open to SL is a general amnesty and the release of its imprisoned members.

Notes

1. For further details, see Letts (1981).
2. Regarding the PCP-SL, see CVR (2003). Volume II, Section Two, 'Los actores del conflicto', Chapter 1, 'Los actores armados', Annex 1, 'El Partido Comunista del Perú—Sendero Luminoso', pp. 23–98.
3. About the MRTA, see CVR (2003). Volume II, Section Two, 'Los actores del conflicto', Chapter 1, 'Los actores armados', Annex 4, 'The Revolutionary Movement Túpac Amaru', pp. 254–288.
4. See, for instance, Barros (1986); Nogueira-Budny (2013).
5. Regarding the importance of the mass incorporation of workers in the political order during the years of the populist military dictatorship of Velasco, see Collier and Collier (1991). On 'classic' and 'late' populism, see Freidenberg (2007).

6. See, for instance, Lauer (1977).
7. On this subject, see Tanaka (2008).
8. On this point, see Degregori (2012).
9. For example, see Heilman (2010) and Theidon (2004).
10. See, for instance, Gálvez Olaechea (2015).

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17

MEXICO'S ARMED SOCIALIST MOVEMENT DURING THE 1960s AND 1970s

Adela Cedillo

Introduction: The Origins of the Armed Challenge

The Cold War in Mexico brought a growing trend of state policies for proscribing and repressing the Left. Faced with the government's failure to subdue or co-opt its opponents through ordinary repression (breaking up assemblies, rallies, marches, and strikes; espionage; and imprisonment), Mexican security forces, starting during the administration of Adolfo López Mateos (1958–1962), resorted to employing modes of terror, such as selectively executing leaders and massacring protesters in public spaces. The so-called dirty war began in 1962 with the army's extrajudicial execution of the radical agrarian leader, Rubén Jaramillo, his pregnant wife, and three of their children in Xochicalco, Morelos. Jaramillo had led the most important armed movement of the 1940s, continuing the Zapatista-agrarianist struggle in the state of Morelos. Jaramillismo employed guerrilla tactics, but the movement had little structure and espoused an eclectic reformist ideology, which demanded total compliance with the constitutional principles that benefited peasants and workers (Padilla 2008).

Also, in 1962, the first guerrilla cells inspired by the Cuban Revolution and the Second Declaration of Havana (1962)—which marked Cuba's definitive turn toward socialism—began to form. But beyond the Castro-Guevarist influence, the reasons for the radicalization of a portion of the Left can be found in the government's extreme repression against labor, peasant and student movements all over the country throughout the 1950s and 1960s. State violence was the culmination of the lack of free elections and the restriction of civil liberties and channels for political participation. Quasi-dictatorial authoritarianism and the Cold War climate—one that was polarized, but also made possible the global circulation of ideas, symbols, practices, and left-wing militants themselves—fostered the rise of the Movimiento Armado Socialista (MAS).[1] It fell to the administrations of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964–1970), Luis Echeverría (1970–1976) and José López Portillo (1976–1982) to combat the unstoppable guerrilla wave, and they did so with methods that were indistinguishable from those enacted by the Southern Cone military dictatorships (Sotelo 2006).

The Old and New Mexican Left

One can divide the twentieth-century socialist Left into two periods, which have been broadly identified as the Old and New Left. The Partido Comunista de México (PCM, 1919–1981),

which followed the Soviet party line, dominated the first period, from 1919 to 1959. The second period, from 1960–1994, was characterized by the appearance of dozens of organizations that followed different ideological currents, strategies, and tactics, without any one of them predominating over the rest. The major division during this stage occurred between partisans of the armed struggle and those who sought to practice open mass politics, the self-proclaimed democrats. The activists in the guerrilla organizations came from the PCM and its Juventud Comunista Mexicana (JCM), the Partido Popular Socialista (PPS, 1948), the MLN (1961–1968), student movements from around the country, and some independent peasant organizations.

The MAS did not emerge as a unified bloc; it had inherited the leftist tendency toward continual fragmentation. Thus, despite the fact that the guerrilla Left was usually a minority political force, Mexico had more than forty armed organizations throughout its territory, making it the country with the greatest number of such organizations in Latin America. The MAS was made up of at least six currents: armed socialist agrarianism, guerrilla militarism, pobrismo (poor people's politics), Castro-Guevarism, Maoism, and insurrectional communism. Despite its fragmentation and scant convening power, the guerrilla Left managed to achieve changes in the state-society relationship. These changes tended to promote greater democratization in the country's political life, even if this fell far short of the goals of those who fought for a socialist revolution.

Rural Guerrillas in the 1960s

Armed socialist agrarianism emerged in the state of Chihuahua as the result of sharp socioeconomic contradictions and a repressed peasant movement. Chihuahua was incorporated into the United States economy through the lumber and mining industries. In order to continue exporting primary materials, landowners monopolized ejido and communal lands on a scale similar to pre-revolutionary times. Since the 1950s, the PPS' mass base, the Unión General de Trabajadores y Campesinos de México, had led the struggle of peasants and sawmill workers by organizing strikes, marches, rallies, land invasions, sit-ins, and caravans. The state's normal school students joined these mobilizations and presented their own demands. Both the state's security forces and the landowner-funded paramilitary groups, known as the white guards, systematically attacked the agrarian movement (Henson 2019).

Faced with government intransigence, two of the movement's leaders, Arturo Gámiz and Pablo Gómez, went beyond the demand for land distribution to propose the need for armed struggle to overthrow the regime and install a socialist government. At the end of 1963, a small group of students, teachers, and peasants formed the Grupo Popular Guerrillero (GPG) in the Sierra Tarahumara, focusing their attacks on the caciques (local bosses), security forces, and white guards. In response, the army conducted the first modern counterinsurgency operation in the Sierra Tarahumara. The GPG operated as a Guevarist-inspired guerrilla foco, but it did not develop organically. Its leaders failed in predicting that the peasant movement would follow them in the armed phase. In the GPG's boldest action, the assault on 23 September 1965 on the military barracks in Madera, Chihuahua, eight guerrillas lost their lives, including Gámiz and Gómez. The survivors reunited in Chihuahua City and Mexico City. Because of a leadership issue, the group split into two factions, the Grupo Polutar Guerillero 'Arturo Gámiz' (GPGAG) and the Movimiento 23 de Septiembre (M23S). The former was headed by Oscar González Eguiarte, who suggested continuing the armed struggle in the Sierra Tarahumara. The latter was led by Pedro Uranga and Saúl Ornelas, who proposed creating guerrilla fronts in different regions of the country. The secret police broke up the M23S in Mexico City in 1967, while the GPGAG was eradicated at the beginning of September 1968, following a long counterinsurgent campaign in the highlands of Chihuahua and Sonora (Bellingeri 2003).

However, the guerrilla initiatives were not entirely in vain. Between 1969 and 1971, the Díaz Ordaz and Echeverría administrations distributed over five hundred thousand hectares to ejidatarios (communal land owners) in the areas of Chihuahua where the agrarian issue had turned into an armed conflict. Moreover, the state not only stifled the insurrectional attempts through military means, but also with civic action programs that addressed social grievances.

The exploits of the GPC and GPGAG resonated with hundreds of activists from leftist organizations all over the country, not because they saw Madera as an imitation of the attack on the Moncada barracks in Cuba (1953), but rather because the emergence of a home-grown guerrilla movement was interpreted as a sign that the objective conditions to make a new revolution existed in Mexico and it was to the socialists to create the subjective conditions. This belief was reinforced by the massacres of students in Mexico City in 1968 (Tlatelolco) and 1971 (known as the Corpus Christi massacre), which provided a powerful impetus for the radicalization of the student movement at the national level. In fact, all the urban guerrilla leaders of the 1970s emerged from this juncture.

Guerrilla Militarism in Rural and Urban Settings

The category of 'guerrilla militarism' includes a multitude of armed organizations and commandos, which developed primarily in urban environments throughout the 1960s and 1970s. These groups had eclectic ideologies and were comprised of students. They were characterized by a pronounced voluntarist tendency, since they defended the notion that a small group of audacious militants would inspire the masses with their spectacular attacks on private property, the bourgeoisie, and the State. These organizations were influenced by Castro-Guevarism, Maoism, the Tupamaro movement from Uruguay, and the Vietnamese war for national liberation. The guerrilla commandos 'expropriated' banks and businesses to finance their struggles and kidnapped businessmen and high-level public officials to make concrete political demands. Not only did the masses not follow their armed vanguards, but they also repudiated them as a result of the psychological war that the State waged through propaganda and rumors, along with a genuine rejection of the violence (Oikión Solano and García Ugarte 2002, I).

Some guerrilla groups did not even have names; others were destroyed after their first activities, and only a few lasted for long. Among the most well known were: the Movimiento de Liberación Latinoamericana (MLL, 1961–1969; internationalist); the Movimento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP, 1964–66; Mexico City); the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIRE, 1967; Mexico City); the Macías (1967–1972, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas); the Guajiros (1969–1972; national); the Lacandones (1969–1972; Mexico City); the Comité de Lucha Revolucionaria (CLR, 1970; Mexico City); the Comandos Armados del Pueblo (1971; Mexico City); the Frente Urbana Zapatista (1971, CDMX); the Liga de Comunistas Armadas (1971–1972; Nuevo León); the Fuerzas Armada de la Nueva Revolución (1969–72, Sonora); the Frente Revolucionario de Acción Socialista (1969–72, Aguascalientes); the Brigada Obrera de Lucha Armada (1973, Mexico City); the Frente Armado del Pueblo (1973–75, Hidalgo and Veracruz); and the Brigada Revolucioria Lancandona (Chiapas and Hidalgo).

The MLL stands out as an anomaly among these groups, both as a pioneer in the armed struggle and for its attempts to be a sort of Latin American anti-imperialist front. Activists from Colombia, Venezuela, Peru and Brazil participated in its founding, although the movement was dissolved at the end of the 1960s because some of its members, including Mexican captain Lorenzo Cárdenas Barajas, were suspected of being infiltrators and others were arrested.

The Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria (MAR, 1966–1982; national) and the Fuerzas Revolucionarios Armadas del Pueblo (FRAP, 1973–1983, Jalisco) were the only organizations

in this category that managed to build the minimum infrastructure to carry out armed actions, recruit new cadres, and produce internal documents during the worst years of the dirty war. The MAR was the first Mexican guerrilla organizations to receive international support. Between 1968 and 1970, it sent 70 cadres to North Korea for political and military training. Nevertheless, a large number of its militants were arrested between 1971 and 1973 due to security mistakes. Because of its excellent relationship with the Mexican government, Fidel Castro's government never gave the MAS any logistical help, it only accepted to give asylum to a few convicted guerrillas. More than 40 political prisoners arrived on the island as part of an exchange of hostages kidnapped by the Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria (ACNR, see ahead) and the FRAP in 1971 and 1973, respectively (Castellanos 2007).

Pobrismo in Guerrero's Costa Grande

Pobrismo was a type of armed populism, and it represented the most original ideological expression of the MAS. Its founder was the normal schoolteacher Lucio Cabañas Barrientos, an activist from Guerrero. In 1967, Cabañas led a popular movement to oust a corrupt primary school principal in Atoyac de Álvarez, Guerrero. The security forces opened fire against hundreds of peaceful protesters who had gathered in the main town square, killing nine people and injuring 20. Cabañas was forced to go underground and took refuge in the Sierra de Atoyac, where he began to organize an armed self-defense group, the Brigada de Justicia Campesina (BCA). Cabañas' supporters in the peasant communities came together in the Partido de los Pobres (PdlP) (Aviña 2014). Cabañas was a Communist, but he believed that the PdlP-BCA should respond to the concrete expectations of the peasantry. For that reason, he opted for the pragmatic simplification of socialist terminology, proposing the struggle of the poor against the rich and the establishment of a government of the poor, for the poor. Despite criticism from orthodox Marxists, the PdlP-BCA became the guerrilla group with the largest popular support, and Cabañas came to be the leader with the greatest approval among both the radical and revolutionary Left. Between 1970 and 1974, the BCA carried out various kidnappings of caciques and wealthy people, although its most daring actions were the ambushes of soldiers and police officers.

In 1973, a schism occurred in the PdlP-BCA because of a leadership issue between Cabañas and Carmelo Cortés. The latter formed a mixed guerrilla group, the FAR (1973). There were a number of other organizations that developed as splinter groups of the PdlP-BCA or that gravitated around it in the states of Guerrero, Morelos, and Hidalgo, including the FAL (1974), the Comandos Armados de Morelos (1975), the Organización Revolucionaria del Campesinado Armado (1976), the Comando Armado Revolucionario del 10 de Junio (CAR-10, 1976), the Vanguardia Revolucionaria Armada del Pueblo (1974), and its offshoots: the Vanguardia Revolucionaria Armada Independiente and the Movimiento Revolucionario del Proletariado (MRP).

The fragmentation of the guerrilla groups in Guerrero stemmed from the extreme level to which the counterinsurgency was carried out, especially in mid-1974, when the PdlP-BCA kidnapped PRI Senator and state gubernatorial candidate Rubén Figueroa, provoking a military siege in the Sierra del Sur. The army rescued Figueroa and on 2 December 1974 Cabañas and his companions fell in a confrontation with the military. The security forces subdued the pobrista bases of support through extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture, rapes, forced disappearances, death flights, and a scorched-earth policy that left the Sierra del Sur population on the verge of famine. The PdlP-BCA had the highest death toll, with around one thousand people executed or disappeared (Sotelo 2006).

