Abstract

This dissertation examines Latin American Cold War anticommunism as a transnational political imaginary rooted in the region's political idioms and history, particularly in the legacies, postwar transformations, and social resonance of right wing nationalisms, and their elective affinities with authoritarian forms of state-making. Based on the analysis of state security archives, newspapers, pamphlets and other propaganda materials from Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and the United States, it shows how in both national and transnational arenas anticommunists debated, disseminated, and acted upon their ideas of "the enemy," often posing violence as a legitimate instrument for the "defense of society" through repression from above and from below. The main argument is that the intersections between the local and global meanings of anticommunism enabled it to cut across social, ideological, and national borders, gaining support among a wide range of social groups, prompting forms of national and transnational mobilization, and the implementation of legal/extra-legal institutional responses to the "communist threat." In contrast to narratives that portray the U.S. as the sole architect and instigator of the region's anticommunist crusades, the dissertation accounts for moments of coercion, collaboration, negotiation and tension between these Latin American anticommunists and domestic and foreign state actors, thus providing a nuanced interpretation about the local roots, efficacy, and traction of the anti-communist imaginary and on the differentiated impacts of U.S. intervention in the region.

The three cases shed light on convergent themes and transnational ideological linkages, while noting the importance of local differentiation. Part I tackles the intellectual and political history of the construction of dissidence as banditry, criminality, and communist insurgency in Colombia, tracing the uses of anticommunism as a frame to interpret the causes and possible solutions to endemic violence, and how these assessments shaped Colombia’s early process of counterinsurgent state-building, from 1948 to 1966. Part II deals with the history of Catholic-nationalist and neofascist movements in Argentina between 1946 and 1970, showing how the Argentine *nacionalista* constellation attempted to navigate the Peronist/anti-Peronist divide, exert influence on state affairs, and shape public perceptions about the country’s recurrent crises, while cultivating links with anticommunist fellow travelers abroad. Part III develops an analysis of anti-communism in Mexico in the period between 1946 and 1972, examining the grassroots and popular dimensions of Cold War anticommunism and how they reflected the historical tensions, negotiations, and forms of collaboration between right wing Catholic dissidents and the postrevolutionary PRI regime. Despite their relatively limited national influence and their ambiguous stance vis-a-vis “official” anti-communism, these largely understudied groups were crucial actors of the Cold War in Mexico and beyond, as they built and capitalized on important domestic and external alliances (particularly with the Argentine Right), and inserted themselves in global initiatives such as the World Anti-Communist League, a hub of transnational activism for the Global Right. This dissertation thus makes a contribution to the historiography of right wing politics in Latin America, by stressing the centrality of the idea of “the enemy” in shaping the history of the Cold War more broadly, and by putting forward a historical understanding of the strategies of anticommunist mobilization that various actors used to face the local, national, and global challenges of the Cold War.

ANTICOMMUNISM, THE EXTREME RIGHT, AND THE POLITICS OF ENMITY IN ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA, AND MEXICO, 1946-1972

by

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Introduction

> *These are not the times for sleeping in a nightcap, but with weapons for a pillow, like the warriors of Juan de Castellanos: weapons of the mind, which conquer all others. Barricades of ideas are worth more than barricades of stones.*
>
> - José Martí, "Our America" (1892)

This dissertation delves into the Cold War both as a historical period, and as an affective, intellectual, and experiential framework for its actors and protagonists, to scrutinize and disentangle the history and broader significance of anticommunism as one of the Right's most effective "weapons of the mind," and as one of its most enduring contributions to the Latin American political imaginary of the past and present centuries. This is, in other words, an effort to elucidate the historicity and currency of Cold War imaginaries, and to understand the resounding familiarity of the Right's present-day success in mobilizing the fears, anxieties, and aspirations of its publics.

Prompted by a wave of post-revisionist[1] scholarship that stresses the importance of decentering the Cold War and studying it through the interactions between ideology, technology, and culture,[2] I deal with the transformations, continuities, radicalizations, and productive tensions in the anticommunist imaginary in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico during the Cold War, mainly between 1946 and 1972. I examine the local and transnational dimensions of anticommunism in the historical links between right-wing nationalist, conservative, fascist, and neofascist intellectuals, movements and organizations; the emergence of anticommunist movements that appealed to national sovereignty and the preservation of cultural values and political institutions; and the legitimation of legal and extra-legal forms of violence against those perceived to be enemies of the state and society. My analysis highlights the ways in which anticommunism's global scope acquired contextual and transcontextual meanings that allowed actors to understand the conflicts of their time in a Cold War cypher. In turn, for Argentine, Colombian and Mexican anticommunists, this link between the local and the global substantively transformed the geopolitical Cold War into "an intimate affair" with immediate local repercussions, while also inserting local conflicts and events into a broader framework of historical experience.

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[1] I use the term "revisionism" to refer to different waves of (mainly) American historiography that since the 1960s disproved the thesis of Soviet expansionism as the catalyst for the Cold War, instead emphasizing the effects of American imperial power and the domestic constraints imposed on American foreign policy. A classic example of this approach is William A. Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1959). The most emblematic of the post-revisionist approaches is John Lewis Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), which stresses the limits of both the US and Soviet spheres of influence and the role of misperception in triggering episodes of high tension in the international arena. An on-going wave of postrevisionism focuses on the multipolarity of the Cold War, the existence of multiple arenas, and the importance, or even the centrality, of "peripheral" actors and processes in shaping the conflicts of the period through a mutual interaction. See, for instance, Tanya Harmer, Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Hal Brands, Latin America's Cold War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Odd Arne Westad, The Global Cold War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Piero Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Rather than treating anticommunism as an internally consistent body of doctrine that was uniformly distributed in time and space, I account for how those who identified as anticommunists wrote, spoke, acted, and mobilized in local, national, and transnational spheres. In emphasizing anticommunism's quality as a political imaginary, I am also attentive to the ways in which anticommunists' rendered politics as a space of contention and conflict, how they situated themselves in such space, and how they formulated and debated the ideological and practical aspects of their struggle, including those that contemplated its radicalization and articulated different arguments about the necessity and inevitability of violence.

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[2] See Odde Arne Westad, "The new international history of the Cold War: three possible paradigms," Diplomatic History 24, No 4 (Fall 2000), 551-65.

Anticommunism was a discursive formation, a political imaginary, and form of political persuasion that produced different contextual notions of what it meant to be an anticommunist both in theory and in practice. Anticommunists of various ideological and social backgrounds acted collectively in public and covert ways and from different platforms of civil society and the state, and inserted themselves as political subjects in local, national, regional and global anticommunist initiatives, such as creation of neofascist student organizations, the mobilization of Catholic civic groups, and the dissemination of anti-subversive / counterinsurgent knowledge. This dissertation accounts for the interactions between these different spheres and circuits of anticommunist theory and practice, by looking at the transformations, continuities, and modes of enactment of the anticommunist imaginary. Based on a plurality of readings about local and national realities, anticommunists underwent their own processes of Cold War radicalization, and contributed to the justification and exertion of repressive and punitive violence from above and from below.

The stories that follow have a common point of departure in the late 1940s, when Latin America stood at the center of US concerns for the protection of the Western hemisphere as its natural sphere of influence. With anticommunism at the forefront of President Harry S. Truman's doctrine of "containment," the concerns of Argentines, Colombians, and Mexicans living through the first decade of the Cold War seemed more locally rooted and connected to national and regional debates regarding the course of political and economic modernization, and the extent to which Latin America as a whole could circumvent the seemingly strict geopolitical terms of the Cold War order. However, as I show here, the lexicon of a global civilizational conflict against communism had a deep-seated pre-Cold War trajectory in these countries, with meanings that were shaped by local contexts as much as they were by Latin America's strong cultural and intellectual connections with the global history of radical Left and Right wing politics, from early socialism, anarchism, and communism, to the nationalist and fascist constellation of the interwar period.

For the three cases here studied, the postwar juncture gave way to different experiences with political polarization and conflict, allowing those who embraced anticommunism as a political identity to shape its local meanings in light of such experiences, and to explore different forms of engaging the world through the politics of enmity of the anticommunist imaginary. The political polarization after the fall of Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina (1955); the outbreak of factional violence in Colombia (1948); and the implementation of "national-revolutionary" authoritarian modernization in Mexico (1946), provided anticommunists with fertile ground to put forward political diagnoses centered on the threatening presence of seditious, subversive, criminal enemies; and to act upon such diagnoses, permeating different realms of the state and civil society. In a span of two decades and up to the early 1970s, anticommunist activists, intellectuals, and politicians in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico devised a range of initiatives at the local, national, and transnational level, exerting different degrees of influence on the conduct of state affairs, capitalizing on the social traction of the anticommunist imaginary, and partaking, in different capacities in the transnationalization of the Latin American anticommunist crusades. I thus deal with the period between 1946 and 1972 to locate the anticommunist movements in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico in relation to key events in the region, such as the US-backed coup in Guatemala (1954); the Cuban Revolution and its Marxist-Leninist turn (1959-1961); the Second Vatican Council (1962); and the election and overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile (1970-1973). These known historical turning points actualized the transnational drive of the anticommunist imaginary, and were linked to key moments in the making of a Latin American anticommunist movement. Namely, the founding, in Mexico City, of the first Latin America-wide anticommunist organization, the Inter-American Committee for the Defense of the Continent (1954); the creation, in Taiwan, of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) as a global federation of anticommunist organizations (1967); and the hosting of the League's fifth conference in Mexico City (1972), which gave the Latin Americans (and, particularly, the Mexicans) a platform to promote, endorse, and participate in clandestine anticommunist operations throughout the continent and beyond. As clear precedents to a well-known program of clandestine hemispheric collaboration between state and non-state actors (Operation Cóndor),[3] these histories of transnational collaboration remain, with few exceptions, largely understudied by Latin Americanist historians and scholars of the Cold War, and have been often subsumed under the grand narratives of the covert and overt US intervention in the region.[4]

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[3] On Operation Cóndor see J. Patrice McSherry, Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Peter Kornbluh, The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability (New York: The New Press, 2003).

[4] There are, in fact, no systematic monograph-length studies of the World Anticommunist League, partly due to the difficulties of multinational archival research and the covert nature of most of the organization's activities. The most-well known account of the WACL is the journalistic book-length exposé by Jon Lee

This dissertation engages with three national contexts and three distinct geopolitical spaces within Latin America (the Southern Cone, the Upper Andean Region, and North/Central America) that, particularly in the literature on the Cold War, are seldom treated together from comparative or transnational perspectives. The three countries were, in their own right and in different ways, sites of anticommunist activity historically and culturally connected to different metropolitan centers (Spain, France, Great Britain, the United States), to other "peripheries," and with each other through various forms of transnational interaction between individuals and organizations (including states). By analyzing these connections, I propose tackling Latin American Cold War anticommunism as a political imaginary and a heterogeneous constellation of movements that shared a contextual notion of the enemy, the sacralization of anticommunist violence, an ambiguous relationship to the state, and the adoption of, and adaptation to, the forms of political action and mobilization championed by the revolutionary Left. In this regard, from a historiographical and a methodological perspective, my approach parallels to some extent those of recent contributions to the history of the Left, which equally stress the latter's tensions between its internationalist drive, the ambivalent relationships with its "centers" (Moscow, Beijing and Havana), and

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Anderson and Scott Anderson, Inside the League: The Shocking Exposé of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World (New York: Dodd-Mead, 1986). A notable contribution to the Latin American aspect of this history is Ariel Armony, Argentina, the United States, and the Anticommunist Crusade in Central America, 1977-1984 (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1997). Historians of Western Europe have placed the WACL as a key actor in the covert CIA operations in Western Europe during the Cold War; see, for instance, Daniele Ganser, NATO's Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe (London: Frank Cass, 2005); Giles Scott-Smith, Western Anticommunism and the Interdoc Network: Cold War Internationale (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2012). A recent study focused on the United States but striving for a global perspective on these actors, Kyle Burke, "A Global Brotherhood of Paramilitaries: American Conservatives, Anticommunist Internationalism, and Covert Warfare in the Cold War" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2015).

its rootedness in national contexts.[5] This way of tackling the history of the extreme Right, and of the Cold War in general, can help bridge the analytical gap between national historiographies that stress local or national peculiarities, the comparative approaches that rely on the logic of contrast and similarity, and more recent developments in transnational history that understand certain social phenomena as "spilling over" national borders.

Treating Argentina, Colombia and Mexico as "porous case studies" allows sifting through similarity and convergence in forms of collective action that sought to expand the scope of local anticommunist crusades beyond national borders. The transnational lens enables looking at different types connections – intellectual, ideological, political – that, rather than undermine, in fact enhance the "differences and similarities" approach of comparative history. While the structure of the dissertation favors a case-oriented compartmentalized narrative, I stress specific junctures in which Argentines, Colombians and Mexicans appealed to a shared intellectual and ideological milieu to devise various forms of anticommunist theory, practice and collaboration to address local, regional, and global political concerns. By pointing to the tensions between the particularities of national contexts and the transnational drive of anticommunist ideology and movements, I also emphasize the transcontextual character of the links and elective affinities between the political projects of the Right, the forms of social mobilization against the perceived threat of communism, and the logics and mechanisms of state-making that informed governmental action against this purported enemy.

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[5] Recent studies on the Latin American Left have tackled this rich history of transnational exchanges, collaboration, and tensions. See, for instance, Tobias Rupprecht, Soviet Internationalism After Stalin: Interaction and Exchange Between the USSR and Latin America During the Cold War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Matthew Rothwell, Transpacific Revolutionaries: the Chinese Revolution in Latin America (New York: Routledge, 2013); Daniela Spenser, Stumbling Its Way Through Mexico: The Early Years of the Communist International (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011); Daniela Spenser, The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Van Gosse, Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America, and the Making of a New Left (London; New York: Verso, 1993).

In various national and transnational circuits, Argentine, Colombian and Mexican anticommunists interacted, formed bonds of solidarity, and debated various ways of being and acting in the world against their purported enemies. I pose that part of the explanation for these multiple and yet converging meanings of "being an anticommunist" lay in the plurality of the Right as the foremost historical proponent of anticommunism and of its intense ideological and existential struggle with the enemy. Dealing with the Right as a plural actor (*las derechas* or "the Right*s*") allows for examining its own intellectual trajectories and influences across time and space, the conflicting views that right-wing anticommunists held regarding their own traditions (conservatism, nationalism, Catholicism, fascism), and on the means and ends of their struggle. In other words, my goal is to provide an account of the ideological, political, and experiential aspects of anticommunism, problematizing its pull towards a cohesive, unified platform, and to present it as a field of contestation within these *derechas*.[6]

Anticommunism and the Long Cold War

As a political imaginary marked by a radical antagonism to Marxism and the Left, anticommunism can hardly be circumscribed to the historical Cold War (1945-1990). Liberal and conservative critiques of communism abounded since the publication of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto (1848), and particularly in the aftermath of the Bolshevik

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[6] For a groundbreaking contribution that builds on this idea of the Right as a plural actor, see Sandra McGee Deutsch, Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Revolution of 1917. Thus, while historically tied to "the reactionary mind" of conservative counter-Enlightenment,[7] the anticommunism of the twentieth century belongs more properly to the "long Cold War" that emerged from the exacerbation and radicalization of nationalisms during and after World War I, the global reaction to Bolshevik Russia, and the founding of the Komintern in 1919.[8]

Anticommunism was also central to the social doctrine of the Catholic Church as formulated in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Divini Redemptoris* (1937), to its attempts to counter leftist influence on the working class through grassroots activism, and to debates between traditionalist and progressive Catholics over matters of doctrine and "the social question."[9] Similarly, anticommunism was key to the radical/revolutionary genealogy of fascism, with its political and existential fixation on anti-national enemies.[10] The revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism of Georges Sorel, for instance, stood as an anti-materialist "corrective" to revolutionary Marxism, sharing, with other radicalisms of its time, a scathing diagnosis about the decay of bourgeois individualism, laissez-faire liberalism, and parliamentary democracy. For Sorel's fascist descendants, violence was the only means to obliterate this stagnant liberalism and re-instill life into politics, restoring its dynamism through political myths and the waging of a "ceaseless war."[11] In the 1920s and 30s, the global fascist project of nationalist rebirth/restoration through war and imperial expansion would pose communism as the radical enemy against which "the fascist idea" became an equally revolutionary and universal antithesis.[12]

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[7] On conservatism as counter-Enlightenment, see Corey Robin, The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011); Darrin M. McMahon, Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity (Oxford University Press, 2002).

[8] See Enzo Traverso, The European Civil War, 1919-1945 (New York: Verso, 2016). For a conservative take on the impact of communism in modern politics, and particularly in relation to fascism and totalitarianism, see François Furet, The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[9] On the history of social Catholicism in Europe, see Paul Misner, Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991). On the impact of Catholic activism in Latin America, see the collected essays in Stephen J.C. Andes and Julia G. Young, Local Church, Global Church: Catholic Activism in Latin America from Rerum Novarum to Vatican II (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016).

[10] Stanley Payne has analyzed fascism as predicated on two central negations (anti-liberalism and anticommunism) and the goals of an authoritarian state with a multiclass integrated economy and an imperial drive. See Stanley Payne, Fascism: Comparison and Definition (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980). Ernest Nolte also emphasizes the anticommunist core of fascism as seeking "to destroy the enemy by the evolvement of a radically opposed and yet related ideology" (Ernest Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism. New York: New American Library, 1969, 20-21). Zeev Sternhell has explicitly rejected the reduction of fascism to this negative dimension, and has stressed its peculiarity as a specific synthesis of non-Marxist socialism and nationalism with an overarching anti-Enlightenment ethos. See Zeev Sternhell, The Birth of Fascist Ideology

From a liberal-democratic standpoint, anticommunism was fundamental to pre-Cold War attempts by the United States to build a world hegemonic project based on the promotion of democracy, self-determination, and free trade, while advocating against radicalisms and revolutions, particularly those inspired by "outsiders."[13] Joining the anticommunist camp from the Left particularly after the advent of Stalinism, anticommunist socialists of different persuasions rejected Stalin's totalitarianism and

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). On fascism as a "generic" nationalism based on the idea of revolutionary, violent "rebirth," see Roger Griffin, The Nature of Fascism (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[11] Sternhell, The Birth of Fascist Ideology, 36-53. Also see Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[12] For a fascist perspective on the centrality of the relation between anticommunist war and fascism, see Nino D'Alesio, La Guerra Anticomunista Nella Politica e nella Storia del Fascismo (Bologna: Licinio Capere Editore, 1941).

[13] Westad, The Global Cold War, 16-21. Woodrow Wilson's Pan-Americanism would be the regional expression of this project, through a combination of economic coercion, political interference, and the use of trade for the promotion of liberal-democratic values. For a classic study on Pan Americanism as an ambivalent attempt to give diplomacy primacy over the use of interventionist military force, see Mark T. Gilderhus, Pan American Visions: Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986).

what they saw as the subordination of workers organizations to the pro-Soviet politics of the Komintern.[14]

In that sense, the global and hemispheric conflicts that defined the post-1945 period (the Cold War "proper") owed as much to the conduct and outcome of World War II as they did to the internationalism of the Left and the rise of fascism as a form of militaristic anticommunist ultra-nationalism. As I demonstrate in this dissertation, the rationale for Cold War anticommunism was assembled both locally and globally by conservatives, liberals, socialists, fascists, nationalists, and religious movements of various persuasions, as a politics of enmity framed by, but also transcending, the competition between superpowers.

