



**TWENTIETH CENTURY
GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS
IN LATIN AMERICA**
A PRIMARY SOURCE HISTORY

FERNANDO HERRERA CALDERÓN

ROUTLEDGE

TWENTIETH CENTURY GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

Twentieth Century Guerrilla Movements in Latin America: A Primary Source History collects political writings on human rights, social injustice, class struggle, anti-imperialism, national liberation, and many other topics penned by urban and rural guerrilla movements.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Latin America experienced a mass wave of armed revolutionary movements determined to overthrow oppressive regimes and eliminate economic exploitation and social injustices. After years of civil resistance, and having exhausted all peaceful avenues, thousands of working-class people, peasants, professionals, intellectuals, clergymen, students, and teachers formed dozens of guerrilla movements. Fernando Herrera Calderón presents important political writings, some translated into English here for the first time, that serve to counteract the government propaganda that often overshadowed the intellectual side of revolutionary endeavors. These texts come from Latin American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and many more.

The book will be indispensable to anyone teaching or studying revolutions in modern Latin American history.

Fernando Herrera Calderón is Associate Professor of Modern Latin American History at the University of Northern Iowa, USA.



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TWENTIETH CENTURY GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

A Primary Source History

Fernando Herrera Calderón

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ACRONYMS

ALN	Ação Libertadora Nacional [National Liberation Action] (Brazil)
DFS	Dirección Federal de Seguridad [Federal Security Directorate] (Mexico)
EGP	Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres [Guerrilla Army of the Poor] (Guatemala)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional [National Liberation Army] (Colombia)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional [National Liberation Army] (Peru)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional [National Liberation Army (aka Ñancahuazú Guerrilla)] (Bolivia)
EPR	Ejército Popular Revolucionario [Popular Revolutionary] (Mexico)
ERP	People's Revolutionary Army [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo] (Argentina)
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional [Zapatista National Liberation Army] (Mexico)
FA	Frente Amplio [Broad Front] (Uruguay)
FALN	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional [Armed Forces of National Liberation] (Puerto Rico)
FALN	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional [Armed Forces of National Liberation] (Venezuela)
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes [Rebel Armed Forces] (Guatemala)
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias [Revolutionary Armed Forces] (Argentina)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army] (Colombia)
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front] (El Salvador)
FPMR	Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez [Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front] (Chile)

FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional [Sandinista National Liberation Front] (Nicaragua)
FSTMB	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia [Union Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers] (Bolivia)
GPG	Grupo Popular Guerrillero [Popular Guerrilla Group] (Mexico)
JCM	Juventud Comunista de México [Mexican Communist Youth] (Mexico)
LC23S	Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre [23rd September Communist League] (Mexico)
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril [19th of April Movement] (Colombia)
M-26-7	Movimiento 26 de Julio [26th of July Movement] (Cuba)
M9-8	Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro [8th October Revolutionary Movement] (Brazil)
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria [Revolutionary Left Movement] (Chile)
MLN-T	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros [Tupamaros National Liberation Movement] (Uruguay)
Montoneros	Movimiento Peronista Montonero [Peronist Montonero Movement] (Argentina)
MRTA	Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru [Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement] (Peru)
PAN	Partido Acción Nacional [National Action Party] (Mexico)
PCB	Partido Comunista de Bolivia [Communist Party of Bolivia] (Bolivia)
PCCh	Partido Comunista de Chile [Communist Party of Chile] (Chile)
PCM	Partido Comunista Mexicano [Mexican Communist Party] (Mexico)
PDLP	Partido de los Pobres [Party of the Poor] (Mexico)
PGT	Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo [Guatemalan Party of Labor] (Guatemala)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional [Institutional Revolutionary Party] (Mexico)
PS	Partido Socialista de Chile [Socialist Party of Chile] (Chile)
PSU	Partido Socialista del Uruguay [Socialist Party of Uruguay] (Uruguay)
SL	Partido Comunista del Perú – Sendero Luminoso [Communist Party of Peru – Shining Path] (Peru)
UP	Unidad Popular [Popular Unity] (Chile)
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca [Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity] (Guatemala)

INTRODUCTION

Guerrilla movements were exceptionally widespread in twentieth-century Latin America. They left a significant imprint on political culture and, in some cases, were instrumental in the emergence of human rights movements. Few countries avoided political upheavals and social instability. As city denizens carried out their day-to-day business, they were almost guaranteed to encounter some political actions that challenged their daily routine. Peasant-led guerrillas also transformed the countryside and mountains into major epicenters of armed resistance. Centuries of exploitation, discriminatory policies, distrust in both local and federal governments, and unfulfilled promises galvanized direct action by peasant communities. Guerrilla movements instilled a sense of empowerment and hope in the country's poor, working class, students, professionals, and many more living under military dictatorships or authoritarian regimes dressed up as democracies. Every armed organization herein was created after years of civil protests and direct action.

When legal channels failed to generate radical reforms, many entertained and accepted armed struggle as the vehicle to bring about radical change and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. For countless social activists, the electoral ballot had increasingly failed them and they refused to continue taking their chances with electing people that purported to represent their best interests. Governments and their elite allies were forced to respond immediately to signs of civil disobedience by ordering the armed forces to quell dissent and maintain order, even if it meant violating citizen's rights and the rule of law. Groups staunchly against changing the status quo and social fabric responded aggressively to social mobilizations, and activists paid dearly for their dissent. In conjunction with the military and repressive governments, special interest groups

openly supported brute force against the general opposition. Governments devised a program that attempted to taint organizations in any way that discredited their movement's purpose and, at the same time, promoted them as the pillar of democracy. These sorts of political moves pitted social classes and families against each other and fostered even greater polarization across generations.

The current literature on twentieth-century Latin American urban and rural guerrilla movements and revolutions is vast and continues to grow. Over the last two decades, formerly inaccessible sources have become available to researchers, particularly documents dealing with government-sponsored atrocities. The declassification of government documents opened opportunities for new understandings about recent events that left questions unanswered and society mulling over what happened. Many innovative publications on the Salvadoran Civil War and the United States' involvement in supporting undemocratic regimes in the region are taking advantage of the wealth of information now available to researchers. No doubt, the glory days of studying Central America were in the 1980s and early 1990s when the region was in the process of culminating decades of civil war, and people were addressing US imperialism and Cold War policy in Latin America. Yet, as these new projects have shown, these topics continue to attract investigators and broaden our perspective about the long- and short-term ramifications of armed struggle in Latin America and the rest of the world.

I have always wanted to publish a book on twentieth-century revolutions in Latin America. It seemed appropriate since I periodically teach a course on the subject. Teaching revolutions, insurgencies, and armed struggles is unavoidable in any modern Latin American survey or topics course. Academics have a plethora of scholarship and non-scholarly literature to choose from and assign to their students; the challenging part is deciding which to use. From general textbooks that cover the halcyon days of revolutions and armed struggles between the 1960s and 1990s, individual case studies span an even wider timeframe, beginning with the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to today. Many of these articles and books make valuable contributions and will continue to be utilized in surveys and topics courses.

One would assume that given the enormous repertoire of works already available, little remains to weigh in on and contribute to the prevailing body of literature. My issue has been with the dearth of primary sources—specifically, translated documents that non-Spanish speaking students can read, and academics can use in their courses. Indeed, no scholar of revolutions can write a book or an article without toiling through the profound and sometimes repetitive and amorphous theoretical documents produced by an organization's leading political philosophers or "advanced" militants. Guerrilla insurgencies offer us a rare glimpse into the guerrillas' political thinking in the most raw, most open, and perhaps most revealing form. One cannot proceed without integrating these indispensable documents in their study in order to understand the historical, political, social, and cultural elements that informed an armed revolutionary

organization's ideology and rationale for taking up arms. I believe that students must also be given the same opportunity to read the words written by those who were at the forefront of a major revolutionary project and, in some cases, are no longer alive.

Too often, armed propaganda (kidnappings, expropriations, assassinations, etc.) overshadows the countless hours an organization's leading philosophers expend writing political texts to advance their revolutionary endeavors and win the hearts and minds of the people. These political writings also served to counteract government propaganda that presented guerrillas as uncultured, bloodthirsty, trigger happy maniacs disconnected from reality by emphasizing the intellectual side of the revolutionary underground. While guerrilla movements were not infallible and often made dramatic mistakes, these documents help to explain how each action, however controversial it might have been, was a necessary step toward the people's emancipation, bringing down a military dictatorship, or defeating imperialism.

Guerrilla movements, while they might be things of the past, continue to find expression in student, intellectual, peasant, and worker circles and remain deeply entrenched in political culture. Their ideas are regularly invoked by new social movements and those who feel they are carrying on the struggle their antecedents left for them to finish. Therefore, if we want to understand Latin American political culture and why revolutions and social movements are so prevalent in the regime, we must look back and unearth the roots of these episodes of social strife.

Admittedly, the documents in this volume represent only a small percentage of those produced by guerrilla movements. Compiling them all would result in countless volumes. Still, the documents selected herein provide the reader a way to understand the mindset of a guerrilla movement and what motivates their struggle. In the end, this volume hopes to accomplish two things: help fill a void that teachers of revolutionary movements in Latin America regularly encounter; and prompt the students, or anyone else who reads it, to further research these and other guerrilla movements and produce new works and explain why and how they remain relevant today.

Note on translations: These documents were translated from Spanish and Portuguese by the author, unless otherwise indicated. The reader will notice that in some cases, parts of the translation might sound literal. This was done in order to maintain a consistency in style and prose, and respect the author's original message and text.

1

ARGENTINA

Montoneros (Movimiento Peronista Montonero), MPM

The Montoneros emerged in 1970 and became one of the most targeted urban guerrilla movements by the military dictatorship that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983. It formed part of the left-wing faction that supported former President Juan Domingo Perón and his return from exile in 1973. Perón was overthrown by a military coup in 1955, fleeing first to Paraguay and eventually Spain. Over the course of four years, between 1969 and 1972, Argentina experienced a series of mass political mobilizations by pro-Perón supporters and opponents of the dictatorship. The most significant, dubbed *El Cordobazo*, took place in the city of Cordoba, northwest of Buenos Aires, under the direction of labor groups that formed part of the General Confederation of Labor of the Argentine Republic (*Confederación General del Trabajo de la República Argentina*), or CGT. Government repression was swift and vicious, leading to the arrest of several leaders and numerous deaths. A second *Cordobazo* erupted in 1971 in response to the assassination of a famous unionist. In the end, dictator Roberto Marcelo Levingston was forced out of power, paving the way for Perón's return. Upon his return, unions and leftists had high expectations and presumed Perón would reinstate reforms taken away by past regimes. However, a falling out between the Montoneros and Perón catalyzed radical change, and tensions flared up. When Perón died unexpectedly in July 1974, just under a year after taking power, the political situation became increasingly unstable when Perón's second wife, Isabelita, assumed the presidency. Isabelita unleashed the notorious Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (*Alianza Anticomunista Argentina*), better known as the Triple A, against armed revolutionary groups. Her mismanagement of the political crisis paved the way for the military to take power in 1976 and carry out a

2 Argentina

“dirty war” against domestic subversion. The following year, the Montoneros, led by the controversial figure Mario Firmenich, issued “Grounds for National Unity Against the Military Dictatorship,” which eloquently describes the prevailing political and economic crisis that beset the nation. Moreover, the document reads like a step-by-step blueprint on how to build a united and fearsome front against the military dictatorship.

Grounds for National Unity Against the Military Dictatorship

The Crisis of the Dictatorship

Nine months after it took power, the dictatorship is already in crisis because its Economic Plan generates popular opposition (currently a worker can only buy half of the items they could purchase in June 1973) and does not please some sectors who had staunchly backed the military coup. What is happening is that the oligarch [José Alfredo] Martínez de Hoz is developing a plan that privileges the agro-exploiting oligarchy more than industrial monopolies. Thus, the monopolies want to modify the economic program to benefit them more than the oligarchy. This is very possible given that in our country, the monopolies have more economic and political leverage than landowners.

The monopolies need to implement an economic plan that permits them to increase their production in order to boost profits. To do this, they want to widen the domestic market since the bulk of the industrial output is not export-oriented but for domestic consumption.

These adjustments to the economic plan would also require some modifications in the dictatorship’s political schemes, since the monopolies, in their efforts to enhance the production and consumption capacity of the internal market, need an intermediary (collaborationist unionism) to negotiate and keep the workers under control. We have to take advantage of this to demand greater legality for our struggle and union organizations.

That’s why by the end of 1976, the generals, admirals, and brigadiers were all fighting among themselves to try to solve this mess. These clashes came to light when each side began accusing the other of vying for their positions. These conflicts also show the dictatorship’s profound deficiencies, which, only nine months since the coup took place, is already in crisis and without a way out.

This crisis is the product of not only internal contradictions but mostly the people’s resistance to the implementation of its anti-popular and anti-national projects. Isolated and repudiated, they will find themselves in need of giving into more inclusive participation as a means to alleviate widespread tensions. We must take advantage of this by putting “one foot in the door” so that they can no longer close it on us, pushing hard to open it definitively.

Unity and Resistance Against the Military Dictatorship

In one of the many speeches that the military made, Admiral [Armando] Lambruschini stated that they are not for national unity between “Civilization and Barbarism.” According to this *gorila*, “Civilization” is the oligarchy and US monopolies’ livestock, whereas “Barbarism” is the workers and the people. We, on the other hand, do want NATIONAL UNITY, but not by that “Civilization,” whether it be with the sectors represented by Admiral Lambruschini, the oligarch Martínez de Hoz, Alsogaray, or Ford and General Motors. We want the unity of the working class, workers, peasants, merchants, students, professionals, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, the people’s priests and bishops, and military patriots. We want the unity of all Peronism and all popular and national political and social forces.

This national unity is the reconstruction of an alliance by 10 million voters who voted for change on March 11, 1973, for freedom based on the support of each of their respective parties (Frejuli [Justicialist Liberation Front], UCR, [Radical Civic Union], APR [Popular Revolutionary Alliance]), and who witnessed their expectations frustrated.

We must fight so that this national unity is represented in a single body that stands for all workers without exclusions of any kind, functions as an effective tool to secure wage increases and contract improvements, and respects labor rights, and the recovery of unions and the CGT currently under the military dictatorship’s control.

We support the need to strengthen, develop, and consolidate the General Confederation of Labor in the resistance, and organic bodies (Delegates, Internal Commissions, and Unions) to fight for demands and recover the CGT and the unions that have been seized. It is necessary to unite these struggles with those of all the unions and internal commissions that have not been affected and can carry out the legal battle.

Thus, from the unions, the CGT, and the legal bodies that still exist, it will be possible to consolidate the struggle of the working class as a whole to defend its victories, achieve its demands, and recover the CGT, which will be led by the authentic representatives of the workers and not by the colonels, the commodores, or collaborationist bureaucrats. This will permit us to reclaim the unions and the CGT as we did 20 years ago when the so-called “Liberating Revolution” also tried.

National Unity and the National Liberation Front

We will ensure that national unity is expressed politically through a single structure in which all popular and national forces prepared to face the military dictatorship of the oligarchy and imperialism can converge.

4 Argentina

We propose the formation of the National Liberation Front (FLN) based on the program and the candidates voted for by a majority on March 11, 1973. This Front will be a body capable of fighting for the dictatorship, calling for free elections without proscriptions, and imposing once again a people's government that satisfies the interests of the national majority.

The Montoneros, through the different branches of the Montoneros movement, will vigorously promote the development of the CGT in the resistance and the construction of the National Liberation Front to end this exploitative and murderous dictatorship as soon as possible, as we did in 1973 with the so-called "Argentine Revolution."

On the other hand, through militias and the Montoneros army, we will actively participate in the popular resistance to ensure the program and the Front's candidates triumph.

A Calling

To restore justice and peace in our country, the Montoneros call on all the people to consolidate the CGT's union structures in the resistance, reorganize the Peronist Movement into the Montoneros movement, and build the National Liberation Front in order to fight for these five minimum points.

Modification of the Current National Policy

- Removing Martínez de Hoz
- An occupation plan
- The return of real wages to their June 1973 level

The Withdrawal of the Military from the Unions and the CGT

- The immediate return of labor unions
- Restitution of gains made during the last Peronist government (Law on Professional Associations, Employment Contracts, and Joint Ventures)

The Absolute Establishment of Human Rights

- End to all forms of repression and torture
- Freedom for everyone detained without judicial cause
- The publication of a prisoners' list recognizing the thousands of kidnapped Argentines
- The right of a defense

Restoration of Civil Liberties

- The restoration of political rights and freedom to Héctor J. Campora (forced to remain isolated in the Mexican embassy) and to all political prisoners, trade unions, students, and the masses
- Freedom of assembly, expression, and press for all popular sectors
- The end of the ban on political parties

Call for Elections Without Proscriptions

We Call for Free Elections Without Restrictions

Popular Resistance Against the Military Dictatorship

We Will Overcome

Montoneros, National Leadership

Mario Eduardo Firmenich, Martín Montenegro, Lucio Medina, Raúl Navarro

Source: El Montonero, no. 13, 1977

People's Revolutionary Army (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo), ERP

Mario Roberto Santucho helped start and lead the *guevarista* People's Revolutionary Army from 1970 until his death at the hands of the armed forces in 1976. Next to the Montoneros, the ERP was one of the largest guerrilla movements in Argentine history. Before collapsing at the hands of the military dictatorship, it made significant strides toward radicalizing and organizing workers. Before he created the ERP, Santucho established the Workers' Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores*) in 1965, following the merger of the Popular Indo-Americanist Revolutionary Front (*Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular*) and the Workers' Word (*Palabra Obrera*). Immediately, political differences caused internal conflicts between the Marxist–Leninist wing led by Santucho and the Trotskyist branch which praised Juan Domingo Perón. Santucho opposed Peronism, believing it had usurped the workers' movement by appearing revolutionary when in reality it practiced bourgeois populism; and therefore, stifled the movement's right to self-determination. In 1968, the Santucho wing split and created the PRT-ERP. Santucho remained fervently committed to Marxism–Leninism and emphasized the centrality of the industrial proletariat in the revolutionary process. While other revolutionaries sought to build a heterogeneous movement to overthrow the military regime, Santucho and his cadre expended most of their time and energy on preparing the workers.

In 1976, the ERP released a political work titled “The Working-class: The Backbone of the Resistance.” Apart from reaffirming Santucho’s thesis about the working class as a key player, the document speaks to the importance of “Resistance Committees” in organizing factory workers and raising their revolutionary consciousness.

The Working Class: The Backbone of the Resistance

Throughout the country, around 300,000 factory workers concentrated in some 250 large factories, with more than 500 workers in each, are the backbone of the popular forces. They, therefore, constitute the backbone of the just and victorious anti-dictatorial resistance of the Argentine people. It is from this great working mass that the revolutionary forces are and will be mainly nourished. From this mass, a significant portion of the leaders, cadres, militants, sympathizers, and collaborators of our Party, the Revolutionary Workers Party, the vanguard, and leadership of the anti-dictatorship, anti-imperialist, and socialist struggle, will emerge. Marxism–Leninism, the science of revolutionary politics, discovered the revolutionary and leading role of the proletariat in the class struggle, during the present universal historical period of transition from capitalism to socialism. This scientific discovery, which has been categorically proven in practice and is especially relevant in our country, makes it possible to correctly organize a revolutionary activity, focusing it on the most concentrated masses of factory workers. Because the industrial proletariat is subjected to daily exploitation in the very heart of the capitalist machinery, gathered there in large numbers, it is in the best position to receive and embrace revolutionary ideas, to mobilize with tremendous enthusiasm the broad working masses, the less concentrated workers, the rural workers, the average peasants and children, the employees, the students, the independent workers, etc., etc., in a formidable and consistent deployment of immense popular energy, wisely organized and led by the proletarian combat party, of which the PRT is today the fundamental nucleus.

The Party in the Big Factories

This is why our Party considers the large factories that we call factory fronts to be the number one priority of its political–revolutionary activity, and in which we develop a coherent and harmonious multilateral effort of demands, politics, agitation, propaganda, military action, etc. This is work that must be accelerated even more in the present conditions, given the total illegality of our struggle. Because as the repression intensifies and targets the big factories, more complicated situations are created, and therefore more attention and dedication will be needed.

The Party’s revolutionary activity in the factory can be initiated within the factory or by partisan efforts from the outside. In both cases, once the

first cell is formed, it is necessary to proceed with vigor, skill, and prudence. We must move forward with determination to maintain a powerful organizational presence to promote the opposition struggle, sabotage, self-defense, and the Committees of Resistance. We must also move forward with a strategy of systematically organizing the Committee Front of the PRT, the military cell (trio) and guerrilla front's political leadership, the propaganda trio, the mass cell, the trade union trio, the Guevarist Youth League, and ensure that the Committee Front and its cells are performing organically. We must move forward with caution to ensure that spies do not infiltrate the cells, that the enemy cannot identify the members of the organization, that no one knows more than they need to, and that all tasks are carried out with strict security measures.

Underground Resistance Committees

The new phase of our struggle began with Videla's military coup is characterized by limiting the legal options to a minimum and shifting the bulk of the people's struggle underground and to violent terrain. Because even a single strike over a minor issue is forbidden and repressed because rights are trampled upon because any popular attempt to organize and fight immediately attracts the wrath of the murderous military. Is this why our people will cease to mobilize and defend themselves? Not at all. What we Argentines will do is mobilize, organize, and fight differently. Today everyone is suffering from dictatorial oppression; therefore, the people will be ready to resist. The way to organize this mass resistance is through the formation of Resistance Committees in factories, neighborhoods, towns, villages, universities, etc. This path should revolve around the Resistance Committees in the large factories as the leader and people's organizer, which, as we have seen, is the responsibility of the Argentine industrial proletariat. We still do not have the experience in the country to explain in detail how these Committees will be organized. But in proposing their creation, we can refer to their program, their integration, their organic principles, and the activity they need to develop.

Program

Given the goal of waging an unwavering fight and obtaining mass support, the Resistance Committee's program should address the following points:

1. Fight the military dictatorship.
2. The defense of the standard of living and the unionist and democratic rights of the workers.
3. Solidarity with all political and social prisoners.
4. Anti-dictatorship and patriotic unity of all the people.

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Naturally, point 2 of this program, which refers to the most immediate demands of the factory workers, constitutes the real programmatic axis, which, varying from place to place, by the problems of each factory, interpreting exactly the aspirations and needs of all the workers, will help to acquire massive support for the Resistance Committees...

Integration

Since political bodies are involved, they must be made up of representatives of the anti-dictatorship parties and tendencies with real work in the factory concerned and independent activists from the factory. The Resistance Committees will thus be a broad-based unitary body with excellent resources, a pioneer of the unbreakable workers' and people's unity required for the development of our revolutionary struggle.

Organic Principles

The Resistance Committees have to be clandestine, secret bodies with effective and nimble management, with branches in every section of the factory. The Committees must be well organized, their members must be kept secret, and they must act under strict security measures and skillful plotting methods to successfully overcome the repression. We must not be recklessly singled out by the company, the bureaucracy, or repression; we must prevent panderers and spies, organize our fellow activists into small groups both at the base and in management, organize a good system of links inside and outside the factory so that the resistance's activities are carried out in unison by all groups, etc. The underground experience of our organization and other revolutionary organizations or groups will serve as a basis for the proper structuring of the Resistance Committees.

Activities

The Committees' tasks are:

- a) To promote the struggle to recover the unions, and energize or form legal and semi-legal groups, lists, or commissions;
- b) To carry out systematic written political propaganda for the anti-dictatorship resistance;
- c) To sabotage production;
- d) To support solidarity with political and social prisoners;
- e) To organize lightning events, demonstrations, and other acts of agitation and resistance;
- f) To promote and encourage, by example, unity among workers and people.

Thus, the Committees of Factory Resistance will constitute the grassroots organizations of the National Liberation Front that we need to build.

Party and Resistance Committee

The activities of the cells and the Front Committee of the PRT in the large factories are different, complementary, and interrelated with the activities of the Resistance Committee. They differ because of the program's scope and the organization's flexibility; because the PRT's plan is more defined, and its organization is much stricter.

But both must develop and promote revolutionary activities (propaganda, mobilizations, armed activities, etc.) that complement and interrelate with each other.

The presence of the PRT speeds up the politicization of the vanguard and the masses, which results in higher consciousness and more significant organization. The Resistance Committee, for its part, guarantees the massiveness and unity of the anti-dictatorial effort.

Without the Party, there is no consistency or consciousness, no real revolutionary development. Without the Resistance Committee, the struggle will be diminished, weak, and uneven. For this reason, it is vital to advance simultaneously in the construction and development of the cells and the Factory Committees of the Party on one hand, and on the other, the Resistance Committees with the branches.

Summary and Conclusion

The new and prolonged stage of the generalized civil war that has begun requires more than ever the dynamic leadership of the industrial proletariat. Not only because of the forces it deploys and its direct influence in mobilizing the people but primarily because of the decisive class resources it injects into the Revolutionary Party, invigorating it, developing it, allowing it to adequately fulfill its mission as the revolutionary leader of the Argentine worker and popular masses. Today, more than ever, we adhere to a strategy of concentrating work in the large factories, preparing ourselves to create gradually, step by step, the great revolutionary political-military forces that will give us victory over the exploitative and oppressive enemy. There are many obstacles, but we count on the anti-dictatorship unanimity of the working masses and a broad and growing proletarian vanguard unlike ever before. We must wisely combine the building and operation of the Party to incorporate the vanguard workers and train them into complete revolutionaries, with the Resistance Committees' construction to organize and mobilize the entire working masses. These are fundamental tasks that must be solved in each factory, according to the situation and in a creative

spirit, relying on the national and international experience of the Party. The People's Resistance, strong and rooted in the factories, will keep the Dictatorship in check, patiently accumulate enormous strength, and, finally, overthrow the murderous military and the unjust and backward capitalist system they defend.

Mario Roberto Santucho

April 1976

Source: Documentación de Historia Política Social y Movimiento Popular Contemporáneo de Chile y América Latina- Archivo Chile; www.archivochile.com/entrada.html

Armed Revolutionary Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias), FAR

Juan Domingo Perón was ousted from power in 1955 by a military coup, ending a nine-year reign and commencing years of internal conflict. In the wake of the coup, several armed pro-Peronista groups took a stand against the preceding regimes and labored to facilitate Perón's return to power. In 1966, Juan Carlos Onganía orchestrated a coup that overthrew Arturo Umberto Illia and inaugurated a period known as the "Argentine Revolution," a period of tremendous political shifts and the strengthening of the military as a political entity. From 1966 to 1973, a military junta governed the country and persecuted supporters of Perón. General strikes were attempted, and protests ensued and increased over time in the cities of Córdoba, Rosario, and led to massive street confrontations with security forces. In 1967, members of the Communist Youth Federation (Federación Juvenil Comunista) and Communist Party dissidents formed the FAR. At one point, the FAR envisioned joining Che Guevara's forces in Bolivia, but that never materialized due to the revolutionary's death. The organization was faithfully pro-Perón and strived to build off the political strategies associated with *peronismo*. For the next six years, the FAR carried out several actions of armed propaganda and kidnappings. The organization also suffered setbacks and the loss of militants. Upon Perón's return to Argentina in 1973, the FAR and the Montoneros, another pro-Perón armed revolutionary movement, joined forces, sealing an important merger that would transform the Montoneros into one of the largest guerrilla movements of the period. The following document provides a straightforward explanation justifying the "act of unity" and Perón's influence. Yet, while his role in encouraging the merger may have seemed benign, his relationship with the revolutionary wing of this support base began to unravel soon after the announcement. Perhaps, read after the fact, the announcement reveals a different reason for the merger.

Act of Unity Between the FAR and the Montoneros

Today, with General Perón's reinstatement as President, a crucial objective in the history of our Movement—achieved after 18 years of fierce conflict.

This Movement achieved this goal amidst an economic downturn characterized by massive unemployment and the decline of the conditions that created our dependency.

This political moment is marked by a burgeoning offensive by Yankee imperialism to undermine our liberation process, to lengthen the domination and exploitation of our people; an assault which, amid the vicious repression of the Chilean people, corroborates once again the willingness of the imperialists to employ whatever means to safeguard their interests.

This imperialist enemy is outside our borders and in the economic, political, and military entities inside the country, which are focused on weakening the people's forces and extinguishing the Peronist Movement in particular.

Within our own Movement, there are specific leading sectors that plot closely with the anti-Fatherland imperialists and oligarchy.

Considering that:

Our organizations are the result of the Movement's strengthening and development, and the metastasis and blossoming of the working-classes' and Peronists' consciousness, which guided our embracement of new forms of organization and struggle to stand up against imperialism and the oligarchy.

Under the severity of the military dictatorship, the Peronist Movement had to entertain all possible forms of struggle: armed action, rebellions, strikes and mobilizations, and the electoral struggle.

In each of these demonstrations in which the people expressed their demands and yearnings for dignity and rights, our organizations were on the scene—preparing themselves for the front lines, as our tortured, killed, and imprisoned comrades would testify.

We contributed to the people's victory with our weapons and our lives. We worked actively with the formation of popular forces and the consolidation and ideological, political, and organizational development of the working class and the Peronist people.

On the day of our victory following 18 years of struggle, the Peronist Movement concluded one of its most heroic and intense battles and began a new liberation struggle. This is as challenging and complex as the previous one. To advance this process, General Perón has called for the Movement to unify around his leadership, to achieve by all possible means the unity, reconstruction, and liberation of the Argentine people.

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For this unity to become a reality, General Perón has called for the Movement's reorganization and institutionalization. This entails providing it with democratic and representative structures of the working class and the Peronist people and purging it of traitors and opportunists.

The union is the necessary axis to bring together the Argentine people under a National Liberation Front capable of standing up to imperialism.

The FAR and Montonero organizations have decided:

1. From this day forward, both organizations will merge and become one, and all their structures and commands will be definitively unified.
2. The organization resulting from the merger will be called MONTONEROS, and the name FAR will disappear after signing this act.
3. The unity of our organizations strives to contribute to the Peronist Movement's reorganization and democratization process. General Perón has called upon us to secure the organic participation of the working class in its management. This guarantees that the unity of the Argentine people in the Liberation Front under the Peronist Movement's leadership will make effective the objectives of national liberation and social justice toward constructing National Socialism and Latin American unity.

Free or Dead, Never Slaves!

Perón or Death! Long Live The Fatherland!

Revolutionary Armed Forces-Montoneros

October 12, 1973

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA;
www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=221

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BOLIVIA

National Liberation Army of Bolivia (Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Bolivia), ELN

The National Liberation Army of Bolivia (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Bolivia*), or Ñancahuazú guerrilla, was an armed revolutionary organization that operated from 1966 to 1967 in the southern region of Bolivia. The ELN was initially composed of nearly 30 Bolivian nationals, three Peruvians, and more than a dozen Cuban revolutionaries—namely, the iconic revolutionary and its ideological leader, Ernesto “Che” Guevara. Why Che decided on Bolivia as the site of his next revolutionary endeavor continues to baffle people. Regardless, the organization would have never come to fruition without the tenacity of two brothers, Roberto “Coco” and Guido “Inti” Peredo. In June 1966, Coco purchased roughly 300 acres of land for just over \$1,500 US dollars in the mountainous region of southern Bolivia near the Ñancahuazú River for the ELN’s primary guerrilla camp. Before departing for Bolivia, Che was led to believe the Bolivian Communist Party and other dissidents supported a guerrilla *foco*, but the Party’s General-Secretary, Mario Monje, opposed one in Bolivia. By early 1967, the US-backed René Barrientos regime uncovered a guerrilla movement in the works somewhere in southern Bolivia. Meanwhile, in the mountains, the ELN guerrillas suffered severe setbacks that took a profound toll on their morale and physicality. On September 26, 1967, Coco Peredo, Mario Gutiérrez Ardaya, and Manuel Hernández Osorio perished in an ambush orchestrated by the Bolivian forces on the route toward La Higuera, a small village in the province of Vallegrande, Santa Cruz. Twelve days later, Che was executed at La Higuera. On June 24, 1967, the Bolivian military attacked miners from the Siglo XX-Catavi tin mine. The strikers had been protesting against austerity measures

imposed by President Barrientos. In response to the rise in worker discontent, Barrientos ordered soldiers to attack miners as they celebrated the Festival of San Juan. Armed with machine guns and dynamite, the soldiers wreaked havoc on the community. According to the Historical Archive of Catavi, the unofficial press reported 22 deaths. The ELN hoped to capitalize on the discontent by issuing a communiqué addressed to the miners. The remaining *guerrilleros* regrouped and brought new militants into the fray from Argentina and Chile. Under “Inti” Peredo, 70 guerrillas secretly entered Bolivia via Chile after training in Cuba. While Inti ultimately fell on September 9, 1969, the ELN stayed afloat. Under the command of the youngest Peredo brother, Osvaldo, or “Chato,” the ELN launched revolutionary activities in Teoponte, 230 km north of La Paz. But the venture lasted only a year. By the end of 1970, less than ten militants remained. Chato Peredo and several others went into exile to Chile, where President Salvador Allende welcomed them. His most popular political document, titled *Volveremos a las montañas* (“We Will Return to the Mountains”), is both a rallying call and a document intended to inject energy back into what many perceived was a moribund revolutionary movement.

Communique #5: To the Miners of Bolivia

Comrades:

Once again, proletarian blood runs in our mines. In an explosion that has lasted several centuries, the sucking of the miner’s slave blood is now spilling when so much injustice causes the outbreak of protest. This repetitive cyclical has not changed in hundreds of years.

In recent times, the pace was temporarily interrupted, and the insurgent workers were the fundamental factor in the triumph of April 9. That event brought hope that a new horizon would open up, and workers could be masters of their destiny. But the imperialist world’s mechanisms taught those who wanted to see that there are no partial solutions in matters of social revolution; either one takes absolute power, or one loses the advances obtained with extraordinary sacrifice and blood.

Over time, militias from the other sectors of the working class began to join the mining proletariat’s armed militias, including the underclass and the peasants; however, the members of these groups were unable to see their mutual interests and clashed with each other, driven by anti-popular demagoguery. Finally, the professional army reappeared, in sheep’s clothing and with the wolf’s claws. This army, small at first, became the armed wing used against the proletariat and a faithful accomplice of imperialism, hence why they gave the go-ahead to the military coup.

We are recovering from a defeat caused by the working class’s repeated tactical errors, and are patiently preparing the country for a profound revolution that will fundamentally transform the system.

We must not insist on underhanded tactics; heroic, yes, but fruitless, and drive the proletariat into a bloodbath that diminishes their ranks, depriving us of its most combative elements.

Throughout several months of struggle, the guerrillas have rocked the country, inflicting heavy casualties on the army and demoralizing it without sustaining significant losses. In a confrontation that lasted several hours, the same army was left in control of the countryside and pranced over the proletariat's dead bodies. From victory to defeat, there is a difference between right and wrong tactics.

Comrades: do not listen again to the mass struggle's false apostles who view it as a compact and the frontal advance of the people against the oppressive weapons! Let us learn from reality! Against the machine guns, heroic bodies are not worthwhile; against modern weapons of destruction, barricades are not valuable, no matter how well they are built. The struggle of the masses in underdeveloped countries, with a large peasant base and extensive territories, must be developed by a small mobile vanguard: the guerrilla, embedded in the people's heart. It will gain strength at the expense of the enemy's army and capitalize on the revolutionary fervor of the masses until it creates the revolutionary situation in which state power collapses with a single blow, well delivered and at the right moment.

We do not call for total inactivity, but we recommend not committing forces to operations that cannot guarantee success. However, the pressure of the working masses must be exerted continuously against the government because this is a class struggle without limited boundaries. A proletarian is duty-bound to fight to the best of their ability against the common enemy.

Fellow miners: The ELN guerrillas await you with open arms and invite you to join the underground workers who are fighting at our side. Here we will rebuild the worker-peasant alliance broken by anti-popular demagoguery. We will turn defeat into triumph, and the cries of the proletarian widows into a victory anthem. We are waiting for you.

National Liberation Army of Bolivia

June 15, 1967

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA;
www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=127

We Will Return to the Mountains

The Bolivian guerrilla has not died! It has only just begun.

The Bolivian guerrilla is in full swing, and we will not hesitate to give as a brilliant epilogue the triumph of the revolutionary forces that will establish socialism in Latin America.

Our country has lived a revolutionary experience of unimagined continental dimensions. Tragic misfortunes have accompanied the beginning of our struggle. We have suffered a serious blow due to the disappearance of our friend and comrade, Commander Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and many other combatants. They were the noblest and most virtuous of the generations of our continent and did not dither for a single moment to offer, for the sake of human redemption, their lives.

But all these painful episodes, far from intimidating us, harden our revolutionary conscience, increase our decision to fight, and forge, in the harsh and bloody crucible of war, new combatants and leaders who will honor and pay tribute to the fallen.

We know what we fight for, we do not wage war for the sake of fighting, nor are we a group of delusionals. We do not fight for personal or partisan goals. We have confidence in man as a human being.

Our only and ultimate motivation is the liberation of Latin America, which is our continent and our homeland, temporarily broken up into 20 republics.

We are convinced that the Bolivarian and Che’s dream of uniting Latin America politically and geologically will only be achieved through armed struggle, the only dignified and honest, glorious, or irreversible course that will rouse the people. There is no purer way of fighting. And on the path of armed struggle, the guerrilla is the most effective and correct method.

For this reason, as long as there is an honest man in Latin America, the guerrilla will not die, the armed struggle will thrive until the people gain consciousness and take up arms against the common enemy: North American imperialism.

The Bolivian Guerrilla Has Not Died: This Is Just Beginning

Enemies and friends of the revolution have probed, with greater or lesser intensity, from one and several points of view, the complex problem of the guerrilla chapter that occurred in our country. Guided by petty interests, they all come to the parochial and biased conclusion that armed struggle is not the way to seize power in Bolivia.

Dishonest documents have been issued, misrepresentations and biases have been pouring out and, in part, have misled global public opinion about these events. But what they have not achieved is to rupture the faith and will of the revolutionary forces in our country. The most precise and most categorical proof is that our National Liberation Army (ELN) has remained faithful and steadfast in the fight despite issues that have come up.

Circumstantially, the duty falls upon me to explain to the revolutionaries of this country and the entire continent the reasons why we, despite having lost a battle recently, insisted on upholding our position that the guerrilla is a more effective and safer way to seize power.

Any comrades who participated in this challenge and fell heroically would have done it the same way.

And I do so without considering myself at any moment the immediate successor of Comrade Che Guevara. That would be a significant honor for me. Instead, I act as the heir to the latest and most valuable teachings of the greatest and most brilliant Latin American revolutionary.

I hope that this document will enrich our peoples' revolutionary experiences in their struggle for national liberation. At no time do I try to justify our missteps. Nor is it about the lament or complaints of a guerrilla struggle's lonely survivor. It is, on the contrary, the full expression of the forces of the National Liberation Army (ELN) that represents our people and believes that the guerrilla is the method to realize our ideals of freedom and social justice.

It is cleverly meant to prove the opposite by arguing that "the guerrillas were crushed" in a relatively short time.

For us, the guerrilla foco is a form of struggle used by the people to seize power, considering its more or less prolonged duration as an essential characteristic.

The first stage of any guerrilla struggle consists of surviving until it is rooted in the people, mainly among the peasants. This nucleus will continuously renew its forces until it reaches such a degree of development that it becomes invincible. The guerrilla then begins dealing blow after blow on the regular army, demoralizing and weakening it until it capitulates and is destroyed, along with the regime it supports.

In our case, the guerrilla outbreak could not surpass this first stage, but others will emerge and advance the movement until the enemy is crushed.

The Betrayal of the Communist Party

Our critics determine, from this circumstantial fact, that the armed struggle is the wrong path. They do not touch upon or want to analyze the causes that led to our partial and momentary defeat. Nor do they want to because they would have to evaluate themselves.

They watched our fight from afar. And what's more, they completely isolated it, denied it a partnership, and carried out anti-guerrilla propaganda within its rank-and-file. Later, to maintain "anti-imperialist" appearances, they issued separate communiqués of "solidarity" with the guerrilla struggle. But in fact, this "solidarity" turned out to be mere talk of moral support forced on a small group of "romantic dreamers." Dreamers! Yes. But dreamers constituted the only force in Bolivia that seriously considers taking power by and for the people.

The PCB leadership speaks of the preparation of the Party to take power "by all means." All people should and must participate in the seizure of power. Therefore, the people have to gear up for it and cannot be spoken to about "all" the routes when they are being prepared and developed. When a party or a group considers taking power, it chooses a particular path: the opposite is not thinking seriously about taking power.

They graciously intend to dismiss the guerrilla's path due to their first defeat and insist on the possibility of the "democratic" or reformist route, despite the permanent failures it suffers.

Let's discard the electoral problem! No serious revolutionary can believe that this is the best way to seize power in Bolivia or another Latin American country.

How many peaceful demonstrations in which thousands upon thousands of workers and townspeople participated were violently suppressed by the repressive government apparatus, leading to hundreds of casualties? The events of May and September 1965, in which factory workers and miners were brutally murdered with almost no resistance, are fresh in people's minds. Then there was also the bloody San Juan of 1967, in which humble and defenseless miners were assassinated in cold blood, while our *guerrilla*, at that same time, and with barely 40 men, dealt hard blows on the same army that perpetrated the massacre, causing several casualties and internal demoralization.

We are not enemies of the people struggling for their demands. But we are sure that these will be much more fruitful and effective if they confront a government overwhelmed and weakened by the actions of a guerrilla foco. The guerrilla foco demonstrates to the people, with deeds, the possibility of confronting and defeating imperialism's power and troops.

The people and mainly the peasants, do not support something that does not exist for them. To wait for peasants to support the armed struggle when it does not exist is "playing insurrection," as some "theorists" of armed struggle do and who previously demanded the peasantry's support. The peasants will only concretely support a guerrilla foco when it demonstrates its strength.

For this reason, in the first stage, the guerrilla struggle's objective is to strengthen itself, survive in the field it operates in, and with much-needed aid from the cities. In our case, this assistance was denied to us by the political forces aware of our movement's existence.

The parties that hope to become the vanguard of our people in their anti-imperialist struggle are duty bound to practice honesty and inform the people of their actions. They also have the responsibility to acknowledge their mistakes if they were wrong or explain their behavior if they consider it fair.

How can we explain that these parties can pay homage to the fallen guerrillas if they attacked them when preparing to fight? How does one explain that Monje alerted his party's militancy against a "factional group" that deviated from the "line," and that Zamora expelled comrade Moisés Guevara from the pro-Chinese PCB for the same reason, who with a group joined the guerrilla struggle?

The people expect and demand an explanation about this dual behavior.

We do not mean to blame the PCB for our temporary failure. We do not hold anyone responsible for the outcome of this first episode. What we seek is to establish the historical responsibility of the parties that cast themselves as anti-imperialist fighters in our country.

The Guerrilla Only Way to Liberation

Some think of us as a force that is “running away.” They are delusional. We are committed to reorganizing our armed cadres and continuing the struggle in the mountains because we firmly believe that this is the only path that will lead us toward the liberation of our people and Latin America from the clutches of Yankee imperialism.

We Do Not Seek to Organize a Political Party

Let’s build an armed force capable of confronting and defeating the army, the main instrument of support for the existing regime in Bolivia. Nor will we be the “armed wing” of any political party. We are fully convinced that the guerrillas are not an auxiliary instrument of some other “superior form of struggle.” On the contrary, we think—and international experience shows us—that this form of struggle will lead to the emancipation of our peoples.

The People and Only the People Will Appoint Their Leaders

In the heat of the struggle, the different forces that have national liberation as their goal will unite, and our National Liberation Army (ELN) will gradually incorporate militants from various parties. Then the true alliance of the anti-imperialist forces will become a reality.

Leftist forces will rally around and help the guerrilla foco. Our short experience has already demonstrated this reality.

All the political parties’ leaderships of popular extraction whose militancy demands transparent and anti-imperialist conduct will be forced to support the guerrilla movement. We know that the support was formal, but when the guerrillas manage to overcome their first stage, the masses will force them to turn that formal support into a de facto support or otherwise they will be isolated and without a base to lead.

Only then will the political instrument emerge that the people need to run their future government. Our people’s liberation cannot be done by a single group or a single political party. In this we concur with the parties of the left. We need a broad anti-imperialist front. The question is how to achieve it.

Our short experience has shown us that progress in this direction was achieved in a few months by armed struggle to a much greater extent than in so many years of sitting around tables. In fact, all the parties that expressed their sympathy, whether they like it or not, were uniting around this foco. It is not enough to sympathize with the guerrillas: you have to participate in it and achieve a leadership role by showing that you are the most consistent in this form of struggle.

The claims to lead the movement before starting it or to ask who will lead it as a precondition for participation in an anti-imperialist movement demonstrates

the sectarianism that contradicts the calls for “anti-imperialist unity.” The people, and only the people, will be in charge of giving the title of vanguard to those who lead them to their liberation. The sectarianism of the “vanguardists” also translates into the demand to subordinate the guerrilla leadership to the political leadership. One would have to ask: whose political leadership?

Is it perhaps a matter of dividing the struggle into armed and peaceful factions, subordinating the armed struggle to the peaceful one? Or is it that the armed struggle is intended to be used as a simple instrument for the “political struggle” in the cities?

Why not think more about a single political-military leadership, considering that in a war, such as guerrilla warfare, the most qualified and fittest revolutionary cadres address the problem of war?

The struggle that takes place in the cities must contribute to guerrilla actions. Therefore, the city cannot lead the guerrilla movement. The ELN, as the armed vanguard of the liberation movement, must lead it; this happens naturally. Wanting to do the opposite is condemning the guerrilla to ineffectiveness, making it lethargic and “heavy.” In short: it will lead to failure.

The struggle itself will create its own leaders. In it, the people’s true leaders are forged, and no one who considers himself an honest revolutionary can demand the leadership or worries that it will be taken from him.

The very prolonged nature of the struggle allows a clear awareness of what is being pursued. The forces are polarizing, and the fundamental enemy, Yankee imperialism, shows itself in full. The people clearly see how imperialism demands more discipline from its puppets and does not allow masked positions.

Imperialism is not willing to give up its markets, to leave its colonies. The people must prepare for a prolonged and hard fight. To think that we will take power without sacrifices is to have delusion and create conformity in the people. The struggle will be bloody and cruel and occur throughout the country, in the humblest hut and in the most remote home.

In the face of the perpetual violence of Yankee imperialism, we have chosen, along with the people, the path of revolutionary violence that punishes the oppressors and that, once it has crushed them, is overcome and eliminated to reach socialist humanism.

In short: it is not violence for violence’s sake that we advocate. It is the organized revenge of the people against oppression to achieve our absolute freedom.