Armed Maoism

Mexican Maoism originated with the Sino-Soviet split, which had divided the international Communist movement at the beginning of the 1960s. Some of the activists who broke with the PCM formed armed organizations that supported the Maoist principles of serving the masses, prioritizing the countryside over the city, and launching a protracted people's war. In 1966, Federico Emery Ulloa and other students organized the Maoist-inspired Movimiento Marxista-Leninista de México (MMLM). With Emery's help, the former PCM activist Javier Fuentes Gutiérrez built networks of Maoist sympathizers by distributing the Chinese Foreign Languages Press publications in Mexico. These efforts culminated in 1969 with the founding of the Partido Revolucionario del Proletariado Mexicano (PRPM). The PRPM was well regarded by the Chinese Communist Party, so it could send a dozen cadres to receive political-military training in China, becoming the second Mexican guerrilla organization to receive international support. However, in 1970, the arrest of CLR guerrillas, who had a relationship with Fuentes, led the police to break up the PRPM (Velázquez Vidal 2016).

Florencio (El Güero) Medrano continued the PRPM's struggle and in 1973 organized a land invasion in Temixco, Morelos to establish the 'Rubén Jaramillo' settlement. Shortly after, the army took over the settlement and Medrano went underground. In 1974, he founded the PRPM and its military wing, the Ejército de Liberación Popular Unido de América (EPLUA), whose area of operations was in the mountains of Morelos and Oaxaca. The PPUA-EPLUA was the only Mexican armed organization to receive political and financial support from the radical section of the Chicano movement in the United States. In 1979, the white guards ambushed and killed Medrano in the Oaxaca highlands, and the PPUA-EPLUA disbanded.

During its first few years of existence, the guerrilla wing of the Unión del Pueblo (UP, 1964–1978, national) dedicated itself to the political and military training of cadres and to armed propaganda, making itself known to the public opinion by planting bombs in government offices, embassies, and commercial establishments. Its main leaders were Tiburcio Cruz Sánchez and Héctor Hernández Castillo, and its military trainer was the Guatemalan José María Ortiz Vides. In 1978, the UP became the Partido Obrero-Campesino Revolucionario de la Unión Popular (PROCUP) and reclaimed the strategy of a protracted people's war. In the 1980s, the PROCUP and the remnants of the PdlP merged. Although PROCUP-PdlP's best-known activities were the kidnappings and assassinations of ex-militants considered to be traitors, its primary work was organizing clandestine cells in rural communities in the Mexican southeast.

The Intersection of Castro-Guevarism and Revolutionary Nationalism

During the twentieth century, revolutionary nationalism was the most widespread ideology in Mexico, and it had both right-wing and left-wing expressions. On the Left, it manifested itself in cardenismo, jaramillismo, the PPS, and the most important umbrella organization of the 1960s, the MLN. The Tricontinental (1966) and OLAS (1967) conferences held in Cuba had a profound impact on a sector of the MLN activists, some of whom formed Castro-Guevarist–inspired organizations. Rafael Estrada Villa broke with the PPS and founded the Organización de Acción Revolucionaria Nacional (ONAR, 1966), with the goal of promoting a coordinating organization for the extant guerrilla groups, including the GPGAG, the MRP and the MMLM. In addition, elements associated with the ONAR formed a rural commando unit, the Ejército Revolucionario del Sur (1967). ONAR's project was dismantled in 1967 after a wave of arrests hit its constituent groups (Castellanos 2007).

In the 1960s, a powerful multi-class movement emerged in Guerrero led by the Asociación Cívica Guerrero. Normal schoolteacher, Genaro Vázquez Rojas, one of the main leaders of the ACG, had belonged to the MLN and maintained some of its ideological tenets. The so-called cívicos (civic ones) brought together ejido owners and small producers, who were struggling against the abuses of caciques and intermediaries, along with professionals and students, who were fighting for democratic freedoms. In 1961, the ACG succeeded in removing the state governor General Raúl Caballero Aburto, following a massacre of protesters in Chilpancingo. In 1962, there was another massacre of cívicos who were protesting electoral fraud in Iguala (Aviña 2014).

Genaro Vázquez escaped from the Iguala jail in 1968 and went underground, forming a guerrilla foco in the Sierra del Sur. The ACG's most radical faction followed him and founded the ACNR. The ACNR proposed fighting for national liberation as a strategic goal to bring about socialism. Between 1969 and 1971, the military cut off the ACNR's sources of sustenance, information, and recruitment. In February 1972, Vázquez got into an automobile accident in his way to Michoacán; hurt, he was finished off by the army. The ACNR remained a marginal clandestine organization, despite its efforts to keep the radical civic project alive.

In 1968, journalist Mario Menéndez called on activists from Mexico City, Veracruz, Yucatán, and Nuevo León to establish the Ejército Insurgente Mexicano (EIM) in the Lacandona Jungle in Chiapas. Menéndez was known for his close ties to Fidel Castro, his coverage of the guerrilla groups in Guatemala, Venezuela, and Colombia, and for having founded the radical leftist magazine *Por Qué?*. The attempt to set up a guerrilla foco failed because of Menéndez's uncommitted leadership and the amateurism of its members. The Nuevo León group, which came from the MLN and had most fervently embraced the Castro-Guevarist ideal, called for the EIM's remaining cadres to form a new guerrilla organization. The Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional (FLN) were founded in Monterrey, Nuevo León in August 1969 under the leadership of César Yáñez and Alfredo Zárate. The FLN expanded rapidly to other states in the country, and in 1972 they founded the Núcleo Guerrillero 'Emiliano Zapata' (NGEZ) in the Lacandona Jungle. The FLN proclaimed itself Marxist-Leninist; its ideology, however, was clearly inspired by the MLN, and its military strategy was influenced by Castro-Guevarism and Vietnamese Marxism (Calderón and Cedillo 2012, 148–166).

Unlike the other guerrilla groups, the majority of the FLN's members were upper-middle class professionals and workers. This allowed the FLN to avoid having to resort to robbery and kidnappings to self-finance; instead, they were able to raise funds from sympathizers through clandestine urban networks. The leaders of the FLN also differentiated themselves by prioritizing the 'silent gathering of forces', because they did not see themselves as the initiators of the revolution, but rather those with the best conditions for making up its vanguard once the insurrection had begun. Between 1969 and 1993, the organization did not engage in any offensive actions, only some defensive ones.

In 1974, with the capture of safehouses in Monterrey, N.L. and Nepantla, Edomex, and the disbanding of the NGEZ, the FLN lost its main leaders and racked up dozens of prisoners, murder and disappearance victims. Despite these losses, the organization successfully rebuilt itself under the leadership of Fernando Yáñez (César's brother), Jorge Velasco, and Federico Ramírez. Starting in 1978, the FLN recruited indigenous people from the northern highlands of Chiapas, who had family ties in the Lacandona Jungle. Peasant militancy grew significantly, which made the 1983 founding of the EZLN possible. For ten years, the EZLN was dedicated to organizing rural communities for war. Through this process, the participation of youth and women became the driving force of the organization.

Insurrectional Communism

The most important guerrilla coalition of the 1970s was the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre (LC23S, 1973–1983), a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist organization with both urban and rural branches, which was representative of insurrectional communism. A JCM group from Nuevo León and Mexico City, led by Raúl Ramos Zavala, split from the PCM in 1970 and set about building an armed organization that could respond to the state's onslaught against social movements. The group was known as the Procesos named for its document, 'The Revolutionary Process in Mexico'. The Procesos also incorporated students who had been educated by Jesuit proponents of liberation theology, among whom Ignacio Salas Obregón stood out (Rangel Hernández 2013).

The Procesos allied with the MAR-23—the MAR had merged with the rest of the 23 September Movement—to form the Organización Partidaria (OP), which embraced the ideal of building an authentically revolutionary party and a national guerrilla front. Ramos Zavala, Diego Lucero, and other guerrilla leaders were executed during the period known as the 'gray winter' of 1972. Salas and Manuel Gámez Rascón assumed leadership of the group. The OP brought together guerrilla groups that lacked clear political-military direction, such as the Lacandones, the Guajiros and the Macías, although its greatest achievement was making common cause with organizations that had a significant student base: the so-called Los Enfermos (The Sick Ones, 1971–1973, Sinaloa), the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (1970–1973, Jalisco), and the y el Comité Revolucionario Estudiantil, which had a workers' wing, the Comité Obrero Revolucionario (1972–73, Nuevo León). In March 1973, the leaders of these groups met in Guadalajara, Jalisco to found the Liga Comunista del 23 de Septiembre.

The Liga attempted to forge an alliance with the PdlP-BCA. However, the relationship ended prematurely because of the League's rejection of pobrismo and its intention to subordinate the peasantry to the vanguard of the proletariat. Paradoxically, the League barely interpellated the actual working class. Salas Obregón wrote the League's official doctrine in the essay, 'Fundamental Questions of the Revolutionary Movement' (1973). The League maintained an insurrectional approach, according to which agitation and propaganda would be the means of organizing the masses for the revolutionary civil war. The League suggested that the decisive fight would take place in the cities and that the countryside would form the strategic rearguard. It also developed the 'university-factory thesis', which proposed that universities reproduced capitalist relations of production; consequently, the student-proletarians could constitute the vanguard of the working class.

The Liga had around two thousand activists and over ten thousand sympathizers, who were acquainted with the organization through its journal Madera. It was distributed clandestinely in factories and schools in several major cities. The activists were primarily university and normal school students and teachers who came from working-class families; a minority had petit-bourgeois backgrounds. In addition, the Liga featured the greatest female participation among guerrilla groups, with women accounting for around 25 per cent of its membership. The League had a diverse leadership and a complex organizational structure that encompassed almost all of the country's states, including three guerrilla focos that attracted peasant support: the Brigada Revolucionaria Emiliano Zapata (Oaxaca), the Politico-Militart Committee 'Arturo Gámiz' in the Golden Quadrilateral (Sonora, Chihuahua, Sinaloa and Durango), and the Brigada Genaro Vázquez (Guerrero). At the beginning of 1974, the Liga led an insurrectional attempt among agricultural workers in the valleys of Culiacán, Sinaloa, known as the 'assault on heaven'. Although hundreds of workers answered the guerrilla's call, the army took to the streets and imposed a de facto state of siege.

The Liga was the organization that carried out the majority of kidnappings and executions of both elite and security forces members. The most consequential act was the group's execution of industrialist Eugenio Garza Sada during a kidnapping attempt in 1973. The entrepreneurial Monterrey Group accused President Echeverría of fomenting socialist policies that encouraged the perpetration of terrorist acts, thus provoking the first schism between the PRI and the oligarchy. The League became the central counterinsurgency target in the urban areas. Hence, it was the organization with the highest casualties after the PdlP, and all of its leaders were eliminated.

Both the repression and infighting among factions caused the Liga to have several splinter groups starting 1974. These offshoots included the Bolshevik Faction 23 de Septiembre, the Liga Internacionalista 23 de Septiembre, and the Organización de Revolucionarios Profesionales. In a 'rectification' process, political prisoners and former guerrillas criticized the militarism, sectarianism, dogmatism, and voluntarism that had contributed to the Liga's isolation and the state terror against it, and they disavowed the armed struggle. In 1979, the rectifiers and other radical groups joined together in the Organización Marxista para la Emancipación del proletariado, which gave way to the Corriente Socialista (1981). Despite its radical origins, the Corriente gradually turned toward electoral politics, becoming the Partido Patriótico Revolucionario (PPR, 1985).

The Legacy of the MAS

The López Portillo administration attempted to bring the long period of political violence to an end with the 1977 political reform, which opened space for the various left-wing groups and the far Right to participate in elections. The following year, the Amnesty Law was promulgated, which represented a victory for the human rights movement that had emerged autonomously at the start of the 1970s in response to the dirty war atrocities. Nevertheless, these initiatives did not seek out direct negotiations with the guerrilla groups and the armed conflict lasted until the early-1980s.

One of the MAS's most notable legacies is that the organizations that survived the dirty war remained active during the 1980s and 1990s. The remnants of organizations like the MAR, ACNR and PPR laid down their arms; following numerous alliances and splits with other groups, they came together with the electoral Left to form the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD, 1989). Maoist holdouts founded the Partido del Trabajo in 1990 (1990). Both parties had a visible participation in legislatures and state governorships in the early twenty-first century.

Only two organizations continued to support the armed struggle: the FLN-EZLN and the PROCUP-PdlP, which in 1995 became the Ejército Popular Revolucionario-Partido Democrático Popular Revolucionario. The FLN was one of the most original groups on the spectrum of the Latin American Left. Thus, it is not surprising that the EZLN ultimately led one of the most atypical uprisings in the region. On 1 January 1994, the Zapatistas seized eight towns in Chiapas. After barely 12 days of hostilities, the government accepted a unilateral ceasefire and talks with the insurgents as a result of the mobilizations by national and international civil society. The EZLN renounced the struggle for socialism and instead emphasized the quest for autonomy and the rights of indigenous peoples. The EZLN had faced a war of attrition, but also successfully fought the media battle, becoming a global symbol of resistance to neoliberalism.

The EPR made its public appearance in 1996, on the first anniversary of the massacre of peasants in the fords of Aguas Blancas, Guerrero. Under the uninterrupted leadership of Tiburcio

Cruz, the EPR has been the only organization to continue its commitment to the struggle for socialism and a protracted people's war. Nonetheless, the organization's history is marked by leadership disputes and multiple splits (Lofredo 2007). Despite the fact that, between 1995 and 1997, the EPR's peasant bases in Guerrero and Oaxaca were severely beaten, the organization still maintains strongholds in those states. The War on Drugs (2006–present) has served as a strategy for putting an end to both armed and peaceful resistance. Currently, the revolutionary Left is decimated and the new expressions of self-defense do not bear any resemblance to Madera's guerrilla utopia.