Often treated as peripheral to these seemingly European and North American topics, Latin America was not a passive recipient of the radicalizations that characterized this long Cold War. Home to the first social revolution of the twentieth century, the region has a remarkable record of anarchist and socialist thinkers and movements, a long tradition of nationalist and anti-imperialist thought, as well as a notable and yet often overlooked participation in the fascist constellation of the 1930s. Akin to its strong liberal and radical traditions,[15] Latin America throughout the twentieth century was also a hotbed for right-wing politics, and a constant interlocutor for the European Right.

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[14] Anticommunist socialism was particularly strong in labor organizations in France, Germany, Italy, the United States and Spain. See Federico Romero, The United States and The European Trade Union Movement, 1944-1951 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

[15] On the liberal traditions in Latin America see, amongst others, Carlos Forment, Democracy in Latin America, 1760-1990: Vol 1: Civic Selfhood and Public Life in Mexico and Peru (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Jeremy Adelman, Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Ivan Jaksic, The Meaning of Liberalism in Latin America: The Cases of Chile, Argentina, and Mexico in the Nineteenth Century (Buffal: State University of New York, 1981). The literature on various forms of radicalism in Latin America is extensive; see, for instance, James Baer, Anarchist Immigrants in Spain and Argentina (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Claudio

As historian Paulo Drinot has noted, Latin America's "creole" anticommunism developed not only independent of US influence but also in relation to political struggles across the ideological spectrum, including those within the anti-imperialist Left.[16] The region's anticommunist imaginary was thus rooted in its history as much as it was in transatlantic debates on the different paths to modernization, and the need to impose order and prevent revolution through liberal, social-reformist, corporatist, or dictatorial means.[17] Latin American conservatives and right-wing nationalists of the early twentieth century were, in this regard, as concerned with the threat of communist-inspired revolt and foreign "contamination" as were their French, German, Spanish, or American counterparts.[18] Latin America was also part of the "fascist winds" that historians like Andrea Mammone and Federico Finchelstein show as having blown throughout Europe, and back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean,[19] leaving a legacy of intellectual and

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Lomnitz, The Return of Comrade Flores Magón (New York: Zone Books, 2014); Donald Hodges, Intellectual Foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Sheldon B. Liss, Marxist Thought in Latin America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[16] Referring to the case of the Revolutionary Popular Alliance of the Americas (APRA), Drinot emphasizes the rootedness of socialist and other leftist anticommunisms in concrete debates within the Left, which revolved, for the most part, around the distrust of the Soviet Union and its characterization as another form of imperialism. See Paulo Drinot, "Creole Anticommunism: Labor, the Peruvian Communist Party and APRA, 1930– 1934," Hispanic American Historical Review 92 (4): 703–736.

[17] For analyses of dictatorship in Latin America by historians and other social scientists see Paul H. Lewis, Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America: Dictators, Despots, and Tyrants (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006); Brian Loveman, The Constitution of Tyranny: Regimes of Exception in Spanish America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993); Claudio Véliz, The Centralist Tradition in Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Guillermo O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1973). On dictatorship and authoritarianism more broadly, see Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

[18] On early twentieth century Latin America as a fertile ground for right-wing politics, see Sandra McGee Deutsch, Las Derechas; Alberto Spektorowski, The Origins of Argentina's Revolution of the Right (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003).

[19] See Mateo Albanese and Pablo del Hierro, Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy and the Global Neo-Fascist Network (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Andrea Mammone, Transnational Fascism in France and Italy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Federico Finchelstein,

ideological connections that were sustained throughout the twentieth century. The lay and clerical sectors of Latin American Catholicism had a substantial history of anticommunist mobilization, particularly under the various Catholic Action movements that sprung in the 1920s and 30s.[20] The region's substantial historical experience with US meddling, the identitarian critiques of cultural corruption coming from the North,[21] and the emergence of a Latin American doctrine of non-intervention[22] added other distinctive layers of contestation between different strands of the internationalist anti-imperialist Left, and the anti-interventionist, anti-Marxist, pan-Latin Americanism of the Right. Lastly, Latin American conservatives were not alien to the impact of the Mexican revolution nor to the drive behind the anti-colonial movements in Africa and Asia since the 1910s. Like their leftist opponents, they raised questions about the unviability and decadence of liberalism, and foresaw "national paths" to progress and modernity that could rid their countries, and

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Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919-1945 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[20] For a recent analysis on the transnational politics of Catholic Action, see Stephen Andes, The Vatican and Catholic Activism in Mexico and Chile: the Politics of Transnational Catholicism, 1920-1940 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[21] Various forms of cultural Latin Americanism stressed the radical opposition between the materialistic and instrumental Anglo-Saxon way of life and that of the more spiritual, idealistic *Latinidad* of Spanish America. With its conservative slant against the democratic ethos of mass politics and popular culture, the essay *Ariel* by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó is often credited with turning this opposition into a recurrent theme (known as *arielismo*) in Latin American critiques of US imperialism. See José Enriqué Rodó, Ariel (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1900). Another version of *arielismo* can be found in Mexican writer José Vasconcelos' vindication of *mestizaje* as the fulfillment of Latin America's universal destiny vis-á-vis the Anglo-Saxon race; see José Vasconcelos, La Raza Cósmica: Misión de la Raza Iberoamericana (Paris: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925); and José Vasconcelos, Ulises Criollo (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1935). The Argentine diplomat Manuel Ugarte proposed a more political version of *arielismo*, with a democratic-socialist agenda; see Manuel Ugarte, El Porvenir de América Latina (Valencia: Sempere, 1910); and Manuel Ugarte, La Patria Grande (Madrid: Editora Internacional, 1924).

[22] On the Latin American intellectual and legal roots of anti-interventionism in the creation of the inter-American system, see Juan Pablo Scarfi, The Hidden History of International Law in the Americas: Empire and Legal Networks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

the region at large, of the neo-colonial cultural, political and economic influence of the United States.[23]

After 1945, the Cold War fully projected communism as a totalitarian global project of Soviet intervention, an idea challenged but not discredited by the emergence of Maoist China and the wave of national liberation and anti-colonial struggles in Africa and South East Asia. As Odd Arne Westad has argued, the irruption of the Third World as the main stage of the Cold War shifted the latter's center from Europe to the "peripheries," where local and regional conflicts became proxies for superpower competition. Yet, accounts such as Westad's retain an interpretation that equates "the global" of the global Cold War with US/Soviet rivalry, rendering the Cold War in the Third World (and thus in Latin America) as the interplay of Soviet and American ideologies and practices of intervention, revolutionary and nationalist projects, anti-colonial politics, and the spirit of the non-aligned movement that emerged out of the Bandung conference (1955). As I show in this dissertation, Latin American nationalisms before and during the Cold War were sites of constant political contestation, convergence, and divergence over issues of identity, legitimacy, authority, social change, and paths to development. Anti-interventionism, claims about sovereignty, and different interpretations about the meanings of revolution were part of a political language historically shared, debated, and reformulated by nationalists on the Left and on the Right. Cold War communisms and anticommunisms (in the plural) were not just instruments for proxy intervention by outsiders (although many nationalists would claim otherwise). Rather, as projects, movements, ideologies, and political imaginaries, they were also part of broader repertoires that political actors used to try to make sense of concrete struggles and conflicts.

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[23] For a recent take on the global and "metropolitan" character of anti-colonial/anti-imperialist ideas, even if from a characteristically Eurocentric perspective, see Michael Goebel, Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

In its most restricted bipolar conception, the Cold War made anticommunism a central tenet for US and North Atlantic foreign policy, an external inducement in the conduct of national and international state affairs in the sphere of influence of the United States. In this regard, Greg Grandin has forcefully suggested that the status of Latin America as the testing ground for American intervention before and throughout the Cold War made anticommunism a key premise for increasingly sophisticated forms of political and economic aggression, and for the emergence of a new type of belligerent neo-conservatism in the United States.[24] Without dismissing the importance of these imperial ties and how they shaped the Cold War experience of many Latin Americans, this dissertation puts into question the explanatory power of this type of interpretation. In the urge to present a normative stance vis-a-vis the recent misadventures in American foreign policy, such accounts portray the conduct of inter-American affairs as determined by a seemingly coherent and consistent imperial ideology that teleologically fulfills its truisms. In the struggle between democracy and empire (or rather, between "two visions of democracy", as Grandin puts it), Latin American history is reduced to the interplay between metropolitan ideologies/capital/violence; local resistance by social-democratic or progressive/nationalist forces; and the complicities of alienated, collaborationist, sinister oligarchs, military officers, and clerics. In these narratives, anticommunism appears as a historical contingency, a pragmatic and cynical instrument of the US imperial project; as a form of reactionary false consciousness; a pathology of the American and Latin American conservative mindsets; and/or a mere pretext used by local imperial collaborators for the maintenance of the status quo.

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[24] See Greg Grandin, Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007); Greg Grandin, The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For a series of more nuanced perspectives on the history of US hemispheric relations and the "empire vs. resistance" dyad see Fred Rosen (ed.), Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

I pose that such accounts forego an analysis of the differentiated deployment, contestation, and arrangements of power within "the imperial"; and erase the actual political battles over the meanings of democracy, reform, revolution and counterrevolution that took place in the continent and beyond.[25] More importantly, at least for this study, is that this perspective dismisses the local roots of the anticommunist imaginary in Latin America, painting a static portrait of the Right simply as reactionary, and thus precluding the possibility of understanding the Right as a field of contested traditions and positions (from social Catholicism, to conservatism, to fascism, and different strands of nationalism) vis-a-vis ideological competitors and imperial influence. While holding the United States as a moral and political point of reference, Argentine, Mexican and Colombian anticommunists had conflicting takes on place of the US in their distinct renderings of the anticommunist struggle. In the histories I present in this dissertation, anticommunists negotiated formally and informally to prevent the subordination of their local / regional anticommunist agendas to shifting US national interests, showing how US influence in the region was a crucial and yet temporally and spatially heterogeneous force, marked by consent and collaboration, but also by distance and rupture.

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[25] Gilbert M. Joseph, "Close Encounters: Towards a New Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations." In Joseph, LeGrand, and Salvatore, Close Encounters of Empire, 5-7. For a critical reflection on the use of empire as a category in US historiography, see Paul Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," The American Historical Review 116, (December 2011): 1348-91.

A period of "convergent conflicts," the Cold War "exacerbated existing issues in Latin American politics, adding new dimensions to older struggles, and proving the combustible mix that account for the particular intensity and, often, bloodiness of regional affairs during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s."[26] In these convergent conflicts, anticommunism did not appear as a monolithic ideology or worldview. Rather, as a political imaginary, it consisted of a pool of representations of the enemy, historically and unequivocally championed by the Right, but also by liberal and non-communist leftists, to present it as a threat to world peace, to national aims, to sovereignty and security, to democracy broadly conceived, and/or to the cultural matrix, institutions, and Western Christian traditions of Latin America.

The tensions and debates that sprung from this relative plurality across the wide spectrum of the postwar anticommunist movements did not prevent the formation of various transnational spheres of anticommunist activism, such as the World Anti-Communist League, and in which, as I show here, Latin Americans played a central role. I argue that this type of transnational initiatives was made possible by the convergent local and global production and circulation of anticommunist "enemy images," discourse, and knowledge, in both North-South and South-South exchanges. As I show throughout this dissertation, different actors in different social, political, and geographical spaces resorted to different political languages and traditions (liberalism, fascism, conservatism,

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[26] Brands, Latin America's Cold War, 9.

Catholicism, anti-totalitarianism) to construct communism as an enemy to be opposed and fought by different means. The core belief in the necessity of an ideological, cultural, political, and even physical battle against communism brought anticommunists into devising a range of rhetorical instruments and strategies of mobilization that, as the Cold War evolved, were increasingly radical, all-encompassing, and often violent. As I show for the Argentine, Colombian and Mexican contexts, these strategies and instruments were not exclusive to the realm of the state or inter-state relations; but rather became a point of convergence, collaboration, and also contention, between state agents and anticommunist activists in different realms of civil society, and amongst anticommunist movements themselves, within and beyond national borders. Anticommunism can and should be part of a more comprehensive account of the broader political, social, experiential, and cultural dimensions of the Cold War. For many of its proponents, anticommunism was often part of attempts to build broader political platforms; a form of dissidence and resistance that antagonized governments that were seen as too lenient on the Left and/or infiltrated by it; and thus also a point of convergence and tension with government efforts to curtail leftist activity and influence nationally and regionally.

Rather than limiting the uses and meanings of anticommunism as an instrument of global hegemonic struggle or as a pretext for repression, the Cold War in fact radicalized and pluralized these uses and meanings. Anticommunists themselves framed their cause in terms that connected the local, the national, and the global, both in the immediacy of the conflicts in which they were embedded, but also in terms of a wide range of historical experiences. Anticommunism had many layers in which it worked to shape politics from above and from below. It appeared and was transformed by the period's global binaries (capitalism/socialism; West/East); by different understandings of the Cold War as an unprecedented stage of stealth, latent, irregular global war; and by local histories of conflict, often related to questions of national identity, the presence of religion in public life, the role of the state in education and the economy, and to deferred claims for democratization and social reform.

Anticommunism had a transcontextual dimension. That is, a capacity to appear in different times and places, preserving a set of core characteristics and yet displaying enough flexibility and adaptability to be "filled" with local, contextual meanings and practices that were particular, and establish dialogues and connections across time and space. To account for this transcontextuality, I approach anticommunism as a way of thinking and as a discursive formation, in a Foucaldian sense, insofar as the anticommunist imaginary was constituted, precisely, by a wide array of images and representations of its enemy-object (communism). The "pull" of global anticommunism was to provide a sense of uniformity and consistency to the enemy in order to devise a platform of action against it. This drive to action stood in tension with the actual heterogeneity of the various forces and actors identified under the label of communism. As a discursive formation, anticommunism entailed certain premises about the nature of the enemy; about its norms, behavior, logic, and methods of its agents. In turn, these premises enabled anticommunists to elaborate different conceptions of how to better and most effectively control, repress, and suppress the enemy. In other words, anticommunism was not mere speech or rhetoric, but a discourse that produced forms of anticommunist knowledge(s), theories, and repertoires of practices – from ideas of counterrevolution and theories of counterinsurgency, to the creation of political surveillance apparatuses, the passing of anticommunist legislation, and the creation of anticommunist shock brigades. These theories, practices, and forms of knowledge circulated through various social and institutional frameworks, displaying ruptures, continuities and discontinuities in time and place. [27]

In Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, actors from different realms of society – politicians, military officers, intellectuals, journalists, civic organizers, students and priests – placed themselves within the anticommunist camp, with overlapping but often conflicting understandings of what that meant in their respective spheres of action. Anticommunist rhetoric might have displayed a remarkable consistency across time and space in its characterization of the enemy as a threat to Western civilization, Christianity, democracy, or humankind. The meanings of anticommunism, and the translation of those meanings into action, differed across contexts, but also showed patterns of convergence and collaboration. Whether as anti-Peronist intellectuals, as Catholics demonstrating against secular education, as neofascist youth fighting the enemy in the streets, or as military officers devising and implementing counterinsurgency plans, anticommunists resorted to local and global referents to populate and enact their political imaginaries, and experienced the Cold War through a plurality of means and meanings, framed by, but also transcending, a bipolar understanding of it as a global conflict.

Anticommunism and the politics of enmity

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[27] Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 31-39.

Anticommunism was, like its communist enemy, a global phenomenon tinged with local undertones. Its representations of "the enemy" were central in articulating a rhetoric of violence (struggle/hostility/war) that was translated and put into practice by actors and shaped by context. This creation of enemies is a cultural, social, and political process. But can enmity and the production of enemies be historicized? A political idea defined by the negation of its enemy, anticommunism is my entry point into this historical exploration of the intellectual, political, and social significance of the Latin American Right, its plurality of its actors, the transnational drive of its platforms, and its ambivalent relation to the politics of authoritarian state-making.

Anticommunism implied a form of "negative association"; that is, it produced a sense of commonality based on the negation of, or struggle against, a hostile agent.[28] This negative association implied designating an enemy, an operation that was far from indiscriminate and did not take place in a vacuum, but amidst histories of social and political polarization in which enemies were casted as an array of "outsider" forces and agents scheming against a political community from within.

Anticommunism was not just a category of exclusion. The intensity of this negative association implied process of "hyper-representation" of the enemy that constructed it not only as an intransigent, anti-national, quasi-pathological agent that was disruptive and conniving, but also as illegitimate and subhuman, "a caricature that stood between humanity and bestiality."[29] This hyper-representation enhanced the cultural production and legitimation of prejudices and stereotypes of outsiders into "enemy images," used to create or expand institutions of law enforcement, security, surveillance and punishment;[30] or to mobilize stereotypes and a demonized view of adversaries as a weapon for struggle and underpin political projects in an arena of increasingly radicalized conflict.[31] As historian Angelo Ventrone has studied for the case of twentieth century Italy, the language of war, the sacralization of the nation, and the obsessive fear about the bestial, monstrous, conspiratorial enemy has been historically tied to the demonization of dissent in times of crisis, with the two World Wars and the Cold War as periods in which these languages and fears intensified.[32]

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[28] On the concept of "negative association" see Ioanis Evrigenis, Fear of Enemies and Collective Action (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-21.

[29] Carlo Galli, "On War and The Enemy," The New Centennial Review 9, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 209-210.

Rather than proposing a theory of enmity in Cold War Latin America, my goal is to stress the significance of thinking, historically and across contexts, about the anticommunism and the Extreme Right's politics of enmity during the Cold War. For the purposes of this dissertation, the contextualization of this politics of enmity is a way of engaging with what Pierre Rosanvallon has called "a conceptual history of the political." That is,

> a matter of reconstructing the manner in which individuals and groups forged their understanding of their situations, to make sense of the challenges and aspirations that led them to formulate their objectives, to retrace, in a sense, the manner in which their vision of the world organized and limited the field of their activity.[33]

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[30] Ulrich Beck, "The Sociological Anatomy of Enemy Images: The Military and Democracy After the End of the Cold War," In Ranghild Fiebig-von Hase and Urusula Lehmkuhl (eds.), Enemy Images in American History (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997), 67.

[31] For a study of the rendering of the enemy as subhuman, demon, or animal through propaganda, see Angelo Ventrone, Il Nemico Interno: Imagini, Parole e Simboli Della Lota Politica Nell'Italia del Novecento (Roma: Donzelli, 2005).

[32] Ventrone, Il Nemico Interno, 3-6.

[33] Pierre Rosanvallon, "Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France" in Democracy: Past and Future: Selected Essays (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 38.

Anticommunism worked as a political concept, insofar as its proponents intervened publicly to mobilize ideas about sovereignty, legitimacy, democracy, or revolution, to pose diagnoses and enact solutions about immediate and transcendent concerns regarding the arrangement and exertion of power. Anticommunism was as a concept of enmity that allowed actors to understand themselves amidst relations of power and in a relation of radical antagonism, and to make sense of the changes, crises, uncertainties, and instabilities brought about by the Cold War. Perhaps paradoxically, the construction of communism as "the enemy" provided a sense of legibility to politics, in the sense that communism appeared as a more aggressive and dangerous iteration of other epochal enemies of civilization, Christianity or progress. In this sense, I treat anticommunism as a political concept in history, but also as a form of subjectivity constituted by the personal and collective histories of its actors, and by the Cold War as a historically situated and polyvalent notion of politics-as-war. For anticommunists, the figure of the enemy was key to their self-perception as political subjects, and to their awareness of the Cold War as a multi-layered conflict over ultimate values, constantly harboring the possibility of violence.