Each and every one of this country’s inhabitants will contribute with direct actions in the cities and in the countryside, to provoke insecurity, fear, and panic, and defeat our enemies.

National liberation movements worldwide are dealing hard blows to a common enemy: imperialism. Despite balancing the US economy by militarizing it and avoiding a crisis, the cruel war in Vietnam is creating serious disruption. All of the Yankees’ military strength is already powerless to stop these glorious people in arms. The struggle of our Vietnamese brothers is the struggle of all the revolutionaries of the world. They fight for us, and we must fight for them.

Yankee imperialism will not be able to resist the existence of another Vietnam, and it is we, together with our peoples, who must create that second Vietnam, faithful to the legacy left by our heroic commander, Ernesto Che Guevara.

The thesis of creating several Vietnams is not capricious, nor is it the fruit of a warrior-Christ mentality, as our enemies and pseudo-revolutionaries seek to describe it: it is a thesis that corresponds to a reality. Yankee imperialism will not voluntarily give up its positions. And in our continent, through its colonies ministry—the OAS [Organization of American States]—it will push its lackeys from different countries to join forces and clamp down on any people that rise up in arms.

May Imperialism Never Cry Victory

This is already the era of the continental revolution.

Faced with the unity of the continent's military against the revolution, we must respond by uniting all the national liberation movements in South America.

The shrieks of the right and some pseudo-revolutionaries due to the participation of patriots of other nations in our people's liberation struggle are nothing more than hollow efforts to isolate our movement by collaborating with the enemy to create feelings of chauvinism among the people.

Our guerrilla movement was fought by soldiers of the Bolivian army, advised by Yankee "instructors" experienced in Vietnam and equipped with weapons and rations provided by Argentina and Brazil's armies.

We are sure that when the guerrillas take shape in our country, and the regular army feels incapable and powerless to destroy them, it will quickly receive the assistance of some neighboring countries' troops and military supplies. The revolutionary war will expand and extend to those countries, producing the same insecurity and incapacity in their respective armed forces. This will be the moment when the Yankee Pentagon is forced to change its policy of "advice" for the "direct" participation of its troops and increase numbers, as is the case in Vietnam.

In the face of this possibility, some pseudo-revolutionaries tremble. They want to prevent this "tragedy" for the people. They do not realize that by acting like this, they do not avoid it; on the contrary, they keep them eternally under the scourge of misery, hunger, death, immolating them on the sacrosanct altar of conformity.

This "tragedy" is nothing if we compare it with what the people would have to suffer if they remain eternally under the current yoke and as the noose closes around their neck with increasing force. Nor is it compared to the cruel life that our people lead. The mining camps are concentration camps where the inhabitants have no rights, not even simple entertainment. Even less, of course, the right to protest.

The systematically organized massacres constitute the response that tyranny gives to the just demands of those who support the country's economy and the luxury of the military castes.

No protest or claims by the people are tolerated by the military's arrogance, a pillar of the reigning "democratic" regime. They are violently repressed to set an example and uphold the "principle of authority." Whoever rebels against these principles will feel firsthand the iron fist of the military regime.

Faced with this stark reality, can one think of the sacrifices of a just war? Our struggle will impose no more extraordinary sacrifices than our people already endure with this tyranny.

Therefore, creating a new Vietnam is not a "tragedy." It is a duty and an honor that we will not turn away from.

The War Continues

We have lost a battle and the fall of the oppressed peoples' maximum leader: Commander Ernesto Che Guevara. But the war continues, and we will never quit because those of us who fought with Che do not know the word "surrender." The blood of combatants and Che that waters Bolivia's fields will produce the seed of liberation. It will turn our continent into a volcano that will spew fire and destroy imperialism.

We will be the victorious Vietnam that Che—romantic, visionary, and hero—dreamed of and loved. For these ideals, we are willing to win or die. For these ideals, Cuban comrades died. For these ideals, Peruvian insurgents died. For these ideals, Argentine combatants died. For these ideals, Bolivian comrades gave their life.

Honor and glory for Tania, for Joaquín, for Juan Pablo Chang, for Moisés Guevara, for Jorge Vázquez, for Aniceto Reynaga, for Antonio Jiménez, for Coco Peredo, and others who fell with a weapon in their hands, because they understood that, as Che said:

Wherever death surprises us, welcome it, provided that our battle cry has reached a receptive ear, and another hand reaches out to pick up our weapons, and other men are ready to sing the sorrowful songs with the rattling of machine guns and new cries of war and victory.

Our flags are in mourning, but they will never be lowered.

The ELN deems itself the heir of the teachings and model of Che—the new Bolívar of Latin America. Those who murdered him in cowardice will never kill his thought or example.

Imperialism and its lackeys cannot claim victory because the war has not ended: it has just begun.

We Will Go Back to the Mountains!
Once Again, Our Cry of Victory or Death Will Shake Bolivia!
Manifiesto of the ELN
July 1968

Source: [www.ruinasdigitales.com/cristianismoyrevolucion/
cyrintiperedovolveremosalasmontas99/](http://www.ruinasdigitales.com/cristianismoyrevolucion/cyrintiperedovolveremosalasmontas99/)

3

BRAZIL

National Liberation Action (Ação Libertadora Nacional), ALN

The National Liberation Action movement was a communist urban guerrilla movement established in 1968, four years after the Brazilian armed forces overthrew President João Goulart and established a military dictatorship that lasted until 1985. Fervently anti-communist and an ally of the United States during the Cold War, the dictatorship followed a national security doctrine that involved extreme measures to eradicate domestic subversion. Civil liberties were canceled, and critics of the regime were summarily suppressed by state agents, leading to countless deaths and disappearances, and creating a substantial political prisoner population. In 1968, the dictator Artur da Costa e Silva implemented Institutional Act No. 5, which allowed the government to take extraordinary measures to protect the country's national security. Practices included widespread censorship, greater military intervention in municipalities, and disregard for due process. However, the Act did little to diminish the anti-authoritarianism fervor on university campuses or to dampen the momentum of the revolutionary underground. But the urban conditions presented militants with nuisances that rural guerrillas in Central America did not have to overcome. Moreover, rural insurgents had a more extensive selection of literature on guerrilla tactics suitable for their environment, in addition to enlightening models such as the Vietnamese and Cuban cases. While urban armed activities were practiced by anarchist cells in the United States and other countries, in the Algerian Revolution by the National Liberation Front in France, and during Francisco Franco's fascist regime in Spain, there was a significant dearth of urban guerrilla warfare literature. The ALN's founder, Carlos Marighella, tried to fill that void by writing the *Mini-manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1969). The manual

was widely distributed throughout the ALN and garnered an audience outside of Brazil. Counterinsurgency agents frequently seized copies when they raided guerrilla safehouses throughout Latin America. Apart from a tactical guide, Marighella's work, much like Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare* (1961), describes the character of the urban guerrilla and what militants need to absorb in order to become a full-fledged revolutionary.

Mini-manual of the Urban Guerrilla (excerpt)

The Definition of the Urban Guerrilla

An urban guerrilla is a person who fights the military dictatorship with weapons, using unconventional methods. A revolutionary and an ardent patriot, he is a fighter for his country's liberation, a friend of the people and freedom. The area in which the urban guerrilla operates is in the large Brazilian cities. Some criminals or outlaws work in big cities. Many times, actions by criminals are believed to be actioned by urban guerrillas.

The urban guerrilla, however, differs radically from the criminal. The criminal benefits personally from their actions, and attacks indiscriminately without distinguishing the exploiters from the exploited. This results in ordinary people being among their victims. The urban guerrilla follows a political goal, and only attacks the government, the big businesses, and the foreign imperialists.

Another element just as harmful to the guerrillas as the criminal, and also operating in the urban area, is the counterrevolutionary, who creates confusion, robs banks, throws bombs, kidnaps, assassinates, and commits the worst crimes imaginable against urban guerrillas, revolutionary priests, students, and citizens who oppose tyranny and seek liberty.

The urban guerrilla is an implacable enemy of the regime and systematically inflicts damage on the authorities and on the people who dominate the country and exercise power. The primary task of the urban guerrilla is to distract, wear down, demoralize the military regime and its repressive forces, and attack and destroy the wealth and property of the foreign managers and the Brazilian upper class.

The urban guerrilla is not afraid to dismantle and destroy the present Brazilian economic, political, and social system, for their aim is to aid the rural guerrillas and help create a new and revolutionary social and political structure, with the armed population in power.

[...]

How the Urban Guerrilla Lives

The urban guerrilla must know how to live among the people, and he must be careful not to appear strange and different from ordinary city life. He should not

wear clothes that are different from those that other people wear. Elaborate and high-fashion clothing for men or women may often be a handicap if the urban guerrilla's mission takes him into working-class neighborhoods or sections where such dress is uncommon. The same care has to be made if the urban guerrilla must move from the South of the country to the North, and vice versa.

The urban guerrilla must make his living through his job or his professional activity. If he is known and sought by the police, he must go underground and sometimes live in hiding. Under such circumstances, the urban guerrilla cannot reveal his activity to anyone, since this information is always and only the responsibility of the revolutionary organization in which he is participating.

The urban guerrilla must have an excellent ability for observation. They must be well informed about everything, particularly the enemy's movements. They must be interested and familiar with the area in which they live, operate, and travel.

But the fundamental characteristic of the urban guerrilla is that they are a person who fights with weapons; given these circumstances, there is very little likelihood that they will be able to follow their regular profession for long without being identified by the police. The role of expropriation thus looms as bright as high noon. The urban guerrilla can't exist and survive without fighting to expropriate.

Thus, the armed struggle of the urban guerrilla points toward two essential objectives:

1. The physical elimination of the leaders and assistants of the armed forces and the police.
2. The expropriation of government resources and the wealth belonging to the wealthy businessmen, the large landowners, and the imperialists, with small expropriations used for the sustenance of the individual guerrillas and large ones for the maintenance of the revolutionary organization itself.

It is clear that the armed struggle of the urban guerrilla also has other objectives. But here we are referring to the two primary objectives, above all expropriation. It is necessary for every urban guerrilla to always keep in mind that they can only maintain their existence if they can kill the police and those dedicated to repression, and if he is determined—truly determined—to expropriate the wealth of the wealthy businessmen, landowners, and imperialists.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the Brazilian revolution is that, from the beginning, it developed around the expropriation of the wealth of the major business, imperialist, and landowning interests, without excluding the largest and most powerful commercial elements engaged in the import-export business. And by expropriating the wealth of the people's principal enemies, the Brazilian revolution was able to hit them at their vital center, with special and systematic attacks on the banking network—that is to say, the most telling blows were leveled at the businessman's nerve system.

The bank robberies carried out by the Brazilian urban guerrillas hurt big businesses and others, the foreign companies which insure and re-insure the banking capital, the imperialist companies, the federal and state governments—all of them are systematically expropriated as of now.

The fruit of these expropriations has been devoted to the tasks of learning and perfecting urban guerrilla techniques; the purchase, production, and transportation of weapons and ammunition for the rural areas; the security precautions of the guerrillas; the daily maintenance of the fighters, those who have been liberated from prison by armed force, those who have been wounded, and those who are being persecuted by the police; and to any kind of problem concerning comrades liberated from jail or assassinated by the police and the military dictatorship.

The tremendous costs of the revolutionary war must fall upon the big businesses, on the imperialists, on the large landowners, and on the government too—both federal and state—since they are all exploiters and oppressors of the people. Men of the government, agents of the dictatorship and foreign imperialism, especially, must pay with their lives for the crimes they have committed against the Brazilian people.

In Brazil, the number of violent actions carried out by urban guerrillas, including executions; explosions; seizures of weapons, ammunition, and explosives; assaults on banks and prisons; etc., is significant enough to leave no room for doubt as to the actual aims of the revolutionaries; all are witnesses to the fact that we are in a full revolutionary war and that this war can be waged only by violent means.

This is why the urban guerrilla uses armed struggle, and why he continues to concentrate his efforts on the physical extermination of the agents of repression and to dedicate 24 hours a day to expropriations from the people's exploiters.

Objectives of the Guerrilla's Actions

With his tactics developed and established, the urban guerrilla trains himself in methods of action leading to attack, and, in Brazil, has the following objectives:

1. To threaten the triangle within which the Brazilian state and North American domination are maintained, a triangle whose points are Rio, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte, and whose base is the axis Rio—San Paulo, where the giant industrial, financial, economic, political, cultural, military, and police complex that holds the absolute power of the country is located.
2. To weaken the local militia and the security systems of the dictatorship, given the fact that we are attacking the “gorilas.”
3. Defending, which means catching the government in a defensive position with its troops immobilized in defense of the entire complex of national maintenance, with its ever-present fears of an attack on its strategic nerve centers, and without ever knowing where, how, or when the attack will come.

4. To attack every area with many different armed groups, small in size, each self-contained and operating independently, to disperse the government forces in their pursuit of a thoroughly fragmented organization, instead of offering the dictatorship the opportunity to concentrate its forces in the destruction of one tightly organized system operating throughout the country.
 5. To give proof of its combativeness, decision, firmness, determination, and persistence in the attack on the military dictatorship, to allow all rebels to follow in our example and to fight with urban guerrilla tactics. Meanwhile, the government with all of its problems, incapable of halting guerrilla actions within the cities, will lose time and suffer endless attrition, and will finally be forced to pull back its repressive forces in order to mount guard over all the banks, industries, armories, military barracks, prisons, public offices, radio and television stations, North American firms, gas storage tanks, oil refineries, ships, airplanes, ports, airports, hospitals, health centers, blood banks, stores, garages, embassies, residences of high-ranking members of the regime such as ministers and generals, police stations, official organizations, etc.
 6. To increase urban guerrilla actions gradually into an endless number of surprise raids, such that the government cannot leave the metropolitan area to pursue guerrillas in the rural interior without running the risk of abandoning the cities and permitting rebellion to increase on the coast as well as the interior of the country.
 7. To force the army and the police, their commanders, and their assistants to give up the relative comfort and tranquility of their barracks and their usual rest, for a state of fear and growing tension in the expectation of an attack, or in a search for trails which vanish without a trace.
 8. To avoid open battle and decisive combat with the government, limiting the struggle to brief, rapid attacks with lightning results.
 9. To ensure the urban guerrilla maximum freedom of movement and action, without ever relinquishing armed combat, remaining firmly oriented toward helping the formation of rural guerrilla warfare and supporting the construction of a revolutionary army for national liberation.
- [...]

The Seven Sins of the Urban Guerrilla

Even when the urban guerrilla applies proper tactics and abides by its security rules, he can still be vulnerable to errors. There is no perfect urban guerrilla. The most he can do is make every effort to diminish the margin of error since he cannot be perfect. One of the means we should use to lessen the possibility of failure is to know the seven deadly sins of the urban guerrilla thoroughly and avoid them.

The first sin of the guerrilla is inexperience. The urban guerrilla, blinded by this sin, thinks the enemy is stupid, underestimates the enemy's intelligence, thinks everything is easy, and, as a result, leaves evidence that can lead to disaster. Because of his inexperience, the urban guerrilla may also overestimate the enemy forces, believing them to be stronger than they are. Allowing himself to be fooled by this presumption, the urban guerrilla becomes intimidated and remains insecure and indecisive, paralyzed, and lacking in audacity. The second sin of the urban guerrilla is to boast about the actions he has undertaken and to broadcast them to the four winds. The third sin of the urban guerrilla is vanity. The guerrilla who suffers from this sin tries to solve the problems of the revolution by actions in the city, but without bothering about the beginnings and survival of other guerrillas in other areas. Blinded by success, they wind up organizing an action that they consider decisive, and that puts into play the organization's entire resources. Since we cannot afford to break the guerrilla struggle in the cities while rural guerrilla warfare has not yet erupted, we always run the risk of allowing the enemy to attack us with decisive blows. The fourth sin of the urban guerrilla is to exaggerate his strength and to undertake actions for which he, as yet, lacks sufficient forces and the required infrastructure.

The fifth sin of the urban guerrilla is rash action. The guerrilla who commits this sin loses patience, suffers an attack of nerves, does not wait for anything, and carelessly throws himself into action, suffering many defeats.

The sixth sin of the urban guerrilla is to attack the enemy when they are most angry. The seventh sin of the urban guerrilla is to fail to plan things and to act spontaneously.

[...]

Popular Support

One of the permanent concerns of the urban guerrilla is his identification with popular causes to win public support. Where government actions become inept and corrupt, the urban guerrilla should not hesitate to step in and show that he opposes the government, and thus gain widespread sympathy. The present government, for example, imposes heavy financial burdens and excessively high taxes on the people. It is up to the urban guerrilla to attack the dictatorship's tax collection system and obstruct its economic activities, to throw all the weight of armed action against it.

The urban guerrilla fights not only to upset the tax collection system; the weapon of armed action must also be directed against those government agencies that raise prices and those who lead them, as well as against the wealthiest of the national and foreign profiteers and the important property owners. In short, against all those who accumulate vast fortunes from the high cost of living, the wages of hunger, excessive prices, and high rents. For instance, foreign industries, such as refrigeration and other

North American plants that monopolize the market and manufacture general food supplies, must be systematically attacked by the urban guerrillas. The rebellion of the urban guerrilla and his persistence in intervening in political questions is the best way of ensuring popular support for the cause which we defend. We repeat, and insist on repeating: it is the way of guaranteeing popular support. As soon as a reasonable portion of the population begins to take the actions of the urban guerrilla seriously, their success is guaranteed.

The government has no alternative except to intensify its repression. The police networks, house searches, the arrest of suspects and innocent persons, and the closing of streets make life unbearable in the city. The military dictatorship embarks on massive political persecution. Political assassinations and police terror become routine.

Despite all this, the police systematically fail. The armed forces, the navy, and the air force are mobilized to undertake routine police functions. Even so, they can find no way to halt guerrilla operations or wipe out the revolutionary organization, with its fragmented groups that move around and operate throughout the country.

The people refuse to collaborate with the government, and the general sentiment is that this government is unjust, incapable of solving problems, and resorts merely to its opponents' physical elimination. The country's political situation is transformed into a military situation in which the "gorillas" appear more and more to be the ones responsible for the violence. At the same time, the lives of the people worsen.

When they see the military and the dictatorship on the brink of the abyss, and fearing the consequences of a civil war which is already well underway, the pacifiers (always to be found within the ruling elite) and the opportunists (partisans of nonviolent struggle) join hands and circulate rumors behind the scenes begging the hangmen for elections, "re-democratization," constitutional reforms, and other nonsense designed to fool the people and make them stop the rebellion.

But, watching the guerrillas, the people now understand that it is a farce to vote in any elections which have as their sole objective guaranteeing the survival of the dictatorship and covering up its crimes. Attacking wholeheartedly this election farce and the so-called "political solution," which is so appealing to the opportunists, the urban guerrillas must become even more aggressive and active, resorting without pause to sabotage, terrorism, expropriations, assaults, kidnappings, executions, etc. This action answers any attempt to fool the people with the opening of Congress and the reorganization of political parties—parties of the government and of the positions which the government allows—when all the time parliament and the so-called "parties" only function thanks to the permission of the military dictatorship, in a true spectacle of puppets or dogs on a leash.

To win the support from the population, the role of the urban guerrilla is to continue fighting, keeping in mind the interests of the people and heightening the disastrous situation within which the government must act. These are the conditions, harmful to the dictatorship, which permit the guerrillas to open rural warfare in the middle of an uncontrollable urban rebellion.

The urban guerrilla is engaged in revolutionary action for the people, and with them seeks the participation of the people in the struggle against the dictatorship and the liberation of the country. Beginning with the city and the support of the people, the rural guerrilla war develops rapidly, establishing its infrastructure carefully while the urban area continues the rebellion.

Carlos Marighella
1969

Source: www.marxists.org/archive/marighella-carlos/1969/06/minimanual-urban-guerrilla/

Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária), VPR

Carlos Lamarca was a former military captain who became a political writer, revolutionary, and one of the top leaders of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard Palmares. The name Palmares refers to the famous 17th century *quilombo*, one of the largest settlements formed by runaway African slaves that existed from 1604 to 1694 until it was destroyed by Portuguese colonial authorities. The VPR came to fruition in response to the 1964 coup, going underground after the military regime suspended various rights, outlawed the Brazilian Communist Party, and began persecuting leftists and anyone that refused to conform to the ideas and processes of the dictatorship. It was created following the merger of the National Liberation Command and Popular Revolutionary Vanguard in 1969. That same year Lamarca deserted from the military, joined the VPR, and seized a truckload of weapons. He brought together well-known figures within the revolutionary left and future high-profile individuals, including Dilma Rousseff, the President of Brazil from 2011 to 2016. The VPR carried out numerous acts of armed propaganda meant to bring down the military dictatorship. Like many individuals who joined the revolutionary underground, in order to fully immerse themselves in the struggle they had to sever ties with their families and children. In this letter to his children, Lamarca articulates his thoughts in a fatherly tone as if speaking directly to them, rather than through a piece of paper. The letter provides a medium that expands our understanding of the nature of the guerrilla—typically, that they are blood-thirsty subhumans who lack apathy. This letter humanizes

the revolutionary, regardless of whether one agrees with the methods they use to bring about comprehensive and effective radical social and political change.

Letter to My Children

To my children:

I keep talking about you with my comrades. They are away from their children too, and also talk about them. We all wish that our children are revolutionaries. What is a revolutionary? Someone who loves all people and humanity, has an immense capacity to love, and loves justice and equality. But they must also disdain those who prevent the revolutionary from loving. Abhor those who hate the people, humanity, and social justice. Despise those who rule and exploit the people; hate those who corrupt, threaten, and alienate minds, degrade humanity, are unjust, two-faced, demagogues, cowards.

The revolutionary loves peace and makes war an instrument in order to have peace, righteous peace, without the exploitation of man. The revolutionary must make sacrifices for the cause, even separate from their children in order to free all children, to disconnect from his parents because other parents need them. When you miss me, remember that many Brazilian children are hungry, walk barefoot, are without schools, and see their parents suffer. Remember when I talked to you in the bedroom and asked you to let me fight to end this. I remember that Claudinha clapped her hands, and César said: “Very well, Daddy.” We agreed that we had to stay away from each other and keep in our hearts the hope that we would meet again.

You are happy because mom and dad are revolutionaries, and you must be well. Love mommy a lot. I can’t kiss her, so kiss her twice every day, once for me. I miss you so much, but I don’t cry or kiss your photographs. I fill my chest with air and take a good look at my work. I think of you and all the children, which gives me the strength to fight. When you miss me, then study more, ask about everything you don’t understand, always ask why—ask and think—see if it’s correct, if not, speak out, discuss—discern if it’s fair; if not, fight to change it. Be disciplined, do only what is right and just. Being disciplined is not the same as obedience because whoever obeys everything without reflection is no good.

How’s the shooting training going? Don’t forget to put cotton in your ear and always look at the targets and slowly pull the trigger. Have you fixed the air gun? I hope that you practice running, swimming, and all sorts of games.

[...]

And you Claudinha, do you still make speeches? As I imagined, you will be a great agitator.

Take good care of your teeth so they can chew well. Don't forget to sing and dance. César likes to draw, and Cláudia paints. Practice a lot, try to create, and don't imitate anyone.

Do not call anyone lord because no one is lord to anybody. Listen to your elders and try to do things better than them, because everything new is superior to the old. Respect your elders but demand that they respect you—really demand it.

I told my companions that Cesinha used a war name, and they thought it was funny. I used the name Caesar, but I had to change.

I don't know how to finish this letter because it's like I'm talking to you. I hope to receive a letter from you. If it is impossible. I will continue thinking about you.

The greatest joy you can give me is enjoying your studies and preparing to make the Revolution in any country. Many kisses for my dear wife and children, with all my love, full of longing.

Carlos Lamarca

Dare to Fight—Dare to Win

July 26, 1969

Source: www.marxists.org/portugues/lamarca/1969/07/26-1.htm

8th October Revolutionary Movement (Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro), MR-8

The 8th October Revolutionary Movement was an urban guerrilla movement active in Brazil from 1968 to 1985. Part of the MR-8's name pertains to the date Bolivian forces executed Che Guevara in La Higuera. Many of its initial militants formerly belonged to the Communist Party but broke away because of its political sclerosis and torpidity. The MR-8 also formed a loose alliance with the ALN and established a foothold at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. During its existence, the MR-8 carried out expropriations, kidnappings, and social activism. However, its disdain for unions, which MR-8 frequently disparaged as ineffectively run entities and not revolutionary enough, and conflicts with the Brazilian Left resulted in its marginalization. On September 4, 1969, the MR-8, in a joint operation with the ALN, kidnapped US Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick. On the same day, the ALN and the MR-8 issued a joint manifesto taking credit for the action and explained its symbolic and political significance. In exchange for Elbrick's release, the guerrillas secured the liberation of 15 revolutionaries. The terms of the release also stipulated the publication of a manifesto. While the Brazilian government under President Artur da Costa e Silva obtained Elbrick's freedom, the incident constituted a humiliating moment. Ruffled by the experience, the government escalated its persecution of domestic subversives, resulting in the capture and death of countless combatants.

Manifesto of the ALN and the MR-8

Today, revolutionary groups apprehended Mr. Charles Burke Elbrick, the US Ambassador, taking him somewhere in the country, where they are holding him prisoner. This act is not an isolated episode. It comes on top of the numerous revolutionary acts already carried out: for instance, bank robberies, in which funds are raised for the revolution, taking back what the bankers steal from the people and their employees; the occupation of barracks and police stations, where weapons and ammunition are obtained for the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship; the invasions of prisons, to free revolutionaries and return them to the people's struggle; the bombing of buildings symbolizing oppression; and the justification of torturers and executions.

In fact, the abduction of the ambassador is just another act of the revolutionary war, which advances every day and will initiate its rural guerrilla warfare phase later this year.

With the kidnapping of the ambassador, we want to show that it is possible to defeat the dictatorship and exploitation, if we arm and organize ourselves. We will appear where the enemy least expects us and then disappear, wearing out the dictatorship, bringing terror and fear to the exploiters, and hope and victory to the exploited.

Mr. Burke Elbrick represents in our country the interests of imperialism, which, together with the big bosses, the big landowners, and the big national bankers, sustain the oppressive and exploitative regime.

The interests of these consortiums, of getting richer and richer, have created and maintained a wage squeeze, the unjust agrarian structure, and institutionalized repression.

Therefore, the kidnapping of the ambassador is a clear warning that the Brazilian people will never allow them to rest and at any given moment will bring down on them the weight of their struggle.

Everyone knows that this is a tireless struggle, a long and hard struggle, that does not end with the exchange of one general or another in power, but only with the end of the regime of the big exploiters and the constitution of a government that frees the workers of the entire country from the situation in which they find themselves.

This is Independence Week. The people and the dictatorship celebrate in different ways. The dictatorship promotes parties, parades, sets off fireworks, and puts up banners. But it does not celebrate anything. It throws sand in the eyes of the exploited, instilling a false joy in order to mask the miserable, exploitative, and repressive life we live. Can one block the sun with a sieve? Can one disguise their misery from the people when they feel it in their flesh?

In Independence Week, there are two celebrations: one by the elite and the other by the people; those who promote parades and those who kidnap the ambassador, a symbol of exploitation.

The life and death of the Ambassador are in the hands of the dictatorship. If it meets two demands, Mr. Elbrick will be released. Otherwise, we will be forced to carry out revolutionary justice. Our two demands are:

1. The release of 15 political prisoners. There are 15 revolutionaries among thousands who suffer torture in the jails and prisons throughout the country. They are beaten, persecuted, and are embittered by the humiliations inflicted by the military. We are not demanding the impossible. We are not demanding the restitution of the lives of countless combatants murdered in prisons. They will not be released, of course, but avenged one day. We demand only the release of these 15 men, leaders in the fight against the dictatorship.

From the people's point of view, each one of them is worth a hundred ambassadors. But a United States ambassador is also valuable from the perspective of dictatorship and exploitation.

2. The publication and reading of this message, in its entirety, in the major newspapers, radio, and television stations throughout the country. The 15 political prisoners must be taken by special plane to a specific country—Algeria, Chile, or Mexico—where they are granted political asylum. No retaliation should be attempted against them.

The dictatorship has 48 hours to answer publicly whether it accepts or rejects our proposal. If the response is positive, we will disclose the list of the 15 revolutionary leaders and wait 24 hours for them to be transported to a safe country. If the answer is no, or if there is no answer within that time frame, Mr. Burke Elbrick will be executed. The 15 comrades must be released, whether or not they are sentenced: this is an "exceptional situation." In "exceptional situations," the jurists of the dictatorship always come up with a formula to resolve things, as we have seen recently, when the military junta came up to power.

The talks will only begin after the dictatorship issues public and official declarations that it will comply with our demands.

The process will always be public on the part of the authorities and always unannounced on our part. We would like to remind you that the deadlines are non-extendable and we will not hesitate to keep our promises.

Finally, we want to warn those who torture, beat, and kill our comrades: we will not accept the continuation of this abhorrent practice. We are giving final warning. Whoever goes on torturing, beating, and killing, be on the defensive. It's now eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

8 October Revolutionary Movement (MR-8)

National Liberation Action

September 4, 1969

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA;
www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=327

4

CHILE

Revolutionary Left Movement (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria), MIR

The MIR was founded on October 12, 1965, by a group of revolutionary leftists who had previously militated in communist and socialist parties and other organizations that adhered to variants of Marxism. While Chileans celebrated their country's electoral process, there were groups and cells that viewed the political system differently and debunked the myths surrounding its effectiveness. One of the most vocal organizations was the MIR. Before Salvador Allende won the presidency in 1970, the MIR had been actively pursuing a revolution outside legal parameters. The Movement's first leader, Miguel Enríquez, was a well-seasoned radical militant, who, like several of his co-founders, disapproved of the reformist direction toward which communists and socialists were gravitating. The creation of a revolutionary vanguard was no longer a priority. Against this backdrop, Enríquez and his comrades formed the MIR with the idea that it would become the vanguard of the proletariat and lead the working classes to power. In the short time before the 1970 elections, the MIR managed to carry out some armed propaganda, but with little effect. Allende's victory and the popularity of his "peaceful road to socialism" slogan dampened the MIR's hope of a Marxist-Leninist revolution. While it did not entirely adhere to Allende's vision, some were more willing to work with the new regime. In fact, Enríquez became the new Minister of Education. The MIR issued a document in September 1970 explaining its thoughts on Allende's triumph. While the Movement celebrated the victory, the tenor of the document sounds fairly suspicious. Indeed, early on the MIR began hurling criticisms at the regime, claiming it was implementing radical change too slowly. When the discontent from the Right began to increase,

the MIR skewered the administration for not clamping down on the reactionaries. When the military coup occurred on September 11, 1973, the MIR once again went underground and orchestrated several attacks against members of the military regime—some resulting in the death of high-ranking members. In 1974, Enríquez perished in a gunfight against agents of the infamous National Intelligence Directorate or DINA. Hundreds more would also fall at the hands of the DINA in the 1970s and 1980s. In the early 1980s, the MIR established a front in the southern part of Chile in the Valdivia Province and won support throughout the area. Today, the party forms a part of the *Juntos Podemos Más* (Together We Can do More) coalition.

The MIR and the Triumph of Salvador Allende

The MIR to the workers, peasants, settlers, students, and soldiers.

The Aggressions from the Right

1. The rise of mass mobilizations in recent years and the temporary political divisions of the ruling classes permitted what we believed was very unlikely to happen: the Left achieved an electoral majority.
2. The Right and imperialism, defeated in the electoral field, are upset. To protect their wealth and privileges, they are trying to snatch this win from the Left by creating economic and financial turmoil, expanding unemployment, stealing votes at polling stations, electing the second majority in Congress, and even plotting personal attacks against the candidate who won. In order to protect their dirty interests, they will not hesitate to encourage the Armed Forces' reactionary sectors to stage a military coup or lobby for foreign intervention.

Christian Democracy

The defeated want to administer the victory.

1. The Christian Democrats, the murderers of El Salvador and Puerto Montt, torturers of revolutionaries, and who sold Chilean copper to the Americans after their defeat at the polls, are brazenly attempting to appear as the champions of "democracy" and hoping to castrate the government and the Popular Unity's program by negotiating their votes in Parliament.
2. Beyond the statements, the Popular Unity is confronted with two alternatives: it can take over the government smoothly thanks to conciliation with the Christian Democrats or, as we are sure its revolutionary sectors will urge, it will not conciliate, maintain its program, not align itself with the Christian Democrats to face the reactionary offensive, and thereby secure the government's revolutionary and socialist path.

Meaning of the Electoral Triumph of the Left

We maintain that the Popular Unity's electoral majority represents an immense leap forward in the workers' political consciousness, which will undoubtedly favor the development of a revolutionary path in Chile.

We also maintain that this electoral majority has formalized an impasse between the workers on the one hand, and the bosses at farms and factories. This will only be resolved by a showdown between the rural and urban poor against the masters of power and wealth. This confrontation is postponed for the moment, but sooner or later it will have to happen, and it will surely be violent. Those who are powerful today will not give up their wealth and privileges freely. The strategy of armed struggle, today, more than ever, is entirely in force.

1. The fact that the UP is taking over the government does not mean that the seizure of power by the workers or socialism in Chile will take place straight away. A left-wing electoral majority has been secured, reflecting the aspirations of the masses to be in government. The struggle is for the Left to be the government—that is to say, that the public offices of the President, Ministers, etc., are occupied by the Left. But so far, the repressive apparatus of the capitalist State to the exploitation and misery in the fields and cities of Chile remain intact. **THE GOAL IS FOR THE WORKERS TO CONQUER POWER**, which only can happen when foreign companies and the banks are in the hands of the people, when the factories, mines, and estates are in reality those of the workers and peasants.

The Position of the MIR

1. The MIR does not deceive anyone, nor does it get on any successful electoral bandwagon. In May of this year, we publicly decided not to call for abstention, not to conduct electoral activities, and not to devote ourselves to searching for votes through the classic methods employed by the Left. As we stated then, we carried out a fierce political campaign in the most impoverished sectors of the mass movement, and put our effort into encouraging the mobilization of the workers for their demands through revolutionary methods. We managed to do so in the workers' struggles in Helvetia, the rubber scavengers, Polycron, Sigdo Kopers, Roma furniture, among the peasants of Melipilla and Colchagua, the Mapuche of Cautín, among the coal workers, the textiles of Tomé, the squatters in Santiago, Concepción, Coronel, Chillan, and Los Angeles, and among the high school and university students throughout the country. In May and August, we developed our nascent armed apparatuses and put them on high alert if they had to defend a potential electoral victory for the Left. That's how it was during 1970, that's how it was on September 4, and that's how it is today.

2. We believe that an electoral majority of the Left or a UP government is an excellent starting point in the worker's struggle to take power, which, by incorporating new mass contingents and under new forms of struggle, will inevitably culminate in a confrontation between the national and foreign exploiters on the one hand, and the workers on the other.
3. We will take a stand against the UP government if it assumes power without mediating alliances with the Christian Democrats and without reconciling the program. Although the UP program is not identical to ours, it aims to strike at the heart of the capitalist system, for example: foreign companies, industrial monopolies, finance capital, and landowners. Moreover, although there are parties in the UP that represent different interests, it is a fact that the forces on the Left predominate.

We believe that the reactionary offensive, a possible imperialist blockade, and the forces that will be liberated at a mass level will push for a further radicalization of a UP government. Consequently, the MIR intends to support these measures, to push for the realization of this program, to seek its radicalization in the mass fronts, and today, as a fundamental and urgent task, to focus its efforts on defending the electoral victory against the scheming of the Right and imperialism.

We Propose What Is to Be Done

1. The fundamental task of this moment is to stem monopolies and defend the electoral victory. In the face of the Right's machinations, we must prepare the masses politically, organically, and militarily for the big clash that will surely come before or after November 4. The only way to guarantee victory and the subsequent realization of the program is to relocate the center of decision-making from the halls of Congress and La Moneda to the workers' and peasants' unions, the student centers, and the residents' committees.
2. It is necessary to commit the masses to defend the victory, immediately announcing popular measures such as a minimum living wage of one million pesos, a single-family allowance equal to the highest level, a price freeze from January 1 and onward, etc.

The struggle for demands must be pushed forward on all fronts. The masses must be mobilized through their trade union organizations. Committees must be organized on the front lines to defend the victory as a way of asserting themselves in the most impoverished strata of society.

3. A general strategy must be given to the masses to defend the victory. Thus, in the face of a declared and severe lack of knowledge, the workers should occupy their factories, the peasants their farms, and residents should barricade themselves in the streets.

Defend the Victory!
 Renounce the Alliance with Christian Democracy!
 Fight for the Conquest of Power by the Workers!
 The Revolutionary Left Movement
 MIR

September 1970

Source: CEME – Centro de Estudios Miguel Enríquez – Archivo Chile;
www.archivochile.com/Archivo_Mir/Doc_68_a_10_sept_73/mir68a730007.pdf; Originally published in *Referencias*, February 1971,
 University of Havana

Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez), FPMR

The FPMR was founded in 1983 as the armed wing of the Chilean Communist Party. The Front gets its name from Manuel Rodríguez Erdoíza, a national hero from the 19th century who took part in the Chilean independence movement and collaborated with the South American liberator, José de San Martín. After the MIR, the FPMR was the second most formidable armed revolutionary movement that fought the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship. In the wake of the coup, the Chilean Communist Party spiraled into a political crisis that was further compounded by the dictatorship's persecution of "enemies of the state." In the early 1980s, Party members exiled in Europe, with the assistance of sympathizers back home, recruited Communist Youth militants and other radical leftists eager to participate in a movement to overthrow the dictatorship. The Party also enlisted Raúl Pellegrini to be the FPMR's first leader. Pellegrini and his family fled to Germany almost immediately after the military coup. He later traveled to Cuba, where he enrolled in Camilo Cienfuegos' military training school. After graduating in 1978, he left for Nicaragua and joined one of the Sandinistas' fronts. Given his experience and military knowledge, the Chilean Communist Party recruited Pellegrini. A year after Pellegrini took the helm, the FPMR began operating. In 1986, a FPMR commando tried and failed to assassinate Pinochet as he travelled by car. As the Front's acts of armed propaganda intensified, its relationship with the Communist Party started to rapidly decline. The fallout began when the Party changed its tactics to conform to a new political line that no longer included a popular uprising through armed resistance. As a result, the FPMR was reduced to a secondary role and ultimately demanded that the Frente disband. Some members heeded the Party's call to lay down their arms and formed the Movimiento Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez in 1986. The remaining members continued as the FPMR, and were no longer attached to the Communist Party. In October 1988, the Front tried to launch the National Patriotic War, an ambitious revolutionary project in poor urban and rural areas, but the venture failed drastically. Earlier that month a plebiscite effectively opened the door to the return to

democracy and essentially rendered armed resistance unnecessary. Moreover, in one of several revolutionary actions carried out during the NPA in Los Queñes, Pellegrini and Cecilia Magni were captured, tortured, and executed by *carabineros* (the national police force). Their bodies were later discovered floating in the Tinguiririca River. After the return to democracy in 1990, the appeal of armed revolutionary movements rapidly fizzled. In essence, the Frente entered a period of inactivity and performed only a few revolutionary actions. Membership had been at a low for some time and only worsened into the 2000s. Today, a version of the FPMR still exists and actively participates in social mobilizations and regularly publishes commentary on contemporary political issues on its website. The “First Rodriuguista Manifesto” is written in the style commonly used by guerrilla movements in Latin America. While many thought the revolutionary seventies had come and gone, the FPMR argued for the continuation of armed resistance as the ideal vehicle to bring down tyranny in Chile.

The First Rodriuguista Manifesto

In the face of the deep crisis brought on by Pinochet’s dictatorship and his cabal, the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front hereby declares to the people of Chile and our friends in the world: The country is today experiencing its most profound crisis in history.

This crisis encompasses the most diverse aspects of national life and makes a profound transformation necessary to dismantle all the unjust structures that tyranny has managed to create in these 11 years. We are living in a political crisis motivated by a personalist tyranny that has deprived the Chilean people of all the rights they have won over many years of struggle and sacrifice.

This tyranny’s actions and desires clash with the people’s actions and hopes, who are fighting for democracy, freedom, and the restoration of all the rights stolen from them. Faced with this situation and bereft of popular support, the tyranny’s only recourse is brutal and murderous repression against the people and their organizations. In the last few days, it has even reimposed a “state of siege” with a whole series of bans and censorship.

We are living in a deep economic crisis as a result of the surrenderist and pro-imperialist policy carried out by the regime. This policy destroyed the country’s entire economic structure for the benefit of international corporations and companies and has left the country with a foreign debt that dramatically compromises our future.

This situation has resulted in unemployment, hunger, and hardship for the people, which has driven them to choose between dying of starvation or revolting against the cause of their drama: the dictatorship.

We live in a moral crisis reflected in widespread corruption at the highest levels of the regime and the wealthiest sectors, which are shocking the country

and the world with their scandals. Other signs of this moral crisis are the violent incidents in which the regime's police and security services are implicated with absolute impunity. Hundreds of people have been killed, among the latest being the transport worker Mario Fernández, Juan Aguirre Ballesteros, and the dead from the National Strike. In short, we are living in a major structural crisis that is growing each day as the people vent their demands and clash with the apparatus established by the dictatorship.

The regime has disrupted all the country's structures, successfully concentrating all political and economic power in the hands of a small group of influential people while leaving the vast majority of Chileans powerless.

[...]

Violence Originated in the Dictatorship

The regime is conducting a costly and well-coordinated campaign against so-called "violence" or "terrorism" to eradicate the violence used by some to escape the dictatorship. This violence is denounced precisely by those who initiated it 11 years ago through a savage coup that destroyed democracy and the very life of Chile's constitutional president, and by imposing violently on us a brutal and bloodthirsty dictatorship that has already lasted too long. After 11 years of atrocities and barbarism, the people are now standing up, and with all the weapons at their disposal, to finally put a stop to the regime's terrorist violence.

Hesitation and surrender will only prolong this regime of terror, violence, and misery that Pinochet has us in. We believe that it is a contradiction for some sectors of the opposition to call on the people to mobilize and protest, only to repudiate the violence exercised by the people to defend themselves.

Some go even further and use the people's mobilization as blackmail to reach a solution with the dictatorship behind the people's backs. This is immoral; this is manipulating the people. The people's violence is legitimate, given the savage brutality they have suffered and continue to experience under the dictatorship.

The most sensible thing to do today is to end the dictatorship that is the root of all violence as soon as possible. Behind that objective, we must use all forms of resistance, including those that adhere to violence, a path that we Chileans have not sought, but that was instead imposed on us.

[...]

We Fight for True Democracy

We represent the vast majority of the people when we claim that we aspire to a fully democratic regime in the political and social spheres, for which it is necessary to carry out, together with political transformations, a series of economic

and social modifications that entail putting an end to the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a few and placing it in the hands of the vast majority who do not possess it today.

It is necessary to start by decentralizing economic power, recuperating the large companies that have been surrendered into the hands of national and foreign capital.

Recovering the National Bank and freeing ourselves from the tutelage that imperialism exercises over us through the IMF and the presence of the transnationals that have once again taken over our basic wealth.

We demand the right for peasants to recover the land usurped by the regime to rebuild the large estates. We demand the Mapuche people's right to recover their land, cultivate it as a community, and have all their rights respected.

We demand the right for university students to have autonomy and to have their own organizations independent from the tutelage of military rectors and the surveillance and repression of armed guards.

We demand the right for young people to study and work, as well as the right for professionals to apply their knowledge to national development by obtaining jobs in their professions.

The country must abandon the sphere of influence of imperialism and abandon the policy of blocs, declaring itself non-aligned, firmly in favor of peace, integration among the American peoples, and maintaining friendly relations with all countries under the principle of non-intervention and mutual respect. The people aim to forge a genuine political project, not only by voting when called upon to do so but also by participating with full rights and at the most diverse levels in the approval and development of State policies. We strive to create a fully participatory democracy. Within the anti-government forces, the idea has emerged of signing a Constitutional Pact that commits all the signatory parties to the type of democratic regime to which it aspires and the basic rules that will govern it. This is undoubtedly a positive idea insofar as it makes it possible for all democrats to agree. Still, in the people's eyes, it will be an incomplete compromise if a commitment is not also made by the signatories to put an end to the current regime and dismantle the dictatorship's apparatus.

Ending the dictatorship and all its apparatus is the primary and fundamental test in the democratic faith of the signatories of the constitutional pact. We distrust last-minute democrats. A mere declaration of democratic faith is not enough for us after knowing the record of many "democrats" who did not hesitate in these 11 years to support the dictatorship's actions, even the most barbaric ones. We state our willingness to sign a constitutional pact that includes as a core part the commitment of the signatories to fight for:

For many years, the people have viewed justice as something out of reach and never on their side, instead on the side of the rich.

This image has been accentuated in the years of the dictatorship by the shameful role played in this period by the judicial system. This reaffirms the peoples' appetite to transform the judicial apparatus in order to ensure that their aspirations are reflected in it and that the administration of justice does not depend on the social condition of those who demand it. The achievement of the above goals, together with the democratization of the Armed Forces, will give the people full control over their destiny, thus embarking on the path of building a true democracy.

New Armed Forces for a Future Democracy

During these 11 years, the Armed Forces have been implicated in all the acts undertaken in its name by the cabal that governs us today. We are aware that it was not them as a whole who decided to carry out the 1973 coup, nor did they decide upon the actions that this regime has carried out during these years.

Those who have made these decisions are a high-ranking and military cabal driven by imperialism and in defense of petty interests that are in no way those of the Armed Forces. Hence, the urgent need to carry out a deep purge of criminal and corrupt elements in the Armed Forces, and then to rebuild the new Armed Forces that the country needs, based on a new concept of national defense, in which this is not only an exclusive function of the armed institutions but a function of the people as a whole.

The new Armed Forces will abandon the National Security Doctrine to replace it with another one that covers our nation's real interests, which are opposed by this doctrine's creators.

The Armed Forces, just like the country, shall be democratic in their social composition, in their entry systems, in their plans and programs, in their internal structure, in their promotion systems and regulations. They shall be committed to the brotherhood among the peoples and not to war; they shall tend to the Latin American union and the non-alignment in blocs, developing friendly relations with all those countries with which Chile has a relationship, and they shall break the bonds of dependence they sustain with the Pentagon.

The new Armed Forces will ensure respect for soldiers' rights, including civil and political rights. The members of the Armed Forces have the right to constitute a social organization that channels their concerns and represents them before the civil power and the high command. We call on the soldiers not to shoot at the people, not to participate in the repression.