Note

1. The Movimiento Armado Socialista (MAS) is the general name that Mexican ex-guerrillas have used to refer to the whole set of their political-military organizations.

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE JUNTA COORDINADORA REVOLUCIONARIA

Historical Context and Political Process in the Southern Cone

Aldo Marchesi

February of 1974 marked the first public appearance of the JCR.[1] In a press conference held by the Argentinean ERP, after the failed attack of the Military Headquarter at Azul, they read the joint declaration: A los pueblos de América Latina. The declaration was a call to implement one of the 'leading strategic ideas of Commandante Che Guevara' and renew the tradition of 'our peoples' who joined together against the 'Spanish colonialists'. In this organization's view the question was how to lead that 'awakening of the peoples'. There were two lines of thinking that 'conspired' against revolutionary efforts. 'These are an enemy—bourgeois nationalism—and a mistaken notion among those on the side of the people—reformism.' Against these, the declaration optimistically saw 'the armed pole, the revolutionary pole . . . growing stronger and stronger among the masses.'[2]

The declaration ended mentioning the members of this new alliance of leftist armed groups of the region: the Bolivian ELN, the Chilean MIR, the Argentinean ERP, and the Uruguayan MLN-T. This declaration was the result of an historical process marked by the convergence of the political process in the region.

In the book *Latin America's Radical Left* I traced the different trajectories that met the common project (Marchesi 2018). First contacts took place in Montevideo in the mid-1960s between Uruguayan activists, Argentine Peronist and leftist exiles, and Brazilian opponents to that country's dictatorship, as well as Paraguayan exiles and even Spanish intellectuals, such as the anarchist Abraham Guillen, who had fled their homeland. These exchanges, combined with a fertile cultural context marked by an intense circulation of Latin American left-wing press media, prompted a series of debates on how to advance new protest repertoires that would both take up the ideas of the Cuban Revolution and adapt them to the particularities of the Southern Cone. One of the results of these dialogues was the emergence of the MLN-T, an organization that proposed an urban guerrilla warfare strategy that became popular throughout the region as it offered a heterodox alternative to Cuba's rural foquismo that was more suitable to the specific characteristics of the more urbanized countries of the Southern Cone.

These exchanges among the southern cone activists continued being incited by two events promoted by the Cuban Revolution in 1967. The first and only conference of the OLAS, held in July and August 1967, shaped the debates in the Southern Cone Left. The Cuban Revolution's stance regarding the inevitability of armed struggle and the need for unity of direction in the Latin American revolution was capitalized by the new Left and questioned primarily

by the region's communist parties. At the same time, it sparked a repressive reaction from the democratically elected governments in Chile and Uruguay, the dictatorship in Argentina, and the inter-American system.

Also, the arrival of Che Guevara to Bolivia, in the framework of a project that sought to spread the revolution from Bolivia to the Southern Cone, also fostered support networks in all these countries and raised expectations regarding the feasibility of a revolution in the region. Some of these groups in Uruguay and Argentina never were able to join the Guevara's campaign in Bolivia but this beginning provided new ways of thinking about the armed struggle in their own countries. The Chilean elenos (of ELN) were able to approach the Bolivian's campaign and had a crucial role supporting the Bolivian ELN after Guevara's death. For all Guevara's experience in Bolivia and the epic dimensions taken on by his death strengthened the development of a particular structure of feelings among Southern Cone militants that furthered Guevara's legacy. These aspects revitalized the language of continental revolution, which, while not entirely new, acquired a new relevance under these conditions.

During the early seventies some meetings of Southern Cone activists in Chile under the Unidad Popular government enhanced the exchanges among these groups. Three dimensions of these meetings were important: the political and intellectual debates among representative dependency-theory scholars and political activists connected with guerrilla organizations; the regular coming together of Southern Cone activists in social mobilizations; and the conversations between Chile's MIR, Bolivia's ELN, Uruguay's Tupamaros, and Argentina's ERP. These meeting spaces resulted in the gradual convergence of these organizations in a common ideology and historical interpretation based on structural Marxism, dependency theory, the belief in the inevitable expansion of authoritarianism and the need to respond with an insurrectional strategy.

The establishment and development of the JCR, the coordinating body formed by the above organizations, was carried out from 1973 to 1976 during the still democratic Argentina. It was during this period that these organizations relied more heavily on military action, as normal political activities became impossible due to the brutal repression against Chilean, Uruguayan and Bolivian activists in their respective countries. This process occurred under a framework of complete transnationalization of Southern Cone politics, where various actors, ranging from the military to guerrillas, viewed the region as a unit and devised joint actions that crossed national boundaries. The reaction against the social and political mobilization of the sixties and seventies was a cycle of bloody civic military dictatorships that covered the region. During the eighties in the return to democracies some of these activists were able to adapt to the new political opportunities to develop new ways of political activism.

The groups that were part of this coordinated effort were diverse in their ideological, political and social origins. In Argentina, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), which would later become the ERP, was formed through the merging of the Trotskyist group Palabra Obrera (PO), which had participated in the intense urban labor struggles of the early 1960s, and the Frente Revolucionario Indoamericano Popular (FRIP), a Latin Americanist and Indigenist organization influenced by the ideas of Peruvian APRA leader Víctor Haya de la Torre, with influence in northern Argentina. Both organizations came together in their efforts to raise political awareness among sugar workers in the north, and in 1965 they came to an agreement that established the PRT. One of the leaders of the FRIP, Roberto Mario Santucho, prevailed as head of the new organization over Nahuel Moreno, the traditional leader of Argentine Trotskyism (Pozzi 2004; Carnovale 2011; Seoane 2003). The Chilean MIR was formed that same year as the result of the coming together of various activists who were critical of the traditional (communist and socialist) Left and its commitment to electoral politics in Chile. These activists, who belonged to Trotskyist and anarchist sectors but were also from groups that had broken away from the

communist and socialist parties, were for the most part trade unionists and students who saw social protest as the path to Chile's revolution. Although initially traditional Trotskyist sectors had a significant presence, they were eventually replaced by a new generation of activists, as occurred in Argentina (Avendaño and Palma 2001; Palieraki 2014). The Uruguayan Tupamaros were a small group created in January 1966 by various activists who for the most part had broken away from the PSU, but also from the communist party and anarchist and minor left-wing groups. From 1962 to 1965, several of these activists had met in an informal group, which they called 'the Coordinator', with the aim of supporting the protests of sugarcane workers in northern Uruguay who were occupying land and demanding agrarian reform. This movement was headed by a young law student, Raúl Sendic, a member of the PSU who had gone up north to work with rural laborers and would later be the leader of the Tupamaros (Aldrighi 2001; Gatto 2004; Blixen 2000).

To sum up in ideological terms the groups that ended in the JCR were diverse. Many came from different leftist traditions such as socialism, communism and anarchism, others belonged to different experiences of Latin American National Populism and, also, others came from Catholicism. This myriad of diverse ideological approaches expressed the initial absence of strong ideological definitions and the primacies of political agreement beyond ideologies among these groups. However, the process of encounter among these groups and the increasing influence of a Cuba that was getting close to the Soviet Union, at the beginning of the 1970s impacted on the following definitions of these groups.

In social terms these groups were policlassists. People from different social origins met in the social and political mobilization that emerged during this period. In many of these experiences there was an encounter among urban and rural sectors. On the urban side the student movement and urban trade union leaders found in the streets a cycle of protests related to the crisis of the ISI models. On the rural side an increasing mobilization of rural workers demanding social rights found the support of urban activists (students and trade unions leaders).

JCR Activisms: Strategies and Actions

The first conversations among the groups to begin the formal coordination of the JCR began in Chile during 1972 as a result of the activities of support to give asylum to the Argentinean guerrilla members who hijacked a plane from Rawson´s prison in Trelew, Argentina to flee to Santiago de Chile. Also, the imminence of a coup d'etat in Chile made MIR to think in regional strategies to develop a military resistance.

This was the context in which certain agreements were discussed at the November 1972 meetings. The first joint activities had to do with 'internships' of militants of different organizations in other countries, the incorporation of activists from the different organizations through an international leadership training school and the forming of committees tasked with military infrastructure and logistic matters in Chile.[3]

In June 1973, the second meeting of the JCR was held in Rosario, Argentina. MIR, PRT-ERP and MLN-T delegations were present at the meeting, in which Bolivia's ELN formally joined the JCR, after a series of bilateral conversations with the member organizations.[4] According to the account of one of the participants, the event lasted several days and strengthened the relationship among the organizations.[5] Each group presented a long self-criticism report, which was discussed openly by the other participants. The members of the Bolivian ELN received the loudest applause because of the symbolic meaning represented by its struggle, as it was Che Guevara's organization. In terms of practical matters, the meeting discussed the plans of the PRT-ERP to create a guerrilla foco in Tucumán, a border team was formed and tasked with

purchasing means of transportation (cargo trucks, small aircrafts, motorboats) and investing in transportation companies to ensure the movement of activists from one country to the other, and the search for contacts abroad was launched.

The documentation found in the files of the Dirección de Inteligencia de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (DIPBA) shows that simultaneously with the activities that were being conducted by each organization in Buenos Aires, the JCR was concerned with developing joint propaganda mechanisms and logistic activities to support the organizations' armed actions in their countries. Among the activities projected were the production of films, the establishment of a news agency, and the publication of a political theory magazine.[6]

A number of documents discovered in the DIPBA mention the filming project, which included a full-length film and four short films on Vietnam. The movies were to be filmed in Argentina, sponsored by the 'Grupo cine de la base' and partially financed by the Cuban-Argentine Cultural Exchange Institute.[7]

They also projected a political theory magazine in 1974 under the name *Che Guevara*. The idea was to publish in several languages. The first issue came out in November-December 1974, and the second in February 1975. The magazine was intended as a way of introducing the organization to the world. The magazine is known to have been published in at least three languages (French, Portuguese and Spanish). It featured essays penned by members of each organization giving a historical account of their actions, describing the current situation in each country, and outlining the JCR's involvement in the future plans of each organization. Each issue also included joint documents issued by the JCR and some pieces that mentioned the coordinating body's Guevarist definition. As early as March 1975 the continuity of the project was jeopardized. The third issue of *Che Guevara* magazine was not published until October 1977.[8]

The logo of the organization, featured on the back cover of the magazine, condensed the meanings that the coordinating body sought to build.[9] It shows the silhouette of a man holding a rifle high above his head, over a map of Latin America. Behind the shape of the continent is a five-point star that serves as background of the badge, and it is surrounded by a circle with the name of the JCR and its member organizations. The overlapping of these different images (the man, the continent, the star) symbolizes how the identity of these groups had been shaped. In the center was a man with his rifle, thus highlighting the core element that had brought these organizations together: armed struggle. The continent was the territory on which their actions unfolded, and the star, already used by some of the member organizations (the ERP, the MLN-T), conveyed a number of meanings associated with the international communist movement and with Latin American unity.

It is still hard to determine the degree of development that the JCR attained in terms of infrastructure in Argentina because many of the activists involved in such tasks were kidnapped and disappeared and because of the compartmentalization of information that characterized these actions, which meant that logistic information had to be kept secret. One of the few surviving leaders of the JCR, the Tupamaro Efraín Martínez Platero, recalls that the members in charge of logistics had used JCR funds to enter into agreements with land transportation companies that were critical for distributing various supplies across borders.

Many DIPBA documents from early 1975 describe several raids of JCR houses where important conspiratorial activities were conducted. A report entitled 'Procedure and Detentions of Tupamaro Elements' documents 13 house raids involving sites linked to JCR activities and the arrest of foreign activists, linking the tools and materials seized in those raids to two activities that were dubbed Plan Conejo and Plan 500 by the Buenos Aires police.[10]

The aim of Plan Conejo was to provide forged identity documents (IDs, passports, driver's licenses, police and military service cards, etc.) for the members of all the JCR organizations.

The forged documents found were Argentina, but also from bordering countries, the United States, Canada and Europe. Two houses were set up for forgery activities. Various materials used for such purposes were found in both houses, including a 'very expensive modern photographic enlarger.'

Plan 500 involved the making of 500 homemade machine guns. This project had been initiated in Chile, where the industrial units had begun experimenting with homemade weapon production, and it continued in Argentina. A month before these workshops were discovered in the raids, the ERP reported in its paper *Estrella Roja* that a machine gun that could shoot more than 500 rounds had been designed. This machine gun was the result of two previous attempts by a Bolivian ELN activist and by an ERP activist. *Estrella Roja* featured an image of the JCR 1 machine gun, as it was called, and presented it as a weapon that could be made at a non-industrial workshop, although it informed that there were also efforts underway to mass produce the different parts of the machine gun. The raids were most likely connected with the announcement of the weapon's development in this publication. The tasks involved in Plan 500 were conducted in three sites: two fully equipped shops and a covered firing range. A fourth site was used to assemble FM devices to intercept police taps.

The raids found weapons, explosives, weapon production shops, houses used for document forgery and people's prisons. These raids, which were conducted by Argentine police forces, reveal that in early 1975 the coordination efforts between the member organizations of the JCR were reaching a significant level of development in terms of infrastructure.[11] During the raid operations, two Uruguayans were gunned down, and 26 Uruguayan, three Argentine and two Chilean activists were captured.