The histories I present here feature a range of social and political actors who consciously placed themselves in an intense antagonistic relation to forces and actors identified with the communist enemy and who devised different institutional and social responses to its presence and actions. In examining Cold War anticommunism in its historical contexts of production, articulation, and enactment, my analysis draws from the work of the political and legal theorist Carl Schmitt, whose writings capture the implications of enmity as holding concrete and existential dimensions. As a prominent thinker of the anti-liberal Right, Schmitt shared with his Latin American fellow travelers a concern with enmity as a central category of political experience, an intellectual and ideological fascination with authority and dictatorship, and a disdain for liberalism's incapacity to cope with the disorders and transformations of twentieth century politics. I thus stress that, rather than following or being directly influenced by Schmitt, the Latin American Right partook of the many intellectual global circuits of right wing nationalism, conservatism, fascism, and neofascism that shaped the political languages of war, enmity and conflict of the global anticommunist imaginary and that were central to Schmitt's thought.[34]

Taking on Schmitt's affirmation that "all political concepts, images, and terms have a polemical meaning [...] focused on a specific conflict […] and bound to a concrete situation,"[35] I examine the contexts in which anticommunists used certain notions of legitimacy, legality and sovereignty to articulate "images" of the enemy and to frame their own political experiences as part of the struggle against communism. Similarly, the notion of the state of exception, as it appears in Schmitt's writings, can shed light on the logic of state authoritarianism in moments of emergency and crisis, and on the broader social construction of the Cold War as a permanent state of preparedness for war where the line between exception and norm is blurred.

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[34] For Latin America, the only specific study on the impact of Schmitt and Schmittian interpretations of politics is Jorge Dotti, Carl Schmitt en Argentina (Rosario: Homo Sapiens, 2000). For a rare Latin American Marxist take on Schmitt, see José Aricó's introduction to Carl Schmitt, El Concepto de lo Político (Buenos Aires: Folios, 1984). Latin Americanists, mainly political and legal theorists, have paid some attention to Schmitt as a thinker of enmity, authoritarianism, constitutional politics, and "the exception" for the Latin American context. See, for instance, Joel Colón-Ríos, "Carl Schmitt and Constitutent Power in Latin American Courts: the Cases of Venezuela and Colombia," Constellations 18, no. 3 (2011), 365-88; Esteban Campos, "El lenguaje de las balas. Una aproximación a la guerra de guerrillas en Brasil y Uruguay desde Carl Schmitt," Revista Digital de Estudios Históricos 2 (2009), 23 pp.; Renato Cristi, "The metaphysics of constituent power: Schmitt and the génesis of Chile's 1980 Constitution," Cardozo Law Review 21 (May 2000), 1749-75; José Antonio Aguilar and Gabriel Negretto, Liberalism and Emergency Powers in Latin America: Reflections on Carl Schmitt and the Theory of Constitutional Dictatorship (Mexico: CIDE, 1999).

[35] Carl Schmitt, The Concept of The Political (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 30.

For Schmitt, the decision about what constitutes "the exception" implies a decision about normality, and about notions of order and security. The exception, then, is what makes sovereignty and authority visible and palpable beyond the veil of legal procedure.[36] For anticommunist Cold Warriors, the threat posed by communism and its fellow travelers demanded such decisions and such supersession of legal considerations, because the danger posed by the enemy exceeded the limits of legality. In other words, the exception allowed, and in fact required, the uncoupling of legality-as-procedure from legitimacy-as-sovereign decision, with dictatorship as the clearest example, for Schmitt, of "an act of self-defense," a reaction, against an enemy that does not conform to legal norms.[37] As I will show here, the answers (legal and extra-legal) given to the communist threat and to the Cold War as a state of extreme necessity varied across contexts. In both national and transnational spheres, these strategies were a matter of debate and contention among anticommunist activists, often bringing them into tension or direct confrontation with state actors, and in alliance with those that demanded exceptional measures to defend democracy from its enemies.[38]

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[36] Carl Schmitt, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 5-11.

[37] Carl Schmitt, Dictatorship: From the Origins of the Modern Concept of Sovereignty to the Proletarian Class Struggle (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), 118. On dictatorship as a problem for constitutional democracies, see Clinton Rossiter, Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in Modern Democracies (Brunswick: Transaction Book, 2009).

[38] On the tension and even opposition between legality and legitimacy as a critique of liberalism, see Carl Schmitt, Legality and Legitimacy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Carl Schmitt, The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).

From an anticommunist point of view, the communist enemy embodied a particular kind of dangerous subjectivity that was "exceptional" in the sense of standing beyond legal and even moral considerations. Schmitt's notion of "the partisan"; that is, an irregular, telluric fighter waging a war for supreme political objectives (the Homeland, revolution), acting in complete illegality but with a claim of legitimacy that distinguished him from the criminal.[39] As I will show in the following pages, the communist was constructed as the partisan in its global revolutionary phase: a fighter driven by a totalitarian, universalist ideology; an agent of disorder and disruption of social hierarchies; and the bearer of unconventional, asymmetric, war-like, and even criminal violence. In this regard, I push further on Schmitt's attempts to separate the partisan from the criminal, and point to several instances in which the two figures are brought together, in an essentially political operation, to reduce opposition or dissidence to banditry, criminality or terrorism, altogether under the guise of communism. In other words, I contend that, historically, the distinction between partisan (political) and criminal (non-political) is not an objective one, but was rather an object of contention, a prompt for authoritarian "exceptions," and thus a political weapon in and of itself.[40]

Lastly, I examine the anticommunist Right's politics of enmity and its historical process of radicalization through the revision and reinvention of its own political traditions. Anticommunist organized violence (counterinsurgency initiatives, neofascist bands, and transnational anticommunist organizations) echoed longstanding tropes of anticommunist political warfare and the need to mirror the enemy's mystique and methods as the most effective way to thwart revolution, or even, to seize its means and meanings for an even more radical revolution of the Right. In other words, I also examine the anticommunist politics of the extreme Right as a form of Schmittian partisan warfare, a struggle for supreme values against an equally convinced and fanatical enemy. As I discuss here, this process was not a mechanistic replication of Leftist revolutionary methods by neofascists and other right-wing actors. Latin American anticommunists articulated in many different ways the possibility of a normless "partisan war" with the enemy.[41] Their justifications for, and enactment of, anticommunist violence were local and contextual, but also the product of the heightening and appeasement of global Cold War tensions; and of the history of anticommunist politics-as-war, shaped by fascist politics, traditionalist Catholic though, authoritarian liberalism, and the overall intellectual and political milieu in which Latin Americans state agents and militant groups participated along with fellow travelers from Asia, Europe, and the United States.

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[39] Carl Schmitt, Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of The Political (New York: Telos, 2007), 14-22.

[40] "[W]ithin a state created by the constitution as a legal concept, there is no territorially circumscribed space in which it would not be valid; and no particular circle of people who, without ceasing to be citizens, would be treated as 'enemies' or 'rebels' without rights.' *But it is precisely such exceptions that are intrinsic to the nature of dictatorship; and they are possible because dictatorship is a commission of action defined by the concrete situation*." Carl Schmitt, Dictatorship, 119. Emphasis in mine.

To historicize anticommunism as a concept of enmity and as a form of politics-as war deployed by specific historical actors, I broadly follow Michel Foucault's reflections on the relation between war and politics and what that relation reveals about the nature of power. In Society Must Be Defended, Foucault asserts that power relations "are essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war at a given historical moment that can be historically specified."[42] Foucault takes Carl Von Clausewitz' famous dictum "war is merely the continuation of politics by other means," and reverses it to pose that war is "contained" in the mechanisms of political power, in its distribution and effects, insofar as the end of power is to mute and conceal the relations of force that war makes apparent. Foucault thus pointed to the centrality of historically situated discourses of war, conflict, and confrontation in framing the exercise of power and its contestations. From this perspective, I look at how anticommunists articulated different conceptions of politics-as-war, with the enemy the center of their rationalization of violence as a legitimate / necessary instrument of politics, and how these conceptions prompted states and societies to devise different mechanisms to preclude, neutralize, or eradicate perceived threats to order, security, the nation, Western civilization, Christianity and/or democracy.

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[41] On the notion of "partisan warfare" as a conflict without frontlines or norms see Carl Schmitt, Theory of the Partisan, 68-80. On partisan warfare as post-Clausewitzian war marked by the loss of the state's capacity to decide on, stabilize, and regulate enmity, see Jorge Giraldo Ramírez, "Acerca de la concepción partisana de la guerra," in Jorge Giraldo and Jerónimo Molina, Carl Schmitt: Derecho, Política y Grandes Espacios (Medellín: Universidad EAFIT, 2008). On the partisan as human weapon that defies the regulations of war, see Banu Bargu, "Unleashing the Acheron: Sacrifical Partisanship, Sovereignty, and History," Theory and Event 13, no. 1 (2010). On partisans as irregular combatants during World War II, see Enzo Traverso, The European Civil War, 1919-1945, 76-84.

Also through this lens, I pose that the Cold War implied a particular relation between war and politics, governed by the alleged absence of direct aggression between the superpowers; the confrontation in the realms of ideology, culture and propaganda; and the transfer of that "absent war" from the North Atlantic to the peripheries.[43] As I show throughout the chapters, a central aspect of the anticommunist imaginary was its constant rendering to the Cold War as *stasis*; that is, as a self-sustaining order and a set of conditions exploited by the public enemy to disrupt order, corrupt reason, and bring about a general state of upheaval (revolutionary war, subversion, dissolution).[44] As actors imbued in local and global conflicts, anticommunist statesmen, intellectuals, and activists deployed and acted upon different notions of the Cold War as an unprecedented stage in human history, characterized by a permanent state of sedition, unrest, insecurity, and uncertainty requireing the creation of new legal, political, social and moral orders according to the perceptions of an impending (or even, a silently ongoing) civil war.

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[42] Michel Foucault, Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76 (New York: Picador, 2003), 15-16.

[43] "[US allies] are alienated […] by the fact that they do not wish to become, like the nations of the perimeter, the clients of the United States in whose affairs we intervene, asking as the price of our support that they take the directives of their own policy from Washington. They are alienated above all by the prospect of war, which could break out by design or accident, by miscalculation or provocation […] In this war their lands would be the battlefield. Their peoples would be divided by civil conflict. Their cities and their fields would be the bases and the bridgeheads in a total war which, because it would merge into a general civil war, would be as indecisive as it was savage." Walter Lippman, The Cold War: A Study in US Foreign Policy (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1947), 16.

In this latter sense, anticommunism was also premise of state-making, insofar as the presence and actions of enemies triggered a preemptive and often reactive mobilization of resources to enhance the state's capacity to act against real or imagined threats to order and security. As I emphasize for the three cases here examined, these processes of "Cold War-making as state-making"[45] reshaped the relations between state and society, rendering the latter as the moral and cultural battleground of the Cold War, and, particularly for the case of Colombia, as an almost organic extension of the emerging counterinsurgent states. In this regard, I examine counterinsurgency as one of anticommunism's "transnational contact zones,"[46] where knowledge about revolutionary war and asymmetrical conflict was constituted by reciprocal processes of peripheral and metropolitan translation and adaptation, mediated by the historical and ideological textures of local anticommunist imaginaries. In their implementation, counterinsurgency plans were meant to follow metropolitan blueprints (American or French). Yet, as products of global imperial interventions, they were inevitably prone to alteration by preexisting languages of politics-as-war, and by local histories of conflict and polarization that gave way to contextual forms of counterinsurgent experience and subjectivity.

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[44] Costas Kalimtzis, Aristotle On Political Enmity and Disease: An Inquiry Into Stasis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 9-13. On stasis as a self-sustaining process of constant conflict, and thus of movement and immobility, see Costas M. Constantinou, States of Political Discourse: Words, Regimes, Seditions (London; New York: Routledge, 2004). On stasis as civil war see Giorgio Agamben, Stasis: Civil War as a Political Paradigm (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[45] On the links between war-making and state-making with regards to the mobilization of resources and population, the organization of violence, and the provision of security, see Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans, Dietrisch Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169-91.

The antinomies that lay behind the construction of communism as the Cold War enemy – civilization/barbarism, freedom/tyranny, Christianity/atheism – also bred important notions of political struggle informed by Christian / Catholic doctrines of "just war" that by far preceded the period. As I show in this dissertation, the ideological and cultural centrality of Catholicism in Latin America, the doctrinal rejection of communism by traditionalist sectors of the Church, and the traction of nationalism's appeal to a "negative association" against communism, informed the formulation of a politico-theological language that rendered "the anticommunist struggle" waged by soldiers, priests, statesmen, and other sectors of society, into one of absolute moral (good vs. evil) and civilizational proportions. In speech and writing, these actors articulated the justness and even holiness of their anticommunism, the legitimacy of violently engaging with the enemy based on its Otherness, the conviction about the moral and spiritual superiority of the anticommunist cause, and the notion that theirs was a war of self-defense that inevitably required obliterating the enemy to restore truth and order in society.

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[46] Historian Gilbert M. Joseph has stressed the neglect, by traditional diplomatic and political historians, of "transnational contact zones" where power is "deployed (and contested) through a series of representations, symbolic systems and new technologies involving agents that transcend the state." Gilbert M. Joseph, "What We Know and What We Should Know: Bringing Latin America More Meaningfully Into Cold War Studies" in Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser (eds.), In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 17.

Anticommunism's politics of enmity also emerged in contexts of deep political rupture where grassroots anticommunists presented themselves both as a unifying force against the enemy and as actors in "resistance" or "struggle" against the perceived inaction or complicity of governments towards communism and its local and global allies. This notion of anticommunism as resistance appeared in the tensions between Mexican anticommunists and the PRI regime; in the disputes between Peronist and anti-Peronist nationalists (and within Peronism itself) regarding the anticommunist agenda; and in legitimating the counterinsurgent state in Colombia as democracy's last line of defense against criminality and subversion. As these three cases show, the affinity of grassroots anticommunism with the logic of state repression was often mediated by an inherent dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of anticommunist initiatives, a tension that, particularly during the 1960s, increased the significance of non-state actors in the radicalization, civilianization, and transnationalization of the Latin American anticommunist crusades.

In these crusades, violence became the horizon for politics, blurring the distinctions between dissidents and foes, between internal and external enemies, and between the enemy and the radical Other. These conflations rendered communism (or rather, the figure of "the communist") as a form of dangerous subjectivity that subsumed other figures of the enemy– e.g. the traitor, the conspirator, the criminal, and the insurgent. In the histories tackled in this dissertation, the rendering of the communist as criminal sheds light on the links between the anticommunist imaginary, Cold War state-making, and the use of criminal law as an instrument of the state to reassert its monopoly on violence through the legal punishment of enemies. This criminalization coexisted, and in fact was an integral part of, ideas of the communist as an agent at war with society and worthy of legal and extra-legal violence as punishment exerted from above and from below.

The Cold War rationalization of society's "war" against its enemies entailed the legal crafting of "political demons" and the creation of particular categories of delinquency that identified and even legally codified communism as a political crime. As suggested by studies on the links between the public opinion and social perceptions about crime and justice, criminality was an ambiguous site of social contestation, where criminalization entailed various forms of marginalization and exclusion that often met with political repression, and where notions of punishment and justice were often uncoupled from those of legality.[47] For political crimes (rebellion, sedition, subversion, social dissolution), the repressive dimension was made more apparent, as states targeted and prosecuted political criminals, and civil society scorned them as wrongdoers and demonized them as enemies of both society and the state, and made them, like many

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[47] See, for instance, Pablo Piccato, A History of Infamy: Crime, Truth and Justice in Mexico (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017); Lila Caimari, While The City Sleeps: A History of Pistoleros, Policemen, and the Crime Beat in Buenos Aires before Perón (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); Pablo Piccato, City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); and the various essays in collective volumes such as David Carey and Gema Santamaría (eds.), Violence and Crime in Latin America: Representations and Politics (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017); Carlos Aguirre and Ricardo Salvatore, Crime and Punishment in Latin America (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); and Carlos Aguirre and Robert Buffington (eds.), Reconstructing Criminality in Latin America (Wilmington: SR Books, 2000).

"common" criminals, targets for arbitrary forms of extrajudicial violence and punishment.

While organized violence and forms of state-led repression have been central to the history of the Cold War in Latin America, legality was often posed as the rational and democratic way to "defend" society, the nation, or democracy itself, from their enemies, and, in practice, to disarm and neutralize dissent. As instances of what contemporary legal scholars deem as "enemy criminal law,"[48] the laws, codes and decrees crafted to punish the actions of agitators and subversives were a key component of the anticommunist crusades in this period. Central to the Cold War authoritarian legalities of civilian and military regimes, the communist as criminal was a link between the socio-cultural and institutional dimensions of the anticommunist imaginary,[49] insofar as it gave social and institutional legibility to the enemy and made its threat more "real" and graspable for different publics.

The social and political manifestations of enmity generated by the local and global Cold War(s) provide an entry point into the political and socio-cultural contexts in which they were produced and circulated. When placed in context, they can reveal the conditions that allowed actors to imagine themselves as having a definitive role in shaping the local, national and global stakes of the Cold War. My emphasis on context and on transcontextuality also allows grasping how the traction of representations/narratives of enmity do not remain static through time, and how differently they can be mobilized in instances of deep political and social rupture. While the full range of human experience during the Cold War cannot be reduced to enmity, for many of the "cold warriors" featured in this study the active presence of enemies inspired their being and acting in the world, which included the bonding with anticommunist fellow travelers beyond national borders.

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[48] As conceived by legal theorist Günther Jakobs, enemy criminal law designates a sphere of legality compatible with the rule of law in constitutional regimes. It is characterized by the selective suspension of individual guarantees and due process only for certain types of "threatening" subjects, often dangerous criminals such as serial killers, terrorists, and sexual predators. See Günther Jakobs, Derecho Penal de Enemigo (Madrid: Civitas, 2003). While debates surrounding Jakobs' polemic concept remain relatively rare in the Anglo-American academy, scholars elsewhere have extensively engaged in its revision and critique; see, for instance, Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni and Edmundo Oliveira, Criminology and Criminal Policy Movements (Lanham: University Press of America, 2013); Manuel Cancio Meliá, and Carlos Gómez-Jara Díez (eds.), Derecho Penal del Enemigo: El Discurso Penal de la Exclusión (Madrid: Edisofer, 2006); On the Colombian case, see Iván Orozco Abad, and Alejandro Aponte, Combatientes, Rebeldes y Terroristas: Guerra y Derecho en Colombia (Bogotá: Temis, 1992); Alejandro Aponte Cardona, Guerra y Derecho Penal del Enemigo. Reflexión Crítica Sobre el Eficientismo Penal de Enemigo (Bogotá: Ibáñez, 2006).