We call on them to join the FPMR, where they will find a place to fulfill their vocation as soldiers, loved and respected by the people. We warn the repressive forces that the people will no longer accept being trampled and massacred and will organize and prepare to mete out a fitting punishment on the executioners. If they do not change their attitude, they will know what it means to confront the people's detachments in arms, which is not the same as engaging unarmed

and defenseless people. They cannot forget that even the most powerful armies have fallen before a people determined to achieve their freedom.

[...]

Toward a National Uprising

Through 11 protests and the last National Strike, the people have been building a road that proves to be viable and successful. The regime is terrified of the likelihood that the people will develop this outlook for resistance to an even greater degree—that is, trying to put an end to it as soon as possible and at any cost.

The people have understood that these forms of struggle have caused a real stir in the repressive forces, which have not been able to stop them even with the curfew, with the army taking to the streets, with massive raids, with brutal repression, and with massacres. The protests and strikes have shown that it is possible to go on the offensive, that it is possible to paralyze the country, and that it is possible to create impregnable bastions of the people. In short, the dictatorship's enormous military and repressive power become ineffective in the face of people who fight on the offensive and use all the means available for the struggle.

The above points have marked the path to follow, a national uprising that paralyzes the country for a prolonged period through the total and permanent mobilization of the masses, together with the rebellion of all the people, both in the city and in the countryside, and constituting centers in which the forces of the dictatorship are incapable of penetrating and acting. Through this form of resistance, we will be able to scatter the enemy's technical and military capacity, finally achieving the collapse of the dictatorship's military apparatus.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to advance much further in the masses' paramilitary planning, for which the FPMR has constituted the *rodriguistas* militias. For our part, we will continue to deliver new and stronger blows to the enemy forces. This is how we conceive the road the people will have to take to free themselves from tyranny.

This is a victorious path, of course, not without sacrifices. The sooner we make progress in carrying out the uprising, the less suffering our people will have to endure. Every day that passes with Pinochet in power is a day of hunger, infant mortality, suffering, murder, and crimes against the people. Our experience shows that it is possible to defeat powerful military forces. The key to success does not hinge exclusively on the level of weaponry but rather on combative morality...

This is how the peoples have defeated powerful armies like the United States in Vietnam, the Shah in Iran, Batista in Cuba, Somoza in Nicaragua. Today, the Salvadoran people have their country's army in check with the most powerful support machinery ever assembled by imperialism in our America.

The Chilean people have a just cause for which they are fighting for. They have a strong fighting spirit and have proved their determination to fight. We are sure that, like other peoples, Chile will also win.

Rodriguismo: A Historical Option

The Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front was born as a response to the people's demand for leadership in the military arena and to be the arm of all the people in their struggle against tyranny. We were inspired by the heroic example of the people's guerrilla, Manuel Rodríguez, who did not experience fear, and who, with courage and bravery, knew how to organize and lead the people's struggle during the independence era.

Manuel Rodríguez never allowed hesitation and discouragement to enter his mind. When, after a defeat, the people became desperate and cowardly and fell prey to some "leaders" who were preparing to flee to Mendoza, he knew how to reverse the situation and, to the cry of "We still have a homeland, citizens," he reorganized the patriotic forces to confront the enemy, playing a crucial part in the defeat of the enemies of the homeland and the gaining of Independence.

We love peace and want to put an end to the regime's terrorist violence. After a decade of seeing, and suffering in the flesh, the abuses and violence of the regime, a year ago we decided to organize ourselves and start acting, convinced that this is the only way to end the origin of violence itself: the dictatorship.

Never before had we taken up arms; today we do so obliged, but determined and confident that no sacrifice will be in vain. The comrades who have fallen in combat have our admiration and are the source of inspiration for the thousands of combatants who take their place every day and join the struggle.

We are not a new political party, and we do not intend to dispute spaces with anyone. We thank the parties that have shown their understanding, sympathy, and solidarity with our struggle. We agree with those in today's Chile, where people are killed for participating in a march, touching a pot, or inside their homes when they sleep, do their homework, or read a Bible. Therefore, no one can deny the validity of the life choice of those of us who have decided to fight with weapons in hand, convinced that this is the form of struggle that, combined with others, will defeat the dictatorship and end the terror. We do not despise any alternative form of combat. We would like to understand and agree with all the parties that are fighting against the dictatorship today and form with them the Great Patriotic Front that will lead the people to victory.

Our struggle is that of the unemployed, the homeless, the students, the professionals, the miners of El Teniente, the women, the Mapuche peasants; the Church's struggle in defense of human rights, and for no Chilean to "go to bed hungry" is also ours.

Our struggle is libertarian and patriotic. We seek to liberate our people from tyranny and recover democracy and the freedom we desire, but our

struggle is also to free our country from the domination of imperialism. Therefore, our struggle is in solidarity with and coincides with all those in our continent and the world today fighting to free themselves from the clutches of imperialism or who are building their liberated homelands, facing cruel imperialist aggression.

Our affection and solidarity go out to the people in the struggle in Guatemala and El Salvador, to the peoples and governments of Cuba and Nicaragua, to the peoples of Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil, to the democratization processes in Bolivia and Argentina...

We call on all the people to carry out the tasks set out in this Manifesto. We call for the construction of *rodriguista* militias. We call on the best fighters among the people to join the FPMR, especially the youth who have suffered the most from this regime. Only the heroic, combative, and permanent struggle of all the people will free us from tyranny.

Victory Belongs to Us!

Against Hunger and Repression, Rise Up!

National Leadership, Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front

Santiago, Chile, November 1984

Source: Official website of the FPMR; www.fpmr.cl/web/

5

COLOMBIA

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo), FARC-EP

The FARC was the oldest Latin American Marxist–Leninist guerrilla organization, founded by Manuel Marulanda Vélez (*nom de guerre* ‘Sure shot’) and members of the Colombian Communist Party in 1964 after years of political turmoil. The ceaseless battle between the Liberal and Conservative Parties reached a nadir in the late 1940s, setting off a decade-long bloody internal conflict (1948–1958) remembered as “La Violencia.” In 1958, the conflict ended with both parties agreeing to alternate power and ushered in a period known as the *Frente Nacional* or National Front (FN). During the 16-year period of the FN the conditions for the poor continued to deteriorate. The government expropriated farmland and redistributed it to large landowners, expelling impoverished peasants in the process. For some time, Communist Party militants had been performing political work in regions impacted by land issues. Additionally, militants became aware of other pressing issues plaguing rural society. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, cadres mobilized to raise these issues and organize communities to collectively demand change and assistance. In 1961, Marulanda founded the Republic of Marquetalia just south of Bogotá. Three years later the Colombian military carried out an operation to regain control of the area. Marulanda, Jacobo Arenas, the future co-founder, and dozens of survivors escaped into the mountains and formed the FARC. For the next 53 years, the FARC actively fought the Colombian state. According to data, the organization had close to 10,000 soldiers as well as hundreds of noncombatant sympathizers. Throughout the course of their

existence the FARC carried out numerous politically motivated attacks, assassinations, and bombings. Moreover, through its political work it secured areas in the Antioquia region and established fronts in southern Colombia near the Ecuadorian border. Attempts were made in the late 1980s to facilitate the FARC's transition into a political party under the Patriotic Union. However, the initiative was abandoned by 1987 after party members were subjected to harassment and violent attacks by different groups, including drug cartels who, in addition to other things, disliked the land reform initiatives put forward by UP given that it compromised their drug industry. Several attempts at peace talks failed under the presidencies of Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) and Álvaro Uribe (2002–2010). Attacks by the military and paramilitaries and the deaths of Marulanda of a heart attack in 2008, Raúl Reyes during a military operation on the Ecuadorian border, and Alfonso Cano in 2011 took a toll on the FARC. In 2016, the FARC announced a ceasefire had been signed with the Colombian government. The act took place in Havana, Cuba. In 2017, the FARC officially laid down its arms and issued the following statement. More than just a commitment to peace and moving forward democratically, the FARC also underscored the need to settle unresolved social, economic, and political issues and reiterated their commitment as the champions of the common Colombian.

***Message to the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos
(excerpt)****

Mr. President Juan Manuel Santos

Ladies and Gentlemen of the International Community

To the Government and people of the world

Colombians:

Today, June 27, in this zone that the guerrillas named Mariana Paez, in homage to the heroic comrade who fell in combat in February 2009, a symbol of the struggle of Colombian women for a better future, we gather to carry out the solemn act that culminates in the Laying Down of Arms by the FARC-EP.

This day does not end the existence of the FARC. We are concluding our 53-year-old armed uprising, for it will continue as a legal and democratic movement that will develop its ideological, political, organizational, and propagandistic efforts in an exclusively lawful, peaceful manner, without weapons.

The act that unites us is the result of a bilateral agreement, in which the State and guerrillas never commit again to use weapons in politics. This is the opening of a new era toward a liberal democracy in which the State has committed itself not to use weapons to persecute opponents or repress critical thinking.

We are honoring the laying down of our arms under the agreement. They will be left in the hands of the United Nations for the construction of the planned monuments. We thus honor our word and hope with all of you that the State will keep its word. As of today, all political persecution in Colombia must cease.

We hope that the Integral Rural Reform agreed on in the first section of the Final Agreement will be implemented quickly, given the need for the countryside's development. Without ever losing sight of the fact that the armed conflict was largely due to the plundering and violence suffered by our peasants, this is a history that must come to an end.

At the Havana Round Table, it was decided that the enormous economic, social, political, and cultural debt that the State owes them will be paid in full. We did not object on principle to the large agricultural entrepreneurs advancing their projects; we only demand that their development does not undermine or prevent the growth of the peasant economy.

We also hope that Colombian democracy will generously open its arms to all the forces, organizations, and movements that have been excluded from political representation for hundreds of years. This is what the second point of the Final Accord rigorously dealt with. The constituencies agreed upon for the conflict zones cannot be the subject of the slightest objection.

[...]

Similarly, the Final Accord tackled the problem of illicit drugs, based on a National Program for the Substitution of Illicitly Used Crops, comprehensive plans for substitution and alternative development, immediate attention to and development of productive projects, and a criminal policy strategy against drug cartels, support networks, and money laundering.

If we add the fight against corruption, control over production, importation, and commercialization of commodities, among other essential measures, all of this means the definitive replacement of the old policy of war against the peasant producers, of forced eradication, and military treatment of the problem.

A Victims' Agreement has also been signed, which is summarized in the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition: Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Disappeared in the Context of the Conflict, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Guarantees of Non-Repetition, and the Measures of Comprehensive Reparation.

With the seriousness that characterizes us, the FARC continues to move forward in fulfillment of the Final Agreement's third point: the end of the conflict. We do so in the highest possible faith. As you can all see, the Ceasefire and Hostilities Monitoring and Verification Mechanism proves that we are not wronging Colombia. Today we lay down our arms.

In exchange, the State offers us the creation of a National Political Pact, the National Commission on Security Guarantees, the Special Investigation Unit for the dismantling of criminal organizations and the successors to paramilitarism, the Comprehensive Security System for the implementation of policy, and measures to prevent and fight corruption.

In addition, security guarantees have been established to protect the leaders of organizations and movements and human rights defenders. Let this be the moment to raise our concern about the State's neglect of its word. The murders of popular leaders are not stopping, while the paramilitary threat is growing throughout the country.

The deaths of pardoned or amnestied guerrillas and militiamen have risen, and, in several cases, their families have been killed. The mechanisms stipulated in the Agreements in this area have not been implemented, and bureaucratic, administrative, judicial, and even political obstacles prevent this from happening. State action must be immediate; nothing justifies its delay.

It is regrettable that many guerrillas, militia members, sympathizers, or those accused of belonging to our ranks remain in prison six months after an amnesty and a pardon law that guaranteed their freedom within ten days. They and their families are advancing or preparing actions to protest against this failure. None of this should have been necessary.

There are significant delays in constitutional and legal reforms that develop different points of the Agreements, with the risks originated in upcoming electoral campaigns. Creating the JEP is slowing down in a worrisome way, subject to dismissed attacks from enemies of peace who seek to cloud, vitiate, and prevent or partialize it.

The mechanisms for investigating and combating criminal and paramilitary gangs remain unseen. A broad and efficient UN mission was in charge of verifying our compliance with the Ceasefire and the Laying Down of Arms. Still, when a second mission came to check on the State's compliance with the Agreements, the official climate became suspiciously rarefied.

The State of the infrastructure of this Federal Zone is the best testimony to the pace at which the national government is complying with what was jointly agreed upon. The economic, social, and family reincorporation of the guerrillas requires urgent measures to be implemented very slowly in the face of imminent realities. Many things must be done now.

The agreements are sacred, and they are signed to be fulfilled. Today we are providing clear proof of how the FARC is meeting its obligations. We have said it many times; the peace agreements are not for the FARC; they are for all the Colombian people. It is up to them, with the support of the international community, which has taken such great pains to sign them, to ensure that they are strictly complied with.

From now on, our struggle will be aimed at demanding the implementation of everything that has been agreed upon. We will do it in a peaceful and civilized way without giving up for a moment in our efforts. We know that we carry a truth, a just and legitimate flag, and that our compliance empowers us to demand it from our counterpart. We feel that Colombia will stand by us.

And that we will have sufficient legitimacy to request international solidarity. In contrast to those who do not expect these agreements but a guerrilla ceasefire, we, along with the honest people of our country and the planet, know that they will go much further, they will be the key to a different, decent, democratic, progressive, and just country.

We will walk through the streets and squares of Colombia, carrying our message of unity and reconciliation. The tragic experiences of the past will not be repeated because our country has learned from its pain. After all, Colombians will not allow themselves to be swindled again.

Goodbye Weapons, Goodbye War, Hello to Peace
Central Command of the FARC-EP
November 27, 2017

Source: www.farc-ep.net

National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), ELN

The National Liberation Army of Colombia was founded in 1964 by Fabio Vásquez Castaño, the son of a poor peasant family, radicalized in the Liberal Revolutionary Movement Youths and trained in Cuba in the early 1960s. The ELN was primarily active in the Santander region of Colombia and worked closely with peasants. Without a doubt, the ELN's most famous combatant was Camilo Torres Restrepo, a Dominican priest turned revolutionary, who left his position in the Church to join the guerrillas. Torres Restrepo applied elements of liberation theology to the ELN's political program. While the Vatican and the Latin American Catholic Church frowned on the involvement of clergymen in politics and often aligned with repressive governments, especially during the Cold War and the fight against communism, Torres drew direct links between gospel doctrine and national liberation movements spearheaded by society's most vulnerable and marginalized social classes. Torres Restrepo argued that he was only following the true teachings of Jesus Christ and was carrying out his duty as a Christian. Conservative elites lambasted the former priest for weaponizing the Bible and using it to incite class warfare. During his short time as a *guerrillero*, Torres Restrepo wrote several political articles before his death at the hands of the Colombian army in 1966. He frequently penned political tracts directly aimed at Colombia's Christians, calling for them to join the struggle to end exploitation and the suffering of the country's poor.

“Message to Christians” epitomizes Torres Restrepo’s views on the intersectionality between Church doctrine and the objectives of the armed struggle. While Torres Restrepo died early, his legacy and works were regularly brought up in the revolutions of Central America. As a trailblazer, he became a model for future “radical” priests who actively participated in popular political mobilizations and supported armed revolutionary movements in their respective countries.

A Message to Christians

The upheavals produced by the political, religious, and social events of recent times have possibly created much confusion for the Christians of Colombia. It is necessary that at this decisive moment for our history, we Christians stand firmly behind our religion’s core foundations.

The main thing in Catholicism is to love one’s neighbor. “He who loves his neighbor follows his law” (St. Paul, Rom. XIII). This love, to be genuine, must seek effectiveness. If a charity, alms, the few free schools, the few housing schemes, what has been referred to as “charity,” is not sufficient to feed most of the hungry, nor to dress most of the unclothed, nor to teach most of the uneducated, we have to find effective means for the sake of the majority’s well-being.

Such means will not be sought by the privileged minorities in power, because these effective measures generally force minorities to surrender their privileges. For example, to make more jobs available in Colombia, it would be better not to withdraw capital in the way of dollars rather than investing in job creation in the country. But because the Colombian peso is devalued daily, those who have wealth and power are never going to prohibit the exportation of their money. By exporting it, they avoid devaluation.

It is then necessary to take power away from the privileged minorities and give it to the poor masses. This, done quickly, is the essence of a revolution. The Revolution can be peaceful if minorities do not engage in violent resistance. Therefore, Revolution is the way to achieve a government that feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, teaches the uneducated, commits to charity, and loves one’s neighbor, not occasionally and passively or not just for a few—but for most of our neighbors. That is why the Revolution is not only permissible but obligatory for Christians who see in it the only practical and adequate way of realizing love for all. It is true that “there is no authority except God” (St. Paul, Rom. XXI). But St. Thomas tells us that the people are responsible for the assignment of authority.

When there is an authority against the people, that authority is not legitimate and is called tyranny. Christians can and must fight against oppression. The present government is tyrannical because only 20% of the voters support it and because its decisions stem from privileged minorities.

The sins of the Church should not scandalize us. The Church is human. It is crucial to understand that it is divine and that if we Christians fulfill our obligation to love our neighbor, we are strengthening the Church.

I have given up the clergy's privileges and duties, but I have not given up being a priest. I believe I have given myself to the Revolution out of love for my fellow man. I have given up saying Mass to realize that love of one's neighbor, in the temporal, economic, and social realms. When my neighbor has nothing against me, I will return to offer Mass if I have carried out the Revolution and if God allows me to do so. I believe that this is how I should follow Christ's command:

If you bring your gift to the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar, and go, reconcile first with your brother, and then come and present your gift.

(Matthew v. 23–24)

After the Revolution, we Christians will realize that we established a system guided by love for one's neighbor.

The Fight Is Long; Let Us Begin Now...

Camilo Torres

August 16, 1965

Source: Documentación de Historia Política Social y Movimiento Popular Contemporáneo de Chile y América Latina-Archivo Chile; www.archivochile.com/Homenajes/camilo/d/H_doc_de_CT-0024.pdf;

*Originally published in Frente Unido, no. 1, August 16, 1965

19th of April Movement (Movimiento 19 de Abril), M-19

The M-19 was a nationalist, democratic-socialist urban guerrilla movement active in Colombia from 1974 to 1990. The April 19 date pertains to the contentious presidential election that inspired the organization's creation and catalyzed their armed struggle. At the time of the election, several of the M-19's future members participated in various political parties and organizations. When the votes were tallied, the conservative National Front emerged victoriously. However, the second-place National Popular Alliance or ANAPO, disputed the results, declaring fraud and many discrepancies. In response, the socialist wing of the ANAPO, called the *comuneros*, left the Party to form the M-19 over disagreements about the proper response and its refusal to back armed resistance. The founding nucleus consisted of 11 members, two of whom were women, but ultimately grew to nearly 2,000 combatants, making it the second-largest guerrilla movement after the Rebel Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The M-19 combined armed propaganda with social activism in poor urban communities

from which it recruited comrades and racked up noncombatant popular support. The M-19 was best known for taking control of the Palace of Justice—the seat of the Supreme Court—on November 6, 1985, less than four months after Iván Marino Ospina, the Movement's leader, died in an armed operation. More than 30 female and male insurgents attacked the Palace and took 300 people hostage. After establishing contact with the authorities outside the building, the guerrillas demanded that President Belisario Betancur enter the Palace to stand trial for crimes committed, but he refused to acquiesce to the guerrillas' demands. On the second day of the siege, the Colombian military stormed the building. Photographs taken during the assault showed armored vehicles, in particular, the Brazilian-made EE-9 Cascavel, breaking down the Palace's enormous main doors. More than 100 people died during the assault, including guerrillas and the M-19 leader, Andrés Almarales. Eleven years earlier, on January 17, the guerrillas had performed an unforgettable act of armed propaganda by stealing Simón Bolívar's sword from the Quinta de Bolívar Museum in Bogotá. After the operation, the M-19 issued a communiqué titled "Bolívar, Your Sword Returns to the Struggle." The action had political and historical importance: First, it placed the Movement within the broader history of popular insurrections in Colombia. Second, the "recuperation" of Bolívar's sword by insurgents was intended to symbolize that the struggle he had led in the 19th century persisted unfinished, which meant that the sword could not retire until it realized the continent's liberation.

Bolívar, Your Sword Returns to the Struggle

And freedom is not assured. It doesn't exist. From Mexico to Tierra del Fuego, the worker, the peasant, the laborer, the student, the village woman, the Indian...

We Latin Americans live in hunger. We dwell in misery. We bleed injustice. We feel our culture is being castrated, deformed, and sold.

The Spanish chains broken by Bolívar are now replaced by the gringo dollar. Every four years, the representatives of the murderous oligarchies of the Colombian people have taken turns on Bolívar's throne.

These exploiters talk about a sovereign nation while they hand it over to foreign masters. They speak of a fair homeland while the wealth of a privileged few is amassed at the cost of the workers and landless peasants, the starving child without a school, the unemployed and their misery, the subdued woman, the Indian exploited like an animal, the imprisoned non-conformist, and the censored student.

That is why Bolívar's struggle continues, Bolívar has not died.

His sword breaks through the cobwebs of the museum and launches into the present fight. He passes into our hands, into the hands of the people in arms. He now targets the exploiters of the people, against national and foreign masters. Against them, those who locked it in museums,

rusting. Those who distorted the idea of Liberator. Those who will call us subversives, stateless, adventurers, and bandits. To them, this reunion of Bolívar with his people is an outrage, a crime. To them, his liberating sword in our hands is dangerous ...

But Bolívar is not with them—the oppressors—but with the oppressed. That is why his sword passes into our hands. In the hands of the people in arms. And united with the struggles of our peoples he will not rest until achieving the second independence, this time total and definitive ...

Movimiento 19 de Abril

January 17, 1974

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=3718

6

CUBA

26th of July Movement (Movimiento 26 de Julio), M-26-7

The Cuban Revolution (1956–1959) was one of the most transformative events in Latin American history, and its imagery, discourses, contributions to guerrilla warfare, and inspiration found expression and a receptive audience throughout the globe. Whereas the Soviet Union had become a sort of a Mecca for aspiring revolutionaries around the world since 1917, Cuba transformed into an inspiration for Third World national liberation movements and an ally to global anti-colonial, anti-fascist, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles. Under the 26th of July Movement, an indispensable—but often overlooked—underground cell in Havana succeeded in overthrowing a dictatorial regime led by Fulgencio Batista, and launched a project to build a new society based on socialist principles. Starting as an inauspicious endeavor, it was revitalized under the tutelage of leaders such as Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and Celia Sánchez, and the hundreds of volunteers and impoverished people of the Sierra Maestra. No doubt the dissemination of communiqués, speeches, and propaganda proved to be cumbersome for the M-26-7 during its campaign in the Sierra Maestra. While the urban underground helped smuggle materials out of the mountains, military operations and checkpoints increased the risks. To overcome this problem, the guerrillas established another clandestine media outlet, Radio Rebelde. The radio provided civilians who tuned in a direct channel to the front lines, where they not only heard clarion calls for a national strike and anti-Batista propaganda, but also got to hear Castro regularly report from areas throughout the Sierra Maestra. The first document is an excerpt from Castro’s first speech on Radio Rebelde. The length and rhetoric became a mainstay in Castro’s speeches, as did anecdotes about the movement’s

beginnings, the resolution and heroism of its militants, and the revolutionary passion of the Cuban people. Castro was conscious of the United States' misgivings about the Revolution and familiar with their hawkish stance toward change in Latin America. More than ever, Castro used his speeches to remind Cubans about the constant threats to the Revolution. He asked that they remain vigilant and prepared to defend its longevity against counter-revolutionaries and outside threats. On March 4, 1960, while people unloaded a shipment of munitions and grenades from a French-owned *La Coubre*, two massive explosions, 30 minutes apart, killed roughly 100 people and injured hundreds more. Cuban authorities immediately determined that the "explosions" were a terrorist attack orchestrated by enemies of the Revolution. The events vindicated Castro's frequent warnings and bolstered his power. The following day, at a service for the victims, Castro gave a speech wherein he debunked any claims that the explosions had been accidents. Moreover, Castro expertly capitalized on the incident to rouse the people.

First Speech by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz on Radio Rebelde (excerpt)

To public opinion in Cuba and to the free people in Latin America.

I have been marching day and night without rest from the Column No. 1 area of operations under my command, to be present at this appointment with the rebel radio station.

It's hard for me to leave my men at this time, even for just a few days. But speaking to the people is also a duty and a need that I could not fail to fulfill.

As hateful as tyranny is in all its aspects, none of them is so irritating and crudely cynical as the absolute control that it has imposed on all the media for disseminating printed, radio, and television news.

Censure is so disgusting in itself, and it becomes much more disgusting when it's used not only to try but also to hope to hide the truth from the people about what has happened, through the partial and exclusive use of all common means of communication, to make the people believe whatever better suits the safety of their executioners.

While they are concealing the truth at all costs, they report lies.

[...]

Those same newspapers and broadcasters, within which a severe and vigilant inquisitor prevents the publication of any real news, are obligated to inform and present all that the dictatorship reports. The organs of opinion are snatching the people to turn them into vehicles of oppression. Tyranny constantly tries to deceive the people, as if the mere fact of denying any information that does not go to the people from official sources were sufficient enough to invalidate all their information.

And whom will the people believe? The criminals who tyrannize the people, the traitors who snatched the Constitution and the people's liberties, those who censure the press and prevent the free publication of the most insignificant news?

[...]

The General Staff of the Cuban Army has shown it has no shame whatsoever.

The General Staff lies by interest; it lies to the people and to the army; it lies to avoid demoralization in the army's ranks; the General Staff lies because it refuses to recognize before the world its military incapacity, [...] sold out to the most dishonorable cause that can be defended; it lies because it has been unable, despite its tens of thousands of soldiers and immense material resources, to defeat a handful of men who rose up to defend the rights of the people. The mercenary rifles of tyranny crashed against the idealistic rifles that do not collect any salary. Neither military technique, nor the academy, nor the most modern weapons are of any use to them.

The fact is that the military, when they do not defend the country but instead attack it, when they do not defend their people but instead they enslave the people, they cease to be an institution and they become an armed gang; they cease to be soldiers and become delinquents. And they stop deserving not only the salary they wrest from the people's sweat, but even the sun that covers the earth they have bloodied with dishonor and cowardice.

These same military men who have never defended the Homeland from a foreign enemy, who have never won a medal on the battlefield, who owe their rank to treason, nepotism, and crime, issue war dispatches announcing 10, 20, 30 and up to 50 compatriots killed by their homicidal weapons as if they were victories of the Homeland, as if every Cuban killed, because those are the casualties they announce, did not have brothers or children, a wife or parents. There would be enough people to wage a victorious war just with the relatives of killed compatriots.

We have never murdered any enemy prisoners. We have never abandoned a wounded adversary on the battlefield; that is and always will be for us an honor and a mark of glory; we feel with pain the death of every adversary, even though our war is the fairest of wars because it is the war for freedom.

However, the Cuban people know that the struggle has been waged victoriously; the people of Cuba know that over 17 months, since we disembarked with a handful of men who knew how to face up to the initial defeat without ceasing their patriotic enterprise, the Revolution has been growing incessantly; what was just a spark only a year ago is today an invincible blaze; the Cuban people know that we're no longer fighting

alone in the Sierra Maestra from Cabo Cruz to Santiago de Cuba, but that there are people also in the Sierra Cristal from Mayarí to Baracoa, in Cauto from Bayamo to Victoria de las Tunas, in the province of Las Villas from the Escambray Mountains to the Trinidad Mountains and in the mountains of Pinar del Río; in the very cities, streets and towns the people are fighting heroically; but above all, the people of Cuba know that the will and determination with which we began this fight remains unshakable, they know that we are an army which emerged from nothing, that adversity does not discourage us, that after each setback the Revolution has reemerged with more strength. They know that the destruction of the Granma expeditionary would not be the end of the fight but the beginning. They know that the spontaneous strike that followed the assassination of our Comrade Frank País did not wipe out tyranny, but it marked the way for the organized strike; that no government can stay in power supported by the pile of corpses with whose blood the dictatorship drowns the new strike, because the hundreds of young people and workers who were killed during these days and the unprecedented repression unleashed against the people does not weaken the Revolution.

[...]

When the General Staff announces the deaths of 30, 40, or even 50 rebels, they are invariably talking about defenseless peasants, arrested in their homes and mercilessly murdered. Many officers who command the dictatorship's troops in the Sierra Maestra have received their ranks this way. Promoting these assassins because of massacres perpetrated against defenseless compatriots has been put into practice and it has stimulated one of the most repugnant and inhuman procedures that can be conceived of in a war.

[...]

Last Thursday, on April 10, after the combat at Pozón where a detachment of the dictatorship was completely destroyed as it was leaving Yara to pursue a rebel patrol that had attacked a convoy on the Manzanillo-Bayamo highway, three B-26 aircrafts, a jet and two light aircraft mercilessly attacked the village of Cayo Espino for two hours; there was no military objective there. Not one single house escaped being hit by the shrapnel. An improvised blood bank and hospital in the rearguard with three doctors from the 26th of July Movement provided medical care to the wounded who had to wait for the night to be transferred. A five-year-old boy bled to death on the way, lying on a crudely improvised surgical table, his legs ripped off by a 50-caliber bullet which had also wounded his two little sisters.

No spectacle has impressed us so much as that of the dying boy who, without crying, barely was able to call out to his grandmother to tell her that he had loved her very much, but "I could not love her anymore because I am going to die." It was as if this little child was aware of his

sacrifice, as if he understood that he too was dying for detesting those barbarians who attack humble family homes with machine-guns.

Journalists from four countries witnessed, listened to, and filmed that scene. Even though they were familiar with the toughness of this fight, that event nevertheless infuriated them. Perhaps they were reminded of their own children. It was difficult to understand how Cuban hands were capable of perpetuating such a crime. What need was there for committing such barbarity? What military purpose could be achieved by attacking that defenseless hamlet many miles away from the scene of combat with machine-guns? What strange design guides the minds of barbarians who use the resources of the nation to carry out horrors against their own people?

[...]

If these events can be perpetrated by an armed government against its own citizens and people, it is necessary to understand that mankind has advanced very little in the efforts of protecting people from barbarism. There are the United States, with the weapons for continental defense used by its friends, the dictators of America. These dictators will not grow tired repeating the lie that we are “communists” to justify sending weapons as if they were the representatives of democracy, dignity, and the most sacred rights of the men.

With the word “democracy” on the lips of tyrants, what a sad and shameless campaign they are carrying out against oppressed peoples.

It is said that the sale of weapons to the Batista government has been canceled by the US State Department. But the results have not been changed in the least: the United States is selling arms to Somoza and Trujillo; Somoza and Trujillo sell arms to Batista. What does the Organization of American States do? Do the dictators have a right to conspire for massacring the Cuban people? And the democratic governments of America, the leaders and the democratic parties of the continent, what are they doing with their arms crossed?

If dictators help each other, why shouldn't the people help each other? Are we not obliged to help the sincere democrats in all the Americas? Have we not paid dearly enough for the sin of our indifference to the concert of tyrants who promote the destruction of our democracies? Is it not clear that Cuba is fighting a battle for the democratic ideal of our continent? Do you not realize that the last dictators have turned Cuba into one of their last trenches? In Cuba one does not fight for the redemption of a single people, but for the defense of a principle that concerns America. If the dictators help Batista, it is only fair that the peoples of America help Cuba.

On behalf of the people of Cuba who are fighting against the weapons of Batista, Trujillo, and Somoza, we demand help from the democratic governments of America. A huge territory on the southern coast of Oriente (Eastern) Province, between Cabo Cruz and Santiago de Cuba, is in the hands of our

forces. Weapons that are parachuted ten kilometers from the coast along that wide area will inevitably fall into our hands without the dictatorship intercepting them. We need automatic rifles, heavy machine guns, bazookas, and mortars to advance to the capital. The Provisional Revolutionary Government will defray all the expenses that these shipments cause and the people of Cuba will be eternally grateful. We, the Cuban rebels, do not ask for food, we do not even ask for medicines; we ask for weapons to fight, to firmly establish in America that the will of a people is more powerful than the consortium of the dictatorship and its mercenary armies.

[...]

The repressive forces of the regime, not even its legion of confidants and traitors, will be able to counter this progressive and total standstill in the country. Tyranny will have to suffer from the standstill, suffocation, and hunger.

With this slogan I say goodbye to return to my men. To all the columns operating in Oriente Province and to their commanders, our warm congratulations for the successes obtained.

To the militias of the 26th of July Revolutionary Movement, our recognition and admiration for the heroism with which they are fighting in towns and cities.

To the rebels in Las Villas and the other nuclei in the rest of the island, our fraternal and encouraging greeting. To the people of Cuba, the security that this fortress will never be defeated, and our oath that the country will be free or until the last combatant falls.

Fidel Castro Ruz

Commander in Chief of the 26th of July Revolutionary Forces

April 14, 1958

Source: www.fidelcastro.cu/en/discursos/first-speech-commander-chief-fidel-castro-ruz-radio-rebelde-april-14-1958

Fidel Castro Ruz Delivers Speech During the Funeral Rites Honoring the Victims from the Explosion of La Coubre Vessel (excerpt)

Comrades:

There are moments of great importance in the history of nations; there are extraordinary minutes, such as this tragic and bitter moment we are going through today.

First of all, so that we are not thought of as allowing ourselves to be carried away by emotion, so that it can be clearly seen that there is a people capable of standing with our head held high, with courage, a nation that knows to calmly analyze situations without resorting to lies or pretexts or

based on absurd suppositions, but on obvious truths, the first thing we have to do to analyze the facts.

Yesterday afternoon, when we were all devoted to work—workers, state employees, government officials, members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, students—I mean, devoted to the most decent task a people can undertake, devoted to work in order to carry out the bigger jobs we have ahead, a huge explosion made our capital shudder. Motivated by that instinct of getting inside the root of the problems, the comrades and I who were working at that time were immediately concerned about a serious situation that may be occurring in the power plants, or in the San Ambrosio police station, or in a vessel that had entered the capital port with ammunition and explosives very early that morning. And as a sort of premonition, we imagined that something serious had happened; that the explosion, no matter the place it had occurred, had had to cause catastrophic consequences and lots of victims, as it had indeed unfortunately happened.

About the subsequent event, everyone knows perfectly those next minutes of profound sorrow and anguish—though not of fear—we lived through in the city. In the first place, what was the reaction of the people? The people were not terrified by the explosion; they went to the place of the explosion. The people were not overwhelmed by fear, but by courage and, even though they did not know what had happened, they went there and found workers, the militia, soldiers, and other members of the public force, all of them offering whatever help was in their power.

Events could not be more tragic: the vessel was anchored in the wharf, its cargo was being unloaded at the time of the explosion and half of it virtually disappeared, sweeping away the workers and soldiers who were carrying out that operation.

People would wonder what the reason for that explosion was. Was it an accident? It is possible for those lacking experience or knowledge of explosives to think of it as an accident. Explosives are known to explode, and it is possible to imagine they can explode easily. However, that is not the case. It is not actually easy for explosives to explode; for them to explode they must be set off.

Then, what happened? The other answer was that it might have been sabotage, but how and where can this happen? Can sabotage be carried out in the presence of many people? Can sabotage be carried out in the presence of rebel soldiers and dockworkers, at high noon? If it was sabotage, how could this sabotage have been carried out? And in the first place, why sabotage and not an accident? What was the vessel carrying? That vessel was carrying bullets and also anti-tank and anti-personnel FAL rifle grenades. Bullets were already on the dock, there were no more bullets left in the ship.

[...]

There was an upper chamber that held the iceboxes; one of them had been turned into the compartment for the rifle grenades. The explosion did not occur while the bullets were being unloaded; the explosion occurred while the 30 tons of rifle grenade boxes were being offloaded.

[...]

But how could an intentional explosion happen? Could there have been sabotage in the presence of rebel soldiers, veteran rebel soldiers who were watching the uploading? Could there have been sabotage in the presence of the workers who were working there? If all precautionary measures were taken when conducting these operations, how can anyone think that sabotage could be committed in broad daylight in the presence of workers and soldiers? That person would have had to be a worker, but it is illogical for us to expect sabotage from a worker. No doubt workers are determined and ardent supporters of our Revolution.

But so as not to go only on theory, let us analyze the possibility of that sabotage. First of all, workers are searched to prevent them from carrying matches or cigarettes. They are searched to prevent them from being imprudent, and they have a delegate who observes the work they are doing. So, they are not only searched, but monitored by soldiers and by their own delegates and comrades. Sabotage in these conditions is practically impossible.

[...]

This is why other possibilities had to be analyzed. Could it have been the workers, the ship's crew? Very difficult, very unlikely, because we have questioned them one by one, and we were very careful with those whose work was somehow related to the holds, the cargo, and the keys, in the first place, those who had keys that day and opened the holds. The ship's officers were on board when the explosion occurred, and one cannot imagine that anybody would think it is possible to set off 30 tons of dynamite in a ship and escape unharmed. Many of the crewmembers were saved, but that does not mean that anybody could ensure that they could get out alive after setting off 30 tons of explosives in a ship.

As we went further into our investigation, we reached the conclusion that the sabotage was perpetrated from far away; that it was not plotted and it could not have been prepared in Cuba; that it was unlikely that it could have been perpetrated by any of the crewmembers [...]

That is the conclusion we reached, which is not based on emotion or a whim, but on the analysis, the evidence, the research we have done, and even on the experiments we have conducted, in order to first draw the conclusion that we were dealing with sabotage rather than an accident. And I am sure that there is no doubt about it [...]

Millions of tons of explosives are transported around the world every year and yet we do not hear of ships exploding. In our own country, for

many years explosives have been transported and handled, but we know of no explosion of this nature. And let us remember the Maine explosion, whose mysteries have not been perfectly explained by anyone. It even became the cause of a war because the nation [the United States] to which the ship belonged [...] reached the conclusion that the ship had been blown up by an external mine, and declared war on Spain. Because the United States reached the conclusion that it had been an action perpetrated by Spain's supporters moved by their hostility toward the United States, and based on no evidence or arguments and on mere suppositions, it went so far as to the transcendental act of declaring war on Spain.

We have not had to abuse our imagination that much. We have not had to draw conclusions with such little foundation, because it seems rather unrealistic to imagine Spain, with its difficult situation and hard struggle, blowing up the US battleship. That did not seem logical. Instead, we have more than enough reasons to believe that ours was a case of sabotage and that we know what international forces are encouraging the enemies or our people and our Revolution. We do have reasons to think that there were interests trying to keep us from receiving weapons. We do have reasons to suppose, or think, that those who promoted this sabotage could not be others than those interested in avoiding us from getting such supplies. Because, what would be the interest of the authors of such an act, if not preventing us from receiving those explosives?

Those interested in us not receiving the explosives are the enemies of our Revolution, those who do not want our country to defend itself; those who do not want our country to be able to defend its sovereignty.

We know that efforts were made to keep us from buying those weapons. US government officials were among the most interested in us not receiving those weapons. We can affirm it without this being a secret, because if it is a secret, it would be like those secrets that everyone knows. We are not the only ones to say this. The British Government said and stated that the US Government did not want us to buy planes from Britain. US authorities and spokespersons themselves have expressed their efforts to prevent Cuba from buying weapons. We have been fighting against such pressure. We have been fighting these obstacles.

So, a country, a government, makes use of its own powerful international influence and moves itself in diplomatic circles to prevent a small country from arming itself: a country that needs to defend its territory from its enemies, a nation that needs to defend itself against the criminals who want to return, or against colonizers who want to keep us under slavery and starvation. We must continue fighting the pressure of a powerful and influential government in order to buy weapons.

We can affirm that up to now we had achieved that a government and a European weapons factory, acting independently and firmly, opposed

the pressure and sold us weapons. The Belgian weapons factory and the government of that country had opposed pressures. Not once, but several times, the US consul, a US military attaché in Belgium, and a military attaché working at the US embassy in Belgium had tried to prevent the factory and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from selling us these weapons.

[...]

We are not affirming they have done so, because we do not have conclusive evidence, and if we had such facts, we would be presenting them to the people and the world. I do say that we have the right to think that those who had not achieved their purposes by certain means, they could have tried by another. We have the right to think that we must look for the criminals among the interested ones. We do have the right to think that we must look for those responsible for the loss of the Cuban lives yesterday afternoon!

[...]

Perhaps tomorrow, the newspapers of that country will say that analyzing these truths and reasons is an insult to the people of the United States. It is worth clarifying that we are not insulting the people of the United States. We never have. What happens is that they say the truths are insults, and they say so to the people in order to portray our people as the enemy of the United States' people. The reasons we discuss with the rulers—who are responsible for the policy of that country—are not insults to the people, because, on the contrary, we consider that those who harm the US people are those making such mistakes. Those offending the US people are those making such mistakes. They say that reasoning, calling things by their names and clarifying those truths to the people, are insults, because they want difficult relations between nations, and there are no difficult relations between nations here, because Cuba will never have difficult relations with any other nation of the world.

[...]

May those who are disturbed and dare to consider any kind of invasion against our soil understand the monstrosity of their mistake, because this will save us many sacrifices. [...] They will have to fight against us as long as there is an atom of life in us.

[...]

As I said, today I see that our nation is more glorious, more heroic; that our people are more admirable, a people worthy of admiration as one admires a column coming back from battle [...]

Today, as we say farewell to the fallen, to those soldiers and workers, I have no other way to say goodbye, but with the idea which symbolizes this struggle and the essence of our people today: may they rest together in peace! Together, workers and soldiers, together in their graves, as they fought together, as they died together, and as we are willing to die together.

As we say goodbye [...] we make this promise which, much like today's promise, is the promise of yesterday and always: Cuba will not be intimidated!, Cuba will not recede!, the Revolution will not stop!, the Revolution will continue its unshakable path!

That is our promise, not to those who died, because to die for the homeland is to live, but to the comrades who will always remain in our memories. They will always remain, not in the memory of a man, or men, but in the only memory that can never be erased: in the heart of a people.

Fidel Castro Ruz
Colon Cemetery, Havana
March 5, 1960

Source: www.fidelcastro.cu/en/discursos/speech-delivered-during-funeral-rites-honoring-victims-explosion-la-coubre-vessel

7

EL SALVADOR

Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional), FMLN

The FMLN was an umbrella guerrilla organization formed in 1980 and fought a military junta until 1992 when it signed peace accords with the government, which effectively ended the 12-year Salvadoran Civil War. After years of militating in the Communist Party of El Salvador, Salvador Cayetano Carpio abandoned the Party for political reasons and formed the Farabundo Martí Liberation People's Forces (FPL) in 1970. Like many other Communist Party dissidents throughout Latin America, Cayetano Carpio had grown disillusioned with the PCS's inability to create a vanguard of the proletariat and their complacency with electoral politics. In 1980, five leftist groups—the National Resistance (RN), the Revolutionary Party of the Central American Workers—El Salvador (PRTC), the FPL, the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS), and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP)—came together and formed the FMLN. A year later, it commenced the revolutionary struggle by launching the General Offensive (GO). The offensive did not produce the expected results and only provided the Salvadoran government more reason to ask for extensive military support from the United States. Despite the outcome of the GO, the FMLN established important strongholds in the Chalatenango and Morazán departments. Morazán was later the site of one of the most gruesome massacres of the civil war. In December 1981, the Atlacatl Battalion entered the village of El Mozote and massacred civilians over two days. Investigations place the death toll at 800 or as much as 1,200. In these zones, the guerrillas set up a social program to build up popular support. They offered health care to poor peasants and some education. The

FMLN also operated “Radio Venceremos,” a pirate radio station that propagated information about the struggle and communiqués. Earlier attempts at peace failed, until 1992 when the FMLN and the Salvadoran government agreed to end the civil war. With the United Nations and the Catholic Church’s involvement, the Chapultepec Peace Accords were finally signed and the FMLN became a political party. The following documents focus on the FMLN at different stages in their revolutionary people’s war. The first proclaimed the formation of the Frente and paid particular attention to its place within the broader history of popular political mobilizations. Moreover, the statement explicitly delineates the movement’s plan to build up confidence in the masses. The second document looks at the role of women in the revolutionary war through voices of female combatants. This document breaks down a common perception that women were primarily inspired by revolutionary females (e.g.: Cuba and Nicaragua) to join the struggle. While this was a significant motivator, local issues kindled women’s rebellious spirit.

***Statement from the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU-PM)
Announcing the Formation of the Farabundo Martí National
Liberation Front (FMLN)***

With great revolutionary enthusiasm, the Military–Political Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU-PM), currently integrated by the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS), Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) “Farabundo Martí,” and the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP), announces to the workers and other revolutionary and democratic sectors, the transcendental steps of consolidation and political, military, and organic cohesion of the Military–Political Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU-PM), which is the superior body of the unified direction of our people’s revolutionary process have recently taken.

The formation and strengthening of the DRU-PM is a historical achievement of the revolutionary struggle of our heroic people, who, in order to undertake the critical battles for their definitive liberation, needed to have the best decision–making body and a unique strategic and tactical, political, and military direction, without which it would be impossible to effectively and successfully undertake the global effort toward the Popular Revolution’s absolute triumph.

For this reason, the current steps forward in the development of the unitary cohesion of the DRU-PM, the advances in the unitary structure and functioning, represent transcendental steps toward the final victory of our people.

Here are some of the most critical agreements:

- Following the creation of the DRU-PM, a step of exceptional importance has been to have endowed it with the capacity and mechanisms necessary to make strategic decisions to direct the revolutionary war by adopting Democratic Centralism as the basis of its operation decision-making by a majority.
- Another step of great importance has been the labeling of the political-military organizations that are members of the DRU-PM, with the name of: Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation. Whose acronyms are FMLN, and in which the DRU-PM acts as its military-political leadership.

The symbol of the FMLN will be the character of the immortal revolutionary leader of the Salvadoran people, Agustín Farabundo Martí, whose image will be accompanied by two crossed rifles on the official logo.

- The phrase: “United to fight until the final victory” was reconfirmed as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front’s official motto, which will complement the slogan Revolution or Death! We Will Overcome!
- The flag of the FMLN will be red with a white star in the upper left corner and the initials FMLN, also in white, in the center of the flag.
- We also announce that the FMLN’s house organ will circulate shortly. This publication will bear the name: “We Will Overcome.”

As vital steps for the consolidation and advancement of the unitary process, we inform our people that the Joint Propaganda and Relations Commissions have already been constituted, which are auxiliary bodies of the DRU-PM. In the same sense, our Joint General Staff, with its support agencies, the joint Operations, Information, Logistics, and Communications sections, is trained and working fast in the military field.

- As part of this accelerated unifying process, the Joint Staffs from each of the four war fronts have already been constituted.