International Networks and Contacts

The possibility of focusing on political actions abroad that had been suggested in mid-1975 had turned into the only viable alternative after the March 1976 coup in Argentina. The members of the JCR left Buenos Aires mostly for Europe, Cuba and Mexico, with a smaller group traveling to Algeria. The activities that had begun in France in 1974 continued in 1975 with the establishment of a Latin American news agency (APAL), the publication of the Che Guevara magazine, the promotion of an association of Latin American students in Europe, and various political contacts with different left-wing organizations of Europe and the Third World that were headquartered in France. From there it spread its activities to Italy, Sweden and Portugal through communities of Uruguayan, Chilean, Bolivian, and, later, Argentine exiles, who arrived fleeing the escalation of repression in their countries.[12]

One of the leading concerns of JCR activists was the establishment of political contacts to foster solidarity with the Southern Cone.[13] The organization's documents highlighted two levels of solidarity efforts. First, what they called 'broad democratic solidarity', based on the denunciation of human rights abuses. One document noted that 'in the hands of reformists, the struggle for democracy does not go beyond the narrow framework of opportunism, it never truly lives up to its principles and, therefore, it can never be the vanguard of the solidarity movement,' so that, 'as the Vietnamese say, legal movements are not reformist if they are framed in a revolutionary strategy.' For this it was necessary for the JCR to have its own democratic solidarity team that at certain moments 'would have to conduct its activities carefully masked.'[14]

The JCR's activities involved supporting solidarity and denunciation campaigns, funding lawyers appointed to defend cases connected with human rights abuses and appealing to a range of solidarity bodies that gradually emerged in the late 1970s in Europe.[15] For this reason, there was a level above this 'democratic solidarity', which was 'revolutionary solidarity', consisting in

the 'moral support provided to organizations that, like those who are part of the JCR, are fighting for liberation and socialism in a people's war.' The highest level of revolutionary solidarity was proletarian internationalism, which consisted in 'moral and material solidarity that can take the form of assistance with combatants and weapons in the war for liberation.'[16]

In a document that is most likely from 1976 the JCR poses the need to establish relations with the following parties, in order of priority: the Partido Comunista de Cuba, the Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola (MPLA), Palestine groups, and the Workers' Party of Vietnam. However, it warned that the Cuban Revolution's failure to recognize the JCR would hinder its contacts with other organizations. In the JCR's words:

> [We need to] start forging relations with Cuba, between the party and the JCR, to help neutralize the reformist pressures of the communist parties of Latin America. Let us not forget that as long as Cuba does not recognize us as a body, we will have fewer chances of furthering relations in Europe, Africa, and even Asia.[17]

The document observed that the first congress of the PCC held in December 1975 entailed the consolidation of a new foreign policy with respect to Latin America. This change had been developing since the late 1960s. The foreign policy of the Cuban Revolution had reached its most radical point in the year 1967, with the OLAS Conference and Guevara's Bolivia campaign. Guevara's death marked the beginning of a new foreign policy. This change was explained by the gradual realization that the revolutionary project for Latin America was not viable in the short term. This led to a shift in focus towards the forging of alliances with new nationalist governments of military (Peru, Bolivia, Panama) or populist (Argentina, Mexico) origin, whose agendas had nationalist and Latin Americanist elements that had points in common with Cuba and which offered some hope of easing the embargo.[18] The foreign policy document adopted by the congress of the PCC expressed this clearly: 'We will be friends of our friends, we will respect those who respect us, and our weapons will always be used to defend ourselves against anyone who decides to attack us' (PCC 1978, 523). In the Southern Cone this new situation sparked conflicts with the ELN in Bolivia and with the ERP in Argentina, where Cuba occasionally withdrew its support with the aim of improving its relations with Ovando and Perón, respectively (Mattini 2006, 179–183; Rodríguez Ostria 2006, 221–223).

The first congress of the PCC also sealed once and for all 'the unbreakable alliance that unites the parties, peoples, States, and Governments of Cuba and the Soviet Union' (PCC 1978, 514) It was in this context that the congress adhered to the objective of peaceful co-existence and the climate of international easing of tensions that had been generated in the early 1970s. It also meant adhering to the orthodoxy of the Latin American communist parties. In contrast to heterodox positions and the debate sparked in Cuba in the late 1960s the congress' ideological chapter called for a sole interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and emphasized the threats posed by the 'anti-communism' of anyone who criticized the Soviet Union from the left, and the 'ideological diversionism' and 'ideological revisionism of the left and right' of anyone who proposed interpretations of Marxist-Leninist theory that were different from the 'just' interpretation of the international communist movement. Although this section did not target anyone in particular, the tone of the accusations was similar to that of the accusations that have been directed by Southern Cone communists at the JCR's member organizations since the late 1960s.

In addition to these shifts in foreign policy that explain the change of focus in the relationship between the Cuban government and the armed groups of the Southern Cone, there were other political reasons that made the Cubans wary of the JCR. The JCR had been very vague in the definition of eligibility conditions for joining it, reflecting its intention of coordinating

efforts with a wide range of Latin American organizations and even with radical left groups in Europe. An Interpol report mentions an event that was planned for early 1974 in Argentina to which more than 14 organizations from Latin American countries would be invited.[19] A JCR document from 1977 informed that there was a significant number of 'organizations that have reached an important level of agreement with the JCR, to the point of considering the possibility of jointly carrying out activities to further that process.'[20] Although these ideas were never implemented, these groups were invited to various events held by the JCR.[21] In what seems to be a reasonable conjecture, some activists have suggested that this intention of expanding beyond the Southern Cone may have upset Cuba, as to a certain extent it meant disputing Cuba's influence over the continent's revolutionary left (Rivas 2007, 164–167).

A number of documents from the fifteenth session of meetings of the JCR held in June 1977, which were found in the ADLADC, reveal a clear interest in furthering the JCR's international position and in consolidating its institutional structure. At those meetings the JCR adopted its provisional bylaws and a work plan, which was intended to tell the world about the JCR.[22]

The operating structure set out in the bylaws included an annual conference, an executive secretariat, and a military committee that would meet regularly. These bodies had to be formed by representatives of all the member organizations, and decisions had to be reached by consensus. Three regional secretariats were also established with the aim of developing political relations in every continent: one in Mexico, for the American continent; another in France, for Europe; and a third one in Algeria, for Africa.[23]

The meeting also proposed an annual work plan that involved the implementation of the regional and local secretariats, the establishment of a school of leaders, and tasks to support the fronts. In terms of propaganda, the plan set out various dissemination activities to make the actions of the JCR known in different parts of the world. These included the publication of the two issues of *Che Guevara* magazine, the distribution of JCR documents, and the organization of various activities (such as seminars, conferences, events, etc.) to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Che Guevara's death and the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. These propaganda activities were aimed primarily at what the JCR called the 'revolutionary left' and the 'international communist movement'. Through these activities, the JCR also sought to 'organically structure the Latin American exile community.'[24]

Although this meeting's resolutions and the documents published by the JCR in 1977 gave an image of relative strength, the truth was that the situation of the participating organizations was marked by a profound weakness. In 1977 all the member organizations of the JCR had been defeated and forced to leave their respective countries. While there were countries in the region that could be used to organize a rearguard there could still be hope for a revolution. The movement of activists within the Southern Cone helped postpone the final defeat and expand the military plans of the organizations. But after the coup in Argentina the situation changed and the activists were forced to flee to faraway lands. This situation caused serious internal crises given the impossibility of continuing with armed actions in the short term. Uruguay's MLN-T and Bolivia's ELN suffered fractures as of 1974 and 1975, respectively. The MIR was dealing with an acute internal conflict prompted by the decision of its general secretary, Andrés Pascal Allende, to abandon the call for No Asylum! and seek refuge in the Costa Rican Embassy in December 1975, in an effort to escape persecution by the Direción de Inteligencia Nacional (Sandoval Ambiado 2004, 337–380). The PRT-ERP, which in 1977 had decided to pull its activists from Argentina, was also faced with internal differences that ultimately lead to its dissolution in 1978 (De Santis 2010, 647–677; Santucho 2004; Mattini 2006, 477–492). In every organization the main discussions revolved around the return to armed actions. While some considered that the prevailing conditions did not

allow for such a return in the short term, given the magnitude of the repression unleashed by the new authoritarian regimes, others proposed plans for relaunching armed propaganda actions in each country.

In Europe the great issues of debate within the JCR had to do with the assessment of the situation in the Southern Cone and the policy of alliances. The MIR and the PRT-ERP—the two organizations whose core structures were stationed abroad—had different views on each of those issues. While the MIR believed that counter-revolution had prevailed throughout the Southern Cone, until mid-1976 the PRT-ERP continued to insist that they were on 'the threshold of a revolutionary situation'.[25] The other issue of debate had to do with determining the JCR's international scope. The question was whether the coordination efforts of the JCR would be limited to Southern Cone organizations or whether it should open itself up to organizations from other continents. From what can be gathered from the 1976 documents, everyone seemed to agree on the JCR's Latin American projection, but there were disagreements with respect to the relationship with certain sectors of the 'European far left'.[26] While the PRT-ERP was reluctant to enter into political relations with certain sectors of the European left, the MIR publicly acknowledged some European revolutionary organizations and groups, 'such as Lotta Continua and Manifesto in Italy; Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire in France; West Germany's Student League and Kommunistischer Bund; and many others' that opened up 'a channel for mutual knowledge and for sharing experiences and opinions that contribute to strengthen and harmonize the world's revolutionary left.'[27] The PRT-ERP was reluctant to associate with some sectors of Europe's radical left. Although they had ties with Trotskyism, at the time they were trying to sever in order to get closer to Cuba, and consequently to the area of influence of the Soviet Union.

In late 1977, the JCR had apparently been left entirely to the PRT-ERP. None of the other organizations could deposit much hope in the JCR's coordination efforts. An aspect that revealed the weakness of the JCR's coordination efforts is the fact that when return operations began to be planned they were not coordinated by the JCR. The Bolivian and Uruguayan organizations had been practically dissolved and the Chileans had opted for enhancing their relations with Havana to further their plans for Operation Return. The PRT-ERP also faced serious problems. A number of conflicts that arose in 1977 ultimately divided the party in 1978 (DeSantis 2010, 651). In 1978, half of the surviving activists decided to leave for Nicaragua to join the FSLN and fight on the Frente Sur. After the victory of the Sandinistas, they occupied different positions in the revolutionary government.

By 1978 the JCR had disappeared. The PRT was divided, the MIR was busy with Operación Retorno, the Tupamaros were fragmented and with a small, very weakened group still in Buenos Aires trying to return to Uruguay, and the Bolivians were joining new organizations and dissolved the PRT- B in 1979. The case of the JCR was an example of how the Latin American Cold War impacted in the national political arena promoting a convergence of the local political processes. It was more the commonalities that these activists achieved during the political processes in the region than the previous ideas about Latinamericanism that enhanced the development of this network and the sharing of a political and cultural subjectivity. The short-lived experience of the JCR was the most formal case of this trend that, although it was not able to achieve an important military development, showed a common will beyond national differences of this political generation. Although these activists continued their political activity through different paths—including continuing with armed struggle, becoming involved with the human rights movement, and shifting to political projects on the center-left—the dream of a continental revolution had been crushed by the triumph of the continental counter-revolution.

Notes

1. This chapter is based on the research and the writings ofMarchesi (2018).
2. 'Hechos de Azul. Recortes periodísticos. Tomo III, 19/1/1974,' MDS, Legajo 1453, Archivo DIPBA, La Plata, Argentina. JCR (1974). 'A los pueblos de América Latina. Declaración Conjunta,' *Estrella Roja*, 31, Mar. 4, pp. 10–14.
3. See JCR (1975, Feb.). Editorial: JCR. Orígenes y perspectivas. *Revista Che*, 2. Author's interviews with Andrés Pascal Allende and Efraín Martínez Platero. See also Dinges (2005, 41–63).
4. Author's interview with Efraín Martínez Platero, and JCR (1975, Feb.). Editorial: Junta de Coordinación Revolucionaria. Orígenes y perspectivas. *Revista Che*, 2.
5. Ibid.
6. See 'Relaciones (1974),' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
7. 'Participación clandestina de un equipo técnico argentino de una filmación de películas subversivas,' MDS, Legajo 29775, Archivo DIPBA, La Plata, Argentina; and 'Pautas de discusión de objetivos y tareas del frente de cine de la JCR, 1977,' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
8. The three numbers are available in Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
9. Image taken from *Che Guevara, Revista de la Junta de Coordinación Revolucionaria*, n. 2, Feb., 1975.
10. See MDS Legajo 15174, and MDS Legajo 3010, Archivo DIPBA, La Plata, Argentina. Also, 'Memorándum I-09/975, Junta de Comandantes en Jefe, Servicio de Información de Defensa, Departamento III-Planes-Operaciones-Enlace,' in MLN-T (2011).
11. A Uruguayan intelligence document that describes the objects found in these raids lists 56 FAL rifles, 48 sub-machine guns, 50 rifles, 120 pistols and revolvers, 150 hand grenades, one ton of gelignite and assorted ammunition, two trucks, four cars, one motorboat, and four workshops (carpentry, construction, weaponry, documents), in 'MLN-T (2011).
12. 'Boletín del secretariado europeo. Información estrictamente reservada a los equipos centrales de cada país,' and 'Carta de Pepe,' Stockholm, 3/1976, Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
13. 'Relaciones,' undated; JCR, 'Acuerdo sobre relaciones políticas (junio 1977)'; JCR, 'Criterios para trabajo de solidaridad (junio 1977),' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
14. 'Relaciones,' undated; JCR, 'Acuerdo sobre relaciones políticas (junio 1977)'; JCR, 'Criterios para trabajo de solidaridad (junio 1977),' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
15. 'Boletín del secretariado europeo. Información estrictamente reservada a los equipos centrales de cada país,' 6, Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay; SIDE, 'Identificación del abogado argentino que gestionó en Suiza la intervención de una mision extranjera en nuestro pais,' Jan. 16, 1976, MDS, Varios, Legajo 4384, Archivo, DIPBA, La Plata, Argentina.
16. 'Relaciones,' undated, Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
17. Ibid., Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
18. For an excellent overview of these transformations, see Harmer (2011).
19. Interpol Ministerio de Justicia, 'JCR,' (1975), Archivo CDYA.
20. 'These organizations are the Venezuelan MIR, the Partido Socialista of Puerto Rico, Nicaragua's Frente Sandinista, Guatemala's EGP, El Salvador's FMLN, Costa Rica's Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo and Partido Socialista, Chile's MAPU, Brazil's MR8, Colombia's M19, ELN and FARC, and Argentina's Movimiento Montonero.' JCR, 'A los secretarios de Argelia, Francia y Mexico. Líneas de acción y plan de trabajo JCR,' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay, 5.
21. In Oct. 1977, the JCR planned a meeting of revolutionary movements in Venezuela. 'Plan de tareas del Secretariado Ejecutivo de la JCR,' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
22. JCR, 'A los secretarios de Argelia, Francia y México. Líneas de acción y plan de trabajo JCR,' June 1977, and 'Estatutos provisorios de la JCR,' June 1977, Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
23. JCR, 'Estatutos provisorios de la JCR,' June 1977, Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
24. JCR, 'A los secretariados de Argelia, Francia, y México. Líneas de acción y plan de trabajo,' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
25. 'Sesión Ordinaria 25/6/76,' Archivo ADLADC, Montevideo, Uruguay.
26. Ibid.
27. *Correo de la resistencia, Edición especial no. 3*, 63.