[49] For a comparative study of authoritarian legality under military regimes in South America, see Anthony W. Pereira, Political (In)Justice: Authoritarianism and the Rule of Law in Brazil, Chile, and Argentina (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

The figure of the communist enemy was central to the resurgence, shifts, and radicalization of the extreme Right in the Cold War context; but it was also the historical product and a reflection of the anxieties, aspirations, and shortcomings of societies in the face of deep social and political ruptures and cultural transformations. In looking back at episodes of political polarization, social confrontation, grassroots counter-mobilization, and state repression as history, experience, and memory altogether, this dissertation seeks to shed light on the "afterlife" of the Cold War, and the extent to which many of its anxieties and fears remain a powerful conduit for authoritarianism, intolerance, and anti-progressivism from above and from below. Framed by these rugged histories, the question of the enemy was, and continues to be in many ways, the form and the embodiment of our own questions.[50]

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[50] "The enemy is the embodiment of our own question" is a verse from the poem "Sang an Palermo," by Italian-German writer Theodor Däubler, which Carl Schmitt alludes to in his *Theory of the Partisan* (85). It also appears in a short piece written as a prisoner in Nuremberg titled "Wisdom of the cell," where Schmitt wrote: "Who can be my enemy, so that I recognize him as such, and that I recognize his recognition? It is in

The Cold War in and across context(s): a roadmap

Part I of this dissertation examines the role that the anticommunist imaginary played in shaping Colombia's experience with enmity, violence, and polarization during the first two decades of the Cold War. I argue mainly that anticommunism provided legibility to the problem of endemic political and social violence; allowed actors to make sense of the challenges of popular mobilization and the emergence of the revolutionary Left; and informed, to a great extent, the apparent contradiction between the implementation of social reforms and counterinsurgent warfare. I stress the role of the anticommunist imaginary in what scholars of US foreign policy and the global Cold War have deemed as "counterinsurgent state-building." For Latin America, this perspective has yielded important studies about cases of genocidal state terror, such as Guatemala and El Salvador, and on the development of repressive security apparatuses, emphasizing the prominent role of the United States in promoting and aiding these efforts.[51] Without

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this reciprocal recognition of being recognized where I find the greatness of the concept [of the enemy]. Theologians tend to define the enemy as something to be annihilated. But I am a jurist and not a theologian […] Whom can I at all recognize as my enemy? Only he who can place me in question. [That is] only I myself. Or my brother. In truth, the Other is my brother […]" Carl Schmitt, Ex-Captivitate Salus (Madrid: Trotta, 2010), 78. For a more detailed interpretation of this essay in relation to Schmitt's writings on enmity and politics, see chapter 2 of Heinrich Meier, The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: Four Chapters on the Distinction Between Political Theology and Political Philosophy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[51] A prominent analysis of this state-building dimension of US counterinsurgency initiatives is Michael McClintock, Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Counter-Terrorism, 1940-1990 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992). Also see Paul B. Rich and Richard Stubbs, The Counterinsurgent State: Guerrilla Warfare and State Building in the Twentieth Century (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). For Latin America, Martha Huggins has provided a nuanced argument about US training of Latin American police forces as a site of interplay between US foreign policy directives and the initiatives of states to centralize their internal security systems, sometimes independently of, or at least parallel to, US assistance; see Martha K. Huggins, Political Policing: The United States and Latin America (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 18-24. Most works dealing with counterinsurgent states in Latin America either take the category for granted or deem counterinsurgency plans and political genocide as manifestations of US hegemony and imperial state-building. See, for instance, Susanne Jonas, The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads and US Power (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Michael McClintock,

dismissing these important North-South material and ideological transfers, for the Colombian case I direct my attention to the historical and local gestation of the anticommunist imaginary and its imbrication in the processes of state-building, particularly in regards to the creation and reproduction of legitimacy, and the claims about the need to increase state capacity to protect society from its enemies.

My analysis departs from interpretations that ascribe the continuity of violence in Colombia as the result of a "partial collapse" or failure of the state to fulfill its coercive and normative functions.[52] Instead, I examine the central role of the anticommunist imaginary in the normalization of violence and in the expansion and exertion of state power. This perspective, I argue, can shed light on the connections between forms of local meaning-making and anticommunism as a socially significant component to the ideological and cultural dimensions of counterinsurgent state-building. In this regard, I refer to the Cold War in Colombia not as a set of conditions imposed from the outside. Instead I analyze how different actors contributed to a reading of counterinsurgent state-building as a joint mission between state and society, indeed an "intimate affair," (to use

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The American Connection. Vol 2: State Terror and Popular Resistance in Guatemala (London: Zed Books, 1985).

[52] This premise, reproduced particularly by political scientists, appears, for instance, in an influential piece by Ana María Bejarano and Eduardo Pizarro, who seek to explain the actual near collapse of the functioning government in 1980s Colombia in a historical continuum of state "weakness," caused by resource scarcity and periods of erosion of political representation. See Ana María Bejarano and Eduardo Pizarro, "From Restricted to Besieged: the Changing Nature of the Limits to Democracy in Colombia," in Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring, The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). As Mary Roldán has noted, this view originated in Paul Oquist's notion of the "partial breakdown" of the state during La Violencia (1946-1953), which he sees as direct outcome of the collapse of party machineries and their former role in regulating conflict. This view, Roldán notes, implies monolithic party identities and overlooks regional differentiations in the causes and mechanisms of violence. Mary Roldán, Blood and Fire: la Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 23-25. Also see Paul H. Oquist, Violence, Conflict, and Politics in Colombia (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

Walt Rostow's expression),[53] that emphasized violence as a product of the actions of local and global Cold War "enemies": communists, bandits, subversives, and terrorists.

My approach to this period agrees with recent scholarship that notes the historical failures of "pacification" and amnesty in Colombia as the result of initiatives that treated violence as a cause, and not an effect, of deep-rooted obstacles to broader political participation and socioeconomic inclusion.[54] From this perspective, I show the many ways in which anticommunism condensed discourses of enmity and exclusion that framed the experience and memory of La Violencia (1946-1953) and its aftermath, and how it shaped Colombians' own perception of their place in the *violencias* that affected the country during (and certainly after) the Cold War.

Chapter 1 brings together three aspects of Colombia's Cold War experience. First, I provide an overview of the conditions that gave way to the political violence of the period known as La Violencia (1946-1953). I examine the anticommunism of right wing nationalists prior to the Cold War, its contribution to the political and legal construction of "enemies," and how these enemy constructs played out in episodes of factional violence, and in the so-called "Revolution of Order" attempted by president Laureano Gómez (1950-1951). Next, I deal with the phenomenon of banditry in the context of La Violencia as a historiographical and political problem for Colombians and outsiders alike. I analyze the intersections between state and grassroots levels of the anticommunist imaginary, showing how anticommunists understood themselves as active agents in a violent process of “ordering” against the dual threat of criminality and subversion. In the midst of widespread social and political violence, communism was signified as local and global phenomenon that spoke to the roots of violence and the nature of social conflict in Colombian society. Lastly, I examine the affinities and tensions between anti-violence measures of the Colombian state and early initiatives by the United States to exert influence the country’s internal security apparatus. In this context, I show that local diagnoses about criminality and subversion accounted for the limitations of counterinsurgency as a ready-made solution for violence, and posed the problem of the illegibility of violence for local and foreign actors, as it is made apparent in Colombian and American sources.

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[53] "A guerrilla war is an intimate affair, fought not merely with weapons, but fought in the minds of the men who live in the villages and in the hills, fought by the spirit and policy of those who run the local government." Walt W. Rostow, "Guerrilla Warfare in Underdeveloped Areas," in Thomas Davies and Brian Loveman, The Politics of Antipolitics: the Military in Latin America (Lanham: SR Books, 1997), 137.

[54] See Robert Karl, Forgotten Peace: Reform, Violence, and the Making of Contemporary Colombia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

Chapter 2 deals primarily with the process of counterinsurgent state building and the problems of dealing with non-factional, “residual” violence. I show how anticommunism was central to the dictatorship of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957), who shifted it from an instrument of counterrevolutionary violence to one of authoritarian-populist legitimacy. Rojas was the bridge between the corporatist and anti-Liberal project of Laureano Gómez, and the creation of a modern counterinsurgent state, modeled after various foreign influences, and shaped by the crucial legacies of La Violencia; namely, the normalization of the state of siege; the use of criminal law as a political weapon; and the framing of “residual violence” as a scenario of war that elicited the mobilization of state and society under the paradigm of anti-subversive *autodefensa*. Lastly, I deal with the contradictions of the bipartisan agreement known as the National Front (1958-1974), tackling the tensions between its democratic promises, the strict limitations on plurality justified by the threat of communism, and the persistent use of authoritarian legality as an instrument of repression against “dangerous” subjects.

Part II deals with the various ways in which anticommunism shaped Argentina’s political landscape from the rise and the fall of Juan Domingo Perón (1946-1955) to the so-called Argentine Revolution (the military regime led by General Juan Carlos Onganía from 1966-1970). In this period, the extreme Right exerted various degrees of influence on the polarization of the Argentine public sphere through propaganda, political influence, and a range of social and political movements, which contributed altogheter to rendering Argentina as a society constantly in the brink of civil war.

Chapter 3 tackles some of the challenges faced by right wing nationalists at the time of the overthrow of Juan Domingo Perón. The implosion of Perón’s regime triggered a struggle over the meanings of the *nacionalista* ideal of “the national revolution,” and the rendering of Peronism as a de-stabilizing political force with the potential to yield to the lingering threat of “communist subversion.” I show how the tropes of Peronism as the embodiment of tyranny, terrorism, and subversion reemerged constantly throughout civilian and military regimes. Anxieties about the infiltration of anti-national enemies permeated both state and society, subordinating development initiatives and democratic state-making to the logic of exceptionality and brink-of-war politics caused by the perceived sense of imminence of “revolutionary war.” Anticommunism thus became a frame to explain the enemy’s war and a justification about the legitimate exertion of violence against anti-national revolutionaries. This widely-shared anticommunist imaginary played a central role in laying the ideological and political groundwork for the development of Argentina’s repressive apparatus, particularly under the anti-Peronist junta of 1955, and the civilian regime of Arturo Frondizi (1958-1962). Thus, in contrast to accounts that draw a straight line between Argentina's counterinsurgent state and the French doctrine of counterinsurgency, [55] I provide a more nuanced picture on the convergence between the ideological matrix of the Argentine Extreme Right, the institutionalization of anti-Peronism, the local reception of the "French school", and the crafting of an Argentine doctrine of counterinsurgency by Argentine actors, who altogether responded to local concerns but also aimed to position the country as a Latin American bastion against communist subversion.

Chapter 4 deals with the forking paths of the Argentine Extreme Right during the 1960s, the different projects defended by self-proclaimed anticommunists, and the forms of mobilization that they chose to pursue according to the particular meanings they attached to the local and global Cold War. Forced to position themselves vis-a-vis the irresistible presence of Peronism and the radicalization of the revolutionary Left, a new generation of nationalist militants confronted the challenges of resignifying their "national revolution" in relation to their Catholic-fascist traditions. In this regard, the trajectory of the neofascist group Tacuara sheds light on the Extreme Right's process of pluralization, radicalization, and adaptation to the Cold War environment. The young right-wing radicals of Tacuara held an ambivalent relation with the anti-Peronist and anticommunist regime of General Onganía, and their own lack of consensus over the idea of "the national revolution" caused an internal ruptura that brought its members into seemingly contradictory paths paths of neofascist and leftist-revolutionary radicalization. This chapter also tackles other anticommunist civic and Catholic organizations that developed in conjunction with, but still autonomously from, the state, showing how they partook in spheres of transnational anticommunist collaboration that are seldom treated as such by the historiography of the period. The ideological twists and turns of the neofascist group Tacuara; the emergence of a civic anticommunist movement with deep ties to anti-Peronist military officers; and counterrevolutionary project of the transnational Catholic organization *Ciudad Católica*, were all symptoms of the changes that the "radical sixties" brought about for the Argentine Right in its constant efforts to push the anticommunist politics of enmity to its ultimate consequences.

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[55] See, for instance, Mario Ranalletti, "Aux origins du terrorisme d'État en Argentine. Les influences françaises dans la formation des militaires argentins (1955-1976)," Vingtieme Siécle. Revue d'Histoire 106 (January-March 2010), 45-56. Also see Marie-Monique Robin, Escadrons de la Mort: l'École Française (Paris: Decouverté, 2004).

Part III of this dissertation examines the trajectory, significance and both the national and Latin American dimensions of the anticommunist movement in Mexico during the 1950s and 60s. As for most of Latin America, the bulk of the historiography of Cold War Mexico has largely focused on actors, figures, and movements of the Left, their history of contestation vis-a-vis the postrevolutionary state, and, to a lesser extent, their ties to other Latin American and global fellow travelers.[56] This has led, for the most part, to an oversimplification or dismissal of the importance of the political, cultural and social histories of the Right in shaping the country's Cold War experience. Three premises that have been central to this historiographical vacuum are the plain characterization of the Right as being essentially opposed to the Mexican revolution;[57] the portrayal of the postrevolutionary state as reacting exclusively to the challenges coming from reformist and radical sectors of the Left; and the emphasis on the affinities between the regime's "soft" form of authoritarianism and the Right's emphasis on authority, order, and repression. Recent scholarly contributions have questioned precisely this view, reasserting the authoritarian nature of the regime but also emphasizing important episodes of hegemonic rupture and crisis that have contributed to the demystification of the monolithic postrevolutionary state.[58] As I show in my analysis, the "official" anticommunist crusades were carried out in collaboration but also often in tension with groups that were considered as reactionary threats to the legacies of the Mexican revolution. As a result, the public and covert alliances between state agents and anticommunist activists on the extreme right were rife with contradictions, and generated multiple interpretations of anticommunism in relation to claims about national sovereignty, religious liberty, and/or the integrity of national culture and values.

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[56] Studies on the Mexican Left are extensive, ranging from historical and sociological analyses, to journalistic accounts, militant testimony, and various "in-betweens." On the academic side, some notable examples are Alexander Aviña, Specters of Revolution: Peasant Guerrillas in the Cold War Mexican Countryside (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Robert Alegre, Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Laura Castellanos, México Armado 1943-1981 (Mexico: Era, 2007); Verónica Oikión Solano and Martha Eugenia García Ugarte (eds), Movimientos Armados en México, Siglo XX (Mexico: CIESAS; Colegio de Michoacán, 2006, 3 vols.); Barry Carr, Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992). For works that combine personal experience of Leftist militancy and scholarly engagement, see, for instance, Enrique Condés Lara, Represión y Rebelión en México (1959-1985) (Mexico: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2007); and Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, Historia del Comunismo en México (Mexico: Grijalbo, 1985). For testimonial accounts see Alberto Ulloa Bornemann, Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: a Political Prisoner's Memoir (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); and Benjamín Palacios Hernández, Héroes y Fantasmas: la Guerrilla Mexicana de los Años 70 (Monterrey: UANL, 2009).

Recent scholarship has also emphasized the centrality of the Cuban revolution as a watershed in the political imaginaries and forms of mobilization of the Mexican Left, with much less reference or elaboration to what it meant for the Right.[59] Here, I provide this missing picture of the Cold War in Mexico by accounting for the Right's responses to Leftist mobilization before and after 1959, and by placing the Cuban revolution as one of many critical junctures that gave content, meaning, and traction to anticommunism as a platform to defend what anticommunists constructed as Mexico's cultural and religious identity, from its enemies. The convergence of grassroots and civic anticommunism with the regime's need to curtail social protest contributed in different ways to the amplification of a widely-socialized anticommunist imaginary that was historically championed by the Extreme Right, embraced by a wide spectrum of the Mexican *derechas*, and instrumentalized, even if never fully adopted, by the regime.

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[57] See, for instance, John W. Sherman, The Mexican Right: The End of the Revolutionary Reform, 1929-1940 (Westport: Praeger, 1997); and Hugh Campbell, La Derecha Radical en México (Mexico: SepSetentas, 1976).

[58] See Alegre, Railroad Radicals*;* Tanalís Padilla, Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata: The Jaramillista Movement and the Myth of the Pax Priísta, 1940-1962 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); and the essays in Paul Gillingham, and Benjamin T. Smith, Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

Chapter 5 deals with the first decade of gestation of the postwar anticommunist movement in Mexico. I look at the formation of the Mexican Anticommunist Front (Frente Popular Anticomunista de México, FPAM) as the result of a broad alliance between anticommunist groups originated in civic Catholicism, the private sector, and student activism. Evoking the memory of the repression against Catholic peasants during the Cristero War of 1926-1929, and the anti-Catholic "socialist" presidencies of Plutarco E. Calles (1924-1928) and Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), these right-wing dissidents sought to contest the state's monopoly on agrarian, labor, and student organizations, and fend off Leftist influence in public life. In revisiting these known sites of activism for the Catholic Right in a Cold War context, many of these anticommunists partook in covert networks of collaboration with state agents, even as the regime grew increasingly suspicious of the Right as yet another challenge to the political monopoly of the Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI). These groups pushed for agendas that had a clear affinity with "official" anticommunism, and many remained broadly devoted to the social claims of the Mexican revolution, while also posing critiques against the regime's virtual one-party system, its historical anti-clericalism, and its alleged tolerance of, and complicities with, the Left.

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[59] See, for instance, Renata Keller, Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Christopher White, Creating a Third World: Mexico, Cuba, and the United States during the Castro Era (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007).

This Anticommunist Front capitalized on favorable national and international environments and played a leading role in the creation of the first Latin America-wide anticommunist organization, the Inter-American Committee for the Defense of the Continent (CIDC). While never a protagonist in national politics, in the long run the Front built substantive alliances with other anticommunists in Latin America through the CIDC. Hinging on the Mexican Right's narrative of resistance and dissidence, the Front became a central actor in projecting Mexico as a hub for anticommunist activism and as one of Latin America's most impassioned advocates for the creation of the so-called "anticommunist International," the World Anti-Communist League.

Chapter 6 examines the evolution of anticommunist alliances in government, the press, higher education, and the private sector, particularly in light of the Cuban Revolution, and the radicalization of the anticommunist imaginary as a struggle against historic and newly emerging actors such as *cardenismo*, progressive Catholics, and Leftist students and intellectuals. I account for the public salience of anticommunism in the press and in Catholic activism; the consolidation of different anticommunist coalitions in the creation of the Mexican Anticommunist Federation (1967); and the continuous centrality of Extreme Right organizations in resignifying and projecting anticommunist violence as a radical response from Catholic and nationalist Mexico to the mobilization of their Leftist, “anti-Mexican” counterparts. The national and transnational networks built and consolidated by Mexican anticommunists during the 1960s allowed them to shape public discourse and perceptions about the stakes of the Cold War in Mexico and beyond. These actors formed alliances with fellow travelers abroad to engage in initiatives of transnational anticommunist violence that preceded the advent of the Dirty Wars in Central and South America, and the implementation of Plan Cóndor in the Southern Cone as the pinnacle of transnational collaboration between right-wing military regimes, anticommunist democracies (such as, but not limited to, the United States), and the global Extreme Right.

Taking place synchronically in local, national, and transnational spheres, the processes of right wing mobilization and radicalization in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico in the heat of the Cold War were tied to the resonance of anticommunism as “a global ideology capable of absorbing local conflicts and projecting them into an international movement with universal pretensions.”[60] In Latin America, anticommunism had a history and a strong intellectual, social, and cultural footing that made it attractive to a wide range of actors and cut across class, status, and political identity. This dissertation strives to grasp these historical foundations, to examine the environments and the discursive, practical, and normative dimensions that made violence against the multiple incarnations of the enemy thinkable, possible, acceptable, and “necessary.” The politics of enmity formulated, debated, and construed by anticommunists linked the local and the global dimensions of the Cold War, turning it into a struggle –often silent but also, quite frequently, intense and violent – over community, identity, belief, and civilizational values. Sitting at the root of political violence, anticommunism was central to Latin America's Cold War history, as a "weapon of the mind," as a form of political subjectivity, as lived experience, and as a lens through which actors understood and related to the dramatic social, cultural, and political transformations of the period.