These war fronts were nominated in agreement with the DRU-PM and consist of:

- The “Modesto Ramírez” Central Front, in honor of this self-sacrificing revolutionary leader who belongs to the heroic generation of the people’s combatants who, since the deed of 1932, remained on the battlefield until the last day of his life.
- The “Feliciano Ama” Western Front, in honor of the indigenous leader who was assassinated by the Martinist [followers of President Maximiliano Hernández Martínez] dictatorship in the Popular Insurrection of 1932.
- The “Anastasio Aquino” Para Central Front, in honor of that heroic and brave indigenous leader, who led the most significant struggles of our people in the last century.

- The “Francisco Sánchez” Eastern Front, in honor of another of the heroic popular leaders who led the people’s forces during the Insurrection of 1932.

The PCS, the FPL “Farabundo Martí,” and the ERP, which at this time are part of DRU-PM, by moving to unite under one name, flag, slogan, major propaganda publication, and taking strategic organic steps to carry out the single plan of our people’s political–military struggle, are raising the unitary mystique of our militants and also elevating the fighting morale of our people, who have waited so eagerly and fought for the unification of their vanguard.

From now on, all the political and military actions of our forces will wear the seal of unity, under the name “Frente Farabundo Martí” for National Liberation.

We have taken our name from the immortal figure of Agustín Farabundo Martí because we believe that this illustrious and visionary leader synthesizes the character and content of our people’s heroic struggle.

The figure of Martí, a popular hero, assassinated by the Martinist military dictatorship in 1932, now resurfaces vigorously within the powerful and heroic unity of our people’s forces, which for 50 years fought against the oppression and despotism of military dictatorships of North American imperialism.

By taking the names of Farabundo Martí, Feliciano Ama, Francisco Sánchez, Modesto Ramírez, and Anastasio Aquino, we seek to immortalize them in the glorious deed that our people are now waging and give victorious continuity to that heroic past of popular struggle in our homeland.

While the genocidal regime, buttressed by Yankee imperialism, convulses in the throes of an absolute and irreversible crisis and deep internal contradictions, our people strengthen its unity, concentrate its forces toward decisive battles for their definitive liberation and the formation of the Revolutionary Democratic Government.

In this context, the path of unity is irreversible. Any challenges that the unitary process, which is a multiple and complicated process, is faced with, will be overcome by the will, conscience, and unitary effort of our heroic people, who will not stop until the final conquest of its revolution is achieved and the right to exercise its self-determination and build its independent, revolutionary, democratic future of progress and well-being for the vast majority, which is today exploited and oppressed.

United to fight until the final victory!

Revolution or Death! We Will Overcome!

Unified Political–Military Revolutionary Directorate of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN)

El Salvador, CA, October 10, 1980

Source: www.marxists.org/espanol/tematica/elsalvador/organizaciones/fmln/1980/oct/10.htm

Women of Struggle

In the Salvadoran revolution, women play an essential role: they are in the mass organizations, in the political leadership, on the war fronts, in international work ... they may well be a combatant, clandestine message carrier, urban guerrilla, responsible for a military unit, nurse, commander ... in the kitchen, on Radio Venceremos, in abstention or intelligence tasks, in military communications ... In short, there are female comrades in all the jobs that advance our struggle.

We present below the testimonies of several comrades who participate in different ways to the process:

María, a peasant from Morazán who works in the kitchen of the Venceremos Radio System:

Well, work in the fields is hard, because the salary is quite low. Here, children are abundant, and for the salary to be enough, women have to work the same as men. To work, one has to leave the children alone. When the repression arrived, we had to leave the children in another house and go to sleep in the mountains ... all this makes one enter the struggle because you realize what you lose is all you have, that is, poverty and the pain of seeing children dying of hunger.

Elvira, a mother of three combatants who has worked as a support base:

I was about 16 years old, and I had many conversations with unionists, and that's when I realized how the worker was treated, so then I started to participate in the movement. In the electoral campaigns, you would see me posting posters and propaganda until they took my husband prisoner. I had forgotten to say that my husband participated in the struggle, and my three children too. When they apprehended my husband, after the voting, I told him: one day, I will take up arms to defend him from the mistreatment he suffered. When we realized that the elections had not given us democracy, we met with ERP insurgents, and here we are, my whole family is taking part. I am aware that one day my comrades will inform me: "Look, your son so and so died in someplace, and I will say to myself, well if we gave the children that path, what are we going to do if they're in it with us." [...]

América, military chief of San Salvador:

I joined around [19]73; I was studying the last year of high school, and I didn't finish. In school, I started to see where the injustice that is done to the worker came from, why people are screwed up. Comparing publications between different groups, I joined the FRELMO [Frente de Estudiantes Revolucionarios "Luís Moreno" ("Luís Moreno" Student Revolutionary

Front)] and participated in the front openly. Then the organization began with the Military Committees, and they asked me to join the ERP. When I started to participate in military activities, I had some problems because I had to leave my house at dawn. Since I was studying and living with my family, it was difficult for me to invent new lies. So, I left home and fully integrated the movement ... My family thought that I was still in college because I didn't ask for money. The organization was then very poor. The party then put me to work in the clandestine military structure. [...]

Marisol Galindo, the leader of the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas [the Masses Revolutionary Coordinator], tells us:

In El Salvador, women participate in the revolutionary process, not from the perspective that men oppress them, but because of the oppression by the system. In sectors such as the markets, the textile industry, the assembly of electrical appliances, and others, the workforce is basically female. In that milieu, women's organizations are born, but with a vindicatory plan concerning their work, not their condition as women.

We women in El Salvador have organized ourselves within the context of popular organizations. When one dives deeper into the revolutionary process, one acquires a broader vision about women's role in it. That is where we begin to seek and promote the participation of women. One realizes that the oppression of women is part of the system of domination, and it is the system in general that must be defeated first...

Well, we have seen from what sorts of circumstances women have joined the revolutionary struggle. Let us see how it has happened and the perspectives of a women's organization in El Salvador.

1983

Source: Senal de Libertad, tomo 26; www.publicacionsrv.com

8

GUATEMALA

Revolutionary Movement 13th November (Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre), MR-13

The MR-13 was a guerrilla movement founded in 1960 by two former army lieutenants-turned-guerrillas—Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and Luis Trejo Turcios Lima—and operated in the northeastern part of Guatemala in the Izábal Department and Zacapa. The guerrilla movement named itself after the November 13 military uprising that Colonel Rafael Sessan Pereira led against the reactionary President Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes (1958–1963). At the onset, the rebels issued an impassioned statement titled “Who We Are, What We Want, and What We Fight For,” which explained the reasons for the revolt as well as broader social, economic, and political justifications. Furthermore, the document is deliberately infused with nationalist undertones so as to push back against propaganda and discourses associating the rebels with international communist conspirators. In total, 3,000 rebel soldiers and 100 officials accepted the challenge and took part in this transformative event. The young rebel officers were upset by the presence of Cuban exiles in Guatemala training for the infamous Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961. Ydígoras Fuentes—a lapdog of the United States and a hardline anti-communist—granted the CIA permission to train them near the city of Retalhuleu. In the area allocated to them, the CIA built a secret camp and airstrip to fly in trainees. The revolt failed to topple Ydígoras’ regime, and several participants retreated to southern Mexico. While in exile, Turcios Lima and Yon Sosa plotted an armed revolutionary movement inspired by the Cuban model and foquismo. In 1961, they both returned to Guatemala and settled in the Izábal region and began guerrilla actions under the MR-13, putting to use the counterinsurgency training they had received at Fort Gulick in the Canal Zone. While

mavens in that area, the militants lacked widespread popular support. Moreover, the MR-13 leadership discovered the drawbacks of foco theory, which led to several hiccups along the way and factionalism within its ranks. The guerrilla movement's mishaps revealed serious flaws in its infrastructure: for instance, their unpreparedness and lack of a basic grasp of guerrilla warfare. The insurgents had also erroneously prepared for a short military campaign and predicted Ydígoras' rapid downfall. All in all, these issues did not inspire confidence in the guerrilla movement, which profoundly affected its ability to build up mass support.

Who We Are, What We Want, and What We Fight For

We are officers of the Guatemalan Army, who, since November 13, 1960, have been fighting to give our country a government that acts under democratic standards in accordance with the interests of the people. Since then, young officers from the national army have decided to end the calamity and theft organized by [President Miguel] Ydígoras Fuentes, his economic advisors, and brain trust. We believe that the national treasury should be managed with absolute honesty and decency. While the citizenry suffers the consequences of ydigorista corruption, the government steals, traffics state assets, and cannily works to implement laws that favor US lenders, taking their cut and compromising our country. Before the democratic conscience of the people of Guatemala and America, the 13 November rebel movement denounces Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes, his son Miguel Ydígoras Laparra, the Englishman Jan Munn, the Colombian Morales Gómez, Ramiro Samayoa Roldán, Leopoldo Bolaños, Humberto García y García, Mr. Julio Quiñonez Ydígoras, and Carlos González Siguí as shameless thieves of the public treasury. These, the less important ones the people already know, will soon have to face the consequences of their actions in front of the Guatemalan people they have defrauded, not only concerning their money but also politically and socially. The regime *ydigorista* has been a scam.

The 13 November is once again, with guns in hand, fighting as a guerrilla in the mountains, putting our military youths' lives at the service of the peoples' interests. That is who we are, young people who have not turned our backs on our people just because we are military. Nor are we insensitive to our peasants and workers' hunger and misery, to the anguish of our employees and teachers. We are not unsympathetic to the economic hardship we endure, nor to the dilapidated state of our industries and businesses that are eager for better markets.

The 13 November rebel movement is truly upset to see our children writing on the floor in their schools due to the lack of desks. Meanwhile, Ydígoras organizes a pompous school for Central Americans and exploits his past as a union leader. We genuinely feel the pain of our people, who are begging to be cured in run-down hospitals while Ydígoras and his gang go from fair to fair like a clown, simulating prosperity that does not exist. We are upset to see how the traffickers of state assets steal three million from estates' sales to build a national theater and waste millions more on it. Why do we want a national theater if people are hungry!

Guatemalans, it saddens us to see the bleak future of our country in which it even has to purchase corn from abroad for our tortillas. There is nowhere to work, either in the countryside or the city. In the countryside, large estates continue to exist, and in the city, enormous unemployment and our low purchasing power are paralyzing commercial activity and production in general.

Those who govern do not care to resolve the critical problems of this crisis comprehensively. Instead, they indulge in our people's sweat and blood and cry when the moneylenders come asking for money that they will not give them because they already know they are stealing it.

People of Guatemala ... stand up!

It is only necessary to go 15 kilometers outside the city to see that the dogs in residential areas live better than our peasants. This should not be the case; our people also have the right to a more dignified, safe, and happy life.

That is why the 13 November rebel movement fights...

We are in the mountains fighting to the death for those who are hungry, for the land that Kennedy himself asks us to give to our peasants. We fight for the worker who does not have the right to get ill for lack of medicine, for the employee, the professional, the teacher who has dreamed of their own home, for the sick who die in hospitals, for the humble people we fight, for ordinary good people who have lost all hope and believe that this is their destiny. That is why the 13 November fights! There is a respectful and democratic government out there that does not touch a penny of the people's money, which definitively resolves our material backwardness, consents to the interests of our people and the sovereignty and dignity of our homeland ... that is what we want!

Those who oppose the realization of these ideals are your Guatemalan enemies, the obscurantists, the retrograde, enemies of popular conquests. The people know them because they know who is against their interests.

We categorically deny the government's misrepresentations, which only attempt to distort the facts before public opinion to take advantage of more days in power. *Ydigorismo* is accustomed to deceiving the people and is trying again by reporting that the rebels fled to Honduras, that they captured us, and that everything is back to normal. This is false!

The Time Has Come!

University and high school students: from the "Alejandro de León" rebel front, the revolutionary military youth greets you, knowing that your decision to join the peoples' cause will raise your flags of struggle.

Workers and peasants: It is false that we have given up the fight. We are standing with some of your colleagues with weapons in hand. We have had only victories. Our struggle is slow but effective. Sooner or later, it will be time for the final battle. Be prepared!

Journalists and writers: Our cause is legitimate. Before you, there are three paths: Silence, lies, or truth. Decide what your criteria are, but consult your ethical principles.

Progressive industrialists and merchants: Make it clear to your colleagues and friends that there will only be better markets when the people can purchase more.

Fellow Supervisors and Officers of the Army: National sovereignty has not been respected, nor has the Constitution of the Republic, the popular will, the public treasury. Our people are struggling in this disastrous crisis. If you have been unable to see it from your barracks, ask questions, and look closely at our men, women, and children's current situation. Think reflectively that we deserve a better destiny than that of disease, hunger, and misery, and put your weapons at the service of our people. Do it! Or you will lose the respect of your fellow citizens.

See you soon, until victory!

“Alejandro De León” Rebel Front
 Movement 13 Noviembre
 February 27, 1962

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=86

Rebel Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes), FAR

Pro-guerrilla factions received a significant boost in 1962 when a series of urban protests or *jornadas* erupted in response to allegations of fraud in the national elections and perennial social and political strife. Students, notably from the University of San Carlos, mobilized en masse and flooded the streets with unionists and other dissidents to demand democratic change and Ydígoras' immediate resignation. Ydígoras again blamed the civil unrest on communist agitators and invoked other popular Cold War rhetoric to delegitimize the opposition. Fearing a broader revolt, the president ordered state forces to stifle the protests and weed out the leaders. As a result, the idea of achieving democratic transformation by nonviolent means lost currency. The Guatemalan Party of Labor (essentially the Communist Party) seriously entertained taking up arms while radicalized students, primarily from the Association of University Students (AEU) and the United Front of Organized Guatemalan Students (FUEGO), formed a guerrilla movement called the April 12 Movement. In 1962, the MR-13 merged with the PGT, the Edgar Ibarra Front—an adherent of the Maoist “popular war” line—and the April 12 Movement to form the Rebel Armed Forces. The FAR placed front and center the importance of building a popular movement composed of people from diverse backgrounds. One prominent guerrilla leader named César Montes played a crucial role in recruiting peasants from different parts of the country into the FAR. But peasant

recruits were hard to come by and life in the jungle was harsh and unforgiving. Nonetheless, the guerrillas claimed that peasants formed the backbone of the FAR. In any case, the problem of low peasant representation in FAR's rank-and-file contributed to the internal discord between different ideological tendencies. The FAR ultimately broke from the PGT, claiming the Party's lack of support for the revolution. Yon Sosa's Trotskyist faction eventually split with Turcios Lima's camp over ideological and political disagreements. The group reclaimed the MR-13 name and set up guerrilla fronts in Verapaces, Izabal, and Zacapa. Turcios Lima died in October 1966 in a suspicious car accident, causing the FAR to spiral into disarray. In 1970, Yon Sosa was captured and killed by Mexican authorities when he tried to establish contact with Cuban allies in Mexico. His death ended the MR-13's revolutionary endeavor. The "Proclamation of the Rebel Armed Forces" was a communiqué released in 1963. The document constitutes one of the lengthiest historical pieces of political writings produced by the FAR. In summary, the "Proclamation" offers a detailed overview of Guatemala's social and political conditions and the urgency of an armed revolutionary movement.

Proclamation of the Rebel Armed Forces

Our country is in a precarious situation. The sectors that cling to power and have inflicted significant damage on the nation in recent years have shown themselves to be willing by any means necessary to deprive the people of their freedom. The military government headed by [Colonel Enrique] Peralta Azurdia is the extension of the regime that was forcibly imposed on us years ago. Through violence, the current dictatorship is hindering the people from exercising their rights, including the right to elect their leaders.

The declarations that the government was forced to make last October 31, proclaiming its "intentions" to restore constitutionality and call for elections, are preposterous because they are designed to prolong the dictatorship and concoct a scheme to defraud the people. No one has forgotten that the Army coup led by Peralta Azurdia was explicitly meant to prevent the elections scheduled for this year from taking place. Therefore, the primary task is to bolster the people's struggle to overthrow the military dictatorship, which we will support with our weapons.

This is how a military government that is militaristic, usurping tyranny that pushed aside the Constitution and the laws that they hypocritically claimed to defend, a government that upholds the agonizing policy of raising taxes, offering new loans to foreigners, and increasing the cost of living, was established. To conceal the greedy ambitions of Peralta Azurdia and his group of 15 colonels, the government uses the demagoguery that informs "Operation Honesty," compromising the Army, which now the people view as the main party responsible for the situation.

The retrograde forces, which, by honoring [Jorge] Ubico's remains, revealed themselves to be supporters of tyranny and oppression, bear the historical responsibility of denying the country a peaceful solution to its problems and tranquility for its citizens. Those obdurate sectors fail to understand that at this stage, the people of Guatemala are no longer willing to live in abject poverty and know how to use the means to defend themselves. Naturally, powerful forces are behind the government, with their foreign troops in our country, with their "instructors," providing all sorts of assistance. But the Guatemalan people's vigor will be more powerful when they decide to wage the final battle to control the destiny of our country on their own terms.

The armed resistance has already begun. In the mountains, the first centers of rebellion are being organized, and the guerrillas are the great hope of the oppressed people. In different places, those who no longer want to stand idly by and continue to remain victims of violent repression are coming together. The rebel movement emerged as a necessity, as a response to the violence of the colonels, henchmen, and those once again who wanted to disparage the people. Thus, the Armed Rebel Forces were constituted by the Alejandro de León Movements of November 13, October 20, and April 12, in which every committed, honest, convinced, and disciplined combatant will take up arms against the dictatorship until a genuinely democratic government is obtained.

The reasons that drive us to rebel and to undertake a sacrificial struggle are evident. We are rebel fighters, not "factionalists," "terrorists," or "bandits," because the people's conscience knows that we have reasons to rebel. These are precisely the same motives that the people of Guatemala have had in the past.

The reasons that drive us to armed resistance today must be those that justified, almost a hundred years ago, the Revolution of 1871. An "oligarchic and tyrannical government is intolerable to the Nation because of its repeated arbitrary acts and cruelty." Peralta Azurdia is a "usurper because he has arrogated to himself powers that the law in no way grants him." He follows the same economic and fiscal policy that "has ruined the Public Treasury and compromised the country's future independence." Finally, a military dictatorship has been established that demands the movement be put down because "the citizens have not only the right but also the duty to resist tyranny."

The purposes of our struggle must be equally clear. We want nothing more or less than what the vast majority of the people have made it clear that they want: to overthrow the dictatorship through effective change. We do not want another coup d'état. We do not want a revolt; instead, a clean revolution. We will fight so that the regime is replaced by a completely new one, based on honesty and with no room for baseless ambitions; that

intransigently defends the national interests; boosts the economy with the help of all Guatemalans who are willing to do so; provides the opportunity to work and earn what is necessary so that there are no hungry, homeless, or abandoned homes; redistributes land based on fairness so that every farmer has his own plot and production increases; and invests national resources and recovers to those what is rightfully theirs for economic development and to provide welfare, security, health, and education for all people.

It is not a question of exchanging some rulers for others, in order to continue mocking the masses, as has often happened. Instead, we demand a comprehensive overhaul of the Republic. We struggle to achieve a government that genuinely respects rights and freedoms, which leads the country democratically by guiding itself by the majority's will. That makes effective those democratic institutions that have only appeared on paper and have so many times been shamelessly mocked. A government that will restore Guatemala's prestige abroad as a small country that knows how to safeguard its sovereignty, that will help to improve international relations so that world peace is maintained based on respect for the rights of others, and that will conduct its relations with all other countries with dignity.

With similar words, many rulers, dictators, and demagogues have spoken and made promises to the people of Guatemala, but there is no connection between their actions and what they say. That is why the people distrust political ideals and electoral programs, not to mention official speeches. But in the case of the FAR, it is not a question of empty words or offers, because the militants themselves, who have sprung up from the people, are the best guarantee, because by deciding to give our lives for this cause, we are demonstrating our loyalty to these ideals. Above all, because the revolution will triumph when the people mobilize and achieve the change they so much yearn for.

Unlike armies recruited by force, our armed movement, unlike conspiracies plagued by adventurers and ambitious people, is being formed based on personal decision, conviction, and will. Those who have the same commitments as the movement, but who are willing to sacrifice themselves without personal gains, are convinced that our ideals are worth giving their lives, and are committed to being disciplined combatants, will be welcomed into the FAR. Those who do not adhere to the organization's safety rules, those who commit offenses that jeopardize other comrades or the movement's prestige, will not have a place in its ranks.

Moral conduct is demanded of everyone, based on the principle of always acting in the people's interests. Neither will harm be done to the people, their homes, or property for any reason. It will be apparent to everyone that the enemy's lies and slanders will be turned against them because they will realize that the guerrillas, the combatants, the members

of the Rebel Armed Forces are the arm of the people, organized precisely to defend them from henchmen, bandits, and the murderers employed by tyranny.

The emergence of the Rebel Armed Forces is a response to the military dictatorship, which does not permit the people to use legal and peaceful measures. Its origins are in the rebellious outbreaks of previous years. In 1960 the rebellion of November 13 took place to vindicate the Army's name and change the state of affairs. Those of us who remain faithful to Lieutenant Alejandro de León and other fallen comrades are now more convinced than ever to fight for Guatemala's freedom. Some did not agree, and others, out of misguidance or cowardice, have betrayed or turned their backs on the movement. There will also be those who will understand later—even though today they doubt the guerrilla struggle's effectiveness—that their place is among us. In the FAR, older fighters have been struggling for Guatemala to regain what it achieved from the liberation movement of 1944. Several young people have fought for freedoms in recent years against dictatorial governments and excelled in the movement against Ydígoras and his cabal.

There are soldiers, workers, students, people from the countryside in the Rebel Armed Forces, etc., united for a just cause. There are no prejudices or feelings of superiority, and the differences in political, religious, or other ideas can be maintained as part of a unique will to serve Guatemala.

The Rebel Armed Forces have a responsibility to the people, in whose support they trust and from whom they expect everything. They are not subordinate to or are seeking to rely on any group or party. They will contribute to the United Resistance Front [FUR] by bringing together all the forces inspired to replace the dictatorship with an effectively democratic regime so that the FAR becomes the armed wing of the movement in unison with all these social and popular forces. Because we firmly believe that only by bringing together all Guatemalan patriots, whether or not they are grouped into parties, can a movement be formed that can overcome the current tyranny and clear the way for the democratic restructuring of the country.

The Proclamation issued today by the General Command of the FAR refutes once and for all the distortions and slanders that the unpopular government of Peralta Azurdia has launched against our movement. The military cadre that in the name of the Army rules the country by force has no moral authority whatsoever: it is made up of the same ambitious people who surrounded and supported Ydígoras and share responsibility for all the crimes, thefts, and abuses that his government committed. This is the group that has placed the blame for having exalted the tyrant of another era under Ubico, and that in the months they have been in power, based on blood, cancer, torture, and innumerable abuses, have already earned the hatred of the people.

Through the FAR's official communiqués and publications, we are the only voice of our armed movement, and we will convey the truth to the people. But above all, with our actions, responding with greater strength to the enemy's blows, we are fighting with courage in this struggle that today is one of resistance and will later be victorious. We will show that there is not and will not be tyranny capable of erasing from the patriots' breasts the words immortalized in our National Anthem: "Free to the wind your beautiful flag, to victory or death it shall call."

General Command of the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR)
 Commander-in-Chief Marcos Antonio Yon Sosa
 Guatemala, November 30, 1963

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=85

Guerrilla Army of the Poor (Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres), EGP

The Guerrilla Army of the Poor was a Marxist–Leninist revolutionary movement founded in Mexico City in the early 1970s by survivors of the FAR. The EGP surfaced during Guatemala's second guerrilla wave (1970 to 1996) and was widely supported by Mayan communities and poor Ladinos and operated in the Ixcán region of northern Guatemala. The movement's primary leaders included Mario Payeras and survivors of the first guerrilla wave, such as César Montes and Rolando Morán. Before joining the EGP, Payeras had studied philosophy at the University of San Carlos and then the National Autonomous University of Mexico. After a brief hiatus, in 1963 he resumed his education in philosophy at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig before he returned to Mexico and helped form the EGP in 1972. In Payeras' most revered book, *Days of the Jungle*, he captured the insurgents' trials and tribulations when they entered the northern highlands and began organizing the locals into their guerrilla movement. With painstaking detail, Payeras talked about the obstacles insurgents confronted with wary Indians, mainly Quiché, and winning their confidence. To overcome these hurdles and facilitate indigenous people's recruitment into the EGP, insurgents relied on local intermediaries, a departure from the approaches taken by guerrilla movements in the 1960s. Working with local community members also helped the guerrillas overcome the language barrier that past revolutionary enterprises failed to surmount. Funds generated from revolutionary activities were invested in mass organization efforts and guerrilla cells assisting in those endeavors. Against this backdrop, the EGP helped establish the peasant and rural worker-led Peasant Unity Committee. The CUC (based on its Spanish acronym) helped build up support for the EGP in the Mayan highlands and other regions of Guatemala. In just a decade, the EGP had firmly become the largest guerrilla movement in Guatemala,

with insurgents operating in more than a dozen of Guatemala's 22 departments. To commemorate its 10th anniversary in 1982, the guerrillas published "A Call from the EGP." The communiqué is partially a rundown of its triumphs during its short existence as well as a clarion call to Guatemalans to join the struggle against the ruthless, anti-democratic regime and imperialism. Moreover, the EGP reiterates the centrality of indigenous peasants in the revolutionary struggle.

A Call from the EGP

The year 1982 marks the tenth anniversary of our organization, the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP). On January 19, ten years ago, the first armed contingent entered the country. With that, our young organization started, in the mountains of the department of El Quiché, the tasks of implementing what today we conceive as a strategy of the Revolutionary People's War.

From a small detachment of 16 guerrillas, a cell of urban fighters, and a group of militants abroad, we have become a national political-military organization.

The project of establishing a guerrilla settlement on the northwestern borders of our country constituted a sort of challenge to history, but not only in practice. The selection of the Ixcán area was a conscious and planned move. It was carried out precisely when journalistic delusions about the "end of the guerrilla decade" circulated internationally, presumably as a consequence of Commander Ernesto Guevara's fall. In the national context, when General Arana Osorio was in power, he spoke of the "pacification of the country." Thus, we proposed to cut the rope at its thinnest end.

Behind all the energy, conviction, and determination of our first combatants, there was a whole perspective, a general approach, not systematized, but based on the accumulated experiences of the effort and sacrifice of many previous combatants, many survivors, or up-and-coming ones, in the past decade.

From that day, many events have occurred. We have reaped both successes and failures and experienced victory and setbacks. Many of our comrades, throughout these years, as well as thousands of Guatemalans, have paid for the liberation of our people with their lives.

Ten years later, our struggle's depth and breadth have demonstrated the validity of the Revolutionary People's War strategy in countries with political and economic conditions similar to those of Guatemala. The vast majority are rapidly joining it, giving a revolutionary and combative response to the vicious repression that the genocidal pro-imperialist, bourgeois-landowner, and the military-repressive cabal are applying in proportions that amount to genocide, to divide the guerrilla forces from the masses

who are making their own the political proposals leading to their definitive liberation from the exploitation, oppression, repression, and dependence on US imperialism. The real, objective possibility of absolute freedom is present for the first time in our history, leaving the reformist delusions that dazzled those who did not know how to interpret the Guatemalan political reality.

Today we can say that the venture we started ten years ago has been promising, and has contributed to the Guatemalan Revolution.

Over the ten years, we have built six guerrilla fronts: Ho Chi Minh (in the central and northern part of the department of El Quiché), Ernesto Guevara (in Huehuetenango), Luis Turcios Lima (in Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, and Retalhuleu), Marcos Antonio Yon Sosa (in Alta Verapaz), Otto René Castillo (in the country's capital), and Augusto César Sandino (in southern El Quiché, Chimaltenango, Sacatepéquez, Sololá, and Bajo Verapaz), which have expanded and generalized the war and moved on to major operations and the destruction of the enemy force. From the occupation of villages and hamlets to the occupation of municipal capitals and the departmental capital of Sololá, increasing the participation of the masses in support of guerrilla operations, thousands of militiamen have carried out acts of sabotage, harassed enemy forces, and struck at its local power.

The systematic use of high explosives to attack or demolish government buildings, financial institutions, or enemy posts and the use of popular war traps for self-defense are characteristic of our activities on various fronts.

The military occupation of almost all the municipal capitals of the departments of Huehuetenango, El Quiché, and Chimaltenango, the military takeover of the departmental capital of Sololá, the defeat of the army's offensive in the central highlands, and the recent turning of towns near the capital city, like Mixco, Palin, and San Pedro Ayanpuc, and the defensive state we have forced upon the repressive forces in the nation's capital are clear and unquestionable evidence of the irrepressible progress that the Revolutionary People's War has made in recent years.

As we reach another decade of revolutionary resistance, we send our fraternal and combative greetings to our sister Revolutionary Organizations, the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), and the Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT), the National Leadership Center, together with whom we are promoting the victorious path of the Revolutionary People's War in Guatemala. We express our solidarity with the revolutionary organizations, parties, and governments in the area. We show our recognition to the peoples, governments, parties, and other forces in the world that have offered their solidarity to our people's heroic struggle.

Also, after ten years, we know more about Yankee imperialism, our common historical enemy. We know that it will continue its criminal proj-

ect of drowning in blood our people's legitimate longings for freedom and sovereignty. But we are confident of being victorious and of the righteousness of our struggle. Therefore, we demand that all the forces in the world continue to make their own the struggle of our people, to increase their solidarity at all levels, and to contribute directly to preventing the genocidal intentions of US imperialism and the governments that serve as its instruments.

The triumph of the Guatemala people will be the victory against exploitation, oppression, discrimination, and repression. The victory of the Guatemalan people will be one more victory for the people of the world.

For the unity of all revolutionary, popular, patriotic, and democratic forces in the world to resist the aggression of US imperialism!

Until Victory, Always
 Guerrilla Army of the Poor
 EGP
 Guatemala, January 1982

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=7916

Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca), URNG

Amid the escalation of state terrorism and after suffering a series of crippling setbacks, four guerrilla movements (FAR, EGP, a faction of the PGT, and the Revolutionary Organization of Armed People or ORPA) joined together to create an umbrella movement called the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). All four guerrilla groups agreed to unite forces in 1980, but did not begin operating as the URNG until 1982. Even then, each faction put out communiqués in the areas in which they operated bearing both their logo and the URNG's. The guerrillas established fronts along the Mexico–Guatemala border and fought off the Guatemalan military—often gaining the upper hand given their knowledge of the terrain—and had fronts in other departments and a presence in Guatemala City. In 1982, General Efraín Ríos Montt overthrew General Romeo García in a coup backed by several high-ranking military officials. During his ephemeral, but brutal, year in power, Ríos Montt launched a counterinsurgency to eradicate the guerrillas. The paramilitarization of the countryside brought terror to impoverished communities, primarily Mayan. As a consequence of the government's adoption of a “scorched earth” policy, thousands of people were displaced, tortured, raped, murdered, disappeared, and had their villages and crops ravaged by merciless death squads. Morbid spectacles of violence were frequently carried out to spread fear among the populace living in areas where guerrillas operated or where there were believed to be supporters. By the time another

military coup deposed Ríos Montt, thousands of indigenous Mayans had been tortured, displaced, murdered, or disappeared. In 2013, Ríos Montt was tried and convicted of crimes against humanity and genocide. Ten days later, after the ruling, the Guatemalan Court annulled the conviction, citing several “issues.” The trial resumed two years, but Ríos Montt died unpunished for his heinous crimes in 2018. The following two documents deal with two significant moments in the civil war: the rise of Ríos Montt; and a proclamation by the URNG that indicated the end of the civil war was near, but that a long road still lay ahead.

The Coup d'état in Guatemala: A Reactionary Maneuver by the Reagan Government, the Genocidal Army, and the Guatemalan Ruling Class

A new reactionary maneuver has been enacted against the Guatemalan people by the [Ronald] Reagan administration, the genocidal army, and the Guatemalan ruling classes, by overthrowing the Lucas Garcia military cabal and replacing it with a military junta.

This coup d'état devised by Reagan's State Department and implemented by top-ranking genocidal officials in the Guatemalan Army, and supported by the local ruling classes, is a desperate response by the enemies of our people in the face of a crisis of power in the bourgeois-landowner, pro-imperialist, military, and repressive regime in Guatemala. Moreover, it is symptomatic of the thriving and victorious development of the Revolutionary People's War that the people of Guatemala are waging against their exploiters, oppressors, and repressors.

This frantic attempt by the enemy is also part of a wider aggressive counterrevolutionary and interventionist scheme by the current North American administration to stifle the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean, and attack the triumphant revolutions of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada.

One of the darkest chapters in Guatemalan history has come to an end with the overthrow of Lucas Garcia's bloody military cabal. However, for the Guatemalan people and the revolutionary movement, the fall of Lucas Garcia is the direct result of heroic efforts against their exploiters, oppressors, and repressors.

But the exploitive, pro-imperialist, oppressive, and genocidal regime remains intact, even though new personalities have usurped power and are working to cover up all the rotteness and the regime's deeply anti-popular, reactionary, and pro-imperialist character that all the exploiters of the people of Guatemala benefit from as a whole. Although the coup produced significant cracks within the Army, power remains in the hands of the High Command, whose most distinguished repressors are now members of the Governing Junta. [Efraín] Ríos Montt, [Horacio Egberto] Maldonado Schaad, [Francisco Luis] Gordillo, and other figures are stained with

the blood of the people, just like Lucas García and the generals removed by their compatriots.

The Army's High Command has had to rely on the support of right-wing parties, precisely the political expression of the class interests responsible for the economic, political, and social crisis that has mired Guatemalan society. No effective reform that benefits the working people can emerge from this reactionary tactic. Instead, the reformist demagoguery of counterinsurgency officials will provoke the emergence and worsening of new contradictions between the ruling classes, them, and imperialism.

In their desperate attempt to preserve the system of exploitation, oppression, and repression, the ruling classes, the genocidal Army, and imperialism were forced to violate their legality, establishing an illegitimate regime that has begun to incite well-deserved repudiation from the Guatemalan people and from international public opinion who are not fooled by the coup. The usurpers of power now face people in arms, led by their guerrilla organizations.

The current economic, political, and social crisis that Guatemalan society is suffering through can only be resolved with a revolutionary triumph, with the establishment of a Revolutionary, Patriotic, Popular, and Democratic Government, and with the realization of its five-point program.

The task of the entire Guatemalan People is now to continue the struggle by unmasking and defeating the new illegitimate government, developing the Revolutionary People's War, militarily defeating the genocidal Army, politically defeating the coup-makers supported by the Reagan government, accelerating the formation of the great patriotic front of national unity, and strengthening the unity of revolutionary organizations in the strategy of the Revolutionary People's War.

We are facing a regime that can only govern through repression, fraud, or coup d'état: clear indications of its weakness, collapse, and the meltdown that the reactionary power is beginning to experience.

However, no one should expect a rapid victory. The struggle of the revolutionary, patriotic, popular, and democratic forces has taken a step forward, and today new tasks arise. We have to prepare ourselves to defeat the Reagan administration's intervention and the coup, achieving new and important victories in the Revolutionary People's War for all the Guatemalan people.

Defeat the Coup!

Defeat Foreign Intervention!

Develop the Revolutionary People's War!

Strengthen the Revolutionary Unit!

Build the Great Patriotic Front of National Unity!

"...Our People with Fiery Soul Die Before Being Enslaved..."

Guatemalteca National Revolutionary Unity
URNG

March 24, 1982

Source: <https://ceppas.org.gt/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/El-golpe-de-Estado-en-Guatemala-1982.pdf>

Proposal of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit for a Prompt, Firm, and Durable Peace

The nature, origin, and history of our armed conflict require a particular, serious, and in-depth treatment of its complex reality. The essential and inalienable emphasis lies in laying the political foundations for the solution to this problem.

The Mexico Agreement approved an agenda that under no point of view is it permissible to evade, undermine, or denature. The dynamics and procedures of the negotiations were also established in that Agreement.

The proposal that President Jorge Serrano presented to the United Nations on January 19 introduces elements that modify the agreed procedures apart from incorporating aspects and mechanisms not considered in the Mexico Agreement. A new phase could be entered in the negotiation process, which, well conducted and without altering content, can prove to be positive.

The URNG, taking into consideration that the negotiation process could enter a new phase presents the following proposals:

- I. That the Global Agreement on Human Rights is concluded and signed as soon as possible, without conditions, with immediate effect, and international verification.
- II. That the mechanisms for the urgent and fundamental participation of the civil sectors in the negotiation process be agreed upon immediately.

With this, the first phase of the negotiations could be successfully completed and proceed to discuss the proposal President Jorge Serrano presented to the United Nations and the URNG's current proposal for the continuation of negotiations, taking into account the new conditions that are presented with the incorporation of new national and international elements in the process.

- III. Rationally schedule the treatment and solution of the substantive points of the General Agenda with the verification of their compliance by the National Reconciliation Commission, an active involvement of the United Nations, the Group of Friends in the negotiation process of the peace in Guatemala, and representation of the civil sectors of Guatemala.

- IV. Once this calendar is fulfilled, negotiations can begin regarding the conditions for the ceasefire, the demilitarization of Guatemalan society, and the confirmed solution to the operational points of the General Agenda approved in April 1991, in Mexico, as in the previous point, would testify to the National Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations, the Group of Friends of the negotiations, and the representation of the civil sectors.
- V. The United Nations, the National Reconciliation Commission (CNR), the Group of Friends of the negotiations in Guatemala, and the representation of the civil sectors would certify compliance with the substantive and operational agreements between the Government, the Guatemalan Army, and the URNG.

URNG General Command
Commander Rolando Morán
Commander Pablo Monsanto
Commander Gaspar Ilom
Carlos Gonzales, SG of the CC of the PGT
February 20, 1993

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados,
CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=2736

9

MEXICO

Popular Guerrilla Group (Grupo Popular Guerrillero), GPG

The Popular Guerrilla Group was a rural guerrilla movement established in the state of Chihuahua that operated between 1963 and 1965. The group was founded by Arturo Gamíz (a rural teacher and member of the Popular Socialist Party [PPS]), Óscar González Eguiarte, Salomón Gaytán, and Dr. Pablo Gómez. The origins of the GPG date back to early 1960s Chihuahua and in the context of growing social discord between farmers and large landowners and their government allies. Poverty was widespread in the state, especially among uneducated campesinos who struggled for decades under the yoke of economic exploitation and marginalization by the state's local *caciques* (political bosses). Amid the growing social discontent, Arturo Gamíz arrived at the small town of Dolores to give classes to the local children. By way of his pupils and town folk, he learned about the prevailing social fragmentation and the injustices the people faced at the hands of vicious *caciques*. Soon Gamíz met other social activists (students, peasants, people affiliated to the PPS) who shared his disdain for the local elites and the corrupt state government. Together they organized mobilizations and built up a mass base of students, peasants, and some professionals to collectively confront the problems facing the people. Later, Gamíz and Gómez joined the *Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México* (UGOCM), but broke away to launch an armed struggle. The GPG's first revolutionary actions took place in 1964 when militants bombed a bridge and attacked one of the judicial police headquarters. In May, the guerrillas killed Florentino Ibarra, a notorious landowner, for having murdered an indigenous member of the UGOCM. Ibarra's death and mounting pressure from the federal government and local elites propelled the governor to respond aggressively to the insurgents. On September 23, 1965, the GPG

assaulted the military barracks in Madera, Chihuahua, to collect arms and spark a revolution. The operation turned out to be a disaster and resulted in several dead guerrillas, including Gamíz, Gómez, Gaytán, and other teachers, students, and peasant-farmers. While “unsuccessful” in their attempt to spark a socialist revolution in Mexico, the GPG left a legacy that inspired guerrilla movements in the 1970s and is memorialized today as the first modern guerrilla movement in Mexico. “Resolutions: From the Second Meeting in the Sierra” is a document likely written by Gamíz. The document’s title is in reference to a second meeting where the GPG committed to the armed struggle and made a series of observations regarding the state of the Left in Mexico, a critique of capitalism, and others. Gamíz effectively puts to use his teaching experience to pen a detailed and lucid people’s history of Mexico. Even his explanations of capitalism and other dense political ideas are presented in the manner a teacher would make the material comprehensible to their pupils.

Resolutions: From Second Meeting in the Sierra (excerpt)

One does not choose the world which they are born into or shape the circumstances they live to their own personal liking. The world is already built, and society is organized in a certain way when one is born, whether they like it or not. In this case, we are not satisfied with the order of things. We want to transform the society we were born into because it is based on injustice, inequality, and oppression. Of course, during childhood, we do not dwell on these issues; we do not discuss whether the world is well or organized poorly.

For a long time, the home, neighborhood, and school are not only our world but the only world, however precarious it may be, but from childhood we begin to create some nebulous and empirical observations through which we see forms of living that are distinctive from our own. Any Mexican child notices that there are particular neighbors who, unlike them, always eat adequately, eat candy all day, and have hordes of expensive toys. All the barrio children attempt to make friends with them to have access to their toys and treats. Afterward, they return to their modest home and demand stuff from their parents. Still, they are unable to understand why, despite being equal physically and spiritually, and performing more tasks, they cannot have the same things. At school, they will continue to encounter inequality. Every classroom has a wealthy student who is clean, well dressed, sports something new every day, has all the supplies requested by the teacher, receives special treatment, and obtains positive comments from their teachers. They also realize that there are other children that they hardly know. This is because they play mainly inside their houses, and in the meadows [...] These are the children whose parents or servants take them and bring them back from school in a car, or a bus picks them up and drops them off at home.

However, as they grow up, their scope widens, and their interests deepen and multiply. They begin to pay attention to their parents’ conversations, who speak

bitterly of their work; not of the work itself, which they like so much, but the problems with their bosses, union scams, as well as their colleagues who, because they are in the same line of work, compete for the same jobs and consent to lower wages. One day we will see them arrive home frantic, hiding like a criminal because the grenadiers are pursuing them from the square where they broke up a meeting where the workers expressed their problems. We hear them talking about the adjustment that will happen in the factory because the new boss wants to reorganize everything or because they installed more modern machines that require fewer workers. But what teenager doesn't often hear arguments between his parents, always motivated by insufficient economic resources?

[...]

This reality that we have had to live is so absurd that the majority of children, from the moment they are born, are condemned, without duty or fear, to all kinds of impoverishment, to misery, hunger and cold, abuse; meanwhile, other children, from the moment they are born, even if they have no virtues, will live in opulence, surrounded by all the conveniences and protected by the laws.

This is the tragic and absurd reality that we, the new generations, have to live through and operate in. We are not discovering America when we indicate that injustices and inequality are widespread. We are aware of the efforts that countless compatriots have made and will make to remedy our country's evils. We know about the sacrifices of past generations who gave their lives in a noble effort to leave us a better country. [Miguel] Hidalgo, [José María] Morelos, [Melchor] Ocampo, [Benito] Juárez, [Emiliano] Zapata, and [Pancho] Villa are the representatives of the generations that fought to transform a society of misery and exploitation into a society of well-being and happiness. Their work has yet to be realized.

THIS IS THE MISSION OF OUR GENERATION.

Origins of Capitalism in Mexico

In Mexico, the history of capitalism is essentially the same. Before the conquest, the indigenous peoples of America lived in primitive communism or slavery. When the Spaniards arrived, the Aztecs had a large number of people under their thumb. Productive forces were low, although, within that context, they achieved remarkable production given its quality and quantity. The chroniclers describe that thousands of buyers were visible on market days in Tenochtitlán, who made magnificent pieces of obsidian, jade, turquoise, or wood. They made fabrics from cotton, rabbit fur, and maguey fiber with elegant finishes and striking colors. They worked with furs and pottery, and they were masters who outshined European jewelers.

European colonialists brought new techniques and new forms of production that were implemented mainly in the mines. The Spanish Crown policy, which was that of all the colonialists, was to confine New Spain to a territory that

supplied raw materials and consumed products made by the factories in the city. For that reason, it passed laws that prevented the development of industries in New Spain or that impeded them to a considerable extent.

During the long colonial period, the primary industries were based on wool, cotton, tobacco, gunpowder, and silverware production. The main industrial cities consisted of Mexico, Guadalajara, Querétaro, and Guanajuato. Through smoke shops, the State monopolized the industries of gunpowder, tobacco, etc. Among the regulations to protect the metropolis' industries, the State strictly prohibited the increase of capitals and technical innovations.

All the craftsmen from the same trade comprised the guilds, which had very detailed production and selling regulations. They had a strict hierarchy headed by the masters and culminated in the apprentices. These ordinances monopolized production since no one could engage in any trade outside the guilds or without their authorization.

Small workshops can be considered the ancestors of today's factories, most of which were dedicated to textile production. The authorities of the viceregal imposed barriers because they feared competition. A 14-hour working day was established in the workshops, and workers could not go to their homes. Only the married ones were allowed to go out once a week. The salary was two or three *reales* [Spanish currency] per day.

These productive forces coexisted with the feudal order, but the contradictions were becoming more apparent. The appearance of the power loom and the steam engine, and the expansion of transportation, drove their development. The Ayutla revolution, the War of Reform, the confiscation of the clergy's property, and the freedoms that had been won opened up the way for new productive forces at the end of the 19th century.

During the Porfirian period, there was development in the textile, food, mining, oil, electric, transport, and other industries. However, imperialist domination still keeps the new productive forces and the new social force dormant. In any case, proof of capitalist development, the formation of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is made evident by Pinos Altos, Cananea, Río Blanco, etc., and the creation of the Secretariat of Labor in 1911.

[...]

The Contradictions and Characteristics of Capitalism

The productive forces of capitalism, the machines, cannot produce without the labor of thousands of workers. In other words, production is social. However, the machines do not belong to those who work them, but to the capitalist. This is the primary and fundamental contradiction of the system in which we live.

And who are the goods for? Perhaps for those who produce them? No, for the factory owner, for the capitalist. Even if they do not work or know the machines' names, they pocket the immense profits even if they live outside the country. Of

the total product that comes from the sale of goods produced by thousands of workers, the capitalist spends only a small fraction on workers' wages, another small portion on maintaining the facilities, wear and tear, etc., and a few pesos in taxes, most of which is reserved for themselves in the form of profits. They refuse to give a single penny to the workers, but they know that if the workers starve and do not have children, in the long run, they will be the losers. That is why they pay the worker a salary that allows them to live and produce more workers. [...]