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A BALANCE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLA

Dirk Kruijt, Alberto Martín Álvarez, and Eduardo Rey Tristán

Revolutionary Triumphs

The main political objective of the armed Left was, from the outset, to take state power. Although there were important nuances in the political projects that were envisaged after obtaining victory, the basic prerequisite for their implementation was to appropriate the state structures. The radical transformation of power relations at all levels—political, economic and social—could only be brought about, in the revolutionaries' view, through the state apparatuses. These militants of the revolutionary Left also believed that it was necessary to transform individual subjectivity across the board following the triumph of the revolution. The revolutionary 'mystique' that all members of the movement were expected to possess embodied the new human being to be forged by the revolution in the future,[1] but it was preceded or prefigured by the revolutionary militants themselves. This subjective transformation implied the assimilation of new counterhegemonic values that were in complete opposition to those of bourgeois society: detachment from material goods, selfless voluntary work based on moral values, full commitment to the common good, responsibility, equality, solidarity, etc.[2] However, the dissemination of that new consciousness beyond the revolutionary cadres fully committed to the cause also required taking state power and the subsequent transformation of the education system, which would be tasked with socializing the young in those new values.

Nevertheless, the taking of state power turned out to be an objective that was difficult to achieve. As already noted, only two revolutionary movements managed to do so through the force of arms: the Cuban Movimiento 26 de Julio (M26J) in 1959 and the Nicaraguan Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) in 1979. The reasons behind their success and, by contrast, the failure of dozens of other guerrilla movements in the region, have been analyzed by Wickham-Crowley (1992). The successful groups were those that could rely on both widespread support among the peasantry and their own military strength when confronting personalist patrimonialist regimes that had lost the support of their external backer (the United States). Furthermore, neither of these two revolutionary movements corresponded to the 'ideal type' of foquismo exported from Cuba by Che Guevara and Regis Debray. Actually, both the M26J and the FSLN managed to build comprehensive, urban-rural, multiclass, revolutionary coalitions that were key to mobilizing broad sectors of society against regimes that, in their final stages, lacked solid social and political support at home and military and financial backing from abroad.

Once in power, the Cuban and Nicaraguan regimes shared certain features. The growing centralization of power in the hands of the movement—the party of the revolution whose

greatly enlarged structures would progressively merge with those of the state—was, and still is in Cuba, a dominant trait. Additionally, it is important to note the emphasis that was immediately placed on developing universal social services and policies, basically in the areas of education, health and social welfare. Similarly, mention should go to the redistribution of land ownership by means of agrarian reform, the nationalization of banks and key industries, the building of infrastructures vital for development and support for cultural manifestations authorized by the state. The aim of this series of measures was to favor, first and foremost, those social groups who had been traditionally excluded in their respective societies: peasants, slum dwellers, workers, women and the young. Initially, both projects also aspired to recuperate national sovereignty by establishing relations of mutual respect with the United States, an ambition that soon proved to be impossible owing to the aggressive stance adopted by successive US administrations. As a result, both Cuba and Nicaragua looked to the Soviets and their allies for support in an attempt to survive in a hostile international environment, thus abandoning their third—non-aligned—position in international politics in the Cold War context.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Cuban Revolution served as a source of inspiration for its Nicaraguan counterpart, the latter introduced a number of significant changes with respect to Cuban communism from the very start. For instance, the underpinning of a mixed economy and the attendant acknowledgement of private property, within an economic model that gave pride of place to the public sector under direct state control. Meanwhile, the initial aim of maintaining a certain degree of political pluralism among those at the helm of the revolutionary project was swiftly abandoned because of the desire of the leaders of the FSLN to impose their hegemony. In relation to this last aspect, the Sandinistas' conception of democracy intended to go way beyond the mere holding of elections. The Nicaraguan revolutionaries underscored the need to democratize all areas of social life (the economy, politics and culture), placing less importance on the ballot box (Martí-Puig 1997). Their idea of participation consisted in organizing the population in sectoral organizations controlled by the FSLN itself, where in theory the principal economic and political decisions should be made, although in reality it was the FSLN's national leadership that basically monopolized decision-making. In turn, this was based on the assumption that the FSLN 'was the people' and, therefore, believed that it was qualified to set itself up as the sole representative of the citizenry's interests, needs and identities.

Nonetheless, the war and international pressure obliged the FSLN to call for open elections in 1984 and 1990, processes that were considered to be free and clean by international institutions and observers—except for the Reagan administration. In the last elections, held in the midst of a rampant economic crisis brought about, to a great extent, by the war effort, the Sandinistas lost their parliamentary majority and abandoned power, thus bringing the curtain down on the revolutionary project.

Abortive Strategies

For the revolutionary Left, the armed struggle had to perform several functions: to raise the awareness of the population about the political regime's real class character, to highlight the vulnerability of the security forces and, therewith, the power structure that they were sustaining, and to act as the vital spark to kindle a mass insurrection. At any rate, the precondition for the success of the guerrilla was popular support. In most cases, however, the armed struggle did not produce the desired effect. The reasons behind this failure have important nuances in the different national cases, but even so it is possible to make several general comments in this regard.

The guerrilla groups of the first ripple chose geographically isolated, not readily accessible and, by and large, scantily populated regions as their areas of operation. Their militants, who mostly hailed from urban areas, were deployed in environments in which, as a rule, they lacked relevant social and political contacts. Most of the armed organizations in this initial ripple were unable to

recruit the locals in large enough numbers precisely because they lacked preexisting social ties that permitted them to gain access to established organizational structures and social networks (of a kinship, political or religious nature) in the regions in which they were deployed.[3] In many cases, to this should be added the active opposition or the lack of collaboration of the local communist parties, which did indeed have structures that could provide access to key organizational resources.[4]

The dependence of these first armed groups on logistic and recruitment networks established in cities located a long way away from the war zones, meant that these first initiatives were impractical. Their presence in the cities was limited and, almost without exception, this took the shape of underground supply and recruitment networks. Under these circumstances, they were powerless to implement their strategy in the cities, where they made themselves felt mainly with actions on which their very survival depended (kidnappings, bank raids, etc.) or relating to armed propaganda, which made it even more difficult to establish ties with strategic social groups, such as sectors of the middle classes. This led to the more or less rapid elimination of the organizations making up the first ripple or, at best, a radical drop in membership numbers, in which case they were either rebuilt or disbanded.

The failure of the second ripple of guerrilla activity, which mostly affected Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, yet again highlighted the constraints of the guerrilla struggle—now under its urban guise—as a strategy capable of engaging broad sectors of society. But in the 1970s, and unlike the first ripple of activity, the armed Left formed part of a broader 'movement of movements', that of the New Left, which was symbolically present in the mobilizations occurring in most of the region in 1968—Brazil, Uruguay and Mexico—and in Argentina in 1969. The radicalization of the activists of these protest movements contributed to swell the ranks of armed groups that were still in their infancy at the time, considerably so in some cases like the Argentinian ERP and the Uruguayan MLN-T. However, everything points to the fact that the urban guerrillas were incapable of drumming up the support of sectors of the population other than those who formed part of what Malthaner and Waldmann (2014) have called the 'radical milieu', to wit, more or less large groups of activists mobilized in the aforementioned protests who seconded the objectives and strategy of the armed struggle.

When all these new militants went underground, the armed organizations became gradually isolated from the popular movement and their growth potential was limited to that circle of previously mobilized activists. Moreover, the indiscriminate crackdown on both the militants of those organization and their social milieu by new authoritarian governments, which way surpassed the previous use of force against dissident groups, resulted in the systematic elimination of the guerrilla and the extinction—i.e. the physical disappearance or exile—of the cultural movements that had developed in the Southern Cone and which had given the South American New Left an extraordinary vitality at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the following decade.[5]

The third ripple of guerrilla activity had by far the greatest capacity for mobilization. The armed Left put into practice new relationship strategies with its social environment, undertaking the task of actively creating the social movement's organizational structures and championing the sectoral struggles of different collectives. This provided it with an unprecedented social base in several national cases, particularly in those in which the guerrilla linked up with the popular church movement that had been evolving (in El Salvador, Nicaragua and, to a lesser extent, Guatemala)[6] since the final years of the 1960s. In several cases, the guerrilleros were able to deploy in both urban and rural areas through their links to trade unions, student organizations or the inhabitants of disadvantaged areas. However, the armed Left demonstrated yet again that it was incapable of creating alliances with broad sectors of the middle classes—beyond the student body, the intelligentsia and the academic community. Moreover, except in Nicaragua, the guerrilla had to confront very tightly knit social, political and military elites who occasionally

could depend on plenty of support from abroad. In practically all instances, this prolonged the conflicts transforming them into civil wars (in Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia and Peru). Whenever a negotiated peace was brokered, the armed struggle contributed in a dissimilar way to democratize the political regimes, as will be seen further on.

Repression and Counterinsurgency

Insurgency instigated repression and vice versa. Violent waves of repression were sometimes unleashed by the military top brass before and after a coup, like in the case of Uruguay. Sometimes paramilitary organizations associated with the government launched terror campaigns, as occurred in Argentina. In Central America, the emergence of guerrilla movements was the result of pure desperation following decades of repression and tyranny. This is where the idea of the counterinsurgency cycle, as a counterpart to the insurgency cycle, fits in.

Both cycles roughly coincided and, indeed, influenced one another. Developments in the former had consequences for the latter and vice versa. The most infamous counterinsurgency regimes were the military dictatorships embodied by the national security regimes (see hereunder), especially in the Southern Cone. These had been preceded, in turn, by well-established, personalist regimes or even dynastic dictatorships in Central America (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua), in some Caribbean island states (Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and in South America's heartland (Bolivia and Paraguay).

By and large, even in countries where military dictatorships had matured after crushing the guerrilla insurgencies, the persecution and elimination of leftist organizations and views were still the order of the day. There were transnational linkages as regards matters such as planning, intelligence, torture, kidnappings, murders and disappearances during the years of the Plan Condor in the mid-1970s, all with US training and funding.[7]

In Latin America, the period of insurgency and counterinsurgency coincided approximately but not completely with the Cold War years and the decade following its conclusion. In many countries of the region, the Cold War was a period in which military coups became

TABLE 19.1 Institutional Military Dictatorships in Latin America (1964–1990)

Country	*From*	*To*
Argentina	1966	1973
	1976	1983
Bolivia	1964	1970
	1971	1982
Brazil	1964	1985
Chile	1973	1990
Ecuador	1963	1966
	1972	1978
El Salvador	1948	1984
Guatemala	1954	1985
Honduras	1963	1966
	1972	1982
Panama	1968	1989
Peru	1962	1964
	1968	1980
Uruguay	1973	1984

institutionalized.[8] The first institutional coup was that of 1962 in Peru. But the most important one was the military takeover in Brazil in 1964, planned after explicit consultation with both the national elites and US government representatives (Dreifuss 1981; Castro, D'Araujo and Soares 1994). The Brazilian example gave rise to a succession of Latin American dictatorships, subsequently known as 'national security regimes', established by right-wing military leaders, in which the appointment of cabinet members in the successive military or civil-military governments went hand in glove with internal promotions in one or other branch of the armed forces (in the case of Chile, also the Carabineros).[9] The military institutions of 11 Latin American countries established long-term military governments between 1964 and 1990 and, with the clear exception of Peru (1968–1980), they were all national security or ultra-right repressive regimes.