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[60] Greg Grandin, “Coming to terms with violence in Latin America’s Long Cold War,” in Grandin and Joseph (eds.), A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America’s Long Cold War (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 25.

Part I: Making the Counter-Insurgent State: Anticommunism and the Politics of Enmity in Colombia (1940-1966)

Chapter 1. Anticommunism, nationalism and *La Violencia* in Colombia (1940-1953)

> *It takes little effort to link Colombia's present political disorder to the horrifying state of the world. We cannot pretend that our country is an island of tranquility and abundance amidst a turbulent ocean, nor a sliver of clear, blue skies amongst the dark clouds that cover the Earth. The Colombian Conservative party has recognized the gravity of the time, and with all its grandeur will join the great struggle against the forces of Hell.*
>
> - Laureano Gómez, "The oppression of the modern world," (1938)[1]

In twentieth century Colombia, as in most of Latin America, the changes and disruptions brought about by modernization were intensely debated and contested by political actors. Framed by nineteenth century factional and ideological clashes between Liberals and Conservatives, these conflicts revolved around the structure and role of the state, the place of the Catholic Church in politics and society, and the type of insertion of the national economy in emerging circuits of global commodity trade.

Best represented by the presidentialist, authoritarian and pro-clerical constitution of 1886, the long period of Conservative dominance (1886-1930) was remembered with particular fondness by mid-twentieth century Conservatives as *their* golden age of state and nation-making, punctuated by episodes of violent conflict with the Liberals (most notably the War of the Thousand Days, 1899-1902), and the loss of Panama to secession (1903). After these confrontations, a series of pacts between political factions and regional elites put Colombia on track for a period of authoritarian peace, the restructuring and "rationalization" of the state, the predominance of the Church in education, a modest to negligible industrialization, and the formation of a very profitable, oligarchically-dominated, export-oriented agricultural sector. Indeed, the turn-of-the century coffee boom, the influx of capital into the countryside, and the expansion of the coffee economy transformed the structures of land tenure, prompting the colonization of "internal" frontiers, and the diversification of land ownership and of forms of workforce exploitation.[2]

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[1] Laureano Gómez, Obras Selectas (Bogotá: Cámara de Representantes, 1981), 812.

The agreement on export-oriented modernization was backed by a consensus amongst a new elite of educated "public men" who were to serve as a model to their less fortunate compatriots, and lead the country on the basis of rational discussion, moderation, and high moral virtue. In their view, public life was thus to remain the exclusive realm of thought, speech and action by these public men who understood their particular status as being the *jefes naturales* (natural chiefs) of politics and society. Without fully defusing past ideological and factional conflict, this informal arrangement reserved politics to the morality and action of a few notables in detriment of an excluded and alienated population. Labeled by historian Herbert Braun as a *convivencia* (coexistence or cohabitation), this elite pact gave way to an enduring "political style" (*convivialismo*), which encapsulated both a politics of compromise and the attempt to negotiate and restrain the deep-rooted ideological and programmatic tensions between Liberals and Conservatives.[3]

For the emerging economic and political elites, modernization was both an aspiration and a malady that could unnecessarily and undesirably disturb a political and social order which they thought reflected the country's republican institutions and true

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[2] James Henderson, Modernization in Colombia: The Laureano Gómez Years, 1889-1965 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 12-18.

[3] Herbert Braun, The Assassination of Gaitán: Public Life and Urban Violence in Colombia (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 20-24.

"national character." As Conservative icon Laureano Gómez would warn later in the century, the stability and civility of Conservative Hegemony (1886-1930) appeared as increasingly under attack by enemies with many faces and names: liberalism, socialism, democracy, unfettered capitalism, Freemasonry, Judaism, and communism. The presence of these forces became a source of deep-seated anxiety for those who perceived Conservatism as the only authentic font of Colombian nation-making, with a historical enemy (Liberalism) that came to be seen as inherently anti-national and as the main carrier, ally, and instigator of the internal and external "forces of Hell" besieging Colombia. In this chapter, I examine how these apprehensions about the nature of social and political change played out in the period leading up to the outbreak of *La Violencia* (1946-1953). I pay special attention to the role of anticommunism in providing the language and practices of enmity that linked Colombia's seemingly endogenous violence with external actors and the global Cold War more generally. As factionalism intensified and violently broke through the crust of the politics of compromise, the concrete local meanings of anticommunism manifested in the public demonization and criminalization of dissidence, and in the use of the state of exception to legally and extra-legally render these "dangerous subjects" as enemies of the state.

"No enemies to the Right": Conservatism and the anti-Liberal counterrevolution

Without radically challenging the terms of bipartisan coexistence, but certainly as a turning point in its politics of compromise, the so-called Liberal Republic (1930-1946) undertook a broad and ambitious project of social, political and economic modernization. At large, the goal was to reshape the Colombian state to become an active agent in promoting economic diversification and industrialization and in expanding social and political rights to broader sectors of the population. Known altogether as the Marching Revolution, the project of Liberal president Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-1938 and 1942-1946) was in line with other similar experiments in Latin America[4] that aimed to build a stronger, secular and more interventionist state that was to play a larger role as a regulator of social relations. Lopez's most important reforms included the creation of a civil registry, the implementation of a system of public secular, free and compulsory education, and the support for a progressive labor agenda through the creation of a national workers' confederation (Workers' Confederation of Colombia, or CTC). Witht their complete overhaul of Church-state relations as set by the 1887 concordat with The Vatican, the reforms represented an encroachment on the bases of influence of the Church and the Conservative party, particularly in the realms of labor, education, and social welfare.[5]

The tensions and confrontations caused by the Marching Revolution shook the foundation of bipartisan *convivencia.* Reactions to López's reforms ranged from public condemnation by the Catholic hierarchy against the government, the Liberal party, and liberalism as a whole; to the mobilization of civic associations along with Catholic unions and youth organizations.[6] During the 1940s, the passing of Lopez's reforms and the government's adherence to a "Popular Front" stance against fascism (which included an alliance with communist and Leftist-leaning unions) sparked a strong public rebuttal of the clergy against the Liberal Republic, along with the condemnation of communism and Protestantism as the "greatest danger threatening religion and society in our times."[7]

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[4] In terms of its democratic and reformist orientation, López's Marching Revolution had parallels with (and certainly influences from) other regional experiences such as that of Uruguay under José Batlle; the Mexican revolution and the Lázaro Cárdenas presidency; the Spanish Republic; and the American "New Deal". Javier Guerrero Barrón, El Proceso Político de las Derechas en Colombia y los Imaginarios Sobre las Guerras Internacionales, 1930-1945 (Tunja: Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, 2014), 226-41. On Batllismo, see Milton Vanger, Uruguay's José Batlle y Ordóñez: The Determined Visionary, 1915-1917 (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010).

[5] On the Liberal republic and the Marching Revolution, see Alvaro Tirado Mejía, La Revolución en Marcha y la Reforma Constitucional de 1936 (Bogotá: Universidad del Externado, 1985). On salience of "the religious question" in the 1930s, see Thomas J. Williford, "Aspectos del debate sobre la cuestión religiosa en Colombia, 1930-1935," Revista de Estudios Sociales 41 (Diciembre 2008): 28-43.

Conservative politician Laureano Gómez stood out as the most resounding critic and enemy of the Marching Revolution. Known by his Liberal counterparts as "The Monster" for his fierce diatribes against opponents and detractors, even within his own party, Gómez was a gifted orator, an avowed anticommunist, an anti-egalitarian political pessimist, and a firm proponent of a Catholic corporatist state modeled after the regimes of Francisco Franco and Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in Spain and Portugal.

Gómez's party faction, the *laureanistas*, became a galvanizing force within Conservatism. Laureanismo had an ambivalent place within the Conservative party, as Gómez was keen on placing himself as an outsider to the convivialista establishment, while at the same time remaining the most influential ideological and political figure within the party. This ambivalence had a significant impact on Conservative critiques of the Liberal Republic and important implications for the ensuing process of political polarization.

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[6] Ricardo Arias Trujillo, El Episcopado Colombiano: Intransigencia y Laicidad, 1850-2000 (Bogotá: Universidad de Los Andes, 2003), 139-45.

[7] "Pastoral Colectiva" (1936), cited in Arias Trujillo, El Episcopado Colombiano, 159.

For Gómez and his followers, the politics of compromise incarnated by the "soft" political divisions of *convivialismo* did not reflect the real and even transcendental demarcations between Good and Evil:

> Between the two religions – Marxism and Christianity – intermediate positions are provisional, precarious, and cannot be maintained but in times of prosperity. At moments of struggle, the middle ground disappears. The field becomes belligerent. And those who try to avoid taking a categorical stance by holding Lucifer's candle on their left hand, and that of the Archangel on their right, must disappear at the first crossfire, because they are idle, a hindrance, and useless at the moment of conquering supreme goals.[8]

More than a mere rhetorical exercise, Gómez's assertions on the dangers posed by moderation in a political stage rid with radical antagonisms were the product of his reading of the Marching Revolution as a renewed attempt by the historical enemies of Conservatism to wage an offensive against the core of the nation's values and traditions.[9] For Gómez, tradition was the cornerstone of Conservatism and a weapon against the "barbarism" of the Marching Revolution (particularly its educational component). The barbaric Marching Revolution embodied many evils. It was, Gómez's view, an effort to "abandon all transcendental concepts" and proclaim "the triumph of natural man over spiritual man."[10] As a Liberal scheme, it was also the local expression of a project of global domination and "anti-Christian hatred" led by Judaism, which in complicity with liberalism, Freemasonry, and communism, aimed altogether at "destroying the principles of the national soul and substituting them with overtly sentimental and universalist ideologies."[11] The link between liberalism and communism was particularly clear for Gómez ("communism emerges from the corpse of liberalism as a philosophical system with totalizing pretensions"), and saw the latter "not as a distant and academic matter," but indeed as a "specter" directly threatening Colombian culture and republican institutions, a threat from which Conservatives foresaw "a definite and mortal struggle."[12]

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[8] Laureano Gómez, "El peor enemigo: el moderado" [1938], Obras selectas, 827-28.

[9] In a congressional speech delivered in 1942, Gómez opposed the granting of legal personhood to Masonic lodges by arguing for their historical connections to liberalism, communism and Judaism, altogether enemies of Catholicism, and thus, of the central element to Colombian-ness. Laureano Gómez, "La masonería y su historia," Obras selectas, 677-94.

[10] Laureano Gómez, "Las dos espadas" [1936], Obras completas (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 2013), t. 5: Discursos académicos y doctrinarios, 170-71.

In the context of the 1930s, Gómez and his followers found an important point of reference in the insurrection of the Spanish *falangista* nationalists against the Republic. As noted by historian Helwar Figueroa, throughout the course of that conflict, Conservative and Catholic publications in Colombia embraced the struggle against the forces of communism in Spanish territory as one of their own, and promoted, like their turn-of-the-century Conservative predecessors, the veneration of the historical and cultural bonds with Spain as a means to reassert Colombia's place in the idea of a Hispanic "spiritual empire."[13] Like other Latin American observers of the Spanish Civil war, Gómez and other fellow conservatives adopted the idea of *hispanidad* (Hispanicness) and the triad of "religion, language and race" as essential to their idea of nationalism, signaling their support for an anticommunist struggle that spilled well beyond the Spanish territory and as a banner in their own fight against what they saw as an anti-national and modernizing Marching Revolution.

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[11] Laureano Gómez, "La tradición ante la barbarie" [1942], Obras completas, t. 5, 187.

[12] Laureano Gómez, "El espectro del comunismo" [1938], Obras completas, t. 5, 218-19.

[13] Helwar Figueroa, Tradicionalismo, Hispanismo y Corporativismo. Una Aproximación a las Relaciones Non Sanctas entre Religión y Política en Colombia (1930-1952) (Bogotá: Editorial Bonaventuriana, 2009), 126-146. Since the drafting of the Conservative constitution of 1886, *hispanismo* remained one of the ideological pillars of Conservative nationalist doctrine, championed by the likes of Miguel Antonio Caro, Rufino José Cuervo, Rafael Nuñez, amongst others, all intellectual and political figures of the so-called Conservative Hegemony or *Regeneración*. On these connections between the political thought of Regeneración and hispanismo, see Malcolm Deas, Del poder y la Gramática, y Otros Ensayos sobre Historia, Política y Literatura Colombianas (Madrid: Taurus, 2006). For an unusual comparison with Mexico, see Maria del Pilar Melgarejo Acosta, El Lenguaje Político de la Regeneración en Colombia y México (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana, 2010). On Hispanismo in Latin America more generally, see Frederick Pike, Hispanismo, 1898-1936: Spanish Conservatives and Liberals and their relations with Spanish America (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971).

Gómez was the brashest voice of a generation of Colombian "public men" who understood themselves as the guardians of Conservatism as a political tradition with a deep-seated local history (the political and ideological confrontation with the Liberal Party) and an intellectual and even spiritual bond with other global currents of nationalist and counterrevolutionary thought. A fierce interlocutor of Gómez, writer Silvio Villegas was perhaps the most notable of these "interpreters" of Colombian Conservative nationalism in a global key. As a member of the group of young intellectuals known as Los Leopardos, Villegas strove to formulate an early "theory of nationalism" that, while admiring Italian fascism, appealed more strongly to the influence of French counterrevolutionary thinkers Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès.[14] Villegas's local referent was Simón Bolívar, in whom he saw a "supreme political thinker… the founder and master of Conservative doctrine" who scorned demagogy, anarchy and ideological extremes, and advocated for aristocratic and authoritarian "temperate republics."[15]

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[14] There are relatively few studies dealing with the influence of Maurras' Action Française in Colombia or in Latin America more broadly. Three partial exceptions are Figueroa, Tradicionalismo, Hispanismo y Corporativismo; James D. Henderson, Conservative Thought in Twentieth Century Latin America: The ideas of Laureano Gómez (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1988); and Alberto Spektorowski, The Origins of Argentina's Revolution of the Right (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003). Also see Olivier Compagnon, "Le maurrasisme en la Amerique Latine. Etude comparée de cas argentin et brésilien," in Olivier Dard and Michel Grunewald, Charles Maurras et l'etranger – L'Etranger et Charles Maurras (Berne: Peter Lang, 2009), 283-305.

[15] Silvio Villegas, No Hay Enemigos a la Derecha. Materiales para una Teoría Nacionalista (Manizales: Casa Arturo Zapata, 1937), 43-49.

Villegas built a particular reading of interwar Colombian nationalism as an instrument of critique of the political, economic and cultural establishment, which included the old guard of the Conservative party. Villegas hinged on the notion of a generational break within nationalism, recalling the "gesture" made by the nationalist youth movement that he helped found in 1924: "Our movement was essentially counterrevolutionary. Facing the advance of communism, we found a weakened state, willing to surrender to the threat of revolution. We sought to restore authority to its primeval prestige by renovating all forms of political action." As it proposed the creation of a "nationalist bloc" in defense of property, family, homeland, authority and spiritual unity against liberalism and communism, the nationalist movement's manifesto of 1924 was, according to Villegas, a "logical and coherent doctrine in defense of our nationality, endangered by internal enemies and the heated ambitions of other races."[16]

Reflecting back on the meaning of the 1924 manifesto, Villegas situated his rendering of Colombian nationalism in a global and local historical continuum, evoking Bolivar's temperate republicanism, as well as Maurras's defense of hierarchy and "selective inequality," his piercing attacks against socialism and the French Third Republic, and his embrace of polemics and "illegal action." The leader of Action Française was, for Villegas, not a font of ideological dogmas, but rather "the creator of a political current destined to exert a decisive influence throughout the twentieth century… Maurras is the source that feeds all of the counterrevolutionary movements of our time."[17] Villegas extolled Maurras' consistency and integrity, "his duty to create polemic and doctrine, to write, to recruit orators and seek action in the streets and the public squares," and admired his resolve "to urge for the breaking of the legal order" in the presence of an immoral state (the Third Republic).[18] The notion of nationalism as the political weapon of counterrevolutionary "energetic minorities" ultimately translated, for Villegas, into an understanding of the modern world as "the object of dispute between Carlos Maurras and Carlos Marx; between integral nationalism and the Red International."[19]

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[16] Villegas, No Hay Enemigos a la Derecha, 80.

[17] Villegas, No Hay Enemigos a la Derecha, 34.

While stressing the traction of integral nationalism for Colombian conservatives, Villegas rejected a mere imitation of the project of monarchist restoration proposed by Action Française. Instead, he defended a form of "conservative-republican action that has the same explosive virtue of the traditionalists guided by Maurras in France." For Villegas, that "explosive virtue" of nationalism was rooted in intransigence, which he understood as the imposition, "by word, action, and, if necessary, violence," of ideas that achieve the common good within the norms of order and authority. This intransigence and this violence would ultimately allow Colombian nationalists to formulate a forceful response to the decadence of politics, morality and "aesthetic demagoguery" and promote the resurgence of the Conservative party out of its "rheumatic bureaucracy" to restore "its old and noble insolence."[20] Thus, in defending a sense of originality, and yet, of commonality with global fellow travelers, Villegas and the Leopardos, like many counterrevolutionaries and fascists around the world, denied being fascists themselves, and instead found cover under the mantle of a youthful, rebellious right wing nationalism that scorned the enemies of Conservatism (liberalism and communism), as well as their party's leadership for clinging to the spirit and procedures of constitutional democracy.

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[18] Villegas, No hay enemigos a la derecha, 32.

[19] Villegas, No hay enemigos a la derecha, 43.

[20] Villegas, No hay enemigos a la derecha, 77.

By 1936, amidst the conflicts that arose from the Marching Revolution, Villegas and fellow *leopardo* Augusto Ramírez updated the idea of the "nationalist bloc" in a piece they published in the daily *La Patria* under the title "There are no enemies to the Right." There, Villegas and Ramírez condemned the attempts by the old guard of conservatism to marginalize the "university youth" from the party's conventions, and suggested the possibility of resorting to violent action after losing "faith in the possibility to act democratically in the present historical moment." Appealing to that sense of urgency, Villegas and Ramírez applauded Laureano Gómez's adoption of "insurrectional tactics" as the only way to face the Liberal regime, and praised the publication of Gómez's *El Cuadrilátero*, a book-length essay in which he condemned fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, and extolled Gandhi's *caudillo* qualities and his politics of idealism, sacrifice and spirituality.[21] However, for these rogue Conservatives, a dictatorial solution to the country's ills could could not be abandoned on the basis of abstract philosophical discussions. The only chance for the survival of Conservatism against the oppression of the Liberal regime was to give an answer to the "despair" of the conservative masses and the youth by allowing their right-wing movement (*el movimiento derechista*) to revitalize the party "under the leadership of Laureano Gómez, who is trying to save the homeland." This *derechismo*, they wrote, "constitutes the phagocytosis of society [and] in light of the advancement of communism and liberalism and to ensure society is not defenseless, the right wing of our party must prosper."[22] Their audacious, action-driven right-wing nationalism was, in their view, an organic and natural defensive response of the Colombian social body against those pathologies.