Brief Historical Summary

The Revolution culminated with the 1917 Constitution, which reflected the main demands of the people. Its third article stipulates that education is to be secular, based on science and democracy, combat prejudice and fanaticism, prohibit religious corporations from interfering in education, and compulsory until the age of 15. Article 27 states that the land belongs originally to the nation, but that the State has the power to allocate it to private individuals and retains the right to make such changes in the public's interest. Peasants who do not have land will be given good quality land in sufficient quantity, affecting private property, which may not exceed 100 hectares of irrigated land, 200 hectares of rain-fed land, and enough woodland and pasture to support up to 500 head of livestock. Article 28 prohibits tobacco shops and monopolies. Article 39 states that the people are sovereign and can determine the form of government they want. Article 123 establishes a series of rights and prerogatives in favor of the workers.

The bourgeoisie remains in power and opens wide the doors to capitalist development. Once they have secure power, they devote themselves to eliminating the warlords who cast a shadow over them. This is how Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, cowardly and treacherously, were murdered. The people who sacrificed torrents of blood are the ones who receive the least benefits [...]. The bourgeoisie gradually consolidated its power, and, to the same extent, its progressive traits gradually eroded until it became—by virtue of the objective laws it created—the powerful, immense, and reactionary bourgeoisie that weighs us down today. The people obtained only small gains that they have gradually lost. In the end, it might have removed one yoke, but it threw on another.

But why did this have to happen? Why didn't power remain in the hands of the villagers and the Zapatistas? Because in the era of the Revolution, the proletariat was small and there was no class consciousness, it did not have any awareness of its historical mission because a party did not exist to shed light on the situation, provide the perspective, take out the bourgeoisie's dirty clothes, sketch a better strategy, point out the class interests that were at work, and expose the dirty politics of the Chief of the Constitutionalists. Finally, because Villa and Zapata did not have the political vision, the capacity, or the class consciousness that we now want them to have had; that is to say, they were men of their time

who moved forward as best as they could under the circumstances. Zapata and Villa are the greatest and most authentic revolutionaries Mexico has ever had, the best example for Mexican youth. To study their life and work is an absolute must for those of us who consider ourselves revolutionaries. There was a time when the bourgeoisie wanted to keep them in the shadows, conceal everything that is too inconvenient for them, every shining example, every enlightening experience, every event that would open the people's eyes and illuminate their path. Today they have changed their attitude toward Villa and Zapata. The bourgeois and even the Yankees are the first to make artificial speeches in their memory, erect statues, and put their names on many things. But all this is meant to misrepresent them, distort their revolutionary actions, and use them as a shield to commit wrongdoings. Even if they give long speeches to commemorate their birth or death, deep down they still fear Zapata and Villa, and just hearing their name, even if they say it themselves, does not stop them from getting shivers.

[...]

The national oligarchy that governs us is growing stronger at a rapid pace, increasing its power on all levels, relying on relative calmness to fill its belly, with the advantage of having absolute control of the national situation that other branches of the bourgeoisie cannot achieve. It acquires industries and participates in others with the people's money. If in 1955 only 10 out of the 100 leading companies were theirs, now they have 24 between the most important ones. They manage a total of more than 55 companies and have a stake in many others. It has control of the electricity, oil, petrochemicals, coal, iron, part of the steel industry, the railways, part of the telecommunications, part of the civil aviation, part of the paper industry, the fertilizer industry, several banks and industry, the paper industry, the fertilizer industry, and financial institutions, etc. It's possibly the most powerful oligarchy in Latin America.

Every day the press reports coups d'état, riots, and revolts in Latin America while our government remains in power. But at times, family problems arise that come to light. For example, the dispute between the Callista group and the Cardenista. The former represented the right wing of the bourgeoisie while Cárdenas represented the left wing that succeeded in dominating the situation by relying on the people's help. During WWII, during the Avila Camacho regime, the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie once again imposed its views on national life. Since then and until today, the national and pro-imperialist bourgeoisie have shared power and lived in a constant tug of war, fighting for absolute control of the government, but united closely and intimately against the popular masses, agrarian reform, the workers' movement, the student movement, etc. Meanwhile, there has been a retreat mainly in the area of agrarian reform and education. The worn-out argument that "the President has a strong desire to satisfy the needs of the people and above all of the peasantry, which is his favorite and most pampered class, but his officials double-cross him" is naive and perverse and, in any case, false. No one believes anymore that the President is a victim of the state machine.

In respect to imperialism, the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie, which includes the large commercial, industrial, and financial monopolies, the big landowners and farmers dedicated to exports, are vying to surrender Mexico to imperialism, while the national bourgeoisie resists, not out of decency and modesty, but for the sake of bargaining. The pro-imperialist bourgeoisie claims:

don't be silly, don't play the squeamish girl, surrender to imperialism and your future is secure, or are you in love with the proletariat? Don't be silly; they have nothing to offer you? Or do you want to stay here and be left with neither imperialism nor the proletariat? You can't do that, it's either one or the other

and the national bourgeoisie replies:

Of course I'm not in love with the proletariat, on the contrary, I hate them. I still want to live and enjoy my own life. I feel young, and when I get tired or irritated by the proletariat, I'll marry imperialism. Besides, how can you expect me to have any commitment if they're so stingy, they offer me very little...

[...]

Critique of the Left

The PCM that aims to be the vanguard of the working class has minimal influence over this class and steady clout through the CCI, the peasant movement, or the student movement through the CNED.

The PPS is the party of the petty bourgeoisie under the unilateral leadership of Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who has shamelessly betrayed it. His actions within the party consist of relegating or dismissing honest cadres. The PPS has completely lost its small influence among the workers and its former clout among the students. It only retains certain positions, through the UGOCM, and with the peasants. Its national leaders are steering away from the PCM and other left-wing groups, and tighter to the PRI; away from the masses and closer to the government. As a result, today it lacks the 30% of members that the law requires for the Secretariat of the Interior to allow it to remain active.

The PCM and the PPS, or at least their leaderships, coincide on a series of fundamental points: they have embraced contemporary revisionism.

1. They have renounced the revolution.
2. They pay attention exclusively to conventional forms of struggle and neglect the primary revolutionary forms.
3. They accept only the legal and peaceful elements of the proletariat's doctrine.
4. They refuse to do more than what is permitted, authorized, and registered by the Secretariat of the Interior.

5. They do not grasp the plight of the people. They are in love with bourgeois peace. They have acclimatized and normalized themselves to it. They feel useless outside their political environment and dread a revolutionary situation like the fish fears the lack of water.
6. They separate the internal consolidation of the struggle against the enemy, taking refuge in metaphysical approaches. They want to take a step sideways to escape the revolutionary struggle momentarily and take a breath, organize, accumulate forces, and then return to the revolutionary stream—that is, learn how to swim outside the water.
7. They claim that since the world has changed so much, ALL the objective laws of social development have lost their currency and have been replaced by new ones. Therefore, revolution is no longer necessary.
8. They despise the peasant.
9. They are incapable of understanding each other and coming to agreements.
10. They boycott and bribe each other, and place obstacles at every step.
11. They encourage sectarianism.

[...]

Theoretically, progressive intellectuals and party theorists know the national situation perfectly and can give long and excellent lectures explaining the people's needs. This is good for those who only have a wealth of knowledge about the needs they do not require, or the suffering they do not experience. This makes it difficult for them to be revolutionaries. When ordinary citizens witness someone getting run over, they will undoubtedly remain composed. But if they run over their father, brother, or son, they will surely experience more than just sympathy. The people's sufferings and the outrage they suffer from the government drive party theorists, nothing more. They are too far from the masses to experience anything more than simple sympathy. They are not their class brothers. They are statistics and amorphous masses, without personality and sensibility.

In Mexico, the parties on the left seem to have forgotten their historical mission and who their enemies are because they use all their courage and energy to attack each other and mass organizations. They merely trip over each other and mass organizations. The offices of leftist parties are not headquarters or centers to study and work. Rarely is a major book discussed, never is the land question or the workers' situation analyzed.

[...]

This national reality that we have just observed is normally not dismissed or addressed. There are, however, some who close their eyes to the facts and try to exonerate the regime, deny the failure of the bourgeoisie, and ascribe to it noble intentions and capabilities that they do not have, which forces it to resort to an inexhaustible arsenal of lies, assumptions, mystifications, and revisionism. What path should the people follow to

transform their bitter reality in order to have a bright future? How can the oppressed people break their chains? This is where major problems begin and where huge disagreements emerge. In politics, men always have an opinion, and when what is being debated is the path they should take, it is logical that everyone should be concerned and engaged in the discussion. However, all opinions can be reduced to two currents: there are those that consider that the Mexican people can peacefully break the chains that tie them down, topple the capitalist regime, and install a different type of government in the hands of peasants and workers. Then there are some who believe that **ONLY THROUGH ARMED REVOLUTION** will the Mexican people achieve their liberation.

It's not a question of planning huge tactical operations, but rather of responding to one of the many blows that the government inflicts on the masses. By way of military operations, the guerrillas will become stronger, consolidate, increase their ranks and multiply, and the organization will form, little by little, as conditions permit. The flames of revolution will spread, little by little, to other corners of the Republic. The struggle will be long and take decades. That is why it is time to move forward, start young if we want to have time to achieve the conditions that only years of action will bring.

Those who say that we must wait for all the conditions to be met, for the right moment, and organize everything perfectly are waiting behind their desk for rebel columns to march into their office and inform them the time has come. We have absolute faith in the masses, and we know that more revolutionaries will emerge from their midst every day to prepare and launch actions. We know that without the support of the masses, we will not be able to succeed. Winning their confidence and support is our main concern, and we intend to achieve this through deeds.

“Victory or Death”

Popular Guerrilla Group

State of Chihuahua, February 1965

Source: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de Movimiento Armados

Party of the Poor (Partido de los Pobres), PDLP

The Party of the Poor was a rural guerrilla movement that existed from 1967 to 1974 in the mountains of Guerrero, led by the school teacher-turned-revolutionary, Lucio Cabañas Barrientos. Cabañas was born on December 15, 1936, to a poor family in the small community of Porvenir, a municipality of Atoyac de Álvarez, Guerrero. Like many people before him, at a young age he began participating in popular politics and civic actions against the exploitation of peasants and fought head-to-head with local corrupt caciques. Cabañas' formal political formation

started when he joined the Mexican Communist Youth in 1959. As a student of the Ayotzinapa Normal School, Cabañas was elected Secretary-General of the *Federación Nacional de Estudiantes Campesinos Socialistas* (National Federation of Socialist Peasant Students, FECSM) and served from 1962 to 1963. In that capacity, he participated in political initiatives in support of Genaro Vázquez Rojas, the future leader of the *Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria* (National Revolutionary Civic Association, ACNR), a guerrilla movement that fought the Mexican Army in the mountains of Guerrero from 1968 to 1972. Cabañas began formally teaching in 1963 in Mexcaltepec, where he taught mainly the children of campesinos. Against this backdrop, he participated in actions in support of campesinos. In 1964, Cabañas returned to Atoyac to teach at the Modesta Alarcón school and remained actively involved in civic activities. In 1967, Cabañas crossed a rubicon when the politically motivated removal of a teacher from a school in Atoyac sparked parents' and locals' ire, including that of Cabañas. Under the auspices of the Defenders Front, the protesters scheduled a rally for May 18. More than 2,000 people were in attendance when a large contingent of judicial police arrived, killing five people and injuring more than two dozen. Cabañas fled to the mountains and formed the Party of the Poor not only to battle the local government of Guerrero, but also combat the federal authorities who instituted crooked and manipulative politicians and governors in Guerrero. In response, President Luis Echeverría launched a vicious, dirty war in the state. Under Defense Secretary Hermenegildo Cuenca Díaz, the Mexican army utilized an assortment of extermination schemes against the guerrillas, one of them called "Vietnam Village," in which peasants were removed from their homes and forcefully relocated to "controlled zones." In 1974, the Party of the Poor carried out the high-profile kidnapping of the then senator and future governor of Guerrero, Rubén Figueroa. In one of his discourses in 1972, Figueroa spoke against Cabañas' resistance movement by denouncing its guerrilla credibility and directing a speech to the leader. In his declaration, Governor Figueroa held that "Cabañas is not a guerrilla fighter, and I challenge the PDLP's leader to dare to kidnap me if he can." Figueroa remained in the hands of the guerrillas for three months before they released him. In 1973, the PDLP released a 12-point manifesto that describes a socialist-inspired economic model, steps toward the organization and unity of the peasants to improve living conditions and the perennial land issue, and proper distribution of wealth.

The Ideology of the Party of the Poor

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO
TO THE WORKERS.

The Party of the Poor, an organization that has been born from the deepest bowels of the Mexican people and that day by day is tempered, consolidated, and developed in the struggle and the armed revolutionary war of the exploited

against the exploiters, presents in a general way the primary objectives that underlie the reason for its existence, conduct, and action.

Our essential principles and objectives are:

1. To fight with arms in hand together with all armed revolutionary organizations, alongside our working people, and make a socialist revolution; to conquer political power; to destroy the exploitive and oppressive bourgeois state; to build a proletarian state, and form a government of all workers; to build a new society, without exploiters or the exploited, without the oppressed or oppressors.
2. To destroy the capitalist system; to abolish private property, the foundation and core of exploitation of man by man; to annihilate the bourgeoisie as a privileged, exploitive, and oppressive class, since capital and the wealth accumulated and concentrated in its hands has been created by the labor, sweat, and blood of the working class, the peasants, and all the workers. Consequently, the historical justice of the working class, the peasantry and many workers' organizations will be vindicated. What has been created by the work and sacrifice of the people must belong to the people [...]
3. Consequently, after the triumph of the armed socialist revolution and the seizure of political power by the people, the structure of the exploitative social-economic system will be destroyed and economic power will be conquered. To this end, the industrial, commercial, and agricultural companies and the financial institutions, etc., now in the hands of the bourgeoisie, will be expropriated and socialized. As the factories, the means and instruments of production, natural resources, banks, etc., are expropriated and socialized, they will be administered by the workers and the proletarian state. External and internal trade will be under the control of the workers' state, and economic, political, and social relations with all countries will be based on the interests of the people, on equality, and on minimum aid.
4. Exploitation and oppression in the countryside will cease to exist; large estates, haciendas, and all the properties of the capitalists in the countryside will be expropriated. The land shall be collectivized and administered by those who work it; the state of all workers shall provide the entire peasantry with sufficient machinery, technology, means, and resources to raise the production and living standards of the peasants. Land and production shall belong to those who work it.
5. Large homeowners will be evicted from their homes, and will only be allowed what is necessary to live with dignity. The luxury mansions, hotels, motels, and resorts, in the hands and service of the bourgeoisie, will be handed over to the workers.
6. The large sanatoriums, doctors' offices and hospitals, pharmacies and laboratories, and health centers and hospitals will be expropriated and put at the

service of the people to guarantee good health and avoid death from lack of medical care.

7. Air, sea, and land transportation; communications: telephone, telegraph, and mail, will be socialized and put at the service of all society.
8. Bourgeois culture, being counter-revolutionary and incompatible with the interests of the workers, will be destroyed. The people will develop and create their own culture. The technology and science that the capitalist state uses to deepen the exploitation, oppression, and death of the working masses will be put to use for the benefit of the people in order to transform the country and raise the production and living standards of society. Education, culture, technology, and science will lose their commercial character in this new society. Education will be provided and administered free of charge by the revolutionary state to all the people in order to radically end the illiteracy, ignorance, and cultural backwardness the capitalist regime has maintained them in. Education will be scientific—that is, it will be based strictly on truth, on the materiality of the universe, the world, and society.
9. The press, radio, and television will be expropriated, since they constitute one more instrument of power of the bourgeoisie to subjugate and alienate the people, distort the truth, create false moral and cultural values, and increase its profits and wealth. As the press, radio, and television are expropriated, the revolutionary state and government will be responsible for transforming the orientation and content of this mass media, whose fundamental aim will be to guide, educate, and raise the revolutionary consciousness and morality of the people and help in the formation of the new man.
10. The laws and the entire bourgeois legal system, which guarantee private property and legalize the exploitation of the bourgeoisie against the workers, shall be abolished. The army and all police forces which make up the repressive and criminal machinery, the defenders and fundamental supporters of the state and the bourgeois order, will be destroyed. The proletarian state will create laws, principles, and courts that genuinely express, represent, and defend the rights and interests of all workers and all of society, the fundamental basis of which will be socialist democracy, which must regard all workers as having full rights and obligations and place women on an equal footing with men, with work, and with society. The revolutionary state will consolidate and develop its own army and arm all the people. The home of every working person will be transformed into a battle trench and they will become a revolutionary soldier to defend the country from its exploiters at home and abroad. The people will not lay down their arms until the last stronghold of exploitation and the last enemy of the revolution are eliminated.
11. Human labor shall be free from all exploitation and oppression. It shall cease to be a commodity and can no longer be considered a curse, nor a punishment, but the rational and fundamental activity of man aimed at infinite

improvement, at the transformation of nature, for the creation of the moral and spiritual values of society and for the production of material goods. Production and wealth shall be distributed fairly, taking into account the fundamental interests and needs of all workers.

12. The struggle of the Mexican people for their full emancipation is an integral part of the international revolutionary movement for the total liberation of humanity. The artificial borders established and imposed by the exploiters to separate the people must be wiped out by the struggle and revolutionary internationalism. Therefore, we are fully identified with and are in solidarity with all the exploited peoples, with all the men and women who constantly fight throughout the world against a common enemy: capitalism. We are firmly united with all the peoples who have achieved their political, economic, and social emancipation, and who represent a revolutionary model for us.

In order to reach and achieve the above objectives, the workers must immediately wage a deadly and irreconcilable war against the bourgeoisie, against the capitalists. It is necessary to develop, deepen, and broaden the war of movements and rapid decisions, and to extend guerrilla warfare to the entire country. Guerrilla warfare will drive all the people into ever more advanced forms of fighting, right up to general insurrection and the seizure of power until the bourgeoisie is destroyed and buried along with its exploitative and oppressive capitalist system.

The historical, economic, political, and social conditions necessary to organize and develop the socialist revolution in our country are in place. The immediate task of the exploiters is to group themselves into armed underground organizations and take action. Revolutionary theory and practice will have to create and develop the vanguard, politically and militarily capable of leading the war and coordinating revolutionary actions.

Revolutionary praxis will consequently have to define and unite revolutionaries and separate them from the opportunists, renegades, traitors, and agents of the bourgeoisie inside the revolutionary movement.

We call on all revolutionaries to unite, organize, arm themselves, and fight against the bourgeoisie and all the means and instruments they utilize to exploit and maintain their rule.

We call on the workers to politically and physically liquidate union *charismo*, to take over the factories, transform them into insurrectionist centers, and fight for their historic goals.

We call on the poor peasantry to seize the haciendas and lands owned by the rural capitalists by force and to join the armed struggle.

We call on the militant student body and the revolutionary intelligentsia to turn the schools and workplaces into a battlefield for socialist revolution.

We call on all the people to fight the rich capitalists, wherever they are, to attack their wealth and property and destroy their military-police forces and their exploitative and oppressive system.

It is the duty of every revolutionary to make revolution with guns in hand.

Victory or Death!
The Party of the Poor
The Mountains of Guerrero
March 1973

Source: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de Movimiento Armados

23rd September Communist League (Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre)

The September 23rd Communist League, or Liga, was Mexico's largest modern urban guerrilla movement, estimated to have comprised more than 1,000 insurgents. The organization was established in Guadalajara in March 1973 by several active revolutionary organizations. Founding members included the FER, the Enfermos, the Lacandones, Los Procesos, Los Macías, Spartacists, the MAR-23, Los Guajiros, and the Student Professional Movement (MEP)—a radical Christian group that subscribed to Liberation Theology. The Liga was initially the brainchild of Raúl Ramos Zavala, who, before his death in February 1972, envisioned unifying active armed revolutionary groups into a single national organization. After Ramos Zavala perished in a gunfight with police in February 1972, Ignacio Salas Obregón "Oseas" took the reins. Salas Obregón eventually became the Liga's first leader and chief ideological authority. The organization's creation brought together many of the revolutionary lefts' stars and up-and-coming personalities from around Mexico, including Ignacio Olivares Torres, Leopoldo Angulo Luken, Alicia de los Ríos, David Jiménez Sarmiento, Olivia Ledesma, Luis Miguel Corral García, Fernando Carvajal, amongst others. Many had previously militated in the Communist Youth and belonged to the faction that broke away in 1970, while others were at different points in their militancy and revolutionary development. The Liga established fronts in major cities and the countryside, primarily in the mountains of Chihuahua. While it was never able to build a mass base, it did manage to achieve some peasant, worker, and indigenous support. During its existence (1973 to roughly 1981), the Liga performed a litany of expropriations, political actions, and spectacular kidnappings. These included the botched kidnapping of the famous industrial capitalist and philanthropist, Eugenio Garza Sada; the abduction and death of the young entrepreneur, Fernando Aranguren; the British Consulate in Guadalajara, Duncan Williams (eventually freed); and the failed kidnapping of Margarita López Portillo, the sister of then President José López Portillo. One of the Liga's

crowning achievements was the famous “Asalto al cielo” (Assault on the Sky) of January 16–18, 1974. The “asalto” consisted of several coordinated revolutionary actions by workers, peasants, and students in the state of Sinaloa. While the Mexican government damped down the rebellion by sending in the military and several helicopters, it represented a symbolic triumph for the guerrillas. Moreover, it reinforced the revolutionary capability of the working classes and the possibility of fomenting revolution in Mexico. The following excerpt was published by the Liga and retells the story of the “Asalto al cielo” and the lessons learned. The text impassionedly describes the preparedness of the proletariat for revolution, the vulnerability of security forces against a prepared revolutionary contingent, and the fear it sparked in the national bourgeoisie.

Some Political-Military Aspects to be Considered in Preparation and Development for the Next Revolutionary Days (excerpt)

Almost a year ago, from January 16 to 18, 1974, the news on the radio, TV, and the bourgeois press throughout the country transmitted and reported a distorted account of the revolutionary events that unfolded and shook Mexico on those days. Thousands of agricultural workers, construction workers, and a detachment of proletariat students in Sinaloa executed one of the most extraordinary political-military mobilizations of the last era. Strikes and political struggle, street fights, and guerrilla skirmishes were all intertwined, giving major power to revolutionary mobilization. While this was transpiring in Sinaloa, there were also major revolutionary mobilizations led by squatters and students in Hermosillo and Sonora, public transportation drivers in Guadalajara, and in other parts of the country. The political strike became the leading form of resistance at the heart of this national-revolutionary day. As a result of this agitation and revolutionary combat activity, workers expropriated their labor from capital and expanded their revolutionary movement.

In Sinaloa, 50,000 agricultural laborers stopped working, although not all of them took part in revolutionary action and resistance. More than 100 construction workers from 16 large sites in Culiacán and countless brigades of student proletarians went on strike. Strikes spread from field to field, and the workers advanced in columns, fomenting revolutionary agitation among their class brothers and sisters, and fighting with the armed forces of the bourgeoisie. The execution of police officers, the destruction of judicial and military personnel, the expropriation of arms and resources for the struggle (for example, the assault by workers’ columns on the Water the Resources’ booth and federal bridges, as well as the seizure of arms and money) were mainstays in guerrilla and street fights that unfolded alongside the political strike. This only lasted three days, but even if it had only been one hour, it signified a major victory in the proletarian sense; that is, it was not about earning 2 pesos or scraps from the bourgeoisie. It triumphed because the proletariat recognized its strength, capacity, and proletarian

power. Moreover, the proletariat further strengthened its unity and organization while despoiling and undermining the bourgeois state [...]

only the struggle can educate the exploited class, only in struggle can it discover the magnitude of its strength, broaden its horizon, and raise its capacity.

(Lenin)

In the months after these events took place, we witnessed a considerable upswing in revolutionary mobilization and the rise of the proletariat in Mexico into a formidable force in the unfolding of the National Days of Agitation and Resistance (Lido, Coatzintla, General Electric, Cinsa, Cifunsa, and Castopol, etc.). This development is the byproduct of a confluence between the rapidly growing crisis in the capitalist system of production, dozens of years of proletarian struggle, and the influence of revolutionary Marxism over the years.

The political mobilization of the proletariat in general, and particularly in the development of the national days of agitation and resistance, has been bringing to the fore a military tactic in accordance with their strategic inferiority in relation to the bourgeoisie. This is a matter that we are particularly interested in dealing with herein, together with other questions of a practical and military nature regarding the development of this tactic, which the proletariat has been fostering in its mobilizations to a greater or lesser extent [...]

Such a shift to a more proper military tactic on the part of the proletariat (the tactic of quick decisions) is the result of its political understanding of advanced forms of struggle, organization, and consciousness; a military tactic based on the idea that war must be waged under the rule of war, and that revolution is war.

[...]

If the previous mobilizations and revolutionary days were important, those to come would be greater. Today, we are experiencing the first thunderstorms, the prelude to the glorious revolutionary storm, which will sweep the bourgeois relations of production off the face of the earth.

In the coming mobilizations and national days of agitation and resistance, the proletariat must aim to consolidate the tactic of quick decision-making throughout the revolutionary movement and prepare the conditions that will allow it to arrive tactically superior and achieve victories over the bourgeoisie.

We will stop to highlight the key elements in order to prepare and develop the next national day of agitation and resistance:

Preparation requires organized revolutionaries to provide an extensive and permanent political education campaign and organization. The primary instrument should be the revolutionary press, its elaboration, analysis, and dissemination throughout the labor movement.

To prepare the conditions so that they encompass the broadest possible sections of the proletariat, not just in one locality but in the whole Republic, and to generalize and intensify them, thus dispersing the bourgeois forces and preventing them from concentrating all their forces on a single mobilization or locality.

A reliable and energetic political and organizational education campaign is a vital mainstay to prepare for such a day. The whole revolutionary movement should discuss this question, emphasizing the experience and the progress made in this direction. The experiences of the previous revolutionary days, their weaknesses and strengths, should be analyzed to enable future revolutionary days to contain the fertile seed of revolutionary experience, to fight uncompromisingly.

[...]

Knowledge of the terrain is essential. Moreover, the proletariat, and in particular its most advanced elements, must study the landscape and the location of police and military forces (police headquarters, barracks, squads, and police/military surveillance routes, etc.).

Special attention is required regarding weapons, how to confiscate and manufacture them; the latter, however rudimentary they may be at first, will be developed and perfected. The important thing is to prepare them immediately.

Determining the most appropriate moment to launch the mobilization and taking maximum advantage of economic and political junctures.

On the other hand, in the development of the mobilization, it should not tend to immobility and concentration but to dispersion and mobility even if at certain moments there is a need to concentrate a greater (certain) number of forces to attack the enemy's weak points, the columns of the strikers, and the unruly brigades in the factory zones, workers' neighborhoods, agricultural fields, and school zones, developing revolutionary political agitation, street fighting, and the guerrilla struggle.

[...]

Once the mobilization has begun to scatter the forces of the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to try everything possible to avoid their mobility or, even better, cause their absolute destruction. To this end, according to the quick decision-making tactic, the creative proletarian soldier has been raising a series of practical military questions, some of which we will now point out:

Severe communication, avoid it as much as possible; obstruct roads, sabotage, destroy airfield bridges, cut off telephone, telegraph, and electricity cables, etc.

Raising barricades, though not to remain inert behind them, but to circumvent the enemy's movements. These barricades have previously been erected with trucks and overturned burning cars, stones, and other materials. These must be designed in advance, identifying strategic points that

can best serve this task, which essentially limits military police vehicles' mobility, thus significantly impairing the bourgeois armed forces' military potential.

In addition to these measures, the location of the revolutionary commands in strategic places will attack and ambush the enemy and retreat to previously analyzed and decided sites, but this must be swift and forceful to avoid long fights as much as possible.

The purpose is not to generate solutions to these questions, but to implant and generalize some of them, which the proletariat has been developing in its struggles against bourgeois forces under the quick decision-making tactic. New questions, which will boost the military level of the proletarian class, must be studied and elaborated in accordance with the laws of war.

[...]

It Is Not Time for the Final Assault on the Bourgeois Fortress; It Is Time for the Siege, Hostilities, and Preparation!

Preparation and Development of the National Days of Agitation and Resistance!

Long Live the Socialist Revolution!

Raise the Flag of the Revolutionary Civil War!

Workers of the World, Unite!

23rd September Communist League

Editorial Board

January 16, 1975

Source: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de Movimiento Armados

Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional), EZLN

The Zapatista National Liberation Army is a post-Cold War guerrilla movement made up primarily of Mayan Indians that operates in the Lacandon Jungle in the Mexican state of Chiapas. The EZLN famously made their public debut in the early morning of New Year's Day 1994, to correspond with the inauguration of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The Zapatistas have also amassed significant local, national, and international support through their practical internet usage. Since the onset, they have resisted any political classification and prefer to adhere to a political philosophy called *neozapatismo* that embodies their struggle for a better world vision. The EZLN is passionately anti-capitalist, anti-neoliberalism, and anti-imperialist. The origins of the EZLN date back to the establishment of the politico-military *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Forces) in Monterrey, Nuevo León. The FLN was founded by Fernando German Yáñez (a middle-class law student), Alfredo Zarate, Mario

Sáenz, Carlos Vives, and Mario Sánchez Acosta, among others, in August 1969. Ideologically, the FLN subscribed to a constellation of socialist tenets, including Leninism, Maoism, Vietnamese Marxism, and political philosophies associated with the Cuban Revolution. Initially, the movement was self-sustained through donations from militants, many of whom came from well-off backgrounds. In the early 1970s, several militants moved to the Cañada region in the Lacandon Jungle to establish a *foco* and recruit local Mayan indigenous people. On February 14, 1974, Mexican counterinsurgency agents ambushed the FLN headquarters (*La Casa Grande*) in the town of Nepantla in the state of Mexico after learning of its location from two members they had interrogated. Based on intelligence collected in the wake of the ambush on the house, DFS agents learned of the rural cell's whereabouts in Chiapas. Yáñez and others initially evaded capture, but the military eventually caught up to them in March. Soldiers summarily executed them and placed their bodies in unmarked graves. In 1983, the surviving insurgents founded the EZLN, and, 11 years later, the Zapatistas initiated their insurrection by seizing four cities in Chiapas, including San Cristóbal de las Casas, the area's municipal hub. The Zapatista's spokesperson, Subcommander "Marcos," read a declaration of war whose first four words became inscribed into the public imaginary: "Today we say enough!" President Raúl Salinas de Gortari deployed the military to the towns and cities under Zapatista control. The response was violent and bloody. Conservative estimates place the total number killed at 150, though the true figure is presumed to be higher. The EZLN retreated to the jungle, both agreed to a ceasefire, and subsequently, a peace accord was signed in which the Mexican government promised to fulfill some of the Zapatistas' demands. Since then, the EZLN has remained active, setting up autonomous Zapatista zones in the mountains, and has won the support of millions of Mexicans and foreigners. The following document is a letter sent by the EZLN and written by "Marcos" to the new Mexican president, Ernesto Zedillo, a Yale-educated economist. The message speaks to the Salinas administration's unkept promises and serves as an affirmation that the EZLN is not going anywhere if the government continues in the same manner.

Letter to Mr. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, President of Mexico

I must conclude due to lack of time, but I will add one more observation. Sometimes it is a man's lot to attack the rights of others, impound their assets, threaten the lives of those who defend their nationality, make the highest virtues appear to be crimes, and give to his own vices the luster of true virtue. But there is one thing which neither falsity nor perfidy can reach, and that is the sentence of history. History will judge us.

– Benito Juárez to Maximilian of Hapsburg, in response to a confidential letter where Maximilian proposes a secret negotiation and a position in his government

Mr. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon:

Welcome to the nightmare.

By way of this letter, I direct myself to you regarding your inauguration speech.

You should know that the political system you speak for (the one to which you owe your position of power, although not your legitimacy) has prostituted the language to such an extent that today “politics” is synonymous with lies, crime, and treachery. I only tell you what millions of Mexicans would like to say: we don’t believe it.

And I add what perhaps not all subscribe to: enough of waiting for the day when things will change. Your words today are the same ones we have heard at the start of other administrations.

The nation distrusts the electoral processes, including the one that fraudulently brought you toward that illusory transfer of powers. So, I direct myself to you, as well as your tutor, Mr. Salinas de Gortari, who (as evidenced by the cabinet that accompanies you in this new lie) refuses to retire from national political life.

How do you expect the nation to believe that you will seek justice in the assassination that stained Mexico’s modern history and exhibited the real and criminal face of your state party? How can we believe you when one of those accused of the cover-up has been rewarded with the right to manage our soil’s wealth?

I see that you hold onto Sedesol, that government agency that dispenses alms. What dignified relationship can you offer in exchange for an honest dialogue and respectful negotiation when you appoint as your conscience-buying money man with links to *Salinismo*. Since May of 1993, instead of extending economic assistance to the places that need it the most, he bought indigenous dignity as if it was a trinket in a market?

Is that your counterinsurgency plan? The proliferation of social work in order to weaken our base of popular support? It is a good strategy that comes from North American anti-guerrilla strategy manuals (and in all its history of failures). Don’t you realize that the money only winds up in the pockets of the corrupt leaders and PRI municipal presidents in the Chiapas countryside? Is this advice coming from Argentine military advisors? Are you going to be fooled once again, like the time you were told that millions and millions of old and new pesos were invested in the region which, after January 1, suddenly became a “conflict zone?” How much more money and how much more blood is necessary for you to realize that corruption—which until now has allowed you to survive as a political system—will be your grave tomorrow?

Allow me to continue to comment. Your cabinet is proof that your inauguration speech is only a bunch of words. It is more like a storefront

than a governmental team. In your economic team you have a group inherited from your tutor that distinguishes itself by its willingness to sell out in anything pertaining to national sovereignty and Mexican dignity. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, you have someone who has the approval of foreigners, but not Mexican nationals. Have foreign affairs merely become commercial relations? In the Department of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources you have guaranteed that poverty and discontent will mushroom in the Mexican countryside.

In general, in your cabinet one can see a foreign and frenchified shadow under which Mexicans suffered this past administration. So many lies and so much cover-up will be useless. This country will explode in your hands no matter how much you believe that you control all the resources necessary to keep people as “puts-up-with-everything” Mexicans.

I listened carefully to your speech on the radio. You are correct when you say that it is not our violence that the nation fears. But your lesson is incomplete. You characterize the climate of insecurity in which the country lives as something amorphous. The principal promoter of instability, insecurity, and violence is the state-party system; it is the political system that you cannot destroy because, quite simply, you owe the power you now hold to its existence. The cabinet that you presented today to the country is a small demonstration of the pending debts which your administration begins with. All of your speech will crumble when you confront the debts you owe to the different accomplices, which allows you to assume the presidency by covering up the state's crimes. The crime began with the assassination of the one from whom you inherited your candidacy. It continued with the mockery of the electoral campaigns. It passed a self-test on August 21, and it culminates in this fateful December 1.

The first two days marked the history of this country in opposite ways. The first of January marked rising cries for dignity and rebellion of Mexicans of all social origins but with the same disgrace. From that day on, with a single indigenous voice, men, women, children, and the elderly from the city and the countryside, of different colors, different races, different languages, but of a common suffering, have spoken. December 1 completed the burial of what began before August 21, the funeral of hope for the peaceful transition to democracy, liberty, and justice.

Indigenous communities suffer not only, as you point out, “severe predations, injustice, and lack of opportunity.” They also suffer from a serious illness that begins, little by little, to affect the entire population: rebellion. You will be able to witness this as long as your government lasts.

You say that “the government, society, the affected communities will all unite against poverty.” Yet you appoint a cabinet along the same lines as the man who plunged most of the country in misery: Carlos Salinas de Gortari. We do not want this kind of unity for Mexico, because it will as-

sure the permanence of the same system of oppression, now under a new administration. That is not the unit that Mexico needs. What our history demands is unity against a state-party system of government, which has the nation submerged in a poverty of the body and spirit.

You point out that “during this year the spirit of all Mexicans has been darkened by the events in Chiapas, by violence, and more so, by the conditions of profound injustice, by the conditions of misery and abandonment that fertilized that violence.”

Neither the conditions of profound injustice nor violence are exclusive to the state of Chiapas. The entire nation suffers from the high social cost imposed by neoliberalism. If there are no profound transformations, violence will cast a shadow over the entire national territory, and not precisely because we promote it.

You are contradicting yourself when you point out that “there will be no violence on the part of the government” because the White Guards of the large ranchers and merchants act with impunity—that is, with the complicity of the government. You are starting wrong if all you can offer is half-truths. You say you are “outraged to know that women are being attacked on the street, that children and adolescents are abused outside their schools; that the worker loses his salary in street theft, and the small businessman in violent robberies. It also upsets you to learn of the impunity resulting from the abuse of authority, venality, and corruption.” Yes, and it is also outrageous that in Mexico there are 24 billionaires at the cost of a humiliating 4% increase in already meager wages. It is also disgraceful to learn that the theft of our national identity has been legalized in the North American Free Trade Agreement, which only means freedom for the powerful to rob, and the freedom for the dispossessed to live in misery; it is outrageous that the one who holds the presidential sash does so not by the will of the people, but by the will of money and fear.

“The brutal assassinations of outstanding political figures of the country have deeply wounded the citizenry, they have sowed discontent and doubt about certain institutions and, we should admit, have divided Mexicans.” Yes, but not only those crimes, but also those perpetrated, day and night, by all members of the governmental apparatus, beginning with those committed by the former head of the executive branch and ending with the last of the minor bureaucrats at the municipal level.

You ask for unity and point out that “the moment has arrived when we must gather our wills, without sacrificing our differences.” But you are only looking for the endorsement and legitimacy that the popular votes did not give you. Your offer of a “permanent dialogue” has manifested itself in the repression which was launched in the month of December. Perhaps you are thinking of a kind of “Dialogue Commission” made up of grenadiers and policemen to deal with the press and the opposition.

It is not necessary to declare that, as president of the republic, you will not intervene, "in any way, in the processes and decisions that correspond solely to the party" to which you belong; that will be done by Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Your cabinet and the impunity enjoyed by the PRI leadership is proof enough. Of course, we agree with you when you say that "in this historic moment, let no one run from their responsibility, lessen the effort, give in to the temptation to lay down their arms."

We Zapatistas will not shy away from our responsibility, lessen our effort, or give in to the temptation to lay down our arms. We will continue to fight, arms in hand, against the state-party system, the same one that allows the Salinas de Gortari's shadow behind you. Now, and since November 17, 1994, I have been given the baton of the rebel forces' supreme command. Consequently, I assume the responsibility of answering you on behalf of our entire army.

In your first speech as the President, you indicated your desire to seek negotiation to resolve the conflict and you offer us this path.

Mr. Zedillo, it is my duty to tell you that we cannot believe you. You are part of a system that has already reached the greatest aberration, and resorted to murder to settle differences as if we were a group of criminals. You do not speak to us as a representative of the nation. Your words are stained with blood from the thousands of assassinations, including those who belonged to your own political circle. A stain that covers the Institutional Revolutionary Party. How can we believe the sincerity of your invitation to a negotiated solution?

From the beginning of the presidential term, the number of troops have increased, making evident a disposition to annihilation. Since November 14, there have been continuous flights of the so-called "Hercules," transport men and military supplies to commando units at their counterinsurgent bases on the Guatemalan border. The foreign military "advisors" (and I want to say clearly that they are not Argentinian because these animals have no country) have prepared their pupils. Now they're done, I guess they're ready. We know the number and location of your troops, your general strategy, and some tactical plans.

Unfortunately, we can do anything on political and military terms. The siege prevents us from any major action, and our repeated denunciations regarding the increase in military presence have annoyed and frustrated the nation.

You should know that I have issued orders so that all the members of the CCRI take shelter in order to guarantee that the political direction of our just cause is not lost. Also know that I have instructed all the military chiefs, as in January, that they remain with their units. I will do the same. I have already taken the necessary steps so that my successors to the military leadership can assume their responsibilities without significant problems in case I should die.

Our main strength is also our greatest weakness. The support of the civilian population, that which allowed us to grow strong, now forces us to abandon any attempt to retreat without them. That is why, for us, there is no going backwards. We must fight alongside the people, who previously protected us, and we will be the shield and guardian of their life. I am aware that this takes away all possibility of survival. To confront as a regular army, one that is superior to us in weapons and personnel, although not in morality, nullifies the possibility of success. To surrender has already been expressly prohibited. Zapatista leaders who surrender will be decommissioned.

No matter the result of this war, sooner or later, this sacrifice that today appears useless and sterile to many, will be rewarded by the lightning that lights up other lands. The light will surely reach the South, shimmer in the Mar del Plata, in the Andes, the land of Artigas, Paraguay, and the entirety of this inverted and absurd pyramid that is Latin America. Strength is not on our side; it has never been on the side of the dispossessed. But the historical reasoning, the shame and the ardor we feel in our chests, and that is called dignity, makes of us, today's nameless, true men and women of forever.

Through the dull image of our patient waiting compensated with aggression clothed in green jackets, we received your offer to make us "part of the solution" and a secret and direct dialogue. Irrespective of your proposal to be "an active part of the execution of actions," let us be very clear. If you refer to the cost of Zapatista dignity, know that there is not enough money in the entire nation to come close to its price. Don't be fooled into thinking that our cry "Everything for everyone, nothing for us" is a fad or hoax to cover up our lust for power. The Zapatistas don't have a price because dignity does not have a price.

In reference to a direct and secret dialogue, in my capacity as supreme head of the EZLN, I solemnly reject your invitation to a secret negotiation, behind the nation's back.

You say that after years of war and thousands of deaths and destruction, we will end up negotiating. That it would be better to do so now, in order to avoid war. But which war do you want to avoid? The one that we initiate against your system by making legitimate use of self-defense and rebellion? Or the one that you have made against us since you have been in power and in the government in these lands? The war that we want to avoid is the one waged against us by the political system behind and above you. The war against every attempt to democratize, against every desire for justice, against every aspiration for freedom. That is the war that Mexicans are suffering and it is the one that must end. Once it is over, the other war, ours, everyone's, will eventually be extinguished. Useless and sterile, it will end up leaving like a nightmare that is relieved by the first light of day. That is the peace we want. Any effort in another direction is deceit.

Wanting to avoid the war of the dispossessed by maintaining or increasing the war that walks the pace of the powerful will only be to postpone the execution of a historical sentence; the triumph of democracy, freedom, and justice in the Mexican soils and skies.

If you are a man of honor and dignity, I invite you to renounce wrongdoing—that is, the ownership of the Federal Executive Power. You must renounce the shame of spearheading that great lie that betrayed the hope of the Mexican people for a peaceful change to democracy. But before you do so, summon Carlos Salinas de Gortari to a political trial and help the world avoid another lie, the one behind the World Trade Organization, the one like the North American Free Trade Agreement. And before that, as supreme chief of the federal army, liberate officials, ranks, and troops so they can choose the path dictated by their consciences and their patriotic sentiment. Do not humiliate them by obliging them to accept foreign intervention that advises how to kill Mexicans.

As for me, I have done the same with my troops: I have freed them from any commitment to move forward and they have been allowed to opt for surrender and conformism. None have accepted. Nothing binds them to our ranks, not a salary or threats, but shame and dignity create chains that are difficult to break. All of them choose today the same path that they chose yesterday: that of patriotism and justice.

For my part, I admit that I have been mistaken about you. In February, I thought that your patriotic interest would be greater than your arrogance, that your intelligence would let you see that you yourselves constitute the main obstacle to the country's development, that you would step aside and open the door to a peaceful transition to democracy. But it did not happen that way. You decided to slam the door shut on August 21 and repeat the arrogance of a landslide victory. But history shows that the doors of peaceful change and violent change, of peace and of war, are inversely linked: when one is closed, the other opens. By closing the door of peaceful change to democracy, you opened the heavy door of war.

The clumsiness of your behavior in Chiapas suddenly has brought me back to reality: the state-party system is not intelligent. Furthermore, I see now that imbecility is inherent to your decomposition. Having the opportunity to ease the knot of the conflict, you held on to it and tightened it, roping sectors that had previously remained on the sidelines—to extremes of polarization. The deterioration is now irreversible; the middle ground has disappeared, and the extremes are already facing each other, and demanding the annihilation of each other. We have grown by the tens of thousands. As I have pointed out before, the supreme government has always taken measures to get rid of us as a problem, and that has made us grow. Facing the risk of extinguishing us by political isolation, by creating a vacuum, the government, with its clumsy local and regional politics, oxygenates a fire, which sooner or later will consume it.

You must disappear, not just because you represent a historical aberration, a negation of humanity and cynical cruelty; you should also disappear because you represent an insult to intelligence. You made us possible, you made us grow. We are your other, your Siamese opposite. For us to disappear, you must disappear as well.

It is difficult to listen to you. One supposes that one is speaking with rational beings, but apparently not. Accustomed to buying, corrupting, imposing, breaking, and assassinating all that is in front of you, face to face with dignity, you assume the crafty businessman's pose, seeking the best price for his goods. This has been your systematic attitude during the 11 months of an unstable ceasefire. It is the "intelligent" attitude of a gambler who deposits coins in a slot machine and waits for the product which he has chosen and bought—peace—to drop out.

You should know that we have done everything possible to keep the conflict within the political realm, to avoid at all costs the re-initiation of hostilities. We have called upon different national political personalities, invited them to an initiative that they can head, through political and civil means, the discontent that now overflows toward violent means. If these personalities refused to risk their political capital in what are justice demands, the annulment of the elections, a transitional government, and a new electoral process, there will be no remedy, and the horror will be inevitable. Mexico will not have statesmen who are willing to pay the price of their public image in exchange for being responsible for the struggle for democracy. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they will not exist tomorrow, men and women for whom politics is not synonymous with cynicism and a surrender disguised as "gradualism."

Mr. Zedillo:

Until today you were nothing more than a citizen to us. Today you are the official inheritor of a system without any vision at all, that sacrifices the country's future and national sovereignty. After today, in the unlikely case that you should try to make contact with us, I declare we will make public all communication from your government, while it lasts.

I am sure that in your rise to power, you have found men and women ready to sell themselves and compromise "under reasonable circumstances," which is nothing more than a rationalized surrender. The men and women who have confronted the state-party system since January 1, 1994, are perhaps of a kind that you have not come upon before.

We are men and women to whom "Country," "Democracy," "Liberty," and "Justice" should be, besides grand and noble words, a reality for the Mexican nation. To live without reaching that goal is a shame. To die fighting for it is an honor.

From today, I want you to know that I take with me the seven elements of the Baton of the Zapatista command, the two original volumes of a

1917 edition of the Diary of the Constitutional Congress from November of 1916 to February of 1917. As long as a new Constitution is not created, the one from 1917 is the true one. We will fight for it.