The region also has a history of military-approved governments or co-governments, for instance in Argentina (1955–1973), Brazil (1985–1990), El Salvador 1982–1989), Honduras (1971–1982, 2009–2010) and Guatemala (1966–1970, 1986–1993).

Just as Cuba had triggered the revolutionary cycle, so too did Brazil become the model for other military dictatorships of the national security type, especially in Argentina and Chile.[10] Not only the armed Left was persecuted, but the legal Left as a whole (including the Christian-Democrats). Many of these regimes were at war with their own societies, persecuting 'state enemies' and, in some cases, explicitly engaging in internal warfare. Driven by a fervent anti-communism, they ultimately waged war against the 'enemy within': 'subversive' or 'terrorist' adversaries, real (members of guerrilla movements) or imagined (the leadership of trade unions and peasant associations, left-wing writers and students, journalists, nuns and priests).[11] In Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay and, above all, Central America, it took the form of dirty war: state terrorism, including widespread torture, assassinations and disappearances. In Brazil and the Southern Cone countries, the aim was not only to deal with known adversaries but also to strike fear into the hearts of the people. The region's domestic counterinsurgency wars also involved other aspects: military intelligence, security bodies and police forces, paramilitary groups, death squads and combinations thereof. As the backbone of counterinsurgency operations, the intelligence and security systems expanded to such an extent that it soon became difficult to distinguish between their official and unofficial ties with paramilitary units (Esparza, Ruttenbach and Feierstein 2010; Mazzei 2009).

In several cases, the counterinsurgency campaigns were characterized by their paramilitary and military overkill. In Argentina, the paramilitary formations during the Isabel Perón government and the special units of the security bodies and armed forces during the dictatorship subjected the entire population to a program of intimidation, persecution and selective torture. In the first post-Allende decade, the general aim was apparently to intimidate and persecute left-wing parties and movements lock, stock and barrel, from the relatively small guerilla groups to the socialist and communist parties, through anyone remotely sympathizing with them. In Brazil, 12,000 regular troops were deployed to crush 80 guerrilheiros in northern Goiás, a campaign that can only be understood as a mission of extermination.

In Central America, counterinsurgency and guerrilla operations degenerated into full-fledged civil wars, as well as assuming the character of proxy wars between the then two world powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. As Chávez (2013, 116–123) has demonstrated, in El Salvador a counterinsurgency program and paramilitary forces were developed with US support years before the guerrilla erupted. Argentina and the United States lent a helping hand to organize, arm, train and finance an authentic counterrevolutionary force that turned

Nicaragua into a battlefield during most of the 1980s, the combined warfare in the 1970s and 1980s causing a death toll of 150,000.

Colombia's combined security forces (the military, the police and the intelligence services) amounted to nearly 400,000 men and women, surpassed in the region only by Brazil. In the past, the armed forces had been allied with the paramilitary forces created by local and regional economic elites and national politicians. The paramilitary groups acted as private death squads and performed most of the dirty work. At a certain moment, they were unified at a national level under the name of Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), with between 40,000 and 50,000 men and women.

The use of paramilitary forces was decisive in Colombia, Peru and Guatemala, the three countries with the largest number of (indigenous) victims.

Since 2016, more than 7 million people have been displaced in Colombia alone.[12] Between 1958 and 2012, the war caused 220,000 casualties, of which over 80 per cent were unarmed civilians, most of whom were victims of massacres or targeted assassinations. Of the nearly 2,000 massacres documented between 1980 and 2012, paramilitary groups were responsible for 60 per cent of them, guerrilla groups 17 per cent and the security forces (the armed forces and the police) 8 per cent. This means that for each massacre committed by guerrilla groups, their paramilitary adversaries were responsible for approximately three (NCHM 2016, 42).

In Peru alone, 20 per cent of the armed forces were deployed in the so-called emergency zones during the first years of the counterinsurgency campaign against Sendero Luminoso (SL). But at the end of the 1980s, the Quechuas themselves revolted against SL. 'Rondas campesinas' (local self-defense committees armed with handmade weapons) confronted the guerrilla columns. When SL began to attack urban slum leaders and trade unionists, it completely lost its already dubious reputation as a 'rebel movement'. The new president Fujimori (1990–2000) was swiftly convinced by the army high command that if the idea was to bring the war to a good end, this would require a special pacification strategy. Accordingly, Fujimori armed the peasant communities and placed them under military command. In May 1994, the number of Comités de Autodefensa totaled 6,750 with 400,500 ronderos (Tapia 1997, 73–74; Degregori 2012; Fumerton 2002). As a national military organization, SL was strategically defeated.

The URNG, the Guatemalan guerrilla umbrella organization, actually demobilized around 1,000 members after the signing of the peace accords in 1996. At that time, the Guatemalan army was 55,000 strong, including the rank and file, NCOs and officers, most of the privates having been drafted from indigenous Maya villages. Both the army and the paramilitary forces had been recruiting from the indigenous communities in the western region of Guatemala, the principal theatre of war, with some volunteering while others having to be press-ganged into service. The peasants who enlisted were rewarded with food, jobs, income, housing and, of course, the opportunity to loot the enemies' communities. The social cost of the operations was extremely high in terms of the death toll, the wounded and the mutilated, the refugees and the 'voluntary' and enforced migrations. Essential parts of the social fabric were deliberately destroyed.[13] In a series of brutal counterinsurgency campaigns launched between 1978 and 1983, the armed forces fielded a huge paramilitary force, the notorious PAC formed by indigenous paramilitaries. After the reconciliation between the army and the guerrilla in Cuba in March 1996, the minister of defense disbanded the 1 million Maya PAC troops, 20 per cent of the entire adult male population in Guatemala at the time.[14] The Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH) used the term 'genocide' to describe the strategy employed in several departments where the war had been most felt.[15]

Adapting to Political-Electoral Competition

Most of the revolutionary organizations emerging in Latin America after 1959 not only failed to triumph and transform their societies, but also to survive—except in a few exceptional cases—as political organizations adapted to electoral competition. Although studies have occasionally been performed on the subject in some countries,[16] it has yet to be broached on a regional scale.

Our interpretation points to a direct correlation between diverse variables: a moment of emergence and activity, the scope and effectiveness of the repression and the necessary ideological-political flexibility to adapt to the circumstances. In the 1960s, the first attempts—either stemming from previous ones that had sought to emulate the successful Cuban Revolution in their own countries or based on foquismo to revolution between 1962 and 1967—were short-lived and suffered resounding defeats and harsh repression, for which reason they did not even have the opportunity to reinvent themselves as political organizations—except in Venezuela. We understand that this possibility was also impractical given their ideological and strategic grounds. At best, as was the case in Nicaragua and Guatemala, in the following years they morphed into new armed organizations that, in the 1970s, yet again challenged the prevailing systems. Most of the leaders of those organizations had died in combat or as a result of the repression; as to the survivors, they were unable to gain a political foothold in the following decades or did so individually to little or no effect.

The urban strategies implemented in the Southern Cone since the second half of the 1960s were more enduring. This was partly due to the first adaptation of foquismo, which involved strategic proposals that facilitated the creation of larger organizations with a greater political and social impact (especially in Argentina and Uruguay). Only in Uruguay did they manage to reorganize themselves politically and integrate themselves into the electoral system with their former identities (albeit freshly adapted). The Brazilian case can be explained by the fact that the guerrillas soon bore the brunt of the ferocious repression that left few standing. In that of Argentina, it was down to both the exceedingly violent measures taken against them and internal factors, above all in the case of the Montoneros. To this should be added that the abortive strategies implemented with a view to sustaining the struggle during the dictatorship also had domestic consequences that ruled out any possibility of the surviving leaders spearheading political projects in the future.

This was not so in Uruguay. First, insofar as the repression had not been as appalling as in other Southern Cone states, most of the militants and especially the political leadership of the MLN-T came out relatively unscathed; and, second, because the solitary confinement of the revolutionary leaders in the country's prisons kept them aloof from the debilitating internal debates (in prison or in exile) on the defeat and helped them to safeguard, to a certain extent, their prestige among militants and sympathizers, alike. That, together with the ideological-political decision-making on laying down their arms and their integration into the political system as of 1985, allowed them to adapt to the rules of electoral competition, strategically transforming their organizations while vindicating their historical identity (Galiana 2017).

Lastly, whenever the armed left-wing organizations managed to transform themselves from small underground groups into large, complex, urban-rural insurgent organizations, but did not succeed in defeating their respective states, their political-organizational transformation was achieved through dialogue and negotiation. This was the case with some of the revolutionary movements with the greatest military clout in the region, including those in El Salvador (1992), Guatemala (1996) and Colombia (in different rounds between 1990 and 2016), where the armed left-wing groups became legal political parties in their respective countries. In all three cases, the guerrilleros were combating assorted authoritarian political regimes,[17] which

initiated liberalization processes throughout the 1980s and could all count on groups of elites willing to make a combined stand against the revolutionary threat and, in some cases—i.e. El Salvador and Colombia—also on strong US military support. The impossibility of military victory often led the armed left-wing groups to reconsider their revolutionary strategy.

In the case of El Salvador and Guatemala—and this is presumably what is happening again in Colombia—the goals achieved in this process of political-electoral integration depended on two circumstances. First and foremost, the strength or weakness of the armed groups' position when sitting down at the negotiation table, which enabled them or not to influence the initial terms and conditions. The Salvadorans negotiated bilaterally with the country's predominant party at the time. They managed to broker an agreement that contributed to democratize the political regime, definitively dislodging the military from the state institutions, and that allowed for the political involvement of the Left, thus guaranteeing its participation in the elections in what were practically two-party conditions. In Guatemala, in contrast, the guerrilla negotiated from a very weak political-military position, which in itself explains why the peace accords took longer to sign than in neighboring countries (in El Salvador in 1992 and in Guatemala in 1996) and the persistence of power structures and a certain degree of impunity inherited from the authoritarian period.

Second, maintaining popular support was vital. The Salvadoran guerrillas negotiated from a position of strength because they were still a military force to be reckoned with—although not powerful enough to defeat the army—which was a reflection not only of their combat potential but also of the social support that they still enjoyed. Both factors were undoubtedly interlinked. As a result of the war, the ground that they had lost and the brutal crackdown in the regions in conflict since the initial years of the 1980s—among other factors—the Guatemalans lacked the strength of their Salvadoran counterparts and had lost most of their popular support.

Considering both circumstances, it is unsurprising that the former Salvadoran guerrilla managed to become a party in 1992, maintaining its name and identity, and was soon competing for votes with the main right-wing party and the other principal actor in the peace accords. Conversely, the former Guatemalan guerrilla soon suffered a crushing electoral defeat that underscored its scant political weight in the country after its military debacle and the belated accords, which meant that it was too late to benefit from its participation in the system.

The question that is currently being asked is what model will present-day Colombia follow after the recent peace accords, and what political space will the (former) combatants of the FARC be able to occupy? The circumstances of their defeat, their position when arriving at the negotiation table, the signed peace accords and the change of cycle—both political and generational—in the country have led us to believe that this will be closer to the current state of affairs in Guatemala than that in El Salvador.

The political-electoral integration of the ex-guerrillas also sometimes led to an ideological shift that implied questioning the possibility of socialism, the role and very existence of the vanguard party and, more generally, the viability of Marxism as an interpretative frame in those movements for which it had been a defining ideological trait.

In parallel, the negotiations with the state inevitably involved accepting political pluralism, which thoroughly contradicted the revolutionary vanguard character that the organizations of the armed Left professed. Their organizational model and ideological frame had been sustained by the assumption that a movement, led by the most enlightened revolutionaries, should fulfil the role of guiding the masses. It thus claimed the exclusive right to interpret the interests and collective will of the people, an amorphous social subject who was identified, in general terms, with the dispossessed, marginalized and, in most cases, subordinated masses within the social and political power structures: a people whose participation was deemed essential, although

this was supposed to be achieved through the organic channels established by the revolutionary movement itself. Those channels were basically designed in terms of social class (workers, peasants), although in some cases there was room for other collectives defined by a number of specific social roles (women and students) or even by the place of residence (urban slums or wretched villages).

This organizational model was now unfeasible in the new circumstances at the end of the 1980s. In the new representative democracies, the Left had to renounce its vanguard role to become just another political actor, while also being obliged to recognize the autonomy (or independence) of the popular movements. The left-wing organizations had to adapt to political competition and focus all their energy and creativity on preparing themselves for elections, selecting candidates and, in the event of success, public administration. That adaptation also involved the challenge of representing the new complexity of Latin American societies in which, at the end of the 1980s, new social identities had begun to emerge—feminism, environmentalism, indigenous communities, those of African descent, etc.—which did not fall into the universal class categories used by the revolutionary Left and which, instead of calling for equality, emphasized their right to difference.[18]

On the other hand, it should be noted that this forced renunciation of their organizational model and ideological frame occurred in an international context in which the decline of the national liberation movements emerging in the Third World as from the 1950s was already evident. These movements had been committed to political decolonization, state modernization and industrialization, on the basis of a development paradigm guided by the state. The Latin American revolutionary Left perceived a community of interests, as well as similar objectives, with those governments and movements representing the radical version of the Bandung project,[19] namely, that which considered that socialism was the only way of achieving development. These movements had been in crisis since the end of the 1970s. On the one hand, the commonly held belief that the nations of the Third World formed a tricontinental community of homogeneous interests began to be refuted at the beginning of the 1970s. The thaw in relations between China and the United States, the Cambodian-Vietnamese War and the border clashes between China and Vietnam were clear evidence that the political unity of the Third World was nothing but a myth[20] and that the new revolutionary governments were putting their own national interests above Third World solidarity. On the other, at the beginning of the 1980s the authoritarian drift of the Asian and African liberation movements that had come to power in the 1960s and the 1970s and the end of cycle of the one-party systems adopted by most of them were also for all to see.