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[21] Laureano Gómez, El Cuadrilátero: Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, Gandhi (Bogotá: Editorial Centro, 1935). For Gómez, Mussolini's statements about fascism as an Italian peculiarity showed the absence of a transcendent goal, making fascism a derivative form of "internal despotism." Thus, for him, there were no radical differences between fascism and communism, and referred to the latter as "a fascism in a greater degree, emboldened by an economic dimension." (77) His assessment of Nazism was ambivalent: he admired Hitler's role of "personifying the totality of German discontent" (107) and agreed with the Nazi diagnosis of the Jewish problem (115-116). However, Gómez saw national-socialism as a "materialistic, cold social system" predicated on false ideas of racial purity, a scorn for human dignity and the absence of a legal order (120; 145-146). Regarding Stalin, Gómez stressed communism's sacrifice of liberty and the human person in the name of the collectivity, which, along with the dictatorial and repressive methods of the regime, he saw as a result of Stalin's own racial-cultural propensity towards tyranny (190-191). Gómez's characterization of Gandhi was a sort of self-projection: Gandhi was, for him, a *caudillo* that exemplified the unification of national sentiment, a yearning for a return to the past, and "the faith in the power of the spirit, the force of truth and the preponderance of justice" (294-297).

The diagnosis by Villegas, Ramírez, and other emerging figures of this "New Right" – Eliseo Arango, Fernando Londoño, and Gilberto Alzate ("The Marshal") – denounced the alienation of the economy, public morality, and public discourse to foreign interests, as well as the loss of the Conservative party's historical role as the defender of true national values. As in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and other Latin American participants of the transnational fascist constellation, theirs was not an avowedly fascist program in a derivative sense (because, they claimed,"in Colombia there is no Mussolini or Hitler"). Instead, they revindicated a different articulation of the local, Latin American, and global – or more properly, ecumenical – dimensions of their nationalism: "the Colombian Right is inspired by the political thought of the Liberator [Simón Bolívar] and the social doctrine of the Church." Yet, for them, fascism was a political instrument and a historical necessity (as it had been in Italy), for "fascist movements have only prospered where the Soviet menace is present […] Fascism is historically posterior to communism. The terrorist violence of internationalist parties can only be combatted with a counterrevolution of order."[23] The "rebellion" of Los Leopardos, born out of the alleged need to "renew" the forces of the Right and break, even if violently, with the indolence of the Conservative establishment, was thus a key moment for the reformulation of Colombian nationalism in light of the rise of fascism in Europe, and more concretely and locally, as a radical reaction to the return to power by the despised Liberal party.

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[22] Silvio Villegas and Augusto Ramírez, "No hay enemigos a la derecha" (originally published in La Patria, 10 Dec 1936); in Silvio Villegas, No Hay Enemigos a la Derecha, 247-248.

As historian James Henderson has noted, Laureano Gómez held strained dialogue with the Leopardos over the question of Conservatism's relation to fascism. Stemming from his diplomatic experience in Europe between 1930 and 1932, Gómez condemned both Nazism and fascism as extreme ideologies of totalitarian dictatorship. For Gómez, fascism's cult of violence and tyrannical tendencies were contrary to Conservative notions of liberty and republican government, and he referred to the fascists within his party (the Leopardos and their followers) as "the neo-nationalist epidemic".[24] The confrontation between this Colombian pro-fascist "New Right" (the self-proclaimed "true nationalists") and Gómez's emphasis on party discipline and ideological orthodoxy left a deep imprint in the party, particularly, as historians Ricardo Arias and César Ayala have studied respectively, in the polarization of Conservative factions and the persistence of a combative "*leopardo* sensibility" championed by Gilberto Alzate throughout The Marching Revolution and into the second half of the 20th century.[25]

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[23] Villegas and Ramírez, "No Hay Enemigos a la Derecha," 248.

[24] James Henderson, Conservative Thought, 110-13.

[25] Arias's study of the Leopardos places them as protagonists of important intellectual, political and even artistic debates throughout the 1920s and 30s, and as radically dissenting voices within Conservatism against Gómez's overpowering leadership, while also trying to steer it towards a dictatorial project. See

While resisting to be persuaded by the "neo-nationalists," Gómez's political positions grew increasingly confrontational during the 1930s, as his political fame grew with his speeches and debates in the Senate floor as well as his publications in the influential *Revista Javeriana* and dailies such as *El Siglo* (owned by Gómez) and *El País*, amongst others. From these posts, Gómez defended the notion of Conservatism as the legitimate repository of Colombian nationalism, resting on the spiritual-cultural heritage of *hispanidad* but also on the historical defense of God, motherland and society from the forces of liberalism and positivism in Colombia. Religiosity, reason, and science constituted the pillars of Conservatism's "ideological treasure." For him, Catholicism was "the pinnacle of human culture," and the key link between the party's doctrine and universal values. In Gomez's rendering of Conservative nationalism, this universality rested on the aspiration for "a civilized Homeland, enemy of barbarism; free and scornful of oppression and dictatorship; loving of equality against privilege, and of justice against the abuse of power and gold," and in the acknowledgment of collectivism, socialism, and liberalism as agents of destruction "without permanent content."[26] For Gómez, this "Conservative *idearium*" ought to become the basis of party unity and the political and moral weapon against "the preponderance of liberal principles" in Colombia.

A point of fierce contention by actors opposed to the Liberal Republic was the reform to the educational system and to the Concordat with the Vatican, which Gómez

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Ricardo Arias, Los Leopardos: Una Historia Intelectual de los Años 1920 (Bogotá: Universidad de Los Andes, 2007). On Alzate as the main carrier and actor of *la sensibilidad leoparda*, see César Ayala Diago, Inventando al Mariscal: Gilberto Alzate Avendaño, Circularidad Ideológica y Mímesis Política (Bogotá: Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño, 2010).

[26] Laureano Gómez, "El genuino conservador," Obras Completas, t. 5: Discursos académicos y doctrinarios, 132.

saw as evidence of Liberal barbarism and as grounds to vehemently oppose López's reelection bid for the 1942-1946 period. For Gómez, López had ruled as a tyrant, which, for him, amounted to a declaration of war against "the common good" and "the nation's majorities" – that is, against Conservatives. Their duty as "spiritualists" was, according to Gómez, to prepare for war as a "licit affair and a product of the necessity of the moment we live in."[27] Gómez's belligerent rhetoric went as far as invoking the legitimate (and if necessary, violent) resistance of Catholics against the path towards "communist tyranny" on which López had put the country, drawing a parallel to the political context of the Spanish Republic and noting the redeeming nature of the war that "saved" Spain.[28]

In this regard, if taken together with his past rejection of fascism and Nazism, his admiration for Gandhi's "spiritual nationalism," and his vindication of *hispanidad*, Gómez's affection for the Francoist regime is a symptom of the imprint left by his debates with the "new Right," insofar as his rejection of totalitarian violence did not conflict with his justification of violence as a means of defense against the "war" waged by the Liberals. Ultimately, Gómez shared with the Leopardos a staunch anti-Liberalism (encompassing both the Liberal party and liberalism as a political philosophy) that was rooted in the belief that the Liberal/Conservative divide, deepened during the course of the Marching Revolution, was akin to a radical, transcendent, and inescapable division between idealism and materialism, between the true defenders of the nation and its enemies.

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[27] "There are certain things that we Conservatives cannot renounce without renouncing life. This is why we must prepare for war: because we either renounce to a concept of Homeland, a concept of culture and a concept of morality that is deeply rooted in our consciences or we part with our lives." Laureano Gómez, "Contra la reelección presidencial de López Pumarejo," Obras selectas. Primera Parte, 613-614.

[28] "War can always be waged! That Spanish Republic of which the President spoke so highly, opted for the same positivist system; it armed itself, it bought military supplies to the extreme, and expelled from the ranks of the Army and the Civil Guard all those who it considered suspicious. When the pressure mounted, the war came, and with the war the salvation of Spain." Gómez, "Contra la reelección", Obras selectas. Primera Parte, 616.

The battle waged by Conservatism was, however, not purely ideological. As early as 1932, Gómez and his followers denounced that the Liberal Republic and its Marching Revolution had spurred a campaign of "extermination" against Conservatives in the provinces of Santander, Norte de Santander, and Boyacá, carried out by police forces at the command of local Liberal politicians. Gómez's denunciations of political violence as the result of the zero-sum politics of "Liberal intolerance"[29] peaked after the 1939 massacre of Gachetá (Cundinamarca) in which eight Conservative sympathizers attending a local party convention were killed by civilian (allegedly Liberal) and police fire. The news shook the Conservative party and sparked the condemnation of the government, while the emblematic Liberal daily *El Tiempo* (owned by historic party figure Eduardo Santos) noted that "in Gachetá the Conservatives have a semi-military organization, sponsored by the so-called Catholic unions, and which often demonstrates enthusiastically after Sunday Mass, in what is a clear provocation against the Liberals."[30]

In the context of the 1940 presidential bid, Gachetá was the event that condensed Conservative accusation of voter intimidation, assassination of local elected officials and electoral fraud. These were framed by Gómez not as isolated local phenomena nor as actions motivated by vengeance or criminality, but rather as an integral part of the Liberals' attempts to impose their hegemony by force. The memory of Gachetá was shared by other Conservative figures, such as former *leopardo* Augusto Ramírez, who in a public speech in Gachetá interpreted the deaths of fellow Conservatives as a sacrifice in the name of "fulfilling their duty as citizens, in holding on to their ideals and in welcoming their leaders." The sacrifice of Conservatives was, for Ramírez, a show of Christian martyrdom: "Without the death of Catholics, without death understood as hope, there is no Fidelity […] And the party stills stands, as a splendid beast of combat, torn and bleeding […]" Without naming his source, Ramírez quoted a 1933 speech by the founder of the fascist Spanish Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, to reproach the government's "liberal verbiage" and defend the Conservative project as the only one capable of guaranteeing liberty and the integrity of "eternal values."[31]

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[29] Laureano Gómez, "La violencia política," Obras Completas, t. 4, vol. 2: Discursos parlamentarios 1932-1935, 92-93.

[30] "5 muertos y 7 heridos en la manifestación de Gachetá," El Tiempo, 9 January 1939, 1.

However, Ramírez was critical of Gómez's bellicose leadership, and accused him of exploiting the violence for political purposes and of attempting to impose a "discipline for dogs" against dissidents within the party.[32] By the time of the Gachetá massacre, Gómez had clearly abandoned the position of non-violent, spiritual resistance that he admired in Gandhi, and argued that the revolutionary effects of passive resistance were only possible "in existence of a moral sensibility, a propitious moral environment," which, for him, was absent in Colombia: "In our country, passive resistance to evil would produce nothing but scorn and hilarity."[33] Even without the support of party dissidents nor the Church, Gómez moved closer to the "direct action" approach promoted by Los Leopardos since the 1920s and all throughout the Liberal Republic,[34] and insisted on the need for *acción intrépida* against López Pumarejo's reelection (and Liberalism in general). Insisting that he was "neither a politician nor a thug," Gómez did not retract from prior public statements that legitimized violence against Liberalism and its candidate (including the parallels drawn with the Spanish civil war), but instead stated that he had only "announced a fact: if López regains power, personal attacks and civil war will be inevitable as a logical consequence of that regime."[35]

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[31] "We want less liberal verbiage and more respect for the profound liberty of man… which can only be attained when one considers Man as the carrier of eternal values and as the corporal sheath of a soul capable of saving or damning itself […] Only then can Man expect to be free, particularly if that liberty is coalesced with a system of authority, hierarchy, and order like the one we defend." Augusto Ramírez Moreno, "Al iniciar la marcha. Discurso pronunciado en Gachetá el 19 de Febrero de 1939," Obras Selectas (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1984), 213. The speech by Primo de Rivera is considered the founding moment of the Spanish Falange, and it was published as "Una bandera que se alza," *Acción Española*, no. 40, 1933, 363-369. On the place of this speech in the development of fascism in Spain, see Ferran Gallego, El Evangelio Fascista: La Formación de la Cultura Política del Franquismo *(1930-1950)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2014), 229-54.

[32] Augusto Ramírez Moreno, "Disciplina para perros," Obras Selectas, 214-215; Augusto Ramírez Moreno, "Contra Laureano Gómez y su política, pronunciado por la emisora Nueva Granada e 10 de Febrero de 1943, al abrir su campaña electoral," Obras Selectas, 218-24.

The basilisk: violence, counter-violence and the communist conspiracy

Conservative disaffection towards the reformist legacies of the Marching Revolution and the increase of partisan violence coincided with mounting political and socio-economic tensions, particularly in rural Colombia. Pressures on the workforce and land tenure, for instance, often overlapped with disputes, worsened in times of elections, between local Liberal and Conservative groups, elected officials, landowners, and

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[33] "Laureano Gómez íntimo," El Tiempo, 29 September 1940, Segunda Sección, 2.

[34] Despite its critical importance, this shift on how Gómez understood the practical implications of the clash with the Liberals has been overlooked by the historiography on Colombian Conservatism during the 1930s, including James Henderson's landmark study on the ideas of Laureano Gómez, and Helwar Figueroa's more recent work on corporatism and hispanismo in Colombia. As a notable exception, historian Javier Guerrero has stressed the affinity between the otherwise marginal position of Los Leopardos (their critique of civility as a masquerade, and their scorn of democracy) and the radicalization of Conservatism at the local level. Javier Guerrero Barón, El Proceso Político de las Derechas en Colombia y los Imaginarios sobre las Guerras Internacionales, 1930-1945 (Tunja: Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, 2014), 250-253.

[35] "Laureano Gómez íntimo," El Tiempo, 29 September 1940, Segunda Sección, 2.

colonos (farmer or peasant settlers in sparsely populated regions). In major urban centers, the creation of a government-sponsored national labor confederation came along with the pressures of urbanization and the demand for improvements in infrastructure and social rights. Throughout the 1930s and 40s, the deepening of the ideological confrontation between Liberals and Conservatives, along with the conflicts over for the control of land, revenue, and local and regional clientelistic networks shaped the expressions of violence that pre-dated the period of “classic” violence known as La Violencia (1946-1953): the arming of farmers and peasants, and the mobilization of vigilante squads composed of civilians and police officers for the purposes of political intimidation and retribution. In the absence of a fully institutionalized National Police, local police forces became a key element in this factional use of public authority. While regionally differentiated, this violence had become part of the mechanisms of local governance, exerted by both Liberals and Conservatives as an instrument of political competition and mediation of group interests.[36] Thus, what Gómez adamantly denounced as “political violence” was indeed an expression of the discretional use of public force, perpetrated by both Liberals and Conservatives, to embolden their party machineries through the intimidation, displacement, or elimination of opponents.

After a failed coup attempt against president López in 1944, the politics of civility and elite accommodation underpinning Colombia’s two-party system had clearly undergone a rapid process of erosion. In 1946, the election of Conservative Mariano Ospina served as a catalyst for these accumulated tensions to manifest in a definite crisis.

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[36] Darío Betancourt and Martha L. García, Matones y Cuadrilleros: Origen y Evolución de la Violencia en el Occidente Colombiano, 1946-1965 (Bogotá: IEPRI; Tercer Mundo, 1990), 35-55.

In an effort to centralize highly regionalized party structure and wage a more effective battle against their "enemies," the Conservative directorate launched a campaign of "Conservatization" of all local and municipal elected offices, based on the intimidation of voters and even of elected Liberals to force them out of their posts, often by violent means.[37] Violence in the wake of *La Violencia* (1946-1953) had a markedly partisan character. The entrenchment of party structures as regulators of other forms of conflict (grievances over land, labor, and inter-personal or familial disputes) turned the campaign into a plan for the radical exclusion of Liberals from the broader system of interest representation, inter-party negotiation, and clientelistic mobilization.

Another factor and symptom of the protracted crisis of party coexistence was the disruption caused by the rise of Liberal politician Jorge Eliecer Gaitán. A middle-class, educated activist lawyer with a strong mass appeal, Gaitán built a reputation for his support for labor causes, added to his boisterous personality and his fierce criticism of the traditional ways of doing politics behind closed doors. Gaitán's populist persuasion was rooted in the demand for a significant reconfiguration of the political system, and in the denunciation of elite politics and its restricted notion of public life as a matter concerning only to an enlightened minority. As historian Herbert Braun has pointed out, even if Gaitán was not himself a radical, his movement became a radical challenge to *convivialismo* insofar as his form of leadership and public persona were part of "a continuous experiment within an uncharted middle ground between the politicians and *el pueblo*."[38]

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[37] As Mary Roldán noted in her influential study of La Violencia in the Antioquia region, these efforts to attain full control over localities and their resources exposed the clash between the power claims of regional and national state structures, and deepened the crisis of both parties' political machineries and their incapacity to administer conflict through non-violent forms. To an extent, the violence that emerged out of the "Conservatization" campaign only aggravated the clash between mechanisms of local and regional clientelism, and gave more power to local political bosses to engage in violence. Mary Roldán, Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 30-35.

Gaitán was not an absolute outsider to the politics of *convivialismo*, but rather a figure that emerged from the lower echelons of the Liberal party to push for a redefinition of political participation within the limits imposed by the two-party system. Yet, he insisted on a denunciation of the immorality of self-interested public officials as well as the separation between what he called "the political nation" (the "oligarchs) and the "real nation" (the people). Gaitán inverted the equation of the "public man" as a virtuous guide for the masses, claiming instead the superiority of *el pueblo* over its leaders. Thus, according to Braun, Gaitán threatened the party *jefes* "with what they most feared, an ochlocracy, and he offered his followers a democracy."[39] By ambiguously situating his movement as a both a challenge to convivialismo and a path to refashion party politics from the inside, Gaitán injected the notion of public life with the presence of an active collective subject that, even if constrained by the representational capabilities of the leader, was pushing the limits of a political system that treated these forms of multi-class, heterogeneous mobilization as disruptive.

Gaitán founded an independent political movement (National Revolutionary Leftist Union, or UNIR) with a socialist platform and later ran for Congress as a Liberal. He capitalized on the crisis of representation within the Liberal party (its inability and unwillingness to incorporate worker or peasant organizations in a non-clientelistic way) and pushed Liberalism to the Left from within. Also, while nominally against the foreign nature of communism, Gaitán built his movement by appealing to stark class and status divisions as the basis for mobilization, and attracted vast sectors of the socialist and communist Left that revered the same tradition of late-nineteenth century "Left Liberalism" that favored a social-reformist, secular, interventionist state.[40] In 1946, Gaitán ran for president as a semi-independent candidate with the backing of UNIR supporters and Liberal dissidents. This triggered harsh critiques from the Liberal press, which accused Gaitán of being a "traitor" and a "fascist threat to democracy," and yet Liberal party *jefes* were forced to consider some form of compromise to avoid losing *gaitanista* votes.[41] From the defeat of Liberalism in this election, Gaitán emerged as the undisputed central figure of this dissident wing of the Liberal Party and as seemingly the only one capable of competing with the large scale mobilization spurred by the "Conservatization" campaign.[42]

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[38] Braun, The Assassination of Gaitán, 37.

[39] Braun, The Assassination of Gaitán, 101.

In many ways, Laureano Gómez was Gaitán's Conservative counterpart. Like Gaitán, Gómez was a fierce critic of what he called "the party oligarchies" which he attacked from his influential daily *El Siglo* as viciously as he did the Marching Revolution. Gómez's impact had gone beyond his inflammatory rhetoric, as he built mass support amongst Conservative followers, particularly in rural areas where local authorities and economic interests had aligned with the party machinery. Like Gaitán, Gómez understood the nation as a living organism going through a crisis induced by the acts of corrupt and immoral oligarchs. However, unlike Gaitán's emphasis on a loosely defined class-based mobilization, Gómez's anti-oligarchical discourse was geared toward a corporatist counterrevolution, in which the organization of interests in an organic and hierarchical state appeared as the only model capable of dealing with the disaggregating, anti-spiritual effects of modern rationality, and the only real alternative to the Liberal Republic and to the return to the "farce" of *convivencia*.