In historical terms, you and I are of little value; random luck has placed us one against the other. In you is personified all the reactionary, anti-democratic and contrary sentiments to the interests of the dispossessed. We personify hope: to have, at last, the opportunity to decide our destiny, that democracy, liberty, and justice be more than the subject of speeches and textbooks, and that they become a reality for everyone, but above all, for those who have nothing. You have a face, a name, a past, a present, and a future. In our name, we carry the curse of carrying weapons in our hands and the honor of rescuing a history of dignity; in our last name is our national and liberating vocation. We are barely candidates for the mass grave and immediate oblivion.

But in “we” there are thousands of Mexicans throughout the national territory, men and women, children and old people, who have recuperated, together with the word “dignity,” the conviction that human beings should struggle to be free when they are slaves, and that, once free, should struggle so that other human beings can join them.

We know that our refusal for a dialogue under the conditions you proposed will make a military solution your first choice in future decisions. We do not fear death nor the judgment of history.

If, in truth, the entire country is willing to submit its desires for liberty and democracy, then the clamor for our destruction will be gigantic, and you will not have to worry. High-ranking military commanders say they will annihilate us all in a few hours, days if the weather is terrible. Therefore, the stock market, foreign trade, and payments may suffer only for a few days of uncertainty.

If, on the other hand, as we believe, the people of Mexico wish to listen to our rebel cry for dignity, then millions of voices will unite with our demands for the three conditions for a dignified peace: democracy, liberty, and justice. You are no longer you. You are the personification of an unjust system, anti-democratic and criminal. We, the “illegals,” the “transgressors of the law,” the “professionals of violence,” the “nameless” ones, are, today and always, the hope of everyone.

This is all, Mr. Zedillo. I have spoken to you with sincerity in a way in which I don’t believe you have spoken to me.

I reiterate our demands for peace: *democracy, liberty, and justice for ALL Mexicans*. As long as these demands remain unresolved, there will be war in Mexico.

OK.

Health to you, and a parachute for the cliff that comes with your tomorrow.

From the Mountains of Southeast Mexico
 Zapatista National Liberation Army
 Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos
 Mexico, November 1994

Source: http://struggle.ws/mexico/ezln/marcos_zedillo_dec94.html;

Translation done by site with minor modifications by the author.

Popular Revolutionary Army (Ejército Popular Revolucionario), EPR

The Popular Revolutionary Army is another post-Cold War, Marxist–Leninist and Maoist guerrilla movement that operates in Guerrero, Veracruz, Oaxaca, and a few other states. The organization was founded in 1994 and proclaimed their support for the EZLN but did not engage in any politico-military actions until 1996. Adamantly anti-capitalist, the EPR aspires to establish a democratic-socialist republic in Mexico. Compared to the EZLN, the EPR has never developed the same popular or international support or established autonomous municipalities. Comparatively, the EPR has a smaller number of insurgents to the Zapatistas. While still active, the organization suffered several political setbacks and internal strife in the 2000s. Their revolutionary activities included the bombings of selected symbols of capitalism, corruption, and exploitation—for instance, the oil facilities of PEMEX, Mexico’s state-owned petroleum company. The origins of the EPR date back to the late 1960s and later iterations and confluences of past armed revolutionary organizations and insurgents. These groups include the *Unión del Pueblo* (the Union of People), active in the late 1960s and 1970s, and the Clandestine Revolutionary Workers’ Party–Union (PROCUP) of the People, founded in 1978 by Héctor Eladio Hernández. In the early 1980s, the PROCUP fused with remaining members of the Party of the Poor and formed the *Partido Revolucionario Obrero Clandestino Unión del Pueblo-Partido de los Pobres* (Procup-PdLP), until undergoing another metamorphosis and becoming the EPR in 1994. In 1996, roughly 60 guerrilla fighters came down from Guerrero’s mountains to read the “Aguas Blancas Manifiesto.” A year earlier, members of the South Mountain Range Farmer Organization (OCSS) were on their way to a political protest in the city of Atoyac, Guerrero, in two separate large trucks. Just before they reached Aguas Blancas, the group was intercepted by police and judicial agents. The authorities forced them to vacate the vehicles and lie face down on the road. According to the survivors’ harrowing testimonies, the police began shooting at them, killing 17 campesinos and injuring between 14 and 20 more. In the “Aguas Blancas Manifiesto,” the EPR draws a direct line between their organization and the history of guerrilla insurgencies, in particular Guerrero. While the Mexican military took measures to eliminate the EPR, the organization remains active, but mostly quiet, having never experienced its heyday. However,

since taking up arms, the EPR has been fraught with internal issues and further splits, most notably the formation of a splinter group in 1998 called the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente* (Insurgent People's Revolutionary Army). Today, both organizations remain active, but the extent of their support is difficult to gauge since they mostly remain underground.

Aguas Blancas Manifiesto

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO

TO THE PEOPLE OF GUERRERO

TO THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

Today, June 28, one year after the Aguas Blancas onslaught perpetrated by the repressive forces of the oligarchy and the anti-popular government against 17 defenseless peasants in the mountains of Guerrero, the circumstances remain unchanged: similar to that of 1967 and 1968 in which Commanders Lucio Cabañas Barrientos and Genaro Vázquez Rojas took up arms against exploitation and oppression. Repression, persecution, imprisonment, murders, massacres, torture, and disappearances remain government policy. The current unjust situation and the revolutionary spirit that galvanized us inspire the Mexican people's struggle.

In every corner of the Mexican homeland, new social fighters emerge who are unwilling to stay dormant and contemplative given the country's wrongful economic, social, and political situation. We refuse to stand by helplessly for repression and death to take our lives with impunity.

THERE IS NO RULE OF LAW IN MEXICO!

Our political constitution is a dead letter. Individual rights are violated daily, people are excluded from economic and political decisions, the federal executive holds most of the power, subordinating the other powers of the nation, and does not respect the sovereignty of the states. The prevailing state-party system appropriates the people's sovereign will, being an illegal and illegitimate government backed fundamentally by the military and police corps' arms.

In the face of institutionalized violence, armed struggle is a legitimate and essential device so that the people may restore their sovereign will and the rule of law. We have risen from the pain and grief of orphans and widows, the absence of missing loved ones, the agony of the tortured, the courage of the wrongly incarcerated, the uncertainty of the socially and politically persecuted, of the social situation that kills daily with repression, misery, hunger, and disease, as well as the abandonment of street children. We are a portion of the thousands of Mexicans who, through roads and mountains, towns and cities, are forging an awareness for

the need to build a new Mexico, by those who with their sweat irrigate Mexican and foreign fields, operate with their strength the machines in the factories, survive daily on the streets of major cities, who in the classroom receive and sow the seed of knowledge, who in any home suffer from the lack of bread and work, as well as from the forgotten towns.

Reason and justice are on our side. That is why, as Mexicans displeased with this national reality and since the government has left no other path, we decided to exchange our tools for the libertarian rifles that will fight and contribute to the overthrow of big capital and the anti-popular government. Today, spurred by unjust living and working conditions, we have decided to fight in an organized way to contribute to our country's revolutionary democratic transformation and—based on a conscious and voluntary attitude—we have created one more instrument of struggle that we call the Popular Revolutionary Army.

The Popular Revolutionary Army is made up of men and women from different exploited and oppressed sectors of the people who have realized the need to organize against the reactionary violence of exploiters and oppressors, who for decades have tried to drown in blood the struggle of the Mexican people for their legitimate objectives. This gives it an essential popular character because simple men and women from the village participate.

Our army also fights for the complete transformation of society through the armed revolution as another type of struggle that the people wage in defense of their interests and to achieve their goals. The EPR is one of the people's detachments that aspire to be a part of the libertarian and aggressive efforts that our people have fought against exploitation, injustice, and oppression throughout its history. Today, this is manifested in the struggle for the revolutionary-democratic transformation of the country, which the people are developing in the face of the repressive policies of a state that are supported and financed economically and militarily by imperialism, and does not spare resources to crush and massacre the Mexican people and preserve their subjugated.

We are the outcome of a determination to fight against the anti-popular government's demagogic policy, which in defense of the financial and business leadership, as well as of foreign interests in Mexico, has always refused to satisfy the people's demands for justice, freedom, and democracy. It has also demonstrated that it will never surrender to those demands, which is why we have decided to conquer them with the power of reason and arms.

Therefore, we plan to fight:

1. To overthrow the anti-popular, anti-democratic, demagogic, and illegitimate government at the service of great national and foreign capital, the forces that support it, and the establishment of a new government essentially different from the one that today holds power.

2. To restore popular sovereignty and fundamental human rights. We will achieve this objective, with the people's participation and the establishment of a popular democratic republic, exercising the legitimate right of the people to alter or modify their own government.
3. To solve the people's immediate demands and needs and carry out the necessary economic, political, and social changes.
4. To establish fair relations with the international community.
5. To punish those guilty of political oppression, repression, corruption, misery, hunger, and crimes against humanity against the people.

In the face of the escalating repression that is taking place throughout the country, the Popular Revolutionary Army calls on all democratic, popular, armed, and revolutionary organizations to be ready to respond from their trenches to any aggression against the people. Likewise, to form a single political force and join the struggle for freedom, democracy, justice, and a dignified life.

People of Mexico, let us raise the fighting flags of our brothers who have fallen by the government's repressive forces' bullets. Let us fight against oppression and injustice, against humiliation and dispossession, to defend the dignity of children, women, working-class brothers, peasants, indigenous people, impoverished urban residents, students, and restore legality and law, and popular sovereignty.

May the indignation and the profound sorrow not remain only in our memory and in our hearts, may the pain and the nostalgia for our disappeared, tortured, and massacred loved ones bolster the conviction with which we wield the libertarian weapon. May the pain become a fighting spirit to confront the anti-popular government and its repressive forces, may the blood spilled by Mexico's martyrs not go unpunished. No more massacres against defenseless masses, no more unpunished crimes.

Our struggle is righteous and legitimate, and the embodiment of the people's will to recover the country and build it free and sovereign.

We call on all the people to join in the revolutionary-democratic struggle for the nation's liberation from the shackles of big capital and the oppressive state. We call on all democratic organizations, trade unions, political, progressive, revolutionary armed organizations, social fighters, and progressive and democratic personalities to unify all forms of resistance in the revolutionary-democratic struggle to conquer justice, democracy, freedom, and a dignified life.

Join the Ranks of the Popular Revolutionary Army!
 Form People's Courts to Try the Enemies of the People!
 Form Armed Self-Defense Groups!
 In the Face of Repression and Impunity Exercise Popular Revolutionary Justice!

Respond to Government Violence with Organized Resistance!

With the People's Struggle, the EPR Will Triumph!

General Command of the People's Revolutionary Army CG-EPR

Aguas Blancas, Guerrero

June 28, 1996

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados,
CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=1117

10

NICARAGUA

Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional), FSLN

The Sandinistas is a guerrilla movement turned political party that led the Nicaraguan Revolution and overthrew Anastasio Somoza Debayle in 1979. Like other revolutionary movements of the era, the FSLN combined the words “national liberation” and “front” in their name and incorporated the last name of Nicaragua’s most popular national hero, Augusto César Sandino. Between the late 1920s and early 1930s, Sandino led a rebellion against economic exploitation and anti-democratic forces and the US occupation of Nicaragua by the Marine Corp. Sandino was killed in 1934 by General Anastasio Somoza García, then head of the National Guard. In 1936, Somoza García led a successful coup and was elected to the presidency that same year. From then on, the Somoza family effectively ruled Nicaragua with an iron fist, using the National Guard to clamp down on dissent and eliminate opponents. Two of Somoza García’s sons later became presidents, the last one being Anastasio “Tachito” Somoza Debayle. In the 1960s, the political atmosphere reached fever pitch. In Managua and León, universities became radical bastions and “powder kegs” where the intellectual precursors of the nascent FSLN found fertile ground. One such key figure was Carlos Fonseca Amador, a young Marxist who became one of the Sandinistas’ founding members. As well as his early political activities, much of Fonseca’s radicalization came from reading about Sandino and his struggle against the political class and elites of Nicaragua and the United States. Like other Latin American youths, he was intrigued by the events in Cuba. Through discussions with other radical circles, he met future members of the FSLN who also shared his vision of bringing about a revolution in Nicaragua. In 1961, Fonseca, Tomás Borges, and Silvio Mayora formed

the FSLN, firmly based on Sandino's ideas. In the 1960s, the FSLN began its first armed actions, but they were hampered by combatants' rudimentary training in guerrilla warfare. When Somoza Debayle assumed power in 1967 he further professionalized the National Guard with US assistance. The FSLN continued to carry out political campaigns in poor neighborhoods and build up its mass base. However, the growth in dissent propelled Somoza Debayle to unleash the National Guard, resulting in several casualties. Despite this and inner-group problems, the Sandinistas remained afloat. In 1969, it released a lengthy document titled "The Historical Program of the FSLN," which mirrored other Latin American revolutionary movements' revolutionary programs but also spoke directly to the Nicaraguan case. The document consisted of numerous pledges which—despite having been penned ten years before the revolution's triumph—the Sandinistas kept, especially in the realm of education. In 1976, Fonseca wrote a short document titled "What is a Sandinista?" The document is simple and meant to be read and understood by any Nicaraguan. In essence, through this list of characteristics, Fonseca is merely explaining that everyone who is for social justice, freedom, and believes that a better world is possible is, in fact, a Sandinista at heart. That same year, Fonseca perished and never got to see the triumph of the revolution in 1979.

The Historical Program of the FSLN (excerpt)

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has emerged out of the needs of the Nicaraguan people to have a "Vanguard Organization" capable of achieving, through a frontal struggle against its enemies, the seizure of political power and the establishment of a social system that will eliminate the exploitation and misery that our people have suffered in the past.

The FSLN is a political-military organization whose strategic objective is the seizure of political power through the destruction of the military and bureaucratic apparatus of the dictatorship, and the establishment of a revolutionary government based on a worker-peasant alliance and the participation of all the anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic patriotic forces in the country.

The people of Nicaragua are suffering from the subjugation of a reactionary and fascist cabal, imposed by US imperialism since 1932, when Anastasio Somoza García was appointed Chief Director of the so-called National Guard (GN).

The Somoza gang has reduced Nicaragua to the status of a neo-colony exploited by the US monopolies and the oligarchy in the country.

The current regime is politically unpopular and illegal. Its recognition and support by the Americans is irrefutable proof of foreign interference in Nicaragua's affairs.

The FSLN has seriously and responsibly analyzed the national reality and has decided to confront the dictatorship with arms in hand, since we have come to

the conclusion that the triumph of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, and the overthrow of the regime that is the enemy of the people, will emerge as a consequence of the development of a hard and prolonged people's war.

Whatever the maneuvers and means deployed by US imperialism, the Somoza dictatorship is condemned to total failure in the face of the impetuous advance and development of the popular forces led by the FSLN.

Faced with this historic situation, the FSLN has drawn up this political program with the intention of strengthening and developing our organization, encouraging and stimulating the people of Nicaragua to march forward, determined to fight until the dictatorship is overthrown and to resist the intervention of US imperialism in order to build a free, prosperous, and revolutionary country.

A Revolutionary Government

The Sandinista People's Revolution will establish a revolutionary government that will dismantle the reactionary structure created by electoral farces and military coups. The people's power will forge a Nicaragua without exploitation, without oppression, without backwardness; a free, progressive, and independent homeland.

The revolutionary government will dictate the following measures:

- It will give the revolutionary power a structure that allows the full participation of all the people, both at the national level and at the local level (departmental, municipal, district).
- It will guarantee all citizens the full exercising of all individual liberties and respect for human rights.
- It shall guarantee freedom of thought, leading primarily to the vigorous dissemination of popular rights and patriotic rights.
- It will guarantee the freedom to organize the worker's union movement in the city and in the countryside, the freedom to organize peasant, youth, student, women's, cultural, and sports groups, etc.
- It will guarantee the right of Nicaraguan immigrants and exiles to return to their homeland.
- It will guarantee asylum to citizens of other countries who are persecuted for participating in the revolutionary struggle.
- It will severely punish the executioners guilty of persecuting, informing on, violating, torturing, or murdering the revolutionaries and the people.
- Individuals who hold high public office as a result of electoral farces and military coups will be deprived of their political rights.

The revolutionary government will dictate the following measures of an economic nature:

- It will expropriate the large estates, factories, businesses, buildings, means of transportation, and other goods usurped by the Somoza family and accumulated through the embezzlement and plundering of the nation's wealth.
- It will expropriate the large estates, factories, companies, means of transport and other assets usurped by politicians, the military, and every kind of accomplice who has taken advantage of a corrupt administration under the current regime.
- It will nationalize the assets of all foreign companies, which are dedicated to the exploitation of mineral, forest, maritime, and other resources.
- [...]
- It will protect small and medium-sized owners (producers, traders) with restrictions on the abuses caused by the exploitation of workers.
- The state will have control over foreign trade in order to diversify it and make it independent
- It will rigorously restrict the importation of luxury goods.
- It will plan the national economy, putting an end to the anarchy characteristic of the capitalist system of production. An important part of this planning will be devoted to the industrialization and electrification of the country.

Agrarian Revolution

The Sandinista Popular Revolution will design an agrarian policy that carries out authentic agrarian reform that immediately achieves the massive redistribution of land, liquidating the landowners' usurpation for the benefit of the workers (small producers) who work the land.

- It will expropriate and liquidate the capitalist and feudal large estates.
- It will give the land to the peasants free of charge in accordance with the principle that the land should belong to the one who works it.
- It will carry out an agricultural development plan geared toward diversifying and increasing the productivity of this sector.
- It will guarantee the peasants the following rights:
 - Timely and adequate agricultural credit.
 - Commercialization (market assurance for their products).
 - Technical assistance.
- It will protect the patriotic owners of lands that collaborate with the guerrilla, through the payment of their lands that exceed what has been established by the revolutionary government.
- It will stimulate and encourage the peasants to organize themselves into cooperatives, so that they themselves can take their own destiny into their hands and participate directly in the development of the country.
- It will abolish the debts contracted by the peasantry with the landowner and all types of usurers.
- [...]

Revolution in Culture and Education

The Sandinista People's Revolution will lay the foundation for the development of national culture, popular education, and university reform.

- It will launch a massive campaign to immediately eradicate "illiteracy."
 - It will develop national culture and extirpate neo-colonial influences in our culture.
 - It will rescue from the oblivion progressive intellectuals and their works that have emerged throughout our history from being kept in the dark by unpopular regimes.
 - It will attend to the development and progress of education at different levels (primary, intermediate, technical, university, etc.); education will be free at all levels and obligatory at some.
 - It will grant scholarships to students of different levels with limited economic resources. Scholarships will include: housing, food, clothing, books, and transportation.
 - It will forge more and better teachers, with the scientific knowledge demanded by the present time, who can meet the needs of our entire student population.
 - It will nationalize private educational centers immorally converted into industries by merchants who hypocritically invoke religious principles.
- [...]

Labor Legislation and Social Security

The Sandinista People's Revolution will eliminate the living and working conditions suffered by the working class under brutal exploitation in favor of labor and social welfare legislation.

- It will promote a Labor Code that will regulate, among other things, the following rights:
 - Promote the adoption of the principle of "he who does not work does not eat," with the logical exception of those who due to age (children, the elderly), medical reasons or other issues are not in a position to participate in the production process.
 - Strict adherence to the eight-hour working day.
 - The worker's income (wages and other benefits) must be sufficient to meet their daily needs.
 - Respect for the worker's dignity by prohibiting and punishing unfair treatment of the worker in the performance of his or her work.
 - Abolish unjustified dismissals.
 - Obligation to pay wages within the legal time limit.
 - Right of all workers to periodic holidays.

- It will eliminate the scourge of unemployment.
 - It will expand its attention to social security for all workers and public employees in the country. The assistance will include cases of illness, physical disability, and retirement.
 - It will provide free medical assistance to the entire population. It will install clinics and hospitals throughout the nation.
 - It will undertake massive campaigns to eradicate endemic diseases and prevent epidemics.
 - It will carry out the Urban Reform, which will provide each family with proper housing, ending the usurious speculation of urban space (urbanization, rental houses, etc.) that exploits the need of working families in the city to have an adequate roof over their heads.
 - It will start and develop the construction of adequate housing for the peasant population.
 - It will reduce tariffs on water, electricity, sewage, landscaping; it will implement programs to extend all these services to the entire urban and rural population.
 - It will promote the practice of sports in all classes and categories.
- [...]

Administrative Honesty

- The Sandinista People's Revolution will extirpate government corruption and establish strict administrative integrity.
 - It will abolish the criminal industry of vice (prostitution, gambling, drug dealing, etc.) that exploits the privileged sector of the National Government and foreign parasites.
 - Strict control of tax collection will be established to prevent government officials from making a profit, which will put an end to the practices of official departments in the current regime.
 - It will put an end to the arbitrary business of the members of the National Government who dispossess the population by collecting local taxes.
- [...]

- It will severely punish those who commit crimes against administrative honesty (embezzlement, smuggling, exploitation of vices, etc.), which will be even more severe in the case of those who are members of the revolutionary movement.

Reincorporation of the Atlantic Coast

The Sandinista People's Revolution will implement a special plan in favor of the Atlantic Coast, which is in a state of extreme neglect, to integrate it into the life of the nation.

- It will put an end to the unjust exploitation that the Atlantic Coast has suffered throughout its history by foreign monopolies, particularly by US imperialism.
- It will recondition appropriate land in the area for the development of agriculture and cattle-raising.
- It will take advantage of favorable conditions to boost the development of the fishing and forestry industry.
- It will promote the development of local cultural values in the region, based on the original elements of its historical tradition.
- It will end the hateful discrimination against the indigenous Miskitos, Sumos, Zambos, and Blacks of that region.

Emancipation of Women

The Sandinista People's Revolution will abolish the heinous discrimination that women have suffered in relation to men. It will establish economic, political, and cultural equality between women and men.

- It will give special attention to mother and child.
- It will eliminate prostitution and other social ills, thereby raising the dignity of women.
- It will put an end to the system of servitude suffered by women, which is reflected in the tragedy of the abandoned working mother.
- It will establish the right to equal protection under the revolutionary institutions for children born out of wedlock.
- It will establish children's nurseries for the care and attention of working women's children.
- It will establish two months of maternity leave before and after childbirth for working women.
- It will raise the political, cultural, and vocational level of women, through their participation in the revolutionary process.

Respect for Religious Beliefs

- The Sandinista People's Revolution will guarantee the faith-based population the freedom to profess any religion.
- It will respect the right of citizens to profess and practice any religious belief.
- It will support the work of priests and other religious preachers who defend the working people.

Independent Foreign Policy

The Sandinista People's Revolution will eliminate the foreign policy of submission to the US empire and establish a patriotic foreign policy of absolute national independence and genuine universal peace.

- It will put an end to Yankee interference in Nicaragua's internal problems and will practice a policy of mutual respect and fraternal collaboration between the people of other countries.
- It will expel the US military mission, the so-called peace corps (spies disguised as technicians), and similar military and political elements, which constitute a flagrant intervention in the country.
- It will accept economic and technical aid from any country, as long as it does not involve political commitments.
- It will promote, together with the other peoples of the world, a campaign for genuine universal peace.
- It will disregard any treaty signed with any foreign power that damages national sovereignty.

Popular Unity in Central America

The Sandinista Popular Revolution for the true union of the Central American peoples in one country:

- Will support a true unity with the peoples in Central America. This unity will be aimed at coordinating efforts to achieve National Liberation and establish a new social system without imperialist domination or national treachery.
- It will liquidate the so-called integration that aims to multiply the subjugation of Central America to the North American monopolies and the local reactionary forces.

Solidarity Among the Peoples

The Sandinista People's Revolution will put an end to the exploitation of the national territory as a base for US aggression against other people and will put into practice a militant solidarity with our brothers fighting for their liberation.

- It will actively support the struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America against new and old colonialism and against the common enemy: US imperialism.
- It will support the struggle of Black people, and all the people of the United States, for genuine democracy and equal rights.
- It will support the struggle of all people against the installation of US military bases in foreign countries.

People's Patriotic Army

The Sandinista People's Revolution will abolish the enemy's armed force called the National Guard and create a People's Revolutionary and Patriotic Army.

- It will abolish the National Guard, an enemy force of the people created by the US occupation forces in 1927 for the purpose of persecuting, torturing, and murdering the Sandinista patriots.
- The new People's Army will be open to professional soldiers from the old army who have adhered to the following code of conduct:
 - Who have supported guerrilla fighting.
 - Who have not participated in the murder, dispossession, torture, and persecution of the people and revolutionary militants.
 - Who have risen up against the despotic and dynastic Somoza regime.
- It will strengthen the new people's army by raising its fighting capacity and tactical and technical skills.
- It will instill in the consciences of the People's Army the principle of relying on their own strength in the performance of their duties and carrying out all their creative activity.
- It should deepen the revolutionary ideals of the People's Army in order to strengthen the patriotic spirit and the firm conviction to fight to victory by overcoming obstacles and rectifying mistakes.
- It will ensure that discipline is established in the People's Army and that close ties are established between the soldiers and the people.
- It will establish compulsory military service and will arm the students, workers and peasants who, organized into people's militias, can defend the rights they had won in the face of the inevitable onslaught of the reactionary forces of the country and US imperialists.

Veneration for Our Martyrs

The Sandinista People's Revolution will hold eternal gratitude and veneration for the martyrs of our country and will continue the shining example of heroism and generosity bequeathed by them.

- It will educate the new generations in perpetual gratitude and veneration for those who have fallen in the struggle to make Nicaragua a free nation.
- It will establish a high school to educate the children of the martyrs of our people.
- It will instill in all the people the everlasting example of our martyrs, defending the revolutionary ideal, UNTIL VICTORY!

Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN)
1969

Source: http://ihncahis.uca.edu.ni/mc/uploads/media/Carlos_Fonseca_RM_OT_Que_es_un_Sandinista_1980.pdf

What is a Sandinista? (excerpt)

The Sandinista revolutionary must avoid the simple “revolutionary phrase”; we have to accompany this with a sincere identification with the revolutionary principles.

The Sandinista knows how to link revolutionary theory with praxis, close ties with the popular masses, the assimilation of the experience that develops from the practice of our fighting force.

The Sandinista must have a genuine critical spirit since such a constructive spirit gives greater consistency to unity and contributes to its strengthening and continuity, understanding that a misunderstood criticism that exposes the unity loses its revolutionary meaning and acquires a reactionary character.

A Sandinista possesses, above all, revolutionary modesty. This is a quality that is more valuable than it may seem at first glance. Modesty facilitates, perhaps in many cases decisively, collective life, the activity of a group of people.

The collective conscience, the idea that it is the strength of a group of men that makes up the vanguard, is essential to the militant spirit. This collectivist spirit, which is nurtured by modesty, must become a passion in the revolutionary militant.

The revolutionary never forgets the title that Sandinista combatants hold: BROTHER. This is not opposed to the usage of energy and tenacity, so essential in this challenging clandestine and guerrilla life. It is about being energetic and rigorous without neglecting respect, honesty, and brotherhood.

The Sandinista revolutionary cannot only expect to educate the popular masses, but also learn and know how to be their disciple. May all your steps bear the mark of the people’s character.

The Sandinista militant, wherever they are, must be linked to some extent with the life of the working people.

The Sandinista never falls into a rivalry with his comrades over work, but rather tries to eliminate the different doses of vanity that we all carry.

The Sandinista knows that difficult moments arise in the course of militants’ lives, and it is precisely at such difficult moments that fraternity needs to be highlighted.

The Sandinista knows that ideological correction is worth nothing without consistent, practical behavior. But positive practical behavior is insufficient if it is not accompanied by a revolutionary ideological definition.

The Sandinista knows that only intense ties with the workers contribute to their actual political education.

The Sandinista practices a policy of patience and serenity, preventing it from becoming a policy of indulgence. Be patient without being indulgent, without overlooking the various violations of principles.

Some issues are personally disturbing, but we must subordinate everything to the interests of the Sandinista cause, the subjugated people of Nicaragua, and the exploited and oppressed.

The Sandinista knows how to assist their companions to recognize their faults, their weaknesses. But they must understand that a Sandinista is not going to be considerate because of tactics, for mere convenience, but because revolutionary principles demand it.

The Sandinista knows how to link people's opinions to their practices and how what they say corresponds with what they have done. Demonstrating perfectionism on paper is easy, displaying it in practice is difficult.

The Sandinista feels Sandinista, popular, and proletarian pride in the face of the achievements reached.

They apply constructive, fraternal, responsible criticism in the face of creeping weaknesses.

A Sandinista is not extreme in either pessimism or optimism.

A revolutionary knows that wherever they are, they will be performing their duty as long as they fight for humanity.

Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)

Carlos Fonseca

January 1, 1975

Source: http://memoriacentroamericana.ihnca.edu.ni/index.php?id=251&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=2357&cHash=f209c510d8ad39f93f994873aceec39a

11

PERU

National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), ELN

From 1959 and until the early 1960s, the Peruvian Trotskyist and labor organizer Hugo Blanco had been organizing hundreds of thousands of peasants and carrying out land invasions in the valleys near the city of Cuzco. Blanco's success captured attention from different leftist tendencies. Parallel to organized peasant movements, the Peruvian Left was undergoing structural reforms and ideological shifts that triggered militants' ire. Likewise, the political convulsions caused by the Cuban Revolution and the consequences of the Sino-Soviet split exacerbated the fissures between different leftist persuasions. Hoping to capitalize on the enthusiasm brought on by the Cuban Revolution and the headway made by organized peasant movements, groups of dissidents advocated for armed struggle as a possible vehicle to bring about a socialist revolution. Unable to persuade a substantial part of the Peruvian Left, they broke away from their original parties and organizations. In 1962, the National Liberation Army and the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) took up arms against the Peruvian state. The ELN was founded by Héctor Béjar, a former member of the Communist Party. Like many other militants, he had grown disillusioned with the Party and the Left's inability to foster effective revolutionary action. Much like the MIR, which the ELN distrusted, it tried to capitalize on peasant mobilizations. While workers figured importantly in the ELN's vision for the revolution, the peasant movement appeared more advanced and organized. Moreover, given the ELN's close adherence to the Cuban model and foco theory, the countryside seemed the most appropriate arena to establish fronts. The MIR was founded by Luis de la Puente Uceda, a former member of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). De la Puente and other dissidents broke away from the APRA for political and ideological differences and

created APRA *Rebelde* in 1959, which later transformed into the MIR. In the hopes of bolstering their mass base, de la Fuente met with Blanco in 1962, but the meeting did not result in an alliance, mainly because of ideological differences. Blanco and his cadre of peasants also distrusted the guerrillas. Ultimately, Blanco's movement would collapse when the Peruvian government intensified military actions against militants. In 1963, the MIR issued the "Manifiesto of Chiclayo," which emphasized agrarian reform's centrality in its political program. But by 1965, the guerrillas' sphere of influence had shrunk dramatically as a result of state repression. Moreover, the guerrillas lost significant peasant support after President Fernando Belaúnde implemented piecemeal agrarian reforms, effectively diminishing the armed struggle's attractiveness. While in prison (1966–1970), Béjar wrote what became *Peru 1965: Notes on the Guerrilla Experience* (published in 1969), a memoir-style reflection of his time in the armed struggle. Béjar offers a self-critique of the ELN's mistakes and explains the impact the guerrillas of the 1960s had on Peru's political culture. The following is an excerpt.

Peru 1965: Notes on the Guerrilla Experience (excerpt)

Foreword

These pages are incomplete. They reflect a moment of a man's ongoing reflection and a stage in the examination of events left in the dark because of their protagonists' deaths. They are written based on the belief that it is possible and necessary to continue the revolutionary guerrilla struggle in Latin America and Peru.

The reader will find little praise for the guerrillas. It is always easy to collect adjectives, especially from noncombatants in the struggle. However, the author considers that it is preferable to continue a task and explain why the first attempts failed. Absolute adherence to a cause does not exclude, but obligates a discussion on how to serve it better.

In Peru's case, a careful, dispassionate analysis of the experience of 1965 has yet to be done, about which so much has been written, yet so little is known. These pages are an attempt to an open discussion and will be corrected and completed in the future.

The reader must understand that this book has been written in prison, with the limitations that the prisoner situation imposes. Time and again, his drafts were protected from the jailers, and as a result, hastily written, some things might appear messy.

We have purposely omitted any reference to the insurrectionary outbreak of Lieutenant Francisco Vallejo in Jauja, in July 1962, and to the frustrated ELN guerrilla incursion into Madre de Dios in May 1963, which precede the guerrilla insurrection of 1965 and are linked to it historically. In the first case, we lacked the necessary data. In the second, there are many facts and circumstances that are inappropriate at the time to reveal.

However, there remains the satisfaction that the task has begun, and the promise to continue and complete it.

The Author

Chapter II

The Social Framework

[...]

The Radicalization of the Petty Bourgeoisie

To these factors we can add another one that is decisive in terms of the political history of recent years and even the history of the revolution in Peru: the growth of the petty bourgeoisie.

At first glance, in 20th century Peru we see a powerful oligarchy, concentrating power at the top of the system in partnership with foreign companies. At the base, a peasant majority, illiterate and miserable, excluded from any decision-making power, and an exploited agricultural proletariat with all of its rights deprived. Between both poles is the factory and mining proletariat, the artisan, and the rich social range that we call the "middle class." In truth, as we have seen previously, the latter sector is, in terms of income, "standard" of life, education, and technical capacity, far above the factory and artisan proletariat. At its highest strata, it comes to rub shoulders with the ruling class, and it reaches them through the exercise of the profession, politics, or friendly and family relationships.

This phenomenon is not new to our country, but it is more notable than in others due to the existence of large sectors that do not participate in national life.

An abyss separates the "middle class" from the peasantry and the agricultural proletariat, making it, in fact, a privileged sector. A privileged sector that since 1930 has fought for power and waved radical slogans to attract the support of the backward strata, but has not hesitated to betray them when it has been able to reach rewarding understandings with the ruling class.

From 1956 on, we see that the middle class's growth equals that of the proletariat, as a consequence of an urbanization phenomenon and tremendous social mobilization over recent years.

[...]

In addition to the growth of recent years, the petty bourgeoisie shows great social mobility. It is accessed by many "newcomers" from the provinces or the children of worker, artisan, or peasant parents. The access channel is always education, as it will be for the higher social strata. Therefore, at the same time as education, the petty bourgeoisie grows, the university is democratized, and its students' social level is lowered every year. And as this process takes place amid struggles, contradictions, and social clashes, the university is radicalized and becomes the breeding ground for Marxist ideas, especially from 1956...

Simultaneously, commercial and bank employees managed to build strong union organizations that, for several years, were at the forefront of social struggles in the capital.

The Student Body

[...]

The growth was even more remarkable in the universities. From the 34 normal schools and nine universities in 1960, there were 86 normal schools and 24 universities. And the increasing pace has continued in subsequent years: in 1968, the number of students enrolled at all levels of education reached 3,235,700, a quarter of the total population. There are 96,000 university students. In 1970, 111,000 high school graduates will knock on the doors of the universities.

Guided by traditional conceptions and reasons of prestige, students are directed preferably toward the liberal professions, which are the ones that offer the fewest opportunities in a country with an excess of people of letters and lawyers. When they leave the university, few obtain well-paying jobs, and a large percentage have to dedicate themselves to other activities.

Before they reach the university, they must go through a challenging selection process in which the poorest are eliminated. Of those who manage to finish their secondary education, an increasingly high percentage is not accepted by higher education because it does not have enough capacity to receive so many applicants.

[...]

The situation of the student body has experienced a turnaround. In the early years of this century, the children of a "good family" educated in the universities had their future assured in politics, liberal professions, and business. On the contrary, in recent decades, a sense of insecurity and procrastination preys upon them, propelling them to increasingly radical and violent actions. There is very little that the children of impoverished employees or workers can expect from the system. While it is true that a small minority manages to get promotions, there is always a relegated majority willing to listen to revolutionary doctrine.

Chapter III

The Political Causes

The Cuban Revolution and the XX Congress

The impact caused by the Cuban Revolution was very significant, and it was not long before that reflected itself in political organizations. In APRA, it caused a group of young people to break and form the Committee for the Defense of *Aprista* Principles and Internal Democracy. Later they formed APRA Rebelde, followed by the MIR headed by Luis de la Puente Uceda.

[...]

Indeed, an entire ideological, theoretical, and practical scaffolding was automatically up for discussion. The Stalin cult had been shaken from its foundations, and with it the infallibility of the Party of the Soviet Union. The topics that were starting to be debated pertained to the validity of the CPSU's positions, the immediacy or remoteness of the revolution, the role of social classes in it, the stages of the revolution, as well as the Party's role.

In general, Cuban socialism raised the problems of the revolution for the order of the day and not for a more or less distant tomorrow. It gave a precise purpose to all the revolutionaries in Latin America and gave some support to the embryonic "heresies." Without proclaiming it, we all understood in those years that a new revolutionary stage had begun and that, if it were to take place, the revolution would not necessarily develop according to the models we had in mind.

The "New Left"

The fundamental effect of the XX Congress, the changes in the international communist movement, the Cuban Revolution, the peasant struggles, and the entire social framework described above was to generate various movements of discrepancy or at least differences with the Left's political leaderships, what many later called the "New Left."

Who made up this heterogeneous "New Left"? It is risky to say since some of those who make it up would deny it. But according to what has happened in recent years, we could list its components in the following way:

- a. APRA dissenters who, after a complicated internal struggle, gave birth to the MIR and the *Vanguardia Revolucionaria*;
- b. dissenters of the Communist Party who, after a similar process, went to support, some the FIR [Revolutionary Left Front] and the ELN, and others the Maoist tendencies that appeared at a later date;
- c. the enormous amount of young people, mainly university students, who without belonging to these organizations identified, in one way or another, with them;
- d. some Trotskyists like Hugo Blanco, whose activity with the peasantry clearly differentiated them from "traditional," theorizing, and dogmatic Trotskyism.

Many questions about strategy and tactics were not expressly raised. To a large extent, the "New Left" theoretically continued to uphold "traditional" positions: the characterization of the country, its ruling classes, and the necessary stages for the revolution. Even today, we find in the documents of some insurrectional organizations the same typification of the regime articulated by the Communist Party. What was new were the methods of struggle that were advocated, and the general attitude toward oligarchic power.

How to summarize the points of view of the “new left?” It is a difficult task, since it was presented in an extremely diffuse way, with half-spoken and disjointed statements. Until now, one could not find a solid theoretical approach in Peru that truly encompasses and summarizes everything that the “New Left” thinks. More than a theoretical platform, it outlined, at that time, an attitude.

Let’s try to identify some of the points that we consider to be common:

First of all, their attitude toward the peasantry. Guided by the Chinese and Cuban examples, all these tendencies coincide in granting the peasantry a critical role in the first phase of the revolution and consequently direct its fundamental activity. Thus, Luis de la Puente advised the community of Chepén and others for a long time, Hugo Blanco participated in the union organization of the valleys of La Convention and Lares, and other students took part in different forms of peasant unionization.

The truth is that the “traditional” political parties, especially the communists, had also influenced the advice and organization of peasant unions, but had not fully incorporated the movement into their membership. There was, therefore, a significant difference between those who tried to influence the peasant movement “from the outside” and those who joined to guide it “from the inside.”

Second, the denial of any peaceful possibility to achieve power. Except for the socialists, no organism of the Marxist left has ever raised such a possibility in Peru. But dissenters wanted the methods to fit the ultimate goal of seizing power through violence.

Third, the repudiation of the “traditional” *aprista* and Communist parties whose past they attacked. All the new groups had in common a denial of something. Rather than affirming, they were born denying. A certain lack of analysis was also apparent in this field, a consequence of a lack of understanding of the past.

Particularly concerning the Communist Party, few or none of the dissenters could display a real baggage of knowledge about the Party’s history and the national and international circumstances in which it had to operate and that could explain the mistakes in its policy.

This, which at first glance may seem like an unimportant observation, actually has a reason for being. Only by exhaustively analyzing the history of the Party and relating it to the history of the international communist movement can the root of the mistakes made be found because the Party’s national politics always reflected the line of the international communist movement. Remaining only in the vague and global rejection of opportunism, the Communist Party’s dissenters and those who repeated its arguments refused to deepen the analysis.

The same can be said about the Trotskyists. Stalinism is indeed the source of the deformations of the communist movement, its errors and frustrations. But is he enough to explain everything? Should we also look at its roots to demonstrate

why it emerged and triumphed in the struggle for the leadership of Bolshevism? Why direct criticism only at Stalinism and not also at Trotskyism, whose realization is not uncommon in our country? In reality, Trotskyist leaders to a great extent had participated in the concepts and methods classified as “traditional.”

Fourth, the “**New Left**” claimed action as a promoter of the development of popular consciousness. Armed or not, individual or massive, action was, in its eyes, the only thing that could incite revolution and unify revolutionaries.

This is the most important aspect and the one that ultimately defines the struggle of these years. The one that distinguishes what is really new from what is not. From this principle, a particular consequence can be demanded between words and deeds, theory and practice, speeches and behavior.

[...]

However, the “New Left” carried several negative characteristics within it, many of which later contributed to heavy defeats. Without delving into these characteristics, it is impossible to explain the history of recent years coherently.

Born from the impoverished and neglected sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, the “New Left” was not always consistent with the principles it proclaimed: more than concrete facts, it liked gesture and declaration. It claimed the need to go to the countryside to initiate the revolution, but it remained in the city, with the exceptions mentioned. The “New Left” advocated the guerrilla struggle as the only revolutionary solution for the situation in the country, but only a minority of it was part of the guerrillas when they began. It claimed to be unitary, but remained fragmented into multiple groups that violently fought each other; it called out the Communist Party for being guided by political approaches alien to the reality of the country, but the New Left made no systematic effort to study the country’s reality. It could be said that the New Left knew little about that reality. Also, it repudiated Stalinism but applied those methods in its internal struggles.

In general, the “New Left” lacked a coherent ideological approach and an intimate knowledge of the Peruvian reality, which could only result from the concurrence of two factors: the theoretical study of the Peruvian economy and society’s activity within the masses.

The deep divisions of the Left have, in Peru, old roots. Since the death of José Carlos Mariátegui, a broad-minded and creative Marxist, the Communist Party has been under the leadership of Eudocio Ravines and his sycophants for many years. Ravines is possibly the vilest traitor in Latin America, and had time while he was in charge of the CP’s leadership to create a school characterized by its political liquidation methods that did not recognize any principle and any legality. Many valuable revolutionaries were politically liquidated in this process and the fight against Ravines fills a good number of years in the PCP’s history.

The accusations, the expulsions without evidence, the intolerance toward the dissenting party, the dogmatism, the lack of imagination and audacity, the distrust

of the masses, the fear of thinking on their own, were part of that degenerate model of Stalinism that Ravines implanted in Peru.

[...]

The "Invasions" of 1963–64

The capture of Hugo Blanco did not mean the end of the peasant movement since, as we saw before, La Convención was only one center of insurgent activity.

For almost seven years, the architect Fernando Belaúnde had traveled the nation, sowing agrarian reform promises to collect votes. It was logical that the peasants waited for the fulfillment of his pledges once he won the Presidency after the army-sponsored elections...

In reality, his deceitfulness made him play a dangerous game. While he promised the masses an agrarian reform vague enough to energize their enthusiasm and get them to believe in what they wanted, the oligarchy specifically proposed a limited reform to most conflictive sectors, and made the most productive *latifundias* untouchable, which are also the most powerful in the country. In front of the masses, he liked to cast himself as an arsonist. Before the oligarchy, with which he had long-standing political and family ties, he appeared as someone who'd hold a grudge if he wasn't elected.

In mid-1963, the land occupations began to spread. What happened? It was clear that the architect's [Belaúnde's] rise to power had created confidence in the masses that, in regaining their lands, they would not be repressed.

In October of the same year, the "invasions" multiplied in the center and spread to the entire southern part of the country. It is estimated at no less than 300,000 peasants of different tenure status, but mainly community members, farm settlers, and landless workers were the protagonists.

This great wave of land invasions had their own characteristics. All of them revealed the peasant struggle was reaching a new level and therefore alarmed the "upper classes."

In the earlier stages, peasants were content to occupy uncultivated areas peacefully, preferably natural pastures, and they always backed their actions with incontestable legal arguments. They were not only peaceful but also legalistic: the violence came strictly from the enemy's camp.

The slogan "Land or Death" found expression for the first time throughout the entire Sierra.

[...]

The growing relationship between the city and country contributed to many of these land occupations finding support from students, army graduates, provincial lawyers, self-interested individuals, etc. It was a move-

ment born out of the deepest desires for the vindication of the masses, but not entirely spontaneous. There was a direction, but it was multiple and unlocatable.

Organically, the Left was not present in this alluvial movement. In January 1963, it had been repressed, and almost all of its leaders were in jail. Isolated elements remained, unrelated to their directions, although active.

Because it was unable to link with the peasantry in a timely fashion, it was unable to foresee this gigantic mobilization, nor could it defend the peasantry from the massacres that followed.

At the end of December 1963, Government Minister Oscar Trelles was censored by the right-wing opposition (APRA-UNO). He was replaced by a new “tough” minister, the one who authorized the army and the police to bring order.

The wave was stopped by a bloodbath.

Constrained by its lack of audacity, the Left had isolated itself on its own accord from the rise of the people and consequently was unable to use it to link the peasants’ demands with the objectives of the revolution. As in 1962, the Left missed a revolutionary opportunity. It was able to join the peasantry in 1961–62 and had the means to do so, but it lacked initiative and imagination. In 1963–64 it was already too late to try.

1965

Source: www.marxists.org/espanol/tematica/guerrilla/peru/bejar/1965.htm

The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso)

In 1964, in the context of the Sino-Soviet split, the Red Flag Maoist faction split from the Peruvian Communist Party. Among its leaders was Abimael Guzmán, a philosophy professor at the San Cristóbal de Huamanga National University in the Andean region of Ayacucho. Due to ideological differences, Guzmán formed the Sendero Luminoso (PCP-SL) to carry out a socialist revolution that would advance from the countryside, create liberation zones, and encircle the city, based on the Maoist strategy of prolonged people’s war. Although the Shining Path had only 50 militants in 1977, it was gaining influence among students and professors at several universities, such as the University of Huamanga in Ayacucho and the University of San Marcos in Lima, and gradually penetrated the rural communities of the Andes, periodically building up support by eliminating local oppressors. Guzmán, later known as Chairman Gonzalo, exercised absolute control over the organization. Through a combination of philosophical language and mystical symbolism, he implanted the idea that he had exceptional powers and that the “Gonzalo Thought” was the “fourth sword of Marxism” (after Marx, Lenin, and Mao Tsetung). The Shining Path made its

public appearance on May 17, 1980, just before the presidential elections, by burning the ballot boxes in the town of Chuschi. At the end of that year, the group hung seven dogs from traffic lights in the capital city of Lima. The organization perpetrated acts of armed propaganda, sabotage, terrorism, and attacks on the security forces, for which the Peruvian government carried out a dirty war, mainly in the department of Ayacucho. In 1990, the Shining Path announced that the armed struggle had reached a “strategic balance” and, hence, the likelihood of victory, which led to several attacks in Lima’s metropolitan. However, intelligence services arrested Guzmán and the Sendero Luminoso staff in 1992, causing the organization, which had 20,000 supporters and almost 3,000 combatants, to disintegrate. The first document, titled “We are the Initiators,” was issued a month before the Shining Path initiated the People’s War by seizing and burning the ballot boxes in Chuschi. The text employs metaphors and speaks in millenarian cadences, a style that Guzmán utilized with frequency. The document also places the People’s War in Peru within the broader context of global revolution. Moreover, the document emphasizes the centrality of the Party in the revolutionary process, as well as Maoism: two elements that Guzmán cannily exploited to forge his cult of personality. The second document is the transcript of an exclusive interview that President Gonzalo gave to *El Diario* in 1988, four years before his capture. The leader of the Shining Path rarely gave interviews given the risks involved, preferring instead to speak through his political writings. For the first time, many were able to hear from the organization’s primary ideological leader directly rather than through his texts.