The political integration of the Latin American revolutionary Left occurred, therefore, in this international context marked by the close of the Bandung Era and the national liberation movements characterizing it. At the same time—at the beginning of the 1980s—when capitalism and representative democracy seemed to have triumphed practically the world over, European social democracy and the Latin American developmentalist projects were also in crisis.

In the middle of the 1990s and, barring a few exceptions, wherever it managed to survive, the revolutionary Left was no longer an antiestablishment political movement. If before it had focused on seizing power from the state, typical of the armed struggle phase, it now had to dedicate all of its time and energy to winning elections. Following its institutionalization, the revolutionary Left abandoned the task of attaining cultural hegemony that had characterized it during its initial years as a transnational, antiestablishment, political movement. The task of criticizing capitalism, experimenting with new forms of social organization and launching countercultural initiatives that challenged the logic of consumption and the domination of the mass media were displaced by the requirements of political competition and the management of day-to-day business.

Peace, Amnesty and Rechanneling Activism

Colombia's 'internal armed conflict' persisted during 70 long years, while that of Guatemala dragged on for 36. The guerrilla war in El Salvador raged for 20 years, as in Nicaragua where, furthermore, the guerrilla's victory was followed by a civil war lasting another eight. In the Dominican Republic, there were six attempts at deploying guerrilla forces between 1947 and 1973, with the United States even coming to the conclusion that it might be better to invade the country. In Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Peru (1980–2000), guerrilla groups were active during two consecutive decades. Only during the first cycle of guerrilla activity in Peru (the mid-1960s) and in Brazil did it last only several years, before being neutralized by the security forces. But it was Cuba, the most successful country, which experienced the shortest period of guerrilla warfare, i.e. two years.

By the turn of the century, the region's military dictatorships had been replaced by elected governments. Additionally, practically all the leftist armed groups in Latin America had laid down their arms. They had either negotiated peace accords or had been defeated by the armed forces. In the late 1990s, even Fidel Castro expressed his doubts about the continued viability of guerrilla warfare in the region. In Colombia, only the FARC and the ELN refused to join the avalanche of peace processes. At the time, with the M19 taking the initiative, seven guerrilla movements demobilized following the peace accords of 1989/90, dubbed an 'express peace' by the rest of the guerrilla movements. This process of consecutive peace accords and the subsequent Asamblea Constituyente modernized and improved the country's democratic structures considerably. The M19 became the polestar of the legal Left, which would harvest a stable 10 per cent of the vote in subsequent elections. It would take more than 15 years of interrupted peace talks before the Colombian government and the FARC signed a final and heavily contested peace agreement in 2016. After so many tentative peace talks, the ELN, now out on a limb, decided to prolong the armed conflict, without any possibility of success. Colombia is clearly the country with the greatest number of peace negotiations and subsequent amnesties.[21]

Sadly, the two countries where the civil war had lasted decades (70 years in Colombia and 36 in Guatemala), and where the peace talks had dragged on for years, notwithstanding the fact that it was evident that the guerrilla could never win the war, the people voted *against* the peace accords in a referendum, for they believed that the conditions imposed on the insurgents had been too lenient (in Guatemala in 2009 and in Colombia in 2016). Formal peace accords were only signed in Colombia (on multiple and successive occasions), El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua (twice with the Contra forces). These included specific or blanket amnesties for the security bodies and the armed forces, on the one hand, and the guerrilla organizations, on the other. In El Salvador, President Cristiani granted one such blanket amnesty amid much controversy in 1992, after peace had been achieved. Presidents or heads of state in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru (only in the wake of the first guerilla wave in the 1960s), Uruguay and Venezuela also followed suit. After serving shorter or longer prison sentences, most guerrilla leaders exercised their civil rights and sometimes managed to have their terms reduced.

Dictators and those who had ordered torture or extrajudicial killing were generally handled with kid gloves.[22] With the exception of Argentina, all democratic transitions in Latin America were accompanied by explicit amnesties or pardon legislation. The political conditions of most of those transitions made it impossible to embark on an agenda of retributive justice for the perpetrators. In the eyes of many, this meant in practice that impunity reigned. This problem had to do in part with the way in which human rights violations committed by the security forces during the dictatorships were dealt with by successive civilian governments. Democratic governments were unable or slow to create the right conditions for retribution. This was mostly

out of fear of prompting a military backlash, due to the fact that they were still under military tutelage, because there were other priorities or owing to a lack of political will. Special legislation and the convenience of delegating legal matters to the military courts meant that impunity was relatively commonplace in Brazil, Colombia, the Northern Triangle of Central America and Peru, among other countries.

The ruthlessness and brutality of the dictatorship and counterinsurgency cycle is recognized in all the subsequent reports released by truth and reconciliation commissions, ecclesiastical authorities, the United Nations and national government commissions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. With the sole exception of SL in Peru (which was responsible for nearly half of the atrocities committed), all Latin American truth and reconciliation reports have concluded that the majority of the crimes, massacres, rapes, tortures, disappearances and abductions were committed by paramilitary forces, the police, the army or secret state security forces. For their part, each and every one of the guerilla groups committed crimes, albeit to a lesser degree than their opponents.

This begs another question: what happened to the guerrilleros after the war, the peace accords or the political transitions? When referring to the political-electoral integration of some of the groups, we described the main features that help us to understand individual career paths.

In Cuba and Nicaragua, the two successful cases, former guerrilla combatants were awarded with positions of responsibility in the public sector or the party of the revolution. In Nicaragua, in contrast, the leaders of the first organizations emerging in the 1960s had either since died or, as already noted, did not go on to pursue relevant political careers.

In the Southern Cone, the leaders of the urban groups trod different paths depending on their ability to adapt their organizations' structures to political-electoral competition. As seen earlier, the Tupamaros were successful thanks to the political, ideological and repressive circumstances. This does not mean to say that all the former guerrilleros participated in the subsequent political party. Many abandoned it after serving their prison sentences or returning from exile, while others followed suit driven by their dissatisfaction with the new project because it leaned to close to one or other extreme of the political spectrum. It should be recalled that, in the 1960s and the initial years of the following decade, there were many disgruntled militants in the MLN-T who pursued a radical change in their society, but who were not always ideologically defined or, strictly speaking, aligned. As had occurred in El Salvador, only a few of the former leaders maintained the same structures and established a new political line, with many of those who did not share it falling by the wayside. In any case, the Tupamaros' political strategy, with a broad-spectrum political-electoral logic, was successful as regards its long-term development within the Left, with José Mujica, one of its ex-guerrilla leaders, ultimately becoming the country's president.

There was an aspect, missing in Argentina, which certainly had some influence in Uruguay: the fact that those who had fought for change and had been brutally persecuted for their pains had preserved most of their political prestige and, following that process, managed to reintegrate themselves into the political system. Despite its critics, the memory of the Tupamaros' struggle is still positive in Uruguay, as opposed to what happened in Argentina with the Montoneros and the Trotskyists.[23] The so-called theory of the two demons, which proliferated as soon as the dictatorship had been ousted, required that both the military and the guerrilleros be held accountable for their past acts. It went a long way—together with other factors leading to the guerrilla's defeat, the harsh repression and the preposterous attempts to resume the struggle during the military dictatorship—to generating a negative perception of the armed struggle that prevented the former guerrilleros' political reintegration. Moreover, the internal debate in the wake of the repression and exile made their reorganization impossible in light of their ex-leaders' thoroughly tarnished reputation.

This did not prevent some of the ex-guerrilleros from being reintegrated into the political system. As social mobilization theoreticians note, their individual circumstances are doubtless essential for understanding their personal and political track records (McAdam 1989). For their previous experiences of militancy predisposed them to continue to participate politically and socially. Sometimes their activism took a social form, sometimes other forms of political militancy. Many former Argentinian militants, who did not maintain their political group identity as Montoneros or members of the ERP after their reconstitution, reintegrated themselves through their participation in Peronist organizations (above all in the case of the former). And they returned to politics years later, occupying more or less important posts in the administration, especially during the Kirchner governments whose discourse was closer to that of Peronism during the 1970s and which implemented a special historical memory policy, crucial for vindicating their militant past and for surmounting the prejudice caused by the theory of the two demons.

We have already referred to the Salvadoran and Guatemalan cases and the differences in the political reintegration of the guerrilleros, which depended on a number of factors. In the main, it can be claimed that in Central America the chances of success in the postwar period depended, to a great extent, on the educational level achieved by the militants before going underground, their urban or rural provenance and the quality of their social networks, which was obviously very closely related to their social extraction.

The political-partisan struggle was the only option for reintegration open to the guerrilla's high-ranking militants. Middle- and top-level cadres often became involved in founding non-governmental development organizations initially linked to meeting the needs of the guerrilla's grassroots supporters. In other cases, the ex-guerrilleros discovered survival strategies that allowed them to continue with their activism under the new circumstances. In El Salvador, the fact that former middle- and top-level militants of different armed left-wing organizations were behind the creation of some of the first women's, environmental, community development and human rights organizations is quite remarkable. The legacy of the revolutionary militants were their valuable organizational skills that would be vital for the (re)emergence of Central American civil society as from the 1990s (Natal and Martín Álvarez 2014).

But what kind of future awaited the rank and file? In December 2006, Comandante Lola pondered on how difficult it had been for the demobilized combatants to find a decent job or to earn a stable living. After a poignant silence, she then reflected on the social reintegration of the former UNRG guerrilla members:

> I'm going to say something now that is very hard, but it's the truth: the signing of the peace meant for us that after so many years underground—for some ten years, for others 20 or 30 years, even up to 36 years—that we returned to the [social] class from which we had originally come. This means, for example, that someone who had been a poor peasant was once again a poor peasant. And someone who had come from the petite bourgeoisie went back to being part of the petite bourgeoisie. There were also people from a much more well-to-do class—more well off even than the bourgeoisie. For example, someone who had before, on account of his class, had performed an academic study and then had joined [the movement] and had gone underground—there was a big difference between the possibilities of such a person and someone who had learned how to read and write when she or he was a member of a guerrilla unit, and whom the government considered as having completed the third or the sixth grade. . . . Many male and female compañeros were left to their own devices: some searched the cemeteries for their dead relatives—the children and parents which had been massacred. Others tried to find out if they still had

> been left some plot of land, or part of some plot of land. Women and men looked for their husbands and wives only to discover that they had found other partners. This is a very profound human drama—a subject that was never discussed.[24]

This was the bitter reality for many of the Latin American insurgents.

In the wake of the civil wars, the countries of Central America were plunged into a deep economic crisis. For the most part, the demobilized insurgents, paramilitary combatants and army soldiers found themselves unemployed. Those fortunate enough were able to earn a living as legal or illegal migrants in the United States, with El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua becoming heavily dependent on their dollar remittances and to a lesser degree on those from Mexico and Costa Rica. At least it was a way out.

There was another case of mass reintegration in Colombia. In 2003, President Uribe negotiated a far-reaching settlement with the paramilitary forces in 2003, while offering those combatants willing to desert from the guerrilla ranks a legal loophole. Between 2003 and 2012, some 54,000 combatants had already handed in their weapons. According to official figures, 38,000 paramilitaries were collectively demobilized, while there were some 16,000 individual demobilizations, most of whom were deserting guerrilla combatants. Officially, all those demobilized are being socially reintegrated through a program run by the Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración (ACR; after the peace with the FARC, it changed its name to ARN in 2016).[25] As to the program's effectiveness and the chances of those participating in it of finding employment, there are differences of opinion among the analysts. There is also another debate on the unintended consequences of that demobilization, for example, the emergence of 'new criminal gangs' (BACRIM, 'bandas criminales emergentes'). According to ACR spokespersons in 2013, approximately 50 per cent of the BACRIM comandantes who had been captured or killed were former deputy comandantes of the demobilized paramilitary forces.[26] Even though it is important to stress that the demobilization as such was a success, the informal or black economy has been, in all likelihood, the only option for luckless paramilitary or guerrilla combatants, above all for the young and uneducated with no formal work experience beyond armed violence.

Utopias and Dystopias

If revolutionary insurgency was on the wane at the turn of the century, socialism achieved through the ballot box was given a new lease of life (1999–2013). During the presidency of Hugo Chávez, Venezuela and Cuba established a special relationship. If, initially, Fidel Castro played the role of wise mentor and Chávez that of his young revolutionary alumnus and successor, they gradually became equal partners. Chávez availed himself of his country's huge oil revenues to fund welfare projects for the poor and underprivileged at home and abroad. In the year 2000, Chávez and Castro cemented their relationship through a mutually beneficial agreement. In exchange for doctors, dentists, paramedics, literacy trainers, education experts, etc., Cuba received generous oil imports, reaching 90,000 barrels per day at preferential rates during the first decade of the twenty-first century. By 2013, the year of Chávez's death, the number of Cuban experts had increased to 50,000.

Back in 2004, Castro and Chávez had signed a special Cuban-Venezuelan agreement, i.e. the ALBA. Subsequently, the ALBA began to incorporate other countries, including Bolivia (2006), Nicaragua (2007) and Ecuador (2009).[27] At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, both leaders were seriously considering the possibility of spreading socialism throughout the Caribbean, Central America and South America via the ballot box.[28] They even thought

seriously about a confederation of republics: 'One country with two presidents'. It was the time of the Pink Tide of elected left-wing or center-left governments in the region. With the support of friendly governments in such important countries as Argentina (under the presidencies of the Kirchners, 2003–2015) and Brazil (under the presidencies of Lula, 2003–2011 and Dilma, 2012–2016), it seemed as if a like-minded socialist and social-democratic Left would determine the future of the entire region.