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[40] John W. Green, "Vibrations of the Collective: the Popular Ideology of Gaitanismo on Colombia's Atlantic Coast, 1944-1948," Hispanic American Historical Review 76, no. 2 (1996): 294-98. On the broader significance of Gaitán's populism, see John W. Green, Gaitanismo, Left Liberalism, and Popular Mobilization in Colombia (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 2003).

[41] Green, "Vibrations of the Collective," 292-293.

[42] Daniel Pécaut locates Gaitán's "populist moment" between 1945 and 1948, when his second presidential candidacy captures the support of Liberals, but also mobilizes labor unions, urban professionals, journalists, middle-class activists and what Pécaut calls "the popular classes." Unlike Braun, Pécaut is skeptical of the achievements of Gaitán's populism, which he sees as ultimately conceding to the logic of bipartisan confrontation and as fueling the friend-enemy distinction that informed the political violence of later years. See Daniel Pécaut, Orden y Violencia. Evolución Socio-Política de Colombia entre 1930 y 1953 (Bogotá: Norma, 2001), chapter 4. Also see Daniel Pécaut, "Populismo imposible y violencia: el caso colombiano." Estudios Políticos, no. 16 (15 December 2000), 45-70.

As strong believers in the virtues of the Colombian people, Gaitán and Gómez capitalized on the separation between "the oligarchs" and *el pueblo* by projecting the radicalization of the country's social and political cleavages outside of elite social clubs and parliamentary discussion and into the public squares. More strikingly, Gaitán's emphasis on the ills of capitalism and the defense of a higher moral order in opposition to the "oligarchy" attracted the imagination a wide public, including Conservatives such as Gómez, who saw Gaitán as a leader and legitimate political interlocutor. In this regard, Herbert Braun notes that, while representing two opposing collectivities, both Gaitán and Gómez hinged on the mobilization of their broadened bases of popular support, hoping to unmask the simulation of convivencia and its incapacity to address the impending crisis of governance. Although Braun's account in fact downplays the plurality within both parties and the distance set by moderate factions vis-a-vis these two public figures, their status as party *caudillos* in a time of crisis indeed revealed a deeper rupture related to the way in which both figures understood politics. As Daniel Pécaut has noted, both Gómez and Gaitán appealed to the radical divisions in Colombian society, exposing their originary violence and pushing for "the dissolution of the social as such."[43] In short, by operating within their own party structures to radically question the terms of convivencia, Gaitán and Gómez successfully captured the political imagination of their growing audiences – politicized peasants and rural workers, as well as the urban working and professional classes. They capitalized on the contradictions that affected Colombian society – the gaps between the "political" and the "real" Colombia; between the people and the unresponsive bipartisan system; between a Catholic nation and the abandonment of morality and transcendent value (for Gómez); and between the personal gains of "oligarchs" and the immense socioeconomic disparities (for Gaitán).

The killing of Gaitán in the streets of Bogotá on April 9th, 1948 and the turmoil that followed it have often been presented as the symbolic opening of La Violencia. Gaitán's assassination and the ensuing violence can also be understood as outcomes and symptom of these radical divisions, of the erosion of convivialismo, the rapid escalation of interparty violence at the local level, the routinization of repression and the attempts by the parties' *jefes* to contain and limit mass collective action. The Bogotá riots of April 9th (commonly referred to as El Nueve de Abril or El Bogotazo) were particularly destructive: encouraged by clandestine radio broadcasts and carried out by an undetermined number of gaitanista sympathizers, workers, shopkeepers, passers-by and even police officers, the revolt took on the lynching of Gaitán's executioner, and the burning of public buildings, churches, the headquarters of the Conservative daily *El*

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[43] Daniel Pécaut, "De las violencias a la violencia." In Gonzalo Sánchez and Ricardo Peñaranda (eds.), Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia (Bogotá: CEREC, 1985), 193.

Siglo, and even Gómez's home. Outside of Bogotá, a number of insurrectional experiments took place – from acts of sabotage, to the self-arming of peasants, to the creation of autonomous revolutionary councils – which where, particularly in urban areas, swiftly dispersed by the Army with the assistance of armed civilians identified with Conservatism.[44]

Trying to maintain *convivencia* afloat, the leaders of the Liberal party approached president Ospina and pressured him to form a coalition government or resign. In the following days, Ospina appointed prominent Liberal Darío Echandía as Minister of Interior and incorporated other Liberal leaders to his cabinet. However, with a divided Liberal party and a radicalized Conservative majority, Congress entered a deadlock. As tensions mounted amidst the intensification of partisan rural violence, and in response to what was deemed as a "general state of disturbance of the public order," on November 9th 1949 Ospina issued a declaration of state of siege and decreed the banning of all public meetings, the imposition of a strict censorship over the radio and the press, and the closure of Congress.

The emergency declared by Ospina marked the beginning of a period of intermittent states of exception in which the Executive issued over a thousand extraordinary decrees related to public safety, but also many that modified the structures of government, or at the least, affected, suspended or substituted their functioning.[45]

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[44] On the differentiated regional impact of Gaitán's assassination and the various expressions of rebelliousness during and after the event, see Gonzalo Sánchez, El Bogotazo Fuera de Bogotá: Gaitanismo y 9 de Abril en Provincia (Bogotá: Editorial Códice, 2008).

[45] The decrees addressed a wide range of government issues: foreign and economic policy, public services, education, internal security, administrative and judicial structures, cultural life and electoral institutions, amongst others. At the time, the most polemical and contested measures were those that suspended the normal functioning of Congress and limited the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over governmental actions during the state of siege, effectively modifying their field of competence and subordinating them to the Executive.

Liberal politicians and legal scholars condemned this political use of the president's unchecked powers to enact legislation that was unrelated to the alleged state of necessity and perturbation of public order. For them, appealing to a state of necessity as a source of legitimacy for government action left all legal guarantees reduced to the morality of the ruler - in this case, the dominant Conservative faction.[46]

These debates about the state of siege had important consequences for the conduct of the Conservative regime after Gaitán's assassination. The intervention of the Army to subdue the revolts, the suspension of individual guarantees, and the factional use of the security forces – which included the arming of Conservative sympathizers to repel the actions of rioters and mutineers – were all decisions taken by Ospina and his cabinet under the mantle of the state of siege, justified by a "state of internal commotion" that was to last until the conditions that threatened public safety were resolved. Despite the success in overcoming the revolts, the proliferation of peasant self-defense groups already fighting against the Conservatization campaign, along with the new wave of repression that followed El Bogotazo, allowed the government to justify the state of siege by constructing a perception of threat to public order embodied by the recent memory of the ransacking *gaitanista* mobs in the cities and the bands of Liberal guerrillas in the countryside. As the most palpable and durable expression of the state's para-institutional response to El Bogotazo, the creation of Conservative "civic guards" to replace the police officers who joined the riots became an immediate precedent to the creation of privatized

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Carlos Peláez, Estado de Derecho y Estado de Sitio: La Crisis de la Constitución en Colombia (Bogotá: Temis, 1955), 201*ff*.

[46] "Carta de profesores de las Facultades de Derecho y miembros del cuerpo de abogados al Ministro de Justicia" (undated). Box 1, folder 2: "Documentos y cartas políticas," Germán Arciniegas Latin America Papers. New York Public Library, New York (hereafter cited as GALAP).

police corps. Constituted by *matones* (hired assassins) these “civic guards” were infamously known as *pájaros*, and were funded by Conservative authorities, landowners, and merchant guilds.[47]

Another important development was the government’s attempt to “internationalize” the crisis in the immediate aftermath of the Bogotazo by blaming both the assassination of Gaitán and the ensuing violence on a conspiracy planned by the Soviet Union and carried out by local communists to bring the country to a state of revolutionary upheaval. Conservative intellectuals, commentators, and politicians took on the task of providing “evidence” for the accusations against the communists through an intense propaganda campaign, led by Gómez’s party underlings and some of his closest acquaintances from his daily *El Siglo*. Francisco Fandiño Silva’s *The Soviet Infiltration and the 9th of April* (1949) is perhaps the earliest and most notable effort by a known member of the Conservative party to defend the thesis of the communist conspiracy.

By situating the assassination of Gaitán as a “failed coup” and as a symptom of the degree of aggression reached by communism in the Americas, Fandiño warned about the impending threat of agitation coming from various sources in the continent, such as Rómulo Betancourt and his Acción Democrática party in Venezuela; the “spiritual socialism” of Juan José Arévalo in Guatemala; or the internationalist labor activism of Vicente Lombardo Toledano in Mexico. Also, the presence in Bogotá of known student leaders and Leftist intellectuals from France, Spain, Guatemala, and Cuba (the young Fidel Castro, among them), and who allegedly sought to sabotage the 9th Pan-American Conference taking place in Bogotá, gave credibility to the thesis of the international communist conspiracy, givin creedence to the anti-interventionist and nationalistic undertones of the government's anticommunist campaign.[48] While the Communist Party had historically been a protagonist in social movements since the 1920s,[49] and communists had joined Gaitán's movement, leading some of the uprisings outside of Bogotá.[50] Yet, there was no evidence to sustain the theory of a conspiracy masterminded by the Communist Party and the Soviets, which appeared farfetched even for US and European diplomats stationed in Bogotá.[51]

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[47] Betancourt and García, Matones y Cuadrilleros, 74-75.

For the Conservative party, the violence of El Bogotazo was a direct result of the problem of homegrown and neighboring (i.e. Venezuelan) communism, and tied at the same time to their radical confrontation with Liberalism as a collectivity and with liberalism as a political philosophy at large. The events of El Bogotazo and the failed insurrections that accompanied it throughout the country would, in a way, validate longstanding concerns about Liberal intolerance, communist opportunism, and the use of criminality and violence as instruments of factionalism. This violence would also have a politico-theological, "deeper meaning," as pondered by *leopardo* Augusto Ramírez, who referred to the burning of churches and the house of the Archbishop by the rioters as an episode of the confrontation between the Vatican and the Kremlin; "a fragment and a facet of the war of the Antichrist against Christ." For him, the perpetrators were "backward cavemen" and their endorsers were communists belonging to the armies of the Antichrist, who took advantage of Gaitán's death to exert violence against political adversaries. The Bogotazo was, in short, a sign of "the unleashing of forces that exceed our strength; we are like angels lodged in the mud."[52] The attribution of this type of popular violence to divine and supernatural forces was also part of Laureano Gómez's rhetoric about the Liberal-communist enemy. In one of his most famous speeches about the violence of el Bogotazo, Gómez evoked the mythical figure of the basilisk to make sense of that unholy alliance:

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[48] Francisco Fandiño Silva, La Penetración Soviética y el 9 de Abril (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1949), 46-58.

[49] On the broader history of the Colombian Communist Party as a point of convergence for various political and social movements throughout the twentieth century, see Renán Vega Cantor, Gente Muy Rebelde: Protesta Popular y Modernización Capitalista en Colombia (1909-1929) (Bogotá: Pensamiento Crítico, 2002); Medófilo Medina, Historia del Partido Comunista de Colombia (Bogotá: CEIS, 1980); and Ignacio Torres Giraldo, Los Inconformes: Historia de la Rebeldía de Masas en Colombia (Bogotá: Margen Izquierdo, 1972), volume 4.

[50] The Communist Party was an important ally of the Marching Revolution's efforts to promote unionization under a state-sponsored national labor federation, and it often remained subordinated to the alliance with the more numerous socialists and the so-called radical Liberals. During the 1948 riots, many of these Leftists partook in organizing 'resistance' and 'revolutionary *juntas*' to overthrow the government, achieving some degree of success in mobilizing workers, police officers, and even some judges. In that sense, the presence of a revolutionary ferment was real and yet unlikely to succeed. Gonzalo Sánchez, "The Violence: An Interpretive Synthesis" in Charles Bergquist, Gonzalo Sánchez and Enrique Peñaranda. Violence in Colombia: the Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1992), 81-84.

[51] American, French, and British diplomats had mixed perceptions about the role played by communism in the *Bogotazo,* often stressing the undeniable presence of radical Leftists but also pointing out to the non-systematic nature of the riots in Bogotá, and the important but non-determining and ultimately non-threatening presence of communists in the revolts in the provinces. For analyses on these perceptions, see the contributions in Gonzalo Sánchez (ed.), Grandes Potencias, el 9 de Abril y la Violencia (Bogotá: Planeta, 2000).

> In Colombia, we still speak of the Liberal party to refer to an amorphous and contradictory mass […] that can only be understood through the image of what the ancients called the basilisk […] Our basilisk walks with feet of confusion and ingenuity, with legs of violence and abuse, with an immense oligarchical stomach; and a chest of fury. The basilisk has Masonic arms and a communist head; tiny, and yet still the head. This is the result of a mental elaboration, product of careful observation of the latest events in our nation. And thus we deem the 9th of April as a typical communist phenomenon, carried out by the basilisk […][53]

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[52] "El 9 de abril. Discurso pronunciado en el homenaje orecido en el Teatro Colón en desagravio al Santo Padre y a su Nuncio en Colombia, el 8 de Julio de 1948." In Augusto Ramírez, Obras Selectas, 331.

[53] "Discurso pronunciado por el doctor Laureano Gómez en la Plaza de Berrío de Medellín a su regreso de España en 1949" in Testis Fidelis [pseud.], El Basilisco en Acción, o los Crímenes del Bandolerismo (Medellín : Olympia, 1953).

Through the image of the basilisk, Gómez presented the Liberal opposition to the regime as a chimeric animal controlled by external forces that allegedly plotted against Gaitán, and who were incarnated by urban mob violence and rural criminality (banditry). In putting forward this view of communism as a dangerous minority guiding the actions of the Liberal, Masonic, oligarchical and criminal basilisk, Gómez made the latter a symbol that condensed the various antagonists that the Conservative party had been mobilizing against since the civil wars of the late nineteenth century and throughout the period of the Marching Revolution. Moreover, the basilisk designated, in all its rhetorical force, a target for further action by members of his party and by the security forces controlled by the Conservative regime.

These public speeches were not a mere exertion of rhetoric to castigate the enemies of Conservatism or to remind party members of the need to adhere to "the doctrine." As one of his most famous apologists pointed out, Gómez "awakened the overwhelming mystique of the party. One of his words was enough to produce war or peace." For his followers, Gómez was a leader "in the tradition of the best popular *caudillos*" whose charisma and public presence "was greater than that of all the constituted powers put together," turning him into "the feared arbiter of the nation." [54] Gómez understood his own *caudillo* quality in terms of having a direct connection with "the Conservative masses," to whom he served as judicious, charismatic leader that derived his authority from an ability to translate impulse into reason:

> The masses believe in me. They know that when I am silent, they can be at peace, and when I speak it is because I perceive danger. They await my word. It is not that I influence the Conservative masses, but it is the opposite. I am not the

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[54] Rafael Azula Barrera, De la Revolución al Orden Nuevo: Drama y Proceso de un Pueblo (Bogotá: Editorial Kelly, 1956), 35.

> impulsive one. I meditate things thoroughly, I study the environment and the will of my fellow party members. Then I speak. It is then that the masses discover they have been interpreted… That is why they believe in me. It is them who exert their influence on he who knows how to interpret their sentiments.[55]

Gomez's leadership and political clout was but one element in the erosion and de-legitimation of a traditional notion of civility between the *jefes* of both parties. This civility was somewhat of a fabrication, a desire for moderation that became increasingly unsustainable as all attempts to rationalize the ongoing violence inevitably resorted to retrospective looks that attributed it to factional struggles. For Conservatives, the root of violence had been the break of this civility due to the Liberal intolerance embodied by the Marching Revolution; for the Liberals, violence had been originated by the Conservatization campaign of 1946. Indeed the factional use of the police and armed civilians as instruments of intimidation was a widespread practice since the 1930s, but the Conservatization campaign exacerbated the link between grand ideological goals and the actions of local Conservative committees fueling local conflicts, often contravening the dictates of the Conservative directorate in Bogotá. This allowed the systematic and yet decentralized use of informal parapolice groups known as *policía chulavita*[56] and *contrachusmas* ("counter-rabble," groups of armed civilians), which worked as instruments of local law enforcement and political cleansing.[57]

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[55] "Laureano Gómez íntimo," El Tiempo, 29 September 1940, Segunda Sección, 2.

[56] The term comes from the name of the town of Chulavita, Boyacá, where the Ospina government recruited Conservatives to aid the repression of the riots of the Bogotá riots. Orlando Fals Borda, Germán Guzmán Campos and Eduardo Umaña Luna, La Violencia en Colombia. Estudio de un Proceso Social. Vol I. (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1980 [1962]), 81-83.

[57] For Mary Roldán, these forms of organized violence were not symptoms of a "breakdown of the state" but rather of "its morally weak and organizationally dispersed nature… The very forces that should have represented the principle of order were nothing more than one among a competing array of armed groups, all of whom ultimately answered to private and particular interests and not to the interests of the public." Roldán, Blood and Fire, 106.

Composed of Conservative sympathizers and police officers traveling from one locality to another under orders of local political bosses, these groups played an important role in the repression of the revolts after the death of Gaitán, and became a normalized vehicle of disaggregated and yet organized punitive action against townships and villages that claimed a Liberal affiliation. More broadly, chulavita/contrachusma violence came to be seen as an instrument of local elites to mobilize party affiliates and reassert their power and authority amidst a perceived state of agitation provoked by the Liberals, and later, by the economic and social havoc created by self-defense groups.[58] The use of chulavitas and contrachusmas allowed the conscious avoidance of involvement by the military, opting instead for repression enacted by civilians, sponsored by Conservative politicians and, at the very least, tolerated by the national government.[59] These irregular forces claimed to act legitimately and promptly against the Liberal "rabble" through ritualized forms of violence, such as the post-mortem gutting, decapitation, and mutilation of victims.[60] While these forms of retaliatory and exemplary execution existed before the Conservatization campaign, they were exacerbated by the reaction to the Bogotá riots and the creation of Liberal self-defense groups, and became part of a shared repertoire of violence during and beyond La Violencia.

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[58] Detailed accounts of the regional and local dynamics of chulavita and contrachusma violence as responses and scorched earth "solutions" to Liberal guerrilla activity in Antioquia can be found in Mary Roldán, Blood and Fire, 68-107; 109-135; 200-218; 246-277. For an analysis centered on the province of Valle de Cauca, see Betancourt and García, Matones y Cuadrilleros, chaps. 3-5.

[59] The massacre of El Carmen (North of Santander), occurred in 1949, offers a particularly gruesome example of chulavita and contrachusma violence. El Carmen was a predominantly Liberal town that defied Conservative governor Lucio Pabón (a close collaborator of Gómez) and even built a statue to honor the death of Gaitán. On November 16, Pabón ordered the removal of an army garrison stationed in the town's outskirts to allow a group of ninety *chulavitas* to occupy El Carmen. The Liberals' resistance was unexpectedly fierce and more *chulavitas* arrived by planes (reportedly owned by the Colombian Petroleum Company) to repress the reaction against abuses such as the destruction of houses, rapes, summary executions, beatings, and generalized pillage. Two days later, an additional 250 *chulavitas* stormed into El Carmen, wrecking several houses, murdering 43 residents and imprisoning another 60. According to witness accounts, the prisoners were forced to carry the dead to their graves, while walking barefoot over broken glass. Finally, after the death of nearly 80 *chulavitas*, "volunteers" from neighboring villages called upon by Governor Pabón traveled to El Carmen and were able to "reestablish order." "Boletín no. 15. Informe a los liberales de la provincia de Ocaña de la forma criminal en que fue masacrado el liberalismo de El Carmen N.S., arruinado a todo el comercio y exterminado el patrimonio de la mayoría de los habitantes," undated, Box 1, Folder 3: Violencia, 1949-1952, GALAP.