We Are the Initiators (excerpt)

We are the initiators, and we should keep this fact profoundly in our spirits. This meeting is historic.

Comrades, we will pass into history as the initiators. For some time now, the Party has been writing this history on indestructible pages.

We are the initiators. This First Military School of the Party is both a seal and an opening; it concludes and opens. It ends the time of peace and inaugurates the period of war. Comrades, Comrades, we have finished our tasks with unarmed hands, our armed word begins today: Let us uplift the masses and peasants under the unfading flags of Marxism–Leninism and Mao Tse-tung Thought. One period has ended, and the preparations for the new one have concluded. From here, we seal the deeds of the past, and we open the future. The key is the action and the objective is power. This, we shall do. History demands it, the class urges it, the people have foreseen it and want it. We must accomplish it, and it will be achieved. We are the initiators.

We would like to talk about some problems. Just like you, I will also speak with an open heart, with sincere words, and a rational sentiment. This too has a strict logic.

We Are Entering the Strategic Offensive of the World Revolution

Centuries of devastating exploitation have passed. The masses have been exploited, subjugated, forced to yield, and implacably oppressed. But through all this time, the exploited masses have always resisted because they have no other belief than the class struggle. However, throughout history, the masses were abandoned and had no direction. Their words, protests, actions, and rebellions were crushed and defeated. But the masses never lost hope. The class always has hope. The masses are the light of the world that forge themselves ahead. They transform and create instruments with their own hands. They are the very fiber, the inexhaustible beat of history. Thus, they have been generating ideas and science of the most advanced kind.

But the laws of history that generated themselves through the development of the class struggle have created one last class: the international proletariat. The class arose fighting in the middle of a sinister system, appeared sweating blood and muck from all its pores: capitalism. A system in which the fighting proletariat spearheaded unions, strikes, resistance, and revolutions. All of this became embodied in Marxism, and the class, endowing itself with a Party, evolved into a mature class with its own interests. The masses of the world finally have their liberator. In the old days the masses waited for a liberator, putting their hopes in the hands of so-called redeemers until the powerful and invincible proletariat capable of creating a truly new order, appeared. The class organized itself politically, and another history begins to unfold to become a reality.

In one hundred years of struggle, setbacks, and victories, the proletariat has learned how to fight and seize power with arms. The workers took it once in an embryonic form but were crushed with blood and fire. Nevertheless, we remember the Paris Commune, where those who were reviled are today heroes and their example will live on, while no one will remember their executioners. The workers with Lenin seized power in Russia and created a powerful State. The class continued fighting, and Mao Tse-tung paved a new road and rectified unsolved problems. The class began to fight under the banners of Marxism-Leninism Mao Tse-tung Thought.

Around the Second World War, the revolution entered a strategic equilibrium, leaving behind the holy reactionary alliances and tormentors and enemies that had previously been unpunished. The powerful international workers' movement, the roiling waves of the national liberation movements, the development of communist parties, and the elevation of Marxism to the high summit of Mao Tse-tung Thought have brought us to a new situation: We are entering the strategic offensive of world revolution. In the next 50 to 100 years, the domination of imperialism and all exploiters will be swept away. History cannot go backward. In the hands of the working class, under the leadership of communist parties, and through the mighty force of poor peasants, the people's war will be sustained and will grow every day until it overthrows the old order. The world is entering a

new situation, the strategic offensive of world revolution. This is of paramount importance.

Chairman Mao stated:

“The storm is coming; the wind is howling in the tower.” Thus, the vortex draws near, the vortex begins, and the invincible flame of the revolution grows, converting itself into lead and steel. From the din of battle along its inextinguishable fires will come forth the light. From the darkness, a light will appear, and a new world will be born. The old order of reaction creaks, its old boat leaks, and sinks in desperation. But comrades, no one can expect them to retreat benignly. Marx warned us: Even while floundering, the reactionaries are capable of staying above water and capable of inflicting asphyxiating chokeholds to see if they can drown us. That is impossible. [...]

The major imperialist superpowers—the USA and the USSR—and other powers seek to invade, penetrate, suffocate, destroy, and overpower everything with terror. But as Chairman Mao says, by attacking, assaulting, and launching offensives, they overextend themselves and enter the people’s powerful core. The people rise, arm themselves, and rebel, putting nooses on the necks of imperialism and reactionaries. The people take them by the throat, threaten their lives, and strangle them out of necessity. The reactionary meat will be trimmed of fat, they will be torn to tatters and rags, the scraps sunk into the mud. What remains will be set ablaze and the ashes scattered to the winds of the earth so that nothing remains but the sinister memory of what must never return.

Comrades, this is the world today. We have been living in extraordinary times. Never before have men had such a heroic destiny. The people of today, those who breathe, struggle, and fight, have been tasked to sweep the reactionaries from the face of the Earth, the most luminous and grandiose mission given to any generation.

We find ourselves in this situation: The world revolution enters a strategic offensive. Nothing will prevail against it. Innumerable iron legions rise, and more and more will appear, multiplying exhaustively to encircle and annihilate the reaction. The reaction, by tearing off the people’s flesh with its bloody claws, only entangles itself and seeks to sate itself with the blood of the people. But the people’s blood ascends like furious wings, and the stricken flesh converts itself into a mighty vengeful lash. Their muscles and actions are converted into steel battering-rams to destroy the oppressor who will be irremediably crushed.

Comrades, the reaction will not prevail in any form. The revolution will triumph; the hour has come.

The struggle will be hard, arduous, bloody, long, and difficult. The victory is ours, the masses will prevail, the peasantry will rise up, the working classes will lead it; the communist parties will command and red flags will be raised forever. The reaction has entered its final chapter. We will develop in that world.

Our People Begin to Seize Power Through Armed Struggle

In this magnificent period of world history, our people, along with the Latin American working classes and masses, have a role to play and they are fulfilling it. Our people begin to seize power through armed struggle. It is hundreds of years of struggle in which the peasant movements have shaken the roots of exploitation, but have not succeeded in breaking them down. In this country, the Communist Party was forged as pure steel. It brought light to the people by upholding Marxism–Leninism Mao Tse-tung Thought. Comrades, in this country, we are embarking upon a third stage, one of armed struggle. Armed revolution and counter-revolution are prepared for violence. Counter-revolution with its old and bloody violence, peace at the hands of bayonets, their damned war in the prisons, schools, factories, in the countryside, and even the murdering of children in their maternal wombs.

Today, that sinister violence has met its match. Revolutionary violence prepares to take up the battle in arms. Our people are finally entering the final stage, the completion of the democratic period of the revolution. The masses tremble, the flood rises, and the storm approaches. Response in this country and the world also dreams of soaking the revolution with blood and fire, drowning it in blood. These are old, dark, and violent dreams.

They are not facing the same situation as yesterday. Time has passed, and bureaucratic capitalism has matured the revolution. The agrarian laws promulgated by the regimes have been failures one after another, and peasants have understood the lesson: nothing will be given to them; nothing can be expected from the law. The land must be conquered by their own armed hands. The working class is more aggressive, mature. It has a higher consciousness; it is numerically larger, politically more powerful, and much more robust than in the past. The popular masses are growing in our country. The petty bourgeoisie is being proletarianized. It has no other destiny than to serve the revolution and put itself at the proletariat's disposal. It has no other destiny; it cannot have another path other than to serve the revolution according to the working class's dictates and to fight behind the road paved by the Party forcefully. This is good to remember because, from this experience, we should mainly win over the intellectuals. As Mariátegui has already shown us, the masses must be mobilized, and only in this manner will we fulfill our role and serve the great battle that history has arranged for us.

Comrades, we have concluded that we are embarking upon the third epoch of contemporary Peruvian society. But just as yesterday, when we expounded upon the two moments of contemporary Peruvian history as part of the development of bureaucratic capitalism in this country, some condemned us and rejected our thesis and ideals with insolent, contemptible accusations of infantilism.

What we propose today with a clear and precise historical vision, that our country is entering a third stage, will also be the object of misunderstanding, but it will no longer be possible to simply condemn us with childish labels of

infantilism. This time, history has shown us to be right about many things. They will also learn lessons. Nevertheless, it will not be easy for our accusers to easily accept and comprehend it. It requires convincing deeds, concrete actions that pound into their hard heads and shatter their speculation to pieces so that they also may carry the reality of this country in their spirits.

Understanding the third stage is key for our people to advance. What does this third stage entail? It implies the revolution, the people with arms in hand begin to seize power, that reaction with 400 years of exploitation, added to the exploitation of other epochs (comrades, we should think clearly, 400 years of foreign oppression, a vile slave system that continues to exist today, a state which although weak, still has force), implies that reaction will try to contain us and oppose the advance of the revolution. Materialists know very well that what exists refuses to die, and the reaction exists and therefore refuses to die. It is an unburied corpse, but it protests, negates, resists, and attacks with fury and despair. It does not want us to put it in a casket and bury it.

Thus, we must understand that the revolutionary struggle will be hard and cruel. They will send their sinister forces armed to the teeth to fight us, assaulting the working class, the peasants, and the popular masses, spreading their demonic claws. They will try to encircle, isolate, crush, and wipe us out. But we are the future, the strength, and history.

[...]

The Party Develops Through Armed Struggle

It has been more than 80 years of working-class struggle and 52 years of the Party's existence. It took about ten years for a group of men and women, led by Mariátegui, to establish the Party. His name is imprinted forever in our ranks, the peoples of the world, and the international working class. Time has passed; many of us have fought and will continue to struggle until exploitation is abolished. That is our destiny. We are a growing torrent confronting fire, rocks, and mud. But our power is greater. We convert everything into our fire. We will transform black fire into red fire, and red is light. That is where we are, that is the reconstitution of the party. Comrades, we are reconstituted.

The Party is one of a new type. The purpose of this Party is to seize power for the working class and the people of this country. The Party cannot be developed any further without the use of arms, through armed struggle. That is the hard lesson we have learned in 50 years, a great lesson that we will never forget: we have no power because we have no guns. Like Chairman Mao has written, whoever has more guns has more power, and whoever wants to seize power must forge an army, and whoever wants to keep power must have a powerful army. This is what we will carry out. The Party has embarked on developing itself through armed struggle. That is our course of action and we will not be able to go back.

Comrades, we can now say that the development of the Party has prevailed. Its possible destruction, as it had to be, has been averted. This is the conclusion we can derive from the 2nd Plenary Session of the Central Committee and the First Military School. We have completed a task that we only now have begun to appreciate. We asked ourselves, how will we develop the Party? A straightforward and simple response is: through armed struggle. In critical times the situation enters into contentious battles, and, according to the law of contradiction, specific circumstances can lead to development or destruction—of course, transitory. Still, it does not mean that it ceases to be destruction that could lead us to sink in the mud or march through a muddy place.

The Party has triumphed as it should. Its destruction cannot take place. The Party embarks firmly, decisively, voluntarily, and energetically on its development. Comrades, this is what is derived from these meetings. However, what contradiction is being debated? The launching of armed struggle presents a contradiction: The old versus the new. The development of the Party through armed struggle is the new, and the old is our accomplishments up to now, including the good ones. Even the best of our achievements have aged, and no matter how much we add to this tradition, we also add to that great garbage which parties, classes, and organizations generate throughout decades. We must be very clear on this point. There is only one new thing to develop the Party through armed struggle. Today, this is our contradiction. Just like in the international arena where the contradiction is between the strategic offensive and the strategic defensive of reaction, in our country the contradiction is between the armed people and armed response. Through the People's War, this contradiction will inevitably lead to the triumph of the class and sweep away 400 years of oppression. Comrades, in the Party, there is also a contradiction. It calls for a sober reflection, and no one should doubt it.

Communists today must be very clear, what is new and what is old. I reiterate, the new thing is the armed struggle, it is the burning unfading flames of the people's war, it is the steel that must become finer, a sharp sword, a sharp spear to wound the bowels of the reaction. This is new. Everything else is old, it is the past, and from that past, we must guard ourselves because the past always tries to reestablish itself in a thousand forms in the future.

Comrades, let us not forget that to guarantee the consolidation of 100, we need to advance as 200. Today, advancing with 200 means to initiate the armed struggle; to begin the action is the guarantee of thoroughly sowing the new with lead, crumbling the old walls. Comrades, this is the new. Everything else is old. We should be absolutely clear and understand it. The Party has embarked on its development through arms; this is a fundamental situation. That said, we have three things:

First, we begin the strategic offensive of world revolution. That is our context. The powerful revolutionary tide is on our side.

Second, the people set out to seize power by taking up arms. The future will be decided by the People's War.

Third, the Party begins to develop through the armed struggle. Thus, the Party will become the entity the revolution needs and must be forged.

Comrades, the world process, the process of the nation, and the Party are inter-related. Therefore, the future is assured; it is palpitating in the armed actions that we will commence. It is a delicate task that needs to be nurtured with the clamor of our arms, developed with guerrilla warfare, fortified with the People's War, cared for and nourished like the seed of an army, giving birth to armed columns, allowing it to flourish into a guerrilla army that we must build into a powerful one.

Comrades, these three conditions determine that the Party leads the armed struggle of the masses. In our hearts, minds, and wills, the power of the people is alive, and we carry it with us. In the beginning, we have no rearguard, or we will have one that is small, weak, fragile, and uncertain. Comrades, we must never forget the people's power, the state of the working class, the state of workers, and peasants. This state marches with us, we carry it on the muzzles of our rifles, nestled in our minds, throbbing in our hands, and it will always be burning in our hearts. It is the first thing on our minds. We should never forget it. Comrades, the armed struggle will be born fragile and weak because it is new, but its destiny will be to develop through change, through the variation of fragility like a tender plant. The roots we plant from the beginning will be the future of a vigorous State. Comrades, all this begins to flourish with modest and simple actions that tomorrow we will carry out.

[...]

We Are the Initiators

We are the initiators. We opened by stating that we are the initiators. Now we close by declaring that we are the initiators. Initiators of what? Of the People's War and the armed struggle that is in our hands, glows in our minds, beats in our hearts, and shakes uncontrollably in our wills. This is what we are, "a handful of men and women, communists, abiding by the Party's mandate, the proletariat and the people. On this 19 of April, history will tell, standing upright, they expressed their declaration of revolutionary faith; with their hearts burning with an inextinguishable passion, firm and resolute wills, and clear and bold minds, they assumed their historical obligation as initiators. They decided on 19 of April to bring it to fruition in the autumn with boycotts and the harvest, followed by actions against the reactionary power, targeted at the local authority. They continued with land invasions, and with the peasant masses in rebellion the guerrillas emerged. The guerrillas created the powerful army we have become today, and the State above it. Our country is free..." That is what they will say, comrades. This is materialized in our party decision, apparently simple but of great historical importance.

Comrades, do these three final questions pose contradictions for us? Yes, they do. Here, in the Party, the focus is on our agreement concerning the “Development of the Militarization of the Party Through Actions,” and in applying our Plan of Initiation is the essence of the new, a new part of the world which cannot be detained because our armed hands have surged with more to follow tomorrow. The new in our country, the armed solution, and the Party’s development through arms intensifies through the armed struggle. Thus, on developing and applying the plan of initiation, the new is the focus, and the old is confronted. The old will pledge itself to the opposite, but it is already defeated; it is a great defeat for the Right. [...]

I want to conclude. This School, this First Military School of the Party, is the seal and an opening; it seals the deeds done until today and opens tomorrow. What we have accomplished until now is very positive and has borne fruit. There is a saying that people are judged by their deeds. The deed is done; it is before us. There is nothing more to prove. What has been done until now is good. The breach, what we must do, will be even greater and definitively the only great thing we have to accomplish. It will come forth from arms, from the barrels of the guns. It will come forth from the direct action of the Party upon the masses. It will come forth from the People’s War.

[...]

The Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee congratulate those present and everyone else because they helped in the materialization of this reality through their actions. Congratulations to the Party, because with its actions, it has made this reality concrete. Congratulations to the masses and our people because their actions through centuries have been realized here. Congratulations to the world’s working class, the international proletariat, and the peoples of the world because their efforts have borne fruit here. We render homage, as always, to the unfading flags of Marxism–Leninism Mao Tse-tung Thought, because their grandeur, which will forever live, has been realized here. They now live within us. The spirit of the revolution dwells in the Party, our people, and our class. Finally, it has arrived! All our struggles have been validated. Comrades, finally it has been realized: begin the armed struggle today. Everything that we have accomplished, including errors that have served as experience, are validated here. This is the essence of this School.

[...]

Marxism–Leninism Mao Tse-tung Thought, the international proletariat, the people of the world, the working class, the people of this country, the Party with its bases, cadres, and leaders, this magnificent action through the centuries has been realized here. The promise blossoms, and the future unfolds.

Our duty is to fulfill it. What has been given to us as a future, we must fulfill it with our own lives, for the people, the workers, and Marxism–Leninism Mao Tse-tung Thought.

Comrades, the efforts invested are a satisfaction, it rejoices in the work done, is pleased by what has been done, and seeks no compensation.

The Future Is in the Barrels of the Guns! The Armed Revolution Has Begun!

Glory to Marxism–Leninism Mao Tse-tung Thought!

Long Live the Communist Party of Peru!

Initiate the Armed Struggle!

From the First Military School, April 19, 1988

Source: Centre Marxiste-Léniniste-Maoïste (B): www.centremlm.be/Communist-Party-of-Peru-We-are-the-initiators-%E2%88%921980/

Translation done by site with minor modifications by the author.

Interview with Chairman Gonzalo (excerpt)

EL DIARIO Chairman Gonzalo, why did you decide to speak after a long silence? Why did you choose *El Diario* to do this interview?

PRESIDENT GONZALO Let us start by saying that the Communist Party of Peru, which has been leading the people's war for more than eight years now, has expressed itself publicly in several different documents. We have always considered the Party's pronouncements to be much more important because that way, it is crystal clear that it is the PCP that has dared to initiate the people's war, lead it, and carry it forward.

The reason we are taking this occasion to speak in a personal interview like this one, which is the first time we have had the pleasure to do so, and specifically with you, has to do with the Party Congress. Our Party has accomplished a long-awaited historic task with the convening of its Congress. For decades we struggled hard to bring this about, but it's only the people's war that has given us the conditions to actually accomplish it. That's why we say that the First Congress is the offspring of two great parents: the Party and the people's war. As the official documents state, this Congress marks a milestone, a victory, in which our Party has been able to sum up the long road traveled and has established the three essential elements of Party unity: its ideology, which is Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, Gonzalo Thought; the program; and the general political line.

Furthermore, this Congress has established a firm basis for advancing toward the prospective seizure of Power. The Congress, then, is a great victory, and it is one of the main reasons for giving this interview. Other reasons have to do with

the profound crisis that our country is going through, the ever-growing and more powerful development of the class struggle of the masses, and the international situation and how revolution is the primary trend globally.

As to why we are doing this interview with *El Diario*, there is a very simple reason. *El Diario* is a combat trench, and today it is the only platform that really serves the people. We believe that although we could have met with others, even foreigners, it is more convenient and in accordance with the principles to meet precisely with a newspaper like *El Diario* that struggles every day in difficult conditions to serve the people, the revolution. That's the reason.

EL DIARIO Chairman Gonzalo, Have you weighed the possible implications of conducting this interview? Let me ask you—don't you run some risk talking publicly at this time?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO Being communists, we fear nothing. Moreover, our Party has forged us to challenge death itself and to carry our life on our fingertips so that we may give it whenever the revolution demands it. We believe that this interview has overriding importance: it serves our Party, the revolution, serves our people and our class, and also—why not say it—the international proletariat, the peoples of the world, the world revolution. Any such risk is nothing—especially, I repeat, if we were trained as the Party has made us.

Ideological Questions

EL DIARIO Chairman, let's talk about one of the ideological foundations of the PCP: Maoism. Why do you consider Maoism the third stage of Marxism?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO This point is crucial, and of enormous consequence. For us, Marxism is a process of development, and this great process has given us a new, third, and higher stage. Why do we say that we are in a new, third, and higher stage, Maoism? We say this because in examining the three component parts of Marxism, it is clearly evident that Chairman Mao Tsetung has developed each one of these three parts. Let's enumerate them: in Marxist philosophy no one can deny his great contribution to the development of dialectics, focusing on the law of contradiction, establishing that it is the only fundamental law. On political economy, it will suffice to highlight two things. The first, of immediate and concrete importance for us, is bureaucrat capitalism; and second, the development of the political economy of socialism, since in synthesis we can say that it is Mao who really established and developed the political economy of socialism. With regard to scientific socialism, it is enough to point to people's war, since it is with Chairman Mao Tsetung that the international proletariat has attained a fully developed military theory, giving us then the military theory of our class, the proletariat, applicable everywhere. We believe that these three questions

demonstrate a development of universal character. Looked at in this way what we have is a new stage—and we call it the third one, because Marxism has two preceding stages, that of Marx and that of Lenin, which is why we speak of Marxism–Leninism. A higher stage, because with Maoism the ideology of the worldwide proletariat attains its highest development up to now, its loftiest peak, but with the understanding that Marxism is—if you’ll excuse the reiteration—a dialectical unity that develops through great leaps, and that these great leaps are what give rise to stages. So for us, what exists in the world today is Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, and principally Maoism. We think that to be Marxists today, to be Communists, necessarily demands that we be Marxist–Leninist–Maoists and principally Maoists. Otherwise, we couldn’t be genuine communists.

I would like to emphasize a situation that is rarely taken into account and definitely deserves to be studied closely today. I am referring to Mao Tsetung’s development of Lenin’s great thesis on imperialism. This is of great importance today, and in the historical stage that is presently unfolding. Again simply listing his contributions, we could point out the following: he discovered a law of imperialism when he said that imperialism makes trouble and fails, makes trouble again and fails again, until its final doom. He also specified a period in the process of development of imperialism, which he called “the next 50 to 100 years,” years, as he said, unparalleled on earth, during which, as we understand it, we will sweep imperialism and reaction from the face of the earth. He also pointed to something that today more than ever can’t be ignored. He said that “a period of struggle between US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism has begun.” In addition, we all know of his great strategic thesis that “imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers.” This is a thesis of enormous importance and we must keep in mind that Chairman Mao applied this thesis to US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, both of which we have no reason to be afraid of. But also, we must keep in mind how he saw the development of war, following exactly what Lenin had stated about the era of wars that had opened up in the world. The Chairman has taught us that a country, a nation, a people, no matter how small, can defeat the most powerful exploiter and dominator on Earth if they dare to take up arms. Moreover, he has taught us how to understand the process of war and how never to fall for nuclear blackmail. I believe that these are some questions that we must keep in mind in order to understand how Chairman Mao Tsetung developed Lenin’s great thesis on imperialism. And why do I insist on this? Because we understand that just as Lenin’s contributions are based on the great work of Marx, Chairman Mao Tsetung’s developments are based on the great work of Marx and Lenin on Marxism–Leninism. We would never be able to understand Maoism, without understanding Marxism–Leninism.

We believe that these things are of great importance today, and for us it has been decisive to understand Maoism in theory and practice as a third, new, and higher stage.

EL DIARIO Chairman Gonzalo, do you believe that if José Carlos Mariátegui were alive he would uphold the theories and contributions of Chairman Mao?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO In synthesis, Mariátegui was a Marxist–Leninist. Beyond that, in Mariátegui, the Party’s founder, we find theses similar to those that Chairman Mao has made universal. Thus, as I see it, today Mariátegui would be a Marxist–Leninist–Maoist. This is not speculation; it is merely the product of understanding the life and work of José Carlos Mariátegui.

EL DIARIO Moving on to another question, what is the ideology of the proletariat and what role does it play in the social processes of the world today? What do the classics, Marx, Lenin, and Mao, mean to the PCP?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO Today, tomorrow, and in these stormy decades in which we live, we can see the enormous and overriding importance that proletarian ideology has. First, although I’m emphasizing something that is well known, it is the theory and practice of the final class in history. The ideology of the proletariat is the product of the struggle of the international proletariat. It also comprehends the study and understanding of the whole historical process of class struggle that went on before the proletariat, of the peasantry’s struggle, particularly the great heroic efforts they have waged—it represents the highest level of study and understanding that science has produced. In sum, the ideology of the proletariat, the great creation of Marx, is the highest world outlook that has ever been or ever will be seen on Earth. It is the world outlook, the scientific ideology that for the first time, provided mankind, our class principally, and the people, with a theoretical and practical instrument for transforming the world. And we have seen how everything that he predicted has come about. Marxism has been developing, it has become Marxism–Leninism, and today Marxism–Leninism–Maoism. And we know how this ideology is the only one capable of transforming the world, making revolution, and leading us to the inevitable goal of communism. It is of enormous importance.

I want to emphasize something: it is an ideology, but it is scientific. Nevertheless, we must understand very well that we cannot make any concessions to the bourgeoisie’s stand, which wants to reduce the ideology of the proletariat to a simple method. To do so is to debase it and deny it. Please excuse my insistence, but as Chairman Mao said, “it isn’t enough to say it once, but a hundred times; it isn’t enough to say it to a few, but to many.” Basing myself on this, I say that the ideology of the proletariat, Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, and today principally Maoism, is the only all-powerful ideology because it is true, and historical facts are showing that. It is the product aside from what has already been said, of the extraordinary work of extraordinary historical figures like Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Chairman Mao Tsetung, to point out the most outstanding. But among them, we give particular emphasis to three: Marx, Lenin,

and Chairman Mao Tsetung, as the three banners embodied, once again, in Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, and principally Maoism. And what, precisely, is our task today? It is to raise the flag of our ideology, defend and apply it, and struggle energetically to lead and guide the world revolution. Without a proletarian ideology, there is no revolution. Without proletarian ideology, there is no hope for our class and the people. Without a proletarian ideology, there is no communism.

EL DIARIO Speaking of ideology, why Gonzalo Thought?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO Marxism has always taught us that the problem lies in the application of universal truth. Chairman Mao Tsetung was overly insistent on this point: that if Marxism–Leninism–Maoism is not applied to concrete reality, it is not possible to lead a revolution, not likely to transform the old order, destroy it, or create a new one. It is the application of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism to the Peruvian revolution that has produced Gonzalo Thought. Gonzalo Thought has been forged in the class struggle of our people, mainly the proletariat, in the peasantry’s ongoing struggles, and the larger framework of the world revolution, amid these earthshaking battles, applying as faithfully as possible the universal truths to the concrete conditions of our country. Previously we called it the Guiding Thought. Through its Congress, if today the Party has sanctioned the term “Gonzalo Thought,” it’s because a leap has been made in the Guiding Thought through the development of the people’s war. In sum, Gonzalo Thought is none other than the application of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism to our concrete reality. This means that it is principal specifically for our Party, for the people’s war, and the revolution in our country, and I want to emphasize that. But for us, looking at our ideology in universal terms, I emphasize once again, it is Maoism that is principal.

[...]

EL DIARIO What is your opinion of the New Evangelism put forward by the Pope?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO Marx taught us that “religion is the opiate of the people.” This is a Marxist thesis which is completely valid today, and in the future. Marx also held that religion is a social phenomenon that is the product of exploitation and it will be eliminated as exploitation is swept away and a new society emerges. These are principles that we can’t ignore, and that we must always keep in mind. Related to the previous point, it must be remembered that the people are religious, something which never has and never will prevent them from struggling for their basic class interests, and in this way serving the revolution, and in particular the people’s war. I want to make it absolutely clear that we respect this religiousness as a question of freedom of religious beliefs, as recognized by the program which was approved by our Congress.

So the question you asked really has to do, in our view, with the ecclesiastic hierarchy, with the Papacy, that old theocracy that had succeeded in developing as a powerful instrument in Roman times. Later, adapting itself to the conditions of feudalism, it gained a vast power, even greater than before. But it always tried to rein in the struggle of the people, and defended the interests of the oppressors and exploiters, acting as an ideological shield for the reactionaries, changing and adapting itself as new situations emerged.

We can see this clearly if we think about the relation between the Church and the bourgeois revolution, the old bourgeois revolution, I'm referring to the French Revolution, for example. The Church fiercely defended feudalism, and later, through a lot of struggle and after the defeat of feudalism—let me repeat, through great struggle—it adapted itself to the bourgeois order and became once again an instrument at the service of the new exploiters and oppressors. In the present situation, what we see is a historical process which is unstoppable. The era of the world proletarian revolution, the new era begun in 1917, presents the problem for the proletariat of how to lead revolutions to change the old decadent order and create a genuinely new society: communism. In the face of this, how has the Church responded? As in previous times, it seeks to survive, and this is the basis of the Vatican II Council, where the Church sought to develop conditions that would permit it, first, to defend the old order as it has always done, and then, adjust and adapt itself in order to serve new exploiters, to continue to survive. This is what it seeks, this is the essence of Vatican II.

The question of the “new evangelism” refers explicitly to how ecclesiastical authority, the Pope in particular, sees the role of Latin America, where, as they themselves say and the current Pope said in 1984, half the world's Catholics live. They are, consequently, trying to use the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America to push forward a so-called movement of “new evangelism.” In sum, this is what they hope for: since evangelism officially began in 1494 following the discovery of America, with this new centennial they want to develop a “new evangelism” in defense of their bastion, this half of the “parish,” half of the bastion that sustains them in power. This is their goal. In this way, the hierarchy and the Papacy aim to defend their position in America and serve US imperialism, the dominant imperialist power in Latin America.

But we have to understand this plan in the context of a campaign and a worldwide plan, linked to its relations with the Soviet Union on the occasion of the millennium of its Christianization, the ties with Chinese revisionism, the actions of the Church in Poland, the Ukraine, etc. It is a worldwide plan and the “new evangelism operates within it. As always, they are attempting to defend the existing social order, to be its ideological shield, because the ideology of reaction, of imperialism, has become decrepit. In the future they will again seek to adapt in order to survive. But the prospects will be different, not like things were before. Marx's law will assert itself: religion will wither away as exploitation and oppression are destroyed and eliminated. And since the Papacy serves the exploiting

classes and what will follow is not an exploiting class, the Papacy will not be able to survive, and religion itself will wither away. In the meantime the freedom of religious belief has to be recognized until mankind, advancing through new objective conditions, comes to possess a clear, scientific, and world-transforming consciousness. We must therefore analyze the “new evangelism” in the context of this plan of the Church to survive under new conditions, a transformation that they know must come.

EL DIARIO Chairman, what is the significance of José Carlos Mariátegui for the PCP?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO For the PCP, Mariátegui is its founder. He built the Party on a clear Marxist–Leninist basis. Consequently, he provided it with a clear ideological stand. For him, Marxism–Leninism was the Marxism of his era, of his time. He provided the Party with a general political line. Mariátegui, the greatest Marxist that America has produced until now, left us his greatest work, the formation of the Communist Party of Peru. We understand very well what his loss meant for the Party, but we should be clear on the fact that he gave his very life to fulfill this great work. What we mean is that founding the Party took up his whole life. So he didn’t have time to consolidate and develop the Party. Just think about it, he died less than two years after its founding. A Party needs time to consolidate, to develop, in order to carry out its historic task.

We would like to point something out. As early as 1966 we stated that Mariátegui’s road must never be abandoned, and that the task was to reclaim that road and develop it further. I want to emphasize, to develop this further. Why? Because on a world level Marxism had already entered a new stage that is today Maoism. In our own country, bureaucrat capitalism, in particular, had developed right alongside the inexhaustible struggle of the proletariat and the Peruvian people, who have never ceased to struggle. For that reason, we set out to reclaim Mariátegui’s road and develop it further. We have made the contribution of rediscovering Mariátegui and his validity with regard to the general laws which are the same and only need to be applied in the new national and international context, as I’ve explained. This has been our contribution.

A lot could be said, but it is more worthwhile, I believe, to emphasize a few things. In 1975, “Retomar a Mariátegui y reconstituir su Partido” [“Reclaim Mariátegui and Rebuild his Party”] was published. In this brief document we showed, in opposition to many who today call themselves Mariáteguists, that Mariátegui was “guilty as charged,” an avowed Marxist–Leninist as he himself correctly said. We have stated the five elements that constitute his general political line. We showed that theories similar to those of Chairman Mao are found in Mariátegui. Here it’s enough to point to questions regarding the united front or the important question of violence. Mariátegui said, “Power is seized through

violence and is defended with dictatorship,” “today revolution is the bloody process through which things are born,” and throughout the years of his glorious life he persistently upheld the role of revolutionary violence and class dictatorship. He also said that no matter how big a majority you might have in parliament, it could only serve to dissolve a cabinet, but never to do away with the bourgeois class. What is absolutely clear, and must be emphasized because it is key to his thought, is that Mariátegui was anti-revisionist.

We have, in sum, struggled to reclaim and develop the road of Mariátegui. But allow me to say something more. It would be good to ask some of those who now call themselves Mariáteguists what they used to think of Mariátegui—they rejected him, clearly and concretely. I am referring to those of today’s PUM; yes, to those who come from the so-called “New Left,” who proclaimed Mariátegui outdated, a thing of the past—essentially that’s all there was to their argument. But even more importantly, these and others, are they really Mariáteguists? Let’s take Barrantes Lingán. How can he be a Mariáteguist if he is the complete negation of the clear Marxist–Leninist theories that Mariátegui, in his time, firmly and decisively upheld? Mariátegui was never a parliamentarian; he proposed using elections for the purpose of propaganda and agitation. It was revisionists like Acosta who, in 1945, held that this view was outdated and that the task was to win seats in parliament. And this is what the phony Mariáteguists, out and out unrepentant parliamentary cretinists, do today.

In sum, this is how we view Mariátegui: he is the founder of the Party, his role is etched in history so that no one will ever be able to deny it and his work will not perish. But it was necessary to continue on his road, to develop it further. The only logical way to carry through on the teachings of a Marxist–Leninist founder like Mariátegui, whose thinking, I repeat, contained theories similar to Chairman Mao’s, is to be Marxist–Leninist–Maoists as we, the members of the Communist Party of Peru, are. We think the founder is himself a great example and we are extremely proud that he was the one who founded our Party.

EL DIARIO Chairman, what was José Carlos Mariátegui’s influence on the development of the class consciousness of the Peruvian workers?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO Mariátegui accomplished a great deal in the midst of intense struggle, and excuse me if in answering your question I get into some other things as well. He was already a Marxist before going to Europe. This is the first thing we would like to insist on, because it is always said that he became a Marxist there. The fact that he developed there is another thing. Obviously, the European experience was extremely important to him. Mariátegui waged a very important struggle in the ideological sphere, a struggle on behalf of what he called socialism. This is the term he used, as he explained, because this term had not been debased as it had been in Europe. But what he upheld and propagated was Marxism–Leninism.

He waged a political struggle of great importance in order to form the Party. And this has to do with the debate between Mariátegui and Haya de la Torre, which today is being bandied about and cynically and shamelessly distorted. The essence of this question is very dear: Mariátegui proposed the formation of a Communist Party, a Party of the proletariat, while Haya de la Torre proposed the formation of a front similar to the Kuomintang, claiming that the proletariat in Peru was too tiny and immature to be able to give rise to a Communist Party. This was nothing but sophistry, and it is important to keep that in mind. But furthermore, the APRA party, when it was founded in Peru, was similar to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang—that is, the executioner of the Chinese Revolution who carried out the counter-revolutionary coup in 1927. This is something we should always bear in mind. Why do I emphasize this problem? Because now they are talking about an Haya–Mariáteguism, even an Haya–Leninism. Ridiculous! Mariátegui indeed was a Marxist–Leninist, Haya was never a Marxist or a Leninist. Never! He always opposed Lenin's theories. It's necessary to emphasize this because we can't let them get away with shameless distortions like these which, in the final analysis, are nothing but a mess, a hodge-podge thrown together in order to promote an alliance between the present-day APRA and the United Left [Izquierda Unida (IU)]. This is really the bottom line. The rest, cheap hoaxes.

Well, to answer your question: Mariátegui did all this linked to the masses, to the proletariat, to the peasantry. He was theoretically and practically involved in the formation of the CGTP [Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú], which is the product mainly of his work. But the CGTP that he founded in the latter part of the twenties is not the present-day CGTP, which is the complete negation of what Mariátegui had established. He also developed work with the peasantry. The peasant question was a central one for him. He saw it as the agrarian question, and essentially the Indian question as he explained so well. Likewise, he worked with the intellectuals, as well as with women and the youth. Mariátegui developed his work in connection with the masses, showing them the way, establishing concrete forms of organization and acting decisively to further develop the organization of the proletariat and the people of Peru.

[...]

EL DIARIO Chairman, let's talk about the people's war now. What does violence mean to you, Chairman Gonzalo?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO With regard to violence we start from the principle established by Chairman Mao Tsetung: violence—that is, the need for revolutionary violence—is a universal law with no exception. Revolutionary violence is what allows us to resolve fundamental contradictions by means of an army, through people's war. Why do we start from Chairman Mao's thesis? Because we believe Mao reaffirmed Marxism on this question, establishing that there are no exceptions

whatsoever to this law. What Marx held, that violence is the midwife of history, continues to be a totally valid and monumental contribution. Lenin expounded upon violence and spoke about Engels' panegyric praise of revolutionary violence, but it was the Chairman who told us that it was a universal law, without any exception. That's why we take his thesis as our starting point. This is an essential question of Marxism, because without revolutionary violence one class cannot replace another, an old order cannot be overthrown to create a new one—today, a new order led by the proletariat through Communist Parties.

The problem of revolutionary violence is an issue that is more and more being put on the table for discussion, and therefore we communists and revolutionaries must reaffirm our principles. The problem of revolutionary violence is how to actually carry it out with people's war. The way we see this question is that when Chairman Mao Tsetung established the theory of people's war and put it into practice, he provided the proletariat with its military line, with a military theory and practice that is universally valid and therefore applicable everywhere in accordance with the concrete conditions.

We see the problem of war this way: war has two aspects, destructive and constructive. Construction is the principal aspect. Not to see it this way undermines the revolution—weakens it. On the other hand, from the moment the people take up arms to overthrow the old order, from that moment, the reaction seeks to crush, destroy, and annihilate the struggle, and it uses all the means at its disposal, including genocide. We have seen this in our country; we are seeing it now, and will continue to see it even more until the outmoded Peruvian State is demolished.

As for the so-called dirty war, I would like to simply point out that they claim that the reactionary armed forces learned this dirty war from us. This accusation clearly expresses a lack of understanding of revolution, and of what a people's war is. The reaction, through its armed forces and other repressive forces, seeks to carry out their objective of sweeping us away, of eliminating us. Why? Because we want to do the same to them—sweep them away and eliminate them as a class. Mariátegui said that only by destroying, demolishing the old order could a new social order be brought into being. In the final analysis, we judge these problems in light of the basic principle of war established by Chairman Mao: the principle of annihilating the enemy's forces and preserving one's own forces. We know very well that the reaction has used, is using, and will continue to use genocide. On this we are absolutely clear. And consequently this raises the problem of the price we have to pay: in order to annihilate the enemy and to preserve, and even more to develop our own forces, we have to pay a price in war, a price in blood, the need to sacrifice a part for the triumph of the people's war.

As for terrorism, they claim we're terrorists. I would like to give the following answer so that everyone can think about it: has it or has it not been Yankee

imperialism, and particularly Reagan, that has branded all revolutionary movements as terrorists, yes or no? This is how they attempt to discredit and isolate us in order to crush us. That is their dream. And it's not only Yankee imperialism and the other imperialist powers that combat so-called terrorism. So does social-imperialism and revisionism, and today Gorbachev himself proposes to unite with the struggle against terrorism [...]

EL DIARIO What are some of the particularities of the people's war in Peru, and how does it differ from other struggles in the world, in Latin America, and from the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA)?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO That's a good question. I thank you for asking it, because it gives us a chance to look at the Party's so-called "dogmatism" a bit more. There are even those who say that we incorrectly try to apply Chairman Mao in an era where he is no longer applicable. In short, they babble on so much that we feel perfectly justified asking whether they have any idea what they are talking about. This includes the much-decorated senator who is a specialist in violence.

People's war is universally applicable, in accordance with the character of the revolution and adapted to the specific conditions of each country. Otherwise, it cannot be carried out. In our case, the particularities are very clear. It is a struggle that is waged in the countryside and in the city, as was established as far back as 1968 in the plan for the people's war. Here we have a difference, a particularity: it is waged in the countryside and the city. This, we believe, has to do with our own specific conditions. Latin America, for instance, has cities which are proportionately larger than those on other continents. It is a reality of Latin America that can't be ignored. Just look at the capital of Peru, for example, which has a high percentage of the country's population. So, for us, the city could not be left aside, and the war had to be developed there as well. But the struggle in the countryside is principal, the struggle in the city a necessary complement. This is one particularity, there's another.

In the beginning of the people's war we confronted the police. That was the reality because only in December 1982 did the armed forces enter the war. This is not to say that they had not been used in a support role before then. They had, in addition to their studying the process of our development. It is a particularity because we created a power vacuum in the countryside and we had to establish the New Power without having defeated large armed forces—because they hadn't come into the war. And when they did, when they came in, it was because we had established People's Power. That was the concrete political situation in the country. If we had applied the letter and not the spirit of Mao we would not have established the New Power and we would have been sitting, waiting for the armed forces to come in. We would have gotten bogged down. Another particularity was the structure of the army, which I've already talked about.

All these are particularities. We have already spoken about the countryside and the city, on how to make war, on the army, and how the New Power will arise. The militarization of the Party is another detail. These are specific things that correspond to our reality, to the application of Marxism—Leninism—Maoism, of Chairman Mao's theory on people's war, to the conditions in our country. Does this make us different from other struggles? Yes.

Why do we differ from others? Because we carry out people's war this makes us different from other struggles in Latin America. In Cuba, people's war was not carried out, but they also had their own particularities which they have intentionally forgotten. Before, they said Cuba was an exceptional case—Guevara said this—the fact that US imperialism didn't take part. Later they forgot this. Aside from this, there was no Communist Party there to give leadership. These are questions of Cubanism and its five characteristics: an insufficient class differentiation which demanded that saviors save the oppressed; socialist revolution or a caricature of revolution; united front but without the national bourgeoisie; no need for Base Areas; and, as noted, no need for a Party. What we are seeing in Latin America today is just the development of these same positions, only more and more at the service of social-imperialism and its contention with Yankee imperialism for world hegemony. We can see this clearly in Central America. The MRTA, the little that we know of it, falls into the same category.

Finally, another issue that makes us different—and forgive me if I'm insistent—concerns independence, self-reliance, and making our own decisions. Because others do not have these characteristics they are used as pawns, while we are not. And one far-reaching difference: we take Marxism—Leninism—Maoism as our guide, others do not. In sum, the greatest difference, the fundamental difference, is in the point of departure; ours is the ideology of Marxism—Leninism—Maoism, principally Maoism, applied to the specific conditions of our country, and I insist here again, that this is with clear particularities which show the falsehood of the so-called dogmatism they accuse us of—which they do at the behest of their masters.

EL DIARIO Chairman, would you say then that the MRTA is playing a counter-revolutionary role in this country?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO The MRTA has positions that should make one think.

For example, the truce they granted to APRA until, as they said, APRA attacked the people. But we all know that the same day that García Pérez assumed the presidency, he repressed the masses in the very capital of the republic. In October 1985 there was genocide at Lurigancho prison. Were the people being attacked or not? And how long did they wait to put an end to their truce? These are things one must ask oneself.

[...]

EL DIARIO Why did the Communist Party of Peru initiate the people's war in 1980? What is the military and historical explanation for this? What social, economic, and political analysis did the PCP carry out in order to launch the war?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO We studied the country, particularly from World War II on, and we saw that in its process of development Peruvian society was entering a complex situation. The government's own analysis showed that critical questions would present themselves in the '80s. In Peru it can be seen that there is a crisis every 10 years in the second half of the decade, and each crisis is worse than the one before. We also analyzed bureaucrat capitalism, which makes conditions more ripe for revolution. In 1980, the government was to change hands through elections, which meant that the new government would need a year and a half to two years to fully put in place the operations of its State. So we concluded that bureaucrat capitalism had ripened the conditions for revolution, and that the difficult decade of the '80s approached—with crisis, an elected government, etc. All this provided a very favorable conjuncture for initiating the people's war and refuted the position that armed struggle, or in our case people's war, cannot be initiated when there's a new government event that demonstrated the incorrectness of that position. Such was our evaluation, and such was the situation as the new government took over—that is, the military, having left the government after ruling for 12 years, could not easily take up the struggle against us right away, nor could they immediately take the helm of state again because they were worn down and had become discredited. These were the concrete facts, the reality.

Prior to that time, we had already put forward that participation in the Constituent Assembly was incorrect, that the only thing to do was to boycott it, because to participate in the Constituent Assembly was simply to serve the restructuring of the Peruvian State and to produce a constitution like the one we have. All this was foreseeable, there was nothing that could not be foreseen in this case. Therefore, we had planned for some time to lay the basis to initiate the people's war, to make our move before the new government took office, which is what we did. We began the armed struggle on May 17, the day before the elections.

We thought that under these conditions we could initiate our actions and even unfold them broadly and advance to the greatest extent possible—and that is exactly what we did. We were also thinking that in the second part of the decade there would have to be a more serious crisis than the previous one and therefore, better conditions for advancing. The initiation of the people's war was planned based on these considerations. But it's been said that we didn't think but only acted dogmatically. In what way? Some people preach about dogma while swallowing anything they're told.