But six years after the death of Chávez and three years after that of Fidel Castro, those who are still optimistic about the future of the Left and the political importance of the former guerrilla in Latin America are few and far between. The recent election results obtained by the FARC (Colombia, 2018) and the URNG (Guatemala, 2019) as political parties were disappointing if not disastrous. During the endless years of campaigning and protracted and interrupted peace negotiations, they have alienated their potential electorate, with only a remote chance of improvement in the near future.

In Brazil, the Partido de los Trabajadores (PT) appeared to be invincible, but in 2016 president Rousseff was impeached and since 2018 former president Lula (2003–2010) has been serving a long prison sentence for corruption, after a series of contested legal proceedings. In 2019, President Bolsonaro, a former army captain with far-right leanings took office in Brazil, with a retired general as his vice-president. In El Salvador, the former FMLN president Funes (2009–2014) has been living in exile in Nicaragua, under the protection of President Ortega, since 2016, after having been accused of large-scale fraud and money laundering. By the same token, his successor President Sánchez Cerén became a 'lame duck' after the corrupt practices of part of the FMLN leadership had been publicly aired (Sprenkels, 2018, 2019). In the 2019 presidential elections, the FMLN became the country's third political party after having lost 70 per cent of the votes that it had obtained in the previous elections. In Argentina and Chile, where the former guerrilleros joined legal leftist parties and movements, the electorate opted for hard-right neoliberal presidents. The Pink Tide ebbed and now in 2019 it seems as if it were a thing of the past. In June 2019, the Cuban leadership decided to wind up the OSPAAAL, the result of the Tricontinental Conference held in Havana in 1966, under the pretext that it had fulfilled its mission. But the decision sounds like the swan song of an era.

And the fate of the ALBA, the concordat of friendly heads of government who represented the 'socialism of the twenty-first century' as an alternative to the revolutionary violence of the previous century? The generous oil and financial resources that Chávez offered friendly presidents at their discretion involved a minimum of red tape and were channeled through opaque structures, at least in the case of Bolivia, El Salvador and Nicaragua. One Bolivian cabinet member lost a key ministerial position after refusing to sign 'documents authorizing disbursements without due control'.[29] Bolivia, which has experienced continued economic growth under President Morales, has undeniably made progress in issues such as indigenous rights but he also used shock squads (the Red Ponchos) to intimidate his adversaries.

But 15 years after its creation in 2004, with its internal cohesion in evident decline, ALBA's future looks grim. As a matter of fact, the ALBA system is in disarray. The first state to withdraw from membership was Ecuador in 2018, owing to discrepancies with Nicaraguan and Venezuelan government policies. Similarly, other organizations created during the Pink Tide years are disintegrating or deeply divided. The Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR), a South American military body without the involvement of the United States, has all but disappeared. The CELAC, created in 2010 as an alternative to the OAS, without the presence of either the United States or Canada, is currently (2019) divided into two factions as a result of the crises in Nicaragua and Venezuela (Duarte Gamboa 2019). Instead, in 2017 a (new) Grupo de Lima was created with 17 Latin American member states (and with the open support of the

United States and the European Union), in order to resolve the legitimacy crisis of the Venezuelan government.

Two ALBA member states, Nicaragua and Venezuela, are governed by presidents who are regarded as dictators by a large proportion of the citizenry and who are resorting to intimidation, repression and illegitimate violence in order to hold on to power. In Nicaragua, after the retirement of most of the party and government leaders of the 1980s, the FSLN slowly morphed into a structure whose leadership brokered murky power distribution agreements with other parties during the period between 1990 and 2006, using 'order troops' and politicizing the most important government institutions such as the Supreme Court, the Electoral Tribunal, the Constitutional Court and the Office of the Comptroller. During the second cycle of FSLN governments (2007–present), Daniel Ortega, his wife and Vice-president Murillo also brought the country's local and regional governments under their control, while benefiting their supporters with social programs funded by Venezuelan petrodollars; but this financial support dried up in 2017. Since the ongoing economic and political crisis of April 2018, Ortega had been using paramilitary and police violence (the army had taken a 'neutral' stance) to cower the protesters, resulting in the country's political isolation in the region and in the government becoming a pariah regime.

Venezuela (August 2019) is a country with two presidents, but not in the circumstances that Chávez or Fidel Castro would have preferred. Chávez, also the financial backer of the ALBA, implemented his 'socialism of the twenty-first century' program based on extremely high oil prices, nationalizations and expropriations, more than 20 major social and economic reforms, new political bodies, the incorporation of the army as a co-executive body and his own charisma. He also created more than 30,000 neighborhood councils with a view to fostering the participation of the local population, with the first leaders travelling to Cuba to receive training. Additionally, following the Cuban example, he created armed civilian militias; by 2015, they were 365,000 strong and organized in more than 100 'integral defense areas'.

Maduro, Chávez's successor, soon had to grapple with a profound economic crisis and a coalition of political opponents. Inflation soared, the fall in oil prices significantly diminished the possibilities of providing the citizenry with minimum social welfare benefits and the country became hugely indebted to Russia and China. The Venezuelan government then resorted to monetary financing. In 2017, inflation became galloping hyperinflation. Crime and murder had already been rife during Chávez's presidencies, but under Maduro Caracas has become one of the most violent cities in the world (Briceño-León, Camardiel and Perdomo 2019). The armed forces became the long right (defense) and left (administration and repression) arms of the president. The opposition organized fierce anti-government protests, while the emigration of approximately 4 million citizens drained the country between 2015 and mid-2019. Maduro resorted to governing by decree, outsourcing nearly all the essential executive government institutions and audit bodies to the military and using military and paramilitary repression.

In the 1960s, when Che Guevara once wrote about revolutionary violence as a means of achieving socialist utopias, insurgent guerrilla movements were initiated by revolutionaries who believed in the moral superiority of the Left.[30] Being a guerrillero was tantamount to being a hero willing to lay down his or her life in defense of his or her ideals. Guevara's own interventions in the Congo and Bolivia were catastrophic. His comrades in arms, who managed to spirit him away to Tanzania, still ponder on the fact that most of Che's Cuban combatants knew that their mission was impossible and would end badly. They accompanied Guevara out of loyalty and their commitment to 'the cause'.[31] The Cubans accompanying Guevara to Bolivia were all veteran combatants. Some had fought by his side in the Sierra Maestra as members of his 'suicide platoon', while others had previously accompanied him in the Congo. Again, this was a cause

for which it was worth dying. After his death, Guevara was transformed from a guerrilla hero into a revolutionary martyr and, to a greater extent, a civilian saint of sorts, admired as a role model because of his absolute dedication and ascetic radicalism. Entire guerrilla generations tried to follow Guevara's example. In the 1970s, young recruits of the Sandinista guerrilla solemnly declared their loyalty 'to the Fatherland, History and Che Guevara'. The romanticism of the guerrilla's moral superiority persisted into the 1980s. When reflecting on his generation, Roberto Cañas, a Salvadoran FMLN comandante, remarked,

> I was brought up with the idea that to be a member of the Left meant belonging to an intellectual aristocracy. You were part of the future of humanity. You were the precursor of the New Man. This was who we were. The most prestigious and superior people of all.[32]

Would he or any other former guerrilla leader still contend this without a minimum of doubt or self-criticism? In comparison with the counterinsurgency actors, the reports released by the Latin American truth commissions are considerably more indulgent with the guerrilleros than with their adversaries (the security bodies and armed forces, paramilitary groups and death squads). But these conclusions refer to the degree of guilt in terms of murders, massacres and the number of victims.

Judgements about post-revolutionary governments are made by the electorate and, should there be abuses, by the courts, leading to a more complex state of affairs. At best, the revolutionary cycle produced elected leftist-reformist governments and parties and movements acting with propriety. But it also led to dystopias. On the flip side, some post-revolutionary governments in Central and South America are currently characterized by political abuses, corruption and violence of the kind that, decades before, once drove so many insurgents to take up arms against tyranny and social injustice.

Notes

1. That 'new man' was defined by Ernesto Guevara (see Guevara, E. (1965, Mar. 12). El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba. *Semanario Marcha*, Montevideo). At the same time, he himself ended up being identified with that revolutionary archetype. The 'new man' had already been exalted in the Soviet Union during the 1920s, with similar characteristics including abnegation, voluntary work, selfless sacrifice and dedication to the new society (Figes 2008).
2. These values were transmitted through a variety of cultural and artistic expressions. Cinema, theatre, poetry and popular music were some of its principal manifestations and, by mobilizing emotions, they made an important contribution—yet to be explored in depth—to the dissemination of the political culture of the Latin American revolutionary Left. Many artists joined, even formally, the armed organizations in their respective countries, including the Argentinian filmmaker Raymundo Gleyzer (PRT), the Guatemalan poet Otto René Castillo (FAR), the Salvadoran Roque Dalton (ERP) and the Peruvian Javier Heraud (ELN).
3. There were of course several local exceptions like, for example, the connections of the Peruvian MIR with the peasant trade unions, cited in Chapter 6.
4. With the notable exceptions of the PGT the PCV and the PCCo, which became involved in the most far-reaching armed struggles in this stage.
5. This also included the dismantling of research centers and the exile of leftist social scientists who had produced a rich corpus of counterhegemonic thought from which the New Left throughout the continent drew inspiration at the end of the 1960s.
6. This connection with the popular church movement had also occurred in the case of the Argentinian Montoneros. Nonetheless, in Argentina it was a fundamentally urban organizational infrastructure, while in Central America the popular church movement also opened the way to substantial peasant support for the guerrillas.
7. For a detailed analysis, see McSherry (2005).
8. For a characterization of these types of coups, see Lehoucq and Pérez-Liñán (2014).

9. Regarding Latin American military regimes, see Loveman (2014), Koonings and Kruijt (2002). On the torture regimes and the role of the United States, see Menjívar and Rodríguez (2005). For a classic analysis of military involvement in politics, see Rouquié (1982).
10. Concerning the role of Brazil in the region, see Harmer (2011).
11. About the 'construction of enemies of the nation', see Franco (2012).
12. According to its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2018). *Colombia*. [online] Available at: www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia [Accessed on 22 Sept. 2017].
13. The CEH report (1999, 133–138) provides details on the social movements that vanished and those of their leaders who were tortured and 'made to disappear'.
14. Interview with General Julio Balconi, the minister of defense who disbanded the PAC a couple of months before the peace accords were signed in 1996 (Guatemala City, 15 Apr. 2010). See also Sáenz de Tejada (2004, 77). The build-up of the PAC was confirmed by the peace negotiator Héctor Rosada-Granados between 1993 and 1996 (interview with Dirk Kruijt in Guatemala City, 14 Apr. 2010).
15. The best and most detailed analysis of the terror campaigns is to be found in ODHAG (1998, II).
16. For Nicaragua, El Salvador and Uruguay, see, for example, Martí-Puig, Garcé and Martín Álvarez (2013), and on the Montoneros' adaptation to the Argentinian political system, Gorbato (1999).
17. The Colombian political regime is a case apart in this respect. From 1958 to 1991, the formally democratic political system was controlled by two traditional parties (liberal and conservative). By means of different agreements and restrictions political power remained exclusively in the hands of the traditional elites. After the establishment of the 1991 Constitution and in the context of the pledge to include the armed Left in the political system, there was a transition from a limited democracy to one without restrictions, albeit of poor quality (Bejarano and Pizarro Leongómez 2002).
18. In this regard, the paper published by Hale (1997) is enlightening.
19. For a more detailed analysis of the Bandung project, see Amin (1999).
20. Regarding the idea of third-worldism as a 'myth', see Chaliand (1979).
21. In relation to the peace processes in Colombia, see Pizarro (2017).
22. Here, we have drawn from Koonings and Kruijt (2002) and Kruijt and Koonings (2012).
23. The leaders of the Tupamaros were released from prison in 1985 amid a great deal of media coverage and popular recognition. With their halo of repressed freedom fighters, which had remained intact during their arduous confinement, they were accepted and even acclaimed. They soon began to deliver statements and conferences and to visit deprived neighborhoods to meet with those calling for a greater recognition of their history and political positions.
24. Interview with Alba Estela Maldonado (Guatemala City, 15 Dec. 2006), quoted in Kruijt (2008, 151). At the time of the interview, she was the UNRG's one and only parliamentarian.
25. In June 2017, it modified its structure and was renamed Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización.
26. See ARC-ARN sources quoted in Kruijt (2017, 50).
27. Furthermore, six smaller Caribbean island states joined between 2008 and 2014. As to Honduras, which joined in 2008, Venezuela excluded the country a year later, following the successful military coup against President Zelaya. For its part, Suriname came aboard later on.
28. For a number of excellent studies, see Angosto-Ferrández (2014).
29. We have preserved the anonymity of our source.
30. Anderson's (1997) bibliography of Guevara is still the most quoted and enlightening in this regard.
31. Interview with Osvaldo Cárdenas (Havana, 18 Jan. 2012, in Suárez Salazar and Kruijt 2015). Cárdenas, a member of the Departamento América, recovered Guevara's original diary and was asked to keep it safe. In 1982, the diary was finally published.
32. Roberto Cañas, interview with Dirk Kruijt in San Salvador, 10 Aug. 2005.

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