For these reasons we chose that moment, and the correctness of our decision has been borne out by events. It was obvious that Belaúnde—and this is something we discussed openly—would fear a coup d'état and therefore would restrain the armed forces. Was that difficult to foresee? No, because of the experience he had in 1968. These things could be calculated, and we've been taught to evaluate, analyze, and weigh things—that's what we've been taught. The Chairman was very exacting with regard to these problems, especially in regard to preparation. We believe that events have confirmed our analysis. For two years the armed forces could not come in. Was that the case or not? Now they are saying that they burned the intelligence information that they had. In short, the new government had problems setting up its administration and the facts have shown that. Then came the crisis. The military has entered the battle with ever-larger contingents, and in fighting them for a number of years we are more powerful, we continue to flourish and develop. These were the reasons for initiating the people's war in 1980, and the facts show that we were not wrong, at least not in the broad outlines, which is where one must not be wrong.

[...]

EL DIARIO What do you do when you're not busy with politics and the war? What books do you read?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO Many times I don't have time to read what I'd like to. What do I like to read? I read a lot of biographies. I think that literature is a great form of artistic expression. For instance, I like to read Shakespeare, yes, and to study him. When you study Shakespeare you find political issues. There are very clear lessons in *Julius Caesar* for example, and in *Macbeth*. I like literature, but politics always wins out with me, and leads me to look for the political significance behind it. After all, behind every great artist there is a political leader, there is a man of his time who is waging class struggle. I have also read Peruvian novels and sometimes I reread them.

I once read a short work by Thomas Mann about Moses. Afterwards, we used it to help us politically interpret a struggle in which we were involved at the time. One part of this work says that one can break the law, but not negate it. How did I interpret this? To break the law is to go against Marxism, to deviate, to have wrong ideas. That is permissible, but one cannot allow Marxism to be negated. I think it is possible to learn many things. I read *Broad and Alien is the World*, and *All the Races [Todas las Sangres]*, and I have studied them as well. I like literature and music. Before I liked music more, now I enjoy it less. What other interests? I like science, books about science. In my early days at the university, I studied law because I had to have a profession. But I liked philosophy and I devoted myself to it. Through philosophy I discovered science. I spent a lot of time studying questions of mathematics and physics. In my opinion, physics is an extraordinary science. It is quite fitting to call it "an adventure of the mind." The problem

with science is that scientists, whose starting point is a materialist one, are good so long as they stay within the realm of science, but when they start to get into philosophy or other areas, if they are not materialists, they fall into idealism. This happened even with Einstein. I like science, I think it is extraordinary. This inclination for science can be seen in the thesis that I wrote for my degree in philosophy. It is an analysis of time and space according to Kant, from a Marxist point of view, using mathematics and physics. I would like to read it again, because there's no time now to go back and study all that again. But I don't even have a copy. [...]

EL DIARIO Do you have friends?

CHAIRMAN GONZALO No, I don't. I have comrades. And I am very proud of having the comrades I have.

EL DIARIO Chairman, we have reached the end of this interview.

CHAIRMAN GONZALO We have worked very hard and I thank you for your efforts. I very much appreciate the difficulties you've had to go through in order to meet with me and be able to publish this first interview, which will reach the people through El Diario, a newspaper that has fought tenaciously to serve the people. Thank you very much.

EL DIARIO Thank you, Chairman.

July 1988; *Source:* www.solrojo.org/pcp_doc/pcp_0688.htm; *Translation done by site with minor modifications by the author.*

Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru), MRTA

The MRTA was an armed revolutionary organization that existed from 1980 to 2000, although there is some debate over its actual lifespan and whether a new iteration currently exists. Its primary leaders were Luis Varese Scotto and Víctor Polay Campos, whose father was Victor Polay-Risco, one of the founders of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance or Peruvian Aprista Party in the 1920s. Néstor Cerpa Cartolini and Peter Cárdenas Schulte were also figureheads of the organization. During its existence, the organization had a presence in different parts of Peru, including Lima, the department of Junín, Huancayo, and the Amazonian region. The origins of the MRTA date back to a period of political strife in the Peruvian Left and initiatives to change political strategies and platforms. In the 1970s, different leftist tendencies were involved in heated debates over strategy and political lines. The Peruvian Left became increasingly fragmented; splinter groups materialized, and new organizations took shape. Among these was the precursor to the MRTA. Toward the tail end of the 1970s, there were attempts to unify the Peruvian Left after several factions suffered a demise in their clout amongst the working classes and the peasantry or due to state repression. One revolutionary group, the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), tried to spearhead the unification of the Left. Flustered by the progress made, a group

of detractors from the Revolutionary Socialist Party—Marxist Leninist (PSR-ML) and the MIR, broke away and created the MRTA in March 1982. Guerrilla training camps were also established in the Chanchamayo region, where the terrain and the jungle provided a natural safeguard against military attacks by the Peruvian state. The MRTA used a variety of tactics to carry out their revolutionary actions. They attacked (bombed or set ablaze) symbols of government oppression and imperialism, hijacked a television station and forced the owners to transmit one of their messages, carried out expropriations, and aggressively sought out the support of popular communities in the mountains. In 1996, the MRTA orchestrated one of the most unforgettable operations. During a birthday celebration in honor of Emperor Akihito at the Japanese Embassy in Peru, 14 members of the MRTA under Cerpa Cartolini stormed the residency and took hostage hundreds of distinguished members of the military, political establishment, business class, and foreign diplomats. After several failed negotiations between the MRTA and the Peruvian government under Alberto Fujimori, a contingent attacked the residence on April 22, 1997, killing all 14 guerrillas. The following documents pertain to this incident.

Communiqué #1

The National Directorate of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement would like to inform our beloved Peruvian people that today, Tuesday, December 17, at 8:25 p.m., the “Edgar Sánchez” special forces unit of our organization occupied the residence of the Japanese ambassador and has taken prisoner various political and business personalities and members of diplomatic corps in Peru.

We have named this operation: “COMMANDER OSCAR TORRE CONDESU” and under the slogan: “BREAKING THE SILENCE, THE PEOPLE WANT YOU FREE,” MRTA Commander HEMIGIDIO HUERTA LOAYZA is in command of this operation.

Since the military takeover of the Japanese ambassador’s residence, we have taken every measure to respect each captured individual’s physical and moral integrity. We have executed this occupation in protest of the Japanese government’s interference in our country’s political life, which has continuously defended the methods employed by Mr. Fujimori’s government to violate human rights, as well as its economic policy. As a result, it has produced only misery and hunger for the majority of Peruvians.

We also wish to convey to our people that we have been forced to take this extraordinary measure in order to protect the lives of dozens of militants and leaders of our organization who are experiencing subhuman conditions in prison and a prison policy that is trying to defeat them physically and mentally, locked up in “prison tombs.” As Mr. Alberto Fujimori has repeatedly declared: “they will rot there and only leave dead,” exhibit-

ing an irrational resentment against social fighters who have taken up arms to fight for the well-being of our people.

In that regard, we want to stress with the same emphasis that we are respecting the physical integrity of captured persons. We will only release them if the government complies with the following demands:

- A pledge to transform the existing economic system into a model that takes into consideration the welfare of the overwhelming majority.
- The release of all prisoners who belong to the MRTA and stand accused of belonging to our organization.
- The transferring of the commando that raided the Japanese ambassador's residence and all the MRTA prisoners to the jungle. To ensure their safety, some of the hostages, carefully selected, will be brought to our guerrilla zone and then released.
- Payment of a war tax.

The MRTA was always an organization prepared to engage in a dialogue, but it has only experienced rejection and derision from the government. It must be made clear that any military action that puts the lives of the hostages at risk will be the government's absolute responsibility, as well as any other actions that we may have to take if it does not acquiesce to our demands.

With the Masses and the Arms, Fatherland or Death We Will Overcome!
MRTA National Directorate
Lima, December 17, 1996

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; <http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=657>

Six Months After the Japanese Embassy Massacre

Somewhere in Peru

The National Directorate of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement informs the Peruvian people and international solidarity:

1. Almost six months have passed since the massacre at the residence of the Japanese Embassy in Lima, where 17 people lost their lives due to the authoritarianism and intolerance of those who always bet on the death of the humble and the dispossessed.
2. As a result of these murders that the world has adamantly repudiated, various humanitarian organizations have filed complaints with the Sub-Commission on Human Rights and the Commission for Extrajudicial Executions of the United Nations High Commissioner, given that in Peru there is no "RULE OF LAW" instead, a dictatorial government that concentrates all powers in the executive and has eliminated the independence of the judiciary and is implicated

in this action, other murders, and human rights violations. However, the High Commissioner has yet to take any resolution, despite the time that has elapsed.

3. The regime, with the arrogance that characterizes it, continues to coerce and intimidate the family and friends of the “Edgar Sánchez Command,” impeding them from visiting and bringing flowers to their loved ones.
4. The serious situation of the political prisoners, which was one of the reasons for the action carried out by the “Edgar Sánchez Command,” has yet to improve. It continues to deteriorate and worsen. Dozens of *tupacamaristas* continue to be transferred to the Yanamayo Prison before their subsequent relocation to Challapalca, where the abject conditions make it impossible to live without any humanitarian agency, having denounced this and before the indifference of the entire “international community.” In the eyes of the world, the conditions are being made for a new extermination of political and social prisoners.
5. The political and social prisoners of the different prisons in Peru have been denouncing a series of abuses and physical and psychological torture at the hands of “penitentiary authorities” and the military personnel responsible for safeguarding the prisons. The response has been to inflict greater punishments and transfers to increasingly inhospitable places without the minimum conditions to survive.
6. To investigate these complaints, a Commission on the abuse of authority has been constituted, chaired by the former attorney for terrorism cases, Daniel Espichan, which includes an apparent mockery of the prisoners’ dignity, since during his tenure the greatest crimes were committed. For instance, misconduct by authorities against thousands of citizens detained by the national police and the armed forces, who were tortured, tried, and sentenced by military and civilian courts composed of faceless judges in clandestine trials, without due process, and the right to a defense.
7. The existence of TRIBUNALS of faceless judges was the most aberrant example to describe the elimination of the rule of law in the country. The International Community condemned it repeatedly and demanded its elimination. In a clear attempt to clean up its damaged image, the Fujimori regime has repealed these courts but has not repaired the severe damage caused to thousands of citizens sentenced to long prison terms. The creation of these courts was the result of a political decision by the dictatorship and constituted a clear example of the abuse of power. It is up to human rights organizations and the international community to demand the review of all the trials carried out under these clandestine courts.
8. Faced with the United States’ declaration to prohibit the financing of 30 organizations as “terrorists” in our territory, the *tupacamaristas* state that the only funding that “international terrorism” has received has been from the US government, through the development aid programs, whose funds have been used for the construction of prisons, purchase of armaments, training of military personnel in “national security,” and low-intensity wars at the School of the Americas; and that has benefited terrorist regimes like Alberto Fujimori. The people of Túpac

Amaru reject the cynicism of the greatest terrorist state in the world, and the “greatest enemy of the human race”: the United States of America.

9. The implementation of the neoliberal model in Peru continues to increase the levels of misery, as stated in the latest World Bank report on poverty, which takes as a reference per capita income less than one dollar a day, placing Peru in tenth place, with 49% of the population living in extreme poverty.
10. Faced with this extreme situation, the population has taken to the streets to demand jobs. But these legitimate demands continue to be answered with brutality by the dictatorship. The regime’s repressive policy continues to increase, exacerbating state terrorism.
11. From the dictatorship’s perspective, anyone who protests and claims their rights is a terrorist, and in order to combat it, they have been bolstering and growing the intelligence service, the armed forces, and police, providing them with immense resources and “preparation.” This has led to an increase in militarization.
12. In this increased militarization, urban and rural areas have been invaded by hundreds of intelligence service agents, who vainly try to infiltrate popular and revolutionary organizations.

For this reason, six months after the murder of the members of the Edgar Sánchez Command, and Commander Evaristo [Néstor Cerpa Cartolini], the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement reaffirms its decision to continue fighting and see the dreams of justice and freedom that our brothers fell for come true. We call on all the organizations of our people—political, trade union, neighborhood, and peasant—to build in the mobilizations and direct actions a broad mass political front to confront the neoliberal model and defeat the Fujimori narco-terrorist dictatorship.

Glory and Honor to Command Edgar Sanchez and Commander Evaristo!
 Unity in Action, Unity for Revolution!
 Without Social Justice ... There Will Be No Peace!
 Túpac Amaru Lives and Will Triumph!
 National Directorate
 Condorcanqui, Peru, October 1997

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=3524

12

PUERTO RICO

Armed Forces of National Liberation (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional), FALN

The Armed Forces of National Liberation was a nationalist organization founded by Filiberto Ojeda Ríos in the early 1970s in the United States. The FALN established fronts in the United States and Puerto Rico and carried out more than a hundred bombings during its decade-long existence. Its origins were directly connected to the pro-independence movements of the 1930s. During this period, the National Party of Puerto Rico, under Pedro Albizu Campos—a Harvard Law graduate—became the figurehead of the pro-independence movement. After two decades of weathering repression by Puerto Rican and US authorities, Albizu Campos felt that the nationalists had exhausted all existing legal channels and began advocating for armed resistance throughout the country. In 1937, he and other militants were arrested as part of a counteroffensive against the nationalist, pro-independent movement. He remained in prison for ten years, only to be arrested once again for subversion a few years later. In 1956, while in prison, he suffered a crippling stroke. Nine years later, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Muñoz Marín, pardoned him, but his health continued to deteriorate. Albizu Campos passed away in 1965, which many believe was a consequence of radiation exposure from his time in prison. The nationalist, pro-independence movement entered a new phase after Albizu Campos' death, with new personalities assuming leadership positions. In 1974, Ojeda Ríos formed the FALN and inaugurated a new armed struggle in Puerto Rico and the United States. Before forming the FALN, Ojeda Ríos had been a prominent figure in the radicalization of the nationalist movement. The “Forces” employed urban guerrilla tactics and searing political communiqués to

raise awareness and force an end to US colonialism in Puerto Rico. The bombings the FALN became notorious for carrying out were done against selected targets that represented US colonialism and led to millions in collateral damage, as well as several deaths and injuries. The FALN established footholds in New York and Chicago, two cities with substantial Puerto Rican communities; however, they also obtained moderate support throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and Latin America. Its communiqués repeatedly emphasized their organic connection to past national liberation movements and viewed the organization as a continuation of those initiatives. This mindset served to push back against US and anti-FALN propaganda in Puerto Rico that aggressively tried to delegitimize the movement and label it as another communist-inspired terrorist organization as a means over overshadowing their homegrown ties. “Communiqué #6 is one of many political documents that adamantly makes these claims and avoids inscrutable theory. In the 1980s, the FALN experienced a rapid decline. Several militants were arrested by the FBI and local law enforcement. By 1983, the FALN had virtually been defeated. However, several militants, including Albizu Campos, remained in the revolutionary underground and later formed the Boricua Popular Army, also known as the Macheteros (the Machete wielders).

Communiqué #6

Today, armed units of the FALN commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the revolution of October 30, 1950, in Puerto Rico against Yanki domination and marks the first anniversary of our existence as an organization, by launching a simultaneously coordinated attack on Yanki government and monopoly capitalist institutions in New York, Washington DC, Chicago, and Puerto Rico.

We demand the immediate independence of Puerto Rico and the unconditional release of the five Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners: Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, and Irving Flores, as well as other puerto Rican political prisoners in Yanki colonial and neo-colonial prisons.

We extend our friendship and solidarity to the United States working class, our allies in the struggle against Yanki fascism, who like Puerto Rican workers are being pushed out of work and forced to the unemployment lines while Yanki corporations, and especially the banks, are reaping billions in profits. While the rich and their puppets in the government eat and drink well off the sweat of workers, more and more people are being pushed into the unemployment lines.

We also wish to draw attention to the just cause of the Panamanian people who wish to recover their canal zone. We express our unconditional support for them in the realization that the removal of the Yanki colonists from the area is just as important as our national independence. Should the Panamanian people be forced to resort to arms, the FALN will give them whatever support is necessary.

The FALN welcomes the support given to the Puerto Rican National liberation struggle at the solidarity conference in Cuba and the meeting of the Non-Aligned nations in Peru in September.

We especially acknowledge the moral support given to our organization by the Cuban people and the government in a speech made by Prime Minister Fidel Castro in August, in which he said that the Cuban government would do all it could to support the FALN. Although we have acquired everything we need at this time from our own efforts, as the struggle intensified and the needs increase, we may have to claim concrete expression of such support, not only from the revolutionary government of Cuba, but from all supporters of Puerto Rican independence.

These developments, combined with the recent victory of the Puerto Rican cause at the United Nations, where the *Yanki* gorillas were forced to expose their claws to the world by resorting to fascist arm-twisting of their own allies in order to prevent a committee discussion of the case of Puerto Rico, reaffirms our position:

Only a protracted, organized armed struggle can force the Yanki invaders out of Puerto Rico.

At a time when our cause is rooted in the international community, the imperialists are undergoing a political and economic crisis in the US and elsewhere, and our historical legacy of struggle is given living proof by the existence of the FALN and the political prisoners. Any organization entering parliamentary politics within the colony is only surrendering to colonialist tactics.

The role of the Vanguard and progressive organizations now in Puerto Rico is to organize the armed struggle, telescope the contradictions, and establish the Peoples' army of National Liberation.

We wish to extend our solidarity with all the organizations waging armed struggle with the US against Yanki imperialism abroad and capitalist exploitation of the North American working class. We support the definition of a single working class to which everyone living in the United States and working within it belongs, despite cultural and ethnic differences which actually enrich our country.

Finally, we send our warmest and most affectionate greetings to the freedom fighters of our Latin American homeland from Argentina's Tierra del Fuego to the South, to Mexico in the north, where the struggle continues to end fascist oligarchies and their Yanki masters, and who are creating the many Viet-Nams necessary for the total destruction of imperialism and the victory of democracy, justice, and equality.

Independence for Puerto Rico, Now!
Free the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

FALN Central Command
October 27, 1975

Source: <https://bdk.omeka.net/items/show/7>

Boricua Popular Army (Ejército Popular Boricua)—Los Macheteros

In 1976, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos and other veteran members of the nationalist, pro-independence movement and the FALN began operating under the Macheteros name. The group used the machete as a symbol to reinforce its connection to Puerto Rican workers and commemorate the sugarcane cutters in anti-colonial struggles. In 1978, the Macheteros carried out their first armed revolutionary action against a police cruiser in retaliation for the murders of Arnaldo Darío Rosado-Torres and Carlos Enrique Soto-Arriví, two pro-independent militants, by police at Cerro Maravilla in Puerto Rico on July 25. Much like the FALN, revolutionaries utilized anti-colonial and anti-imperialist discourses. However, Marxian analysis and rhetoric became more prevalent than early writings. Communiqués remained the Macheteros' primary mode of distributing information to the people and counterbalancing the narratives propagated by the US and Puerto Rican governments. Think tanks like the RAND Organization also played a role in discrediting the Macheteros' revolutionary actions. Likewise, the group put out political materials via its house organ, "El Machete," three times a year. Still, individual communiqués remained the preferred means, especially after the Macheteros performed a revolutionary action. Bombings and expropriations remained their primary form of armed propaganda. On January 12, 1981, the group detonated bombs at the Muñiz Air National Guard Base in Puerto Rico that destroyed more than 10 aircraft and caused other significant damage. On September 12, the same day as Pedro Albizu Campos' birthday, a cadre of revolutionaries robbed a Wells Fargo Bank in West Hartford, Connecticut. The Macheteros called the operation *Águila Blanca* (White Eagle), making off with a total of \$7 million, the largest bank robbery in US history at the time. The series of bombings and revolutionary actions propelled the US government and Puerto Rican officials to clamp down on the Macheteros and other pro-independence movements. Two years after the armed robbery, FBI agents apprehended several rank-and-file members and leaders of the Macheteros. Ojeda was also caught, but later became a fugitive after he skipped bail and left for Puerto Rico. The Macheteros entered a period of reconstruction, taking a brief hiatus to regroup. From 1990 onward, the group used "El Machete" to raise awareness about various issues in Puerto Rico, especially those related to economic strife, workers and peasants, and the actions of "colonial entities" (US corporations) in the country. The Macheteros also actively participated in the protest against the occupation of the island of Vieques by the United States Navy. Since the 1940s, the Navy had been using Vieques to test weapons and train its forces, which were often

deployed to preserve US hegemony and fight subversion during the Cold War. Today, the Macheteros remain active, publishing scathing commentary on a wide range of issues; however, they no longer resort to armed propaganda. The following document speaks to the ongoing protests against US actions in Vieques and the reassurance that the Macheteros, despite setbacks, remain fully committed to their cause.

Imperialists, Colonialists, and Terrorists: Merchants of Misfortune (excerpt)

Fellow Puerto Ricans:

Today I address you, on behalf of the Boricua People's Army—Los Macheteros, under very special circumstances in this historical commemoration of the 133rd anniversary of our glorious Grito de Lares. Don Pedro Albizu Campos said one must come to Lares on one's knees and that it is the Altar of the Fatherland.

What do those words mean? That for Don Pedro, on September 23, 1868, the feeling of nationhood in the Puerto Rican people was staged in Lares when performing the Grito claiming the right to life, the right to be, the right to exercise absolute power over their destiny. It was a revolutionary Grito, a Grito of courage and sacrifice: a liberating patriotic war cry.

One hundred and thirty-three years have passed since the moment in which the patriotic, independent, social justice, and libertarian demand will be carried out by the armed media. But while our people demanded their recognition as a nation before the world, the economic avarice of the powerful American empire has thwarted that right.

The year 1898 marked a change in the usurpation of the Puerto Rican people's sovereignty: through a vile act of war, the government of the United States of America seized our Homeland. Since then, 103 years of lies have elapsed, of colonial elections rigged by the Yankees to dismantle Puerto Rican and Puerto-Ricanist consciousness. To do this, they have used representative sectors of the most powerful creole caste whose conscience is driven by power, money, and unbridled ambition. As founders and ideologues of colonial political parties, those sectors have fulfilled their servile function as manipulators of the popular conscience by becoming traitors against the exploited Puerto Rican people, against their fellow countrymen.

It has been 103 years during which our territory has been exploited as an integral part of a powerful war machine whose objective has been none other than to exercise a forceful control over what they have always considered their backyard. It is part of evil. It has been 103 years through which our people and territory have been used as a laboratory to maintain their economic hegemony in the world and the continent and as a military bas-

tion to impose their criminal system on humanity. We have lived through 103 years of confrontations that threaten to destroy the foundations that must be the basis for achieving our national unity.

The reality of the world today, that reality which by the law of universal concatenation has to determine the strategy for our survival as a people, is extraordinarily complex and oriented toward what, in the historical task of peoples, constitutes a structural, philosophical, and interactive leap over the totality of human existence. That leap can be creative, positive, and humanistic, or satanically destructive. Imperialism represents dehumanized criminality, and it is evident that the US government is the maximum exponent of that criminality of an imperialist nature. Freedom, real democracy, social justice, human rights, those values that are a fundamental part of the human being, must be the guiding principle of our efforts as a people for the good of humanity. They constitute part of the truth of goodness. But the United States government intends to continue at the top of exploitation to maintain an already expired and retrograde capitalist system.

In the context of this reality, Vieques has become the maximum exponent of our libertarian struggle. For almost two years, civil disobedience has been defended as a tactic and the slogan "Peace for Vieques" as a spiritual impetus. The Macheteros, until now, have conditioned our conception of the libertarian struggle to these popular slogans, and we support them with firmness and conviction. But the US Navy has not only been more violent in its acts of contempt for our population, but has heightened, with intimidating intent, the levels of exercises and bombings. Our children's tears in Vieques, of our elders hoping that these abuses would stop, the suffering of teachers and parents who want to live in peace, has increased dramatically with their latest exercises and threats of more violent attacks to come. We have supported civil disobedience, but we are disgusted by everything that renders our people defenseless martyrs. For instance, the constant imprisonment of hundreds of men and women of patriotic worth and the violation of the physical integrity and dignity of men and women who struggle for the inalienable right to peace and, above all, freedom. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the path of civil disobedience represents the doorway to the revolutionary struggle exemplified by the Lares of 1868 and illustrated by the machete slogans of today's revolutionary generations.

Today I address you in challenging and particular circumstances. This commemoration to Lares demands from all Puerto Ricans much thought, meditation, reflection, and, above all, opening our hearts and patriotic consciences wide, to speak with the deepest sincerity, with the most profound honesty.

Last Tuesday, September 11, humanity suffered a blow of great consequences, of incredible pain for tens of thousands of families, including thousands of Puerto Rican brothers and sisters, and for what are the deep-

est struggles for justice, as is the struggle of our people to achieve their freedom, their independence, their sovereignty. It has been an act of barbarism. It has been an inhumane act. The representative symbols of the United States' economic power, the World Trade Center Towers, were attacked by an act of terrorism of great proportions. The Pentagon, whose walls enclose the United States' military planning headquarters, has been attacked by the United States of America. The Pentagon structures, whose walls contain the headquarters for planning military interventions in every corner of the planet, were also attacked.

The Macheteros, in no way can we accept, much less justify acts of this nature. We, revolutionaries, are moved by love for humanity, freedom, and human dignity. We reject the act that has been committed because it is in opposition to that love. We share the pain of our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters in the United States. We stand in solidarity with the families of the innocent victims of the American people affected by sorrow and great pain. However, when we analyze the vileness contained in the minds of those who believe that through acts of such a nature that their objectives and demands must be achieved, we are obliged to state our position in order to comply with the highest sense of responsibility that corresponds to us. In doing so, we see no greater difference between that act of terrorist criminality and those committed by the United States government in the world. It is they who create the conditions for such a situation.

[...]

Those cruel facts that with their insensitivity, with their hegemonic claims, with their colonialism, with their international capitalist system, have had as their objective to satisfy the craving for the economic power of a tiny and infamous minority of the economic sectors of the United States, and the effect of imposing misery on the vast majorities that make up the human mass. It is the same policy that subjugates peoples, that sickens the mind, annihilates humanity, and keeps it in a horrible state of meekness and alienation, which turns men and women's creativity for art, for sport, and even for sexual reproduction into a source of commercialized income. Now, with that merciless act carried out in the towers of the World Trade Center, they suffer what we the people have suffered for centuries at the hands of their systems, and they cry out. They make their alienated procurers in our country demand that we denounce "terrorism." Naturally, they seek to justify the open repression of patriots who fight for freedom and independence. They intend to change Puerto Rican's public opinion using the "terrorist" label that they indiscriminately assign to anyone who challenges their political pretensions and, above all, to achieve the acceptance of our people regarding their intentions with Vieques, which are the same ones that they have exercised on the island for more than 60 years.

[...]

We do not present ourselves as monopolists of the truth. But there are not two or many truths in human existence. There is only one truth, and that truth is framed by the very theological nature and religiousness of the majority of humanity, regardless of their sectarian “denominations.” For our part, Los Macheteros, we analyze life and existence with the spirituality that our condition as revolutionaries demands of us.

There is the great truth of good and evil. Colonialism, and all that it symbolizes, belongs to evil, and it has not changed in our country. The bombings in Vieques belong to evil, and they do not intend to change it. War belongs to evil, and the imperialists, the globalizing capitalists, and the tyrants and dictators do not want to abandon such practices. The exploitation of some majorities of human beings by some tiny minorities of other human beings belongs to evil; they do not want to give in to the people’s demands for justice. Poverty and misery, unjustified famine, social inequality, unhealthy conditions, and deaths due to the lack of free health care belong to evil. The merchants of that evil do everything they can to ensure that it remains unchanged. And, above all, at this time, terrorism, as a concept used to overcome the injustices that humanity is experiencing, belongs to evil and must be modified as a concept because, deep down, it contains the unacceptable tendency to substitute one evil for others, one exploiter for another.

For the fighters who defend the highest rights of humanity, all this is unacceptable. We have always rejected such methods, which are instilled and exercised, in the first place, by the same people who seek to prevent changes that favor and benefit humanity.

The reality in Vieques has not changed. The reality of colonial exploitation has not changed. The struggle to achieve peace for Vieques must continue without falling into the trap of permitting these unfortunate events to be manipulated by the United States and colonial governments to stop or divert this cause for justice and peace for our brothers and sisters on Isla Nena. Neither can they be manipulated to divert attention or to allow them to encourage the repression of our Puerto Rican patriots in struggle, like the one they are plotting at this very moment. Let us not allow our extraordinary human sense and noble compassion, our understanding, and our goal for justice to be diverted by the fear of being accused or demagogically condemned. We have lived and are living with the truth.

We know of their plans and claims toward Los Macheteros. We know of their intention to destroy us. But we warn them that they will not eliminate our ideas and objectives for freedom and justice. We love life and freedom for our people. But do not try to attack us or try to justify your murderous and political intentions with deception and manipulation because Los Macheteros will not fall into your traps.

We are the children of Lares; we are the children of Betances; we are the children of Don Pedro; and, above all, we are the children and adherents of truth, justice, freedom, and equality for the good of humanity. We do not fear them because we know that we are bearers of the truth and justice and because, with these powerful ideological and philosophical weapons, we have learned not to fear even the possibility of death. We know ourselves to be passionate men and women who adhere to the truth. We fight for it.

In this first act of Lares of the new millennium, we renew our unwavering oath never to sacrifice the spirit that Lares instilled in the conscience of our people, and hence, of Los Macheteros. We are sure that we belong to the forces of good and so we can proclaim with the certainty that the spirit of justice and reason gives us:

Long Live Peace for Vieques!

Long Live Free Puerto Rico!

Until Victory, Always!

Commemoration of the Grito de Lares

Message from the Boricua People's Army—Macheteros

September 23, 2001

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA;
www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=155

13

URUGUAY

Tupamaros National Liberation Movement (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros), MLN-T

On July 31, 1963, a small group of revolutionaries raided the Tiro Suizo gun club in the city of Nueva Helvecia, about 130 km from Montevideo, to seize its weapons. This revolutionary action was engineered and carried out by the Tupamaros National Liberation Movement (1963–1970), better known as the Tupamaros, a recently formed urban guerrilla movement. The organization's genius dates back to a year earlier when a handful of leftist organizations composed mainly of students and professionals formed the "Coordinator," the precursor to the MLN-T. After internal factionalism primarily caused by a litany of issues, especially the role of armed resistance, those in favor of the latter formed the Tupamaros in 1966. Its leader, Raúl Sendic, was a former peasant, labor organizer, and lawyer. In the 1950s, he represented worker organizations in their disputes with the state and large capitalists. The organization took its name from the rebel leader Túpac Amaru II, a mestizo who led a rebellion launched by mestizos and indigenous people against the Viceroyalty of Peru in 1780. The MLN-T took up arms in response to the prevailing political and economic strife in Uruguay. Besides revolutionary actions, the MLN-T had a house organ called *Mate amargo* (Bitter Mate) after the popular tea from Argentina and Uruguay. The group mostly operated in Montevideo, and, despite its disadvantages, the Tupamaros became experts in urban guerrilla warfare. This entailed a combination of expropriations, bombings, and the kidnapping of high-profile foreign and domestic figures. For instance, on July 31, 1970, the Tupamaros abducted and killed Dan Mitrione, a CIA agent who had been training Uruguayan counterinsurgency staff on torture. Their revolutionary actions also had a "Robin Hood-like" character to them. For example,

on one occasion the MLN-T seized a food truck and distributed its contents to poor people. In 1971, the Tupamaros published "The Revolutionary Program of the MLN-T," which underlines the organization's vision for socialist revolution. It stresses the centrality of radical and swift social change, a direct departure from the piecemeal and ineffective policies implemented by the existing political parties. Between 1971 and 1972, the state launched a full-fledged operation to eliminate the Tupamaros, killing dozens of insurgents. Also, several leading figures in the organization were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms, including José Mujica (the future President of Uruguay) and the famous playwright, Mauricio Rosencof. Amid growing repression and with other popular political movements occurring simultaneously, the MLN-T was deeply involved in the creation of the *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front), a political front composed of multiple leftist organizations and groups, to compete in the 1971 elections. While the Tupamaros were not abandoning the armed struggle, in a communiqué titled "How and Why did the Broad Front Emerge," they described in detail their reason for supporting such a move. Two years later, on June 27, 1973, a civic dictatorship took power and remained in place for 12 years. In 1985, Uruguay held democratic elections and the Tupamaros laid down their arms and joined the FA four years later.

The Revolutionary Program of the MLN-Tupamaros

The Tupamaros National Liberation Movement has outlined the chief components of a revolutionary program that can only be accomplished by a revolutionary government inspired by this ideology.

The launching of this program does not signify that we will not endorse any other transitional program that pursues the same ends as those raised by the CNT and other people's forces. The Tupamaros-MLN's short 6-point platform could have led the country to normalcy, but the government refused to acquiesce. The proposal included the restitution of liberties, the unfreezing of wages, the reinstatement of those dismissed by security forces, the release of political prisoners, etc. Our main aims toward the reconstruction of the country by a revolutionary government rest in Agrarian Reform.

Large livestock farms, large plantations, and large dairies shall be expropriated and managed by the workers: Since most of the country's wealth comes from the countryside, its farming will be capitalized and mechanized to multiply its production. Small rural businesses will be respected by those who work in them. Rural workers, such as tenants, workers, and intermediaries, who today have limited rights to the land, will be given effective rights to it. The land is for those who toil it. The best technical assistance will be available for all rural producers, in addition to fertilizers, seeds, wires, and other instruments to increase its yield.

Industry

1. Large factories will be socialized and managed by workers.
2. Domestic industries will be encouraged and protected, especially those that use local raw materials, meat, wool, hides, oilseeds, etc., and all those that have a secure future in the domestic and global markets.

Trade

1. The government will directly manage imports, exports, and foreign commerce in general.
2. Wholesale trade, large supermarkets, warehouses, shops, and meat markets, etc., will be socialized and managed by their workers.

Credit: Savings and loans will be centralized by the state, which will direct investments toward the production sectors or construction, and services of social interest.

Urban Reform

1. Large homeowners will be expropriated from homes that exceed their family's housing needs, ensuring a roof over the heads of the homeless.
2. Luxury mansions will also be confiscated and used for cultural, educational, or other public utility purposes.
3. Priority in economic planning will be given to the construction of sanitary housing for homeless families. Both production and trade, credit, and the economy, in general, will be carefully planned to facilitate output, eliminate competition, and completely eradicate superfluous intermediation and speculation.

Foreign Capital: Large industries, businesses, and banks that are wholly or partially owned by foreign capital will be expropriated without compensation.

Labor Compensation

1. The standard of living of all workers will be raised based on the equitable distribution of the country's wealth and national productivity.
2. Insofar as the increase in production permits, a rule of allocation shall be established for each according to their needs.

Education

1. The state will guarantee universal education by maintaining and providing materials to students until they complete their studies. Teaching will be oriented toward those specializations that have to do with high-tech production.
2. As in other areas, the administration of education will be carried out by the people themselves. Public Health: The best facilities to care for the sick will be placed at the service of all the people without discrimination. For example, private sanatoriums and large pharmaceutical laboratories will be expropriated. Senior citizens and the disabled: All persons who are unable to work will be supported in all their needs.

Justice

1. The current codes designed for the protection of private property and the capitalist regime, in general, will be replaced by others that take into account essential human values.
2. The rehabilitation of criminal offenders will be done through education and work before and after their release.
3. Criminal sentences handed down by the bourgeois justice system to persons who have committed so-called common crimes will be reviewed in their entirety, as will acquittals for crimes committed by individual members of the regime.
4. All persons who collaborate in the counter-revolution, such as those who have committed murder and other crimes in the service of the present regime, or committed slander and lies against the people's cause through the media, will be imprisoned based on the severity of their crime. Armed Defense of the Revolution: Both the rise to power and the fulfillment of the Revolution's objectives will only be guaranteed by arming the people to defend themselves.

Liberty or Death!

Tupamaro National Liberation Movement

Montevideo, March 1971

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados, CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=122

How and Why Did the Frente Amplio Emerge

The Frente Amplio (Broad Front, FA) was founded in 1971 as an alliance, without exclusions, of parties, movements, and individuals without a party reference, which coincided with forming this political alliance. The FA was configured,

from its inception, as an alliance that aims to transcend simple participation in national elections. Throughout the 1960s, several significant events occurred for the subordinate classes that became antecedents, enriching the awareness that a political alliance of democratic, left-wing, and anti-imperialist forces was possible founded on unity without exclusions.

In summary, these antecedents consisted of:

1. The constitution of two left-wing fronts in 1962, one centered on the Communist Party known by its initials as FIDEL and the Socialist Party or UP.
2. The creation of a single worker's union, the *Convención Nacional de Trabajadores* (National Convention of Workers, CNT), which unified the expanding labor union movement by incorporating the public official's, bank employees', and public education worker's associations. It is important that the Center's formation took place under a program founded on four points: agrarian reform, the nationalization of the banking system, and the nationalization of foreign trade and leading industrial companies.
3. The Movement in defense of public liberties, a democratic alliance made up of left-wing parties, factions of traditional parties, and social organizations in conflict with the government of Jorge Pacheco Areco and infringement on freedoms through the application, virtually ongoing, of the Prompt Security Measures, an equivalent to a state of siege in other countries. This was the last chronological step that preceded the efforts directly related to the Frente Amplio.

From its inception, the Frente Amplio transcended the alliance of political parties and movements to include a wide range of people who identified themselves by their adherence to the FA. From the onset, it created its own grassroots organization: committees and coordinators, which was not and is not the sum total of militants belonging to the political parties that comprise it.

Participation in the national elections of 1971, with 18 percent of the vote, consolidated its possibilities, gathering new elements to fight the old forms of political domination by the bourgeois, traditional parties that operated in a political system designed for a bipartisan relationship.

Since its foundation, until June 1973, a hardening process took place in the form of domination that led to the replacement of the reigning personnel by, fundamentally, the Armed Forces officers, without this implying an essential change in class domination.

Constitutive Declaration

The profound structural crisis that the country has suffered for decades, its dependence on foreigners, and the predominance of an oligarchy that collaborates with imperialism, have created, on the one hand, deep tensions and, on the other, a climate of collective concern about the very fate of our nation.

When the economic decline led to major inflation and crippled any chances of development, the oligarchy found, in the current government, a coherent political interpreter of their own to respond to the crisis. Both tried to establish an order based on despotism and trampled public and union freedoms. They physically and materially attacked the University and the high schools.

They impoverished the workers by actually freezing wages and only slightly prices. They reduced the purchasing power of civil servants and employees, retirees and pensioners, and vast sectors of the middle classes. They asphyxiated modest and medium-sized industrialists, merchants, and rural producers. And they also paralyzed productive forces and discouraged work.

They dismantled vital resources for the national economy like official banks, the National Refrigerator, energy entities, and transportation services. They progressively alienated, by order of the Monetary Fund, external indebtedness, by contracting harmful loans, and by complicity in criminal currency evasion, the country's sovereignty.

All of this in order to keep intact the privileges of a stateless and parasitic minority in alliance with the imperial power's repressive forces. The Republic is moving toward becoming an ignominious colony of the United States.

Clear-headed people, the working class and student youth, creators and diffusers of culture, progressive political parties confronted that anti-national and anti-popular behavior by defending the nation's existence. In doing so, they experienced humiliation, loss of liberty, dismissal, confiscation, proscription, torture and crimes, the curtailment of rights and closure of mediums of expression—a whole range of abuses that harken back to dark times. The blood of the youth and workers watered the streets because the libertarian will of the Uruguayan people, their dignity and decorum, and the growing awareness of the root causes of this outrageous abuse of power demanded a response that did not capitulate in the face of repression and continued to forge, in the arduous experience of the struggle, which are the bases of popular unity.

The historical conjuncture led to a polarization between the people and the oligarchy that would have been fulfilled in any way, since the workers, students, and all progressive sectors resisted anti-national impositions. But the regressivity and government violence, unprecedented, over a century, served as an accelerator in the confrontation process, in the collective consciousness of urgent and profound changes, in the need to implement a political apparatus capable of uniting the authentically national popular forces to exhaust democratic means so that the people, through their struggle and mobilization, could carry out the comprehensive transformations for which the entire country yearns.

The political unity of the progressive currents that culminated in the formation of the Broad Front, closing a cycle in the country's history and simultaneously opening another one of hope and faith in the future, was conceived within the people's struggle against a fascist philosophy. That unity, by its essence and by its origin, by having the people play the protagonist, has brought together

red and white, Christian Democrats and Marxists, men and women of different ideologies, religious and philosophical conceptions, workers, students, teachers, priests and pastors, small and medium-sized producers, industrialists and merchants, civilians and soldiers, intellectuals and artists—in a word, all the representatives of work and culture—the legitimate spokesmen of the very heart of nationality. Because this is a profound movement rooted in the pure traditions of our country, that collects and venerates the structures that come from the bottom of history, and simultaneously has clear objectives to achieve a successful future, feels that its most profound facet connects it with the enlightened, insubordinate, and combatant inherent of Artiguism [José Gervasio Artigas].

In this salient circumstance, aware of our responsibility and convinced that no isolated political force would be able to open a genuine alternative of power to the organized people, we have understood that it is imperative right now to concert our efforts, through a political agreement, to establish a program destined to overcome the structural crisis, to restore the country's destiny as an independent nation, and allow the people to fully exercise their individual, political, and union rights and freedoms. A program of democratic and anti-imperialist import that establishes the control and the planned and nationalized direction of the economic system's key points in order to bring the country out of its stagnation; to redistribute income equitably, end the dominance of the oligarchy as intermediaries, of bankers and landowners, and carry out a policy of effective freedom and well-being, based on the productive effort of all the inhabitants of the Republic.

We express our deep conviction that the construction of a just society, with a national and progressive sense, freed from imperial tutelage, is impossible to come by under a regime dominated by big capital. The break with this system is an unavoidable condition of changing outdated structures and effectively conquering the nation's independence. In due course, this will require the modification of the legal-institutional order to facilitate the transformations that it seeks.

We conceived this national effort as part of the struggle for the liberation and development of the peoples of the Third World in general, which we are in solidarity with, and in particular, the one taking place in Latin America, where it happened more than a century and a half ago, and today the people's insurgency will conquer of the second and final emancipation.

For the above reasons, we have determined:

1. To constitute a unitary political front, the Broad Front, through the convergence of political forces and independent citizens who sign this document, to heighten the fight immediately in all fields, both in opposition to the current tyranny or those who intend to continue it, as well as in the government. This Broad Front is open to other political forces that advance their own progressive and advanced democratic national abstraction.
2. Obtain in this same act, a formal commitment to establish a joint program and stick to it in the struggle, as well as establish coordination in all fields of

political action, on the basis that we attribute to the people, democratically organized, the leading role in the historical process.

3. Establish that this coalition of forces, which is not a merger and where each of its participants preserves their identity, must be endowed with an organization with grassroots nuclei and common authorities, an imperative mandate, and other disciplinary mechanisms that ensure effective compliance with the commitments agreed upon.
4. Declare that the primary objective of the Broad Front is permanent political action and not electoral contests. At the same time, it will face the electoral bodies together, with honest and straightforward solutions that restore citizens' will, and avoid its current falsification.

Tupamaros National Liberation Movement

Montevideo, February 5, 1971

Source: Documentación de Historia Política Social y Movimiento Popular Contemporáneo de Chile y América Latina- Archivo Chile;
www.archivochile.com/entrada.html

14

VENEZUELA

Armed Forces of National Liberation (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional), FALN

On January 21, 1958, the recently formed the Patriotic Junta, a committee of different leftist tendencies, called for a general strike to oust dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez. Led by the former journalist Patricio Ojeda, the Patriotic Junta ultimately brought down Pérez Jiménez on January 23. While the Patriotic Junta remained a powerful political force in the early post-dictatorship period and pledged its commitment to democratic change, tensions began to boil, mostly between it and the Democratic Action Party led by Rómulo Betancourt. While in exile in New York, Betancourt and the leaders of Venezuela's two other main political parties signed the Puntofijo Pact and essentially usurped control over the popular revolution. In 1958, Betancourt won the presidential elections and promised to forge a coalition government. However, President Betancourt deliberately excluded radical factions in favor of the parties who co-signed the Puntofijo Pact. This roused communists and socialists. Betancourt also had to contend with discord with the younger and more militant wing of the Democratic Action Party. Firmly pro-Cuba, this faction's ideas about revolutionary change collided with Betancourt's. In retaliation, he expelled the dissidents from the party in 1960. That same year, they formed the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). The Communist Party had been heavily campaigning against Betancourt's policies and provided a space for new actors to increase their political profile; among those was Douglas Bravo, a communist who participated in the 1957 revolt and later became a leader in the FALN. In 1962, Ojeda resigned from the National Congress, and a year later various movements met in Caracas to form the FALN. The fight between the state and the FALN's different guerrilla fronts expanded

throughout various parts of Venezuela. Between 1963 and 1969, few people remained unaffected by both sides' actions. From a distance, the United States remained alert regarding the situation in Venezuela, offering military assistance to the governments that fought the guerrillas, which, of course, was criticized by the FALN and its supporters. The following document is a letter that the organization wrote to C. Allen Stewart, the US Ambassador to Venezuela.

Letter to the US Ambassador

Your Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States of America

Mr. Ambassador:

The Command of the FALN Guerrilla Detachments operating in Falcón State has presented evidence that implicates US personnel in the military actions currently being carried out by the government of Mr. Rómulo Betancourt against the guerrillas in the aforementioned region.

The evidence:

1. The presence of a group of North American advisors who participate in the supervision of military operations. This group has installed itself in the command posts in the "Piar," "Girardot," "Carabobo," "Urdaneta" Battalions, and others that are involved in military offensives against the FALN in Pueblo Nuevo, Cabure, Santa Cruz de Bucaral, and other places in the state of Falcón.
2. The steady supply of military equipment and technical combat personnel from the United States to the forces participating in anti-guerrilla operations in the state of Falcón.
3. The FBI and staff from the US Military Intelligence Services in Coro, capital of Falcón, which has assumed the management of a police operation against guerrilla detachments and forces opposed to the current government.
4. The decision of the oil companies and other North American companies to provide their facilities, vehicles, media, equipment, etc., for government police forces to use in their operations against FALN guerrilla detachments in Falcón.

All these facts reveal the United States' unabashed intervention in the war unleashed by Mr. Rómulo Betancourt against our people, in open and gross violation of international law, and the sovereignty and independence of Venezuela.

Because such intervention in the internal affairs of Venezuelans is based solely and exclusively on force and violence, the FALN at this moment declares that the United States assumes responsibility for the reprisals to which its nationals and its interests in our country are exposed because it participates in military operations against the guerrilla detachments.

Make the Homeland Free or Die for Venezuela!

FALN

National Guerrilla Command

La Floresta, Caracas

January 16, 1963

Source: Centro de Investigaciones de Movimientos Armados,
CEDEMA; www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=3717

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