These mechanisms of punitive political cleansing brought the radicalization of the Liberal response to the local level, even when Liberal *jefes* in Bogotá remained hopeful for a rapprochement with president Ospina under the latter's attempts to revive bipartisan *convivencia* and form a cabinet of "national unity." For local Liberal officials, the Conservatives' accusations of communist interference in Gaitán's assassination and in the organization of self-defense groups was unfounded, and in response denounced the atrocities committed by *chulativas* and *contrachusmas* as too obviously rooted in known factional and social grievances. Anticommunist rhetoric, initially espoused by the Liberal directorate as a way to appease tensions with the government, had a limited impact within the rank-and-file of the party. Indeed, as shown in documents that circulated clandestinely through local party networks, the issue of communism was superseded by denunciations about the extreme levels of sadism and cruelty taken by anti-Liberal violence,[61] and by the guerrillas' self-understanding as legitimate violent actors resisting and acting in retribution against what they saw as a fascist (“*falangista”*), illegitimate and dictatorial government.[62]

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[60] For a remarkable study of the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of massacres during la Violencia, see Maria Victoria Uribe, Matar, Rematar y Contramatar. Las Masacres de la Violencia en el Tolima, 1948-1964 (Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 1990).

[61] "The cause of the present violence is evident. To crush Liberalism and to unlawfully conquer power, the government and the Conservative party have turned the weapons and the prerogatives of the state over to people without a conscience, all noted criminals, and pushed them to hunt down all Liberals, granting rewards, protection and impunity for these delinquents. Authority has stopped being impartial and has lost all moral backing. "Cartas de Información Politica. Numero 7," 10 January, 1951. Box 1; folder 5: Cartas de Información Política, GALAP.

Dangerous subjects: violence, legality, and banditry in La Violencia

One of the most notable outcomes of the wave of violence between 1948 and 1953 was the outbreak of peasant self-defense groups connected, sometimes indirectly, to the mobilization of Liberals and *gaitanistas* during the 1948 revolts. The Liberal guerrillas of Eliseo Vasquez and Guadalupe Salcedo in the Eastern Plains, and those led by Juan de la Cruz Varela and Jacobo Prías (“El Mariachi”) in Tolima, for instance, were some of the most notable armed groups that sprung from this process. Notwithstanding their internal disputes, their different motivations and origins, and, most importantly, their heterogeneous and sometimes encapsulated regional distribution, these groups were altogether deemed by state officials, political chroniclers and the press as bandoleros, a term that made its way into the common language of La Violencia as a catch-all for those deemed as agents of criminal and political violence.

As a sort of historiographical anomaly in Latin American banditry studies, [63] Colombian bandolerismo became the subject of important analyses concerned with its social composition, its forms of articulation with political organizations, as well as its impact on the collective memory of la Violencia. As a rejoinder to Eric Hobsbawm's idea of bandits as pre-political "primitive rebels" and to his approach to banditry as "*always* social banditry," the groundbreaking work by Gonzálo Sánchez and Donny Meertens countered the view of banditry as a "depoliticized" residue of the period of "classic" party-centered violence, instead showing its social heterogeneity and its irregular distribution in space and time. Their analysis shed light on the centrality of the figure of the *bandolero* as an actor that linked the histories of factionalism, clientelism, agrarian conflict, criminality, insurrection, and rural displacement throughout and after this period. More importantly, these authors stressed the particular status of Colombian bandoleros as political actors, forcing scholars of violence in Colombia to rethink the underlying concept of "the political" beyond its reference to parties/factions, and to address the grassroots meanings of *bandolerismo* as well as those constructed by the state in its efforts to delegitimize and fight off its alleged enemies.[64]

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[62] For the guerrilla of Eliseo Vásquez in the Eastern Plains, for instance, the *chulavitas* were the ‘enemies of freedom’ and the ‘armies of dictatorship,” the “dictatorial rats” whom they swore to kill “by bullet and machete” (*a bala y machete).* For them, Liberal violence was legitimate and just insofar as it was an instrument of retribution against ‘those who killed our mothers, sons, brothers and workers; those responsible for the exiles; the rapists of innocent ones; and those who sustain this government of blood and fire. […] Against this series of infamies and against the *falangista* government of the blue barbarians we can only engage in their extermination from fields, towns and cities.” “Proclama de las Fuerzas Revolucionarias.” 1 May 1950. Box 1, folder 6: Documentos “Sangre y Fraude: Testimonio de la tragedia boyacense,” GALAP.

[63] For the most part, the historiography has dealt with banditry in Latin America as a nineteenth century phenomenon linked to unfinished processes of state formation, and often seen as a symptom of the chronic absence or weakness of emerging states vis-à-vis the residues of civil war or rural resistance. Besides Eric Hobsbawm’s attempts to establish a certain uniformity and continuity in the phenomenon, the spatial and social heterogeneity of banditry, as well as its inherent political illegibility, still poses a challenge for

The connection between Liberal party affiliation, communism as an allegiance to a foreign and threatening force, and "banditry" as a label to criminalize and depoliticize

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historians and social scientists alike. See Eric J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965); as well as his later Bandits (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969). On banditry in Latin American history and historiography, see Gilbert M. Joseph, "On the Trail of the Latin American Bandits: A Reexamination of Peasant Resistance," Latin American Research Review 25 (1990): 7-53; and Richard J. Slatta (ed.), Bandidos: The Varieties of Latin American Bandits (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987).

[64] See Gonzalo Sánchez and Donny Meertens, Bandoleros, Gamonales y Campesinos: el Caso de La Violencia en Colombia (Bogotá: El Áncora, 1983). For a study focused largely on bandolero and chulavita activity in the exceedingly violent region of Tolima, see James D. Henderson, When Colombia Bled: A History of the Violence in Tolima (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985). For the Valle de Cauca region see Betancourt and García, Matones y Cuadrilleros. Also see Mary Roldán, Blood and Fire, where the activities of *bandoleros* appear in the context of intermittent tensions sparked by agrarian conflict and the consolidation of regional elites in Antioquia.

the opposition was a prominent attribute of the political imaginary that emerged during la Violencia. Despite the heterogeneity of bandolerismo “on the ground,” these social and political meanings played a crucial role in rendering it as a constant and almost static phenomenon throughout la Violencia. The government’s anticommunist rhetoric overlapped with negative retrospective social interpretations of El Bogotazo as an event caused by the violence of *bandoleros*, an unruly criminal underclass manipulated by Liberal and communist agitators.

From the onset of violence after the death of Gaitán, the intensification of *chulavita* activity and the displacement of Liberal peasants, bandolerismo remained an issue of grave concern for the Conservative government. Organized as groups of self-defense to counter *chulavitas* and *contrachusmas*, Liberal guerrillas seemed undistinguishable from the bands of thieves, cattle-rustlers, and contrabandists that roamed the countryside capitalizing on the uneven distribution (or even lack) of formal state presence throughout the national territory. Insofar as they were able to constitute informal structures of protection and taxation, the political bandits of La Violencia thus posed a peculiar problem: if they were criminals, their actions belonged to the realm of common criminal law, enforced by regular police forces. But if they were *also* considered insurgents or rebels, their actions would be framed as political crimes of the gravest kind (crimes against the security of the state, rebellion) and thus warranting military action against them. While various episodes of extra-legal state-sponsored violence have been extensively documented by the historiography of the period, there has been much less attention paid to the legal and institutional responses to curtail the activities of bandoleros, and to the use of legality as a discourse about the legitimacy of punitive and coercive violence against these dangerous subjects.

Amid an upsurge in rural violence preceding the presidential election of 1949, president Ospina issued several decrees related to the "repeated commission of crimes such as arson, murder, theft, and pillage by bands of delinquents." These measures were an attempt to grapple with banditry as a national public safety issue and as a legal "gray area" of criminal-political violence. The most significant of these decrees dictated the use of court martials (Consejos de Guerra Verbales) to prosecute a wide range of common offenses, as well as those "against the constitutional regime and the internal security of the state" and against "collective health and integrity." Unsurprisingly, the government capitalized on the ambiguities of these codifications, particularly the typification of "the association or instigation to commit crimes" and the "apology" (justification/incitement) of crime as offenses that fell under the purview of the Consejos de Guerra.[65] Another set of decrees established the creation of an agency for the censorship of the press, under joint supervision by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of War, and staffed with military officers.[66] This agency would be in charge of monitoring targeted publications and broadcasters for any expression of support or sympathy for the Liberal/communist *bandoleros*, which became associated to the "apology of crime" and, in turn constituted an offense against "the security of the state" subject to the authority of the Consejos de Guerra.

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[65] "Decreto número 3562 de 1949," Decretos Extraordinarios y Decretos Reglamentarios de Leyes Expedidos por la Rama Ejecutiva, en Desarrollo del Artículo 121 de la Constitución Nacional, durante el año de 1949 (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1950), 60-61.

[66] "Decreto número 3580 de 1949," Decretos Extraordinarios, 62.

The use of Consejos de Guerra to enforce the penal code and prosecute the wide range of offenses linked to banditry had several other implications. First, it collapsed the prosecution of common crimes (theft, kidnapping, destruction of property) and political ones (rebellion, mutiny), rendering the offenders as more than simple delinquents. Following important criminological trends of the time, the underlying premise was that, aside from knowingly or unknowingly serving the cause of rogue Liberalism, bandoleros were treated as "criminals by conviction," that is, as subjects whose crimes were driven by a strong personal belief (whether an ideology or simply an deviant "way of life") beyond or in addition to egotistical, self-serving motives. Thus, in contrast to common delinquents who implicitly acknowledge the norm they infringe, these "convinced criminals" actively combatted the normative order in the name of a higher cause. This entailed an understanding of the bandit's dangerousness as stemming from an ethical and psychological disposition to break legal and social norms. [67] In short, bandoleros were considered both delinquents and political criminals because their everyday defiance and breaching of these norms were perceived as consciously seeking to undermine the established order. Following the punitive logic of criminal law, this type of delinquent, defined by its "state of special dangerousness" (*estado de especial peligrosidad*),[68] was to be treated as a combatant – that is, as an enemy of the normative order enforced by the state – and thus subject to forms of military engagement and punishment; in this case, to court martial.

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[67] Iván Orozco Abad and Alejandro Aponte, Combatientes, Rebeldes y Terroristas. Guerra y Derecho en Colombia (Bogotá: Temis, 1992), 155-161.

[68] The origins of this notion of "special dangerousness" can be traced back to the 1936 penal code and its emphasis on penal law as a mechanism of "social defense" against subjects considered abnormal and deemed to have a "disposition" to commit crimes. This form of pre-criminal dangerousness appeared later in the loose definition and typification of various kinds of common crimes as *delitos conexos* (related offenses) linked to political crimes, such as rebellion or the apology of crime. Orozco and Aponte, Combatientes, Rebeldes y Terroristas, 63-73.

A second implication of the Consejos de Guerra was that they were governed by the military penal code and worked under the premise that a brief, summary trial would lead to a more efficient process; and that, given the standards of military discipline, severe sentences were the best way to punish misconduct. By being subjected to the authority of these courts, civilians were stripped of the regular constitutional rights established for citizens, and instead placed under a parallel, exceptional *de facto* legal regime that blurred the distinction between common and political criminality.

Lastly, under the state of siege, the militarization of the penal mechanisms against banditry/delinquency modified the conduct of the justice system as an instrument of swift punishment and retaliation against the regime's detractors. Insofar as the measures against crime included the prosecution by Consejo de Guerra of the "apology of crime," the legal discourse in the emergency decrees had a strong communicative component, which was to intimidate the opposition and deter the public dissemination of views that were critical of the overall conduct of state affairs, and allegedly detrimental to the functioning of the constitutional regime given the context of turmoil. These politico-legal mechanisms played a crucial role in the intensification of the violence surrounding the presidential elections of November 1949, which took place amid the climate set by *chulavita* violence, the responses by Liberal self-defense groups, the radicalization of the state's punitive response to dissent, and the use of emergency measures as an instrument of quasi-wartime legislation.

As a response to Ospina's state of siege measures, the Liberal party launched a manifesto denouncing the state of emergency as akin to a coup d'état and condemning the factional use of the state of siege to carry out an "electoral farce." Yet, seeking to maintain a moderate position, party officials also pled to "keep the attitude of resistance to oppression within the party's traditional line of action" and avoid "personal attacks and the use of terrorist methods" in order to avert further justifications for repression.[69] With this call for both resistance and restraint, Darío Echandía, once the Liberals' closest negotiator with the government, withdrew from the presidential race. Running as the lone candidate, Laureano Gómez took over a presidency already endowed with the prerogatives of the state of siege, and with the expansion of military purview in controlling the censorship office and in exerting law enforcement and judicial functions.

In his inauguration, Gómez vowed to reinject the principles of Christianity into the conduct of state affairs, and called all Colombians to "change their habitual lifestyle" to root out the *politiquería* (petty politics) of "the dominant caste" and the violence brought about by the substitution of "eternal laws" by codes and formalities and by the actions of murderers, "the utmost enemies of society."[70] Gómez's conduct of state repression, was, for the most part, a continuation of the punitive tendencies initiated by Ospina, establishing tougher sentences for the "apology of crime" and for "crimes against the integrity of the constitutional regime," which translated into a more strict vigilance by the office of press censorship and a harsher treatment of public dissent.

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[69] "Manifiesto de la Dirección Liberal al Liberalismo," 13 November 1949, caja 2, Fondo Ministerio de Gobierno – Despacho del Ministro, Archivo General de la Nación (Bogotá), hereafter cited as AGN-COL.

[70] Laureano Gómez, "Discurso de Posesión a la Presidencia de la República," Obras Completas, t. VI: Presidencia, Exilio y Frente Nacional, 12-17.

Gómez also decreed changes to the 1936 penal code to increase the punishments for *maleantes*, a category that comprised anyone "failing to exert a legitimate profession or trade," vagrants, and particularly repeat offenders prosecuted for criminal activity or their "anti-social status."[71] This particular change consolidated the use of the state of siege as an instrument to increaase the punitive power of the criminal justice system and neutralize what was perceived as a wave of criminality, tied to the political intentions of enemies, but also to a larger state of social decay. Gómez also terminated the use of Consejos de Guerra to prosecute common crimes, except for specific municipalities in the Eastern Plains (a region with high presence of Liberal guerrillas) where law enforcement would remain under the supervision of a military commander. Moreover, the Consejos de Guerra retained jurisdiction over offenses such as "the association or instigation to commit crimes," which, in practice, placed all prosecution against bandoleros under military purview.[72] With these convoluted and often contradictory legal measures, Gómez sought to offset the disadvantages that law enforcement faced when dealing with *bandolerismo* – the latter's support from local populations, and its extensive networks of information and intelligence[73] – by means of bolstering the military's presence, authority, and firepower in the campaign against the bandoleros.

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[71] "Decreto número 957 de 1950"; "Decreto número 1426 de 1950," Compilación de Disposiciones sobre Reformas Civiles, Penales, Administrativas, del Trabajo y sobre Justicia Penal Militar Expedidas por el Ejecutivo Nacional en los Años de 1948 a 1957 (Ibagué: Imprenta Departamental, 1956), 27-28.

[72] "Decreto No. 1591 de 1951," Compilación de Disposiciones, 47-48.

[73] An investigator stationed in the city of Villavicencio in the Eastern Plains described the larger problems faced by national and local police forces: "the revolutionary situation in the region is increasing progressively and in a very technically sophisticated way […] There is a wide network of espionage that we have been unable to counter due to lack of proper means. Every day we are notified that bandoleros from all throughout the country are arriving to join those already here, and we cannot discard the possibility that the Liberal party is permanently directing and sponsoring these subversive elements." "Orden Público:

In a public statement, Gómez's Minister of War, Roberto Urdaneta, would refer to the modus operandi of the bandits of the Eastern Plains ("those criminals that some dare to call *guerrilleros*") and the drawbacks of military operations against them:

> The outlaws rarely engage with the military troops […] When the army arrives, they flee, concealed by the immensity of the territory […] Sometimes, they disperse in smaller groups and, hidden behind the shrub, aim fire at the servants of the homeland. Woe betide any soldier that gets captured alive, for they will torture and dismember them with Mongolic ferocity. At dawn, the groups dissolve, they hide their rifles in the bush and disguise themselves as peaceful workers to gain the trust of the soldiers […] The peasants that inhabit those regions are forced to collaborate in their homicidal ventures, serving as spies or having to relinquish their scarce possessions, at the risk of being treacherously murdered.[74]

Unwilling to recognize the status of the bandoleros as guerrillas, Urdaneta's reading of the phenomenon was attached to a notion of bandolerismo as an instrument of the Liberal party to undermine the Conservative regime. For him, Liberalism's failure to condemn the actions of the bandoleros suggested the existence of a plan, "of unmistakable communist style" to destroy the national economy and cast the country into chaos. [75]

Urdaneta provided an important twist to the original theory of the communist conspiracy, noting that the key aspect of the enemy's strategy was not to increase affiliation to the Communist Party, but to infiltrate non-communist parties to procure the destabilization of the country. The Liberals' problem was, for him, that "in chasing the

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Informe sobre el Llano", 14 May 1951. Caja 85, Carpeta 28, Policía Nacional Comisión de Investigación, Despacho del Sr. Presidente (DSP), Fondo Presidencia (FP), AGN-COL.

[74] "Roberto Urdaneta Arbeláez, "Conferencia del Ministro de Guerra. 26 de Julio de 1951," Escritos y discursos (Bogotá: Cámara de Representantes, 1985), 305.

[75] Urdaneta Arbeláez, Escritos y Discursos, 306-7.

mirage of reconquering power they let themselves be seduced by the infiltrators."[76] Thus, in his view, the *focos de bandolerismo* were not meant to overthrow the government but to "impede national progress," wreck public and private finances, and spread "economic panic." Lastly, Urdaneta lambasted the coexistence, within the Liberal party, of two tendencies: one that wished to reach an agreement with the government and another that praised "the delinquents and evildoers" – a reference to the critique waged by Liberal Eduardo Santos against the government's approach to the problem of bandolerismo, which he characterized as "a clumsy and counterproductive attitude that only addresses the symptoms of violence." For Urdaneta, Santos' rebuttal amounted to a bogus equation of bandolerismo with a "healthy fever, a defense of the organism," a view he saw as a veiled justification for the actions of the bandoleros.[77] In this way, regardless of the regional differentiations between groups identified as bandoleros, their internal conflicts, their different relations to local party officials and to the formulation of alternative political projects, the logic attributed to the methods and goals of a communist conspiracy became a source of explanation and rationalization for the origins, causes, and aims of bandolerismo as the main agent of the country's *violencias*.

Added to the political pressure exerted by the Liberal party and the challenges of bandolerismo, the violence of the Conservatization crusade carried out under Ospina and Gómez had become a source of concern for US diplomats and, to a lesser extent, for the US press. Just before the 1949 presidential election, for instance, the New York Times chastised the excessive power held by a "falangista" like Gómez, as well as the draconian measures taken under the state of siege, and warned about the possibility of a fascist

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[76] Urdaneta Arbeláez, Escritos y Discursos, 306-8.
[77] Urdaneta Arbeláez, Escritos y Discursos, 311-12.

Colombia: “Now only a miracle can prevent a nation that has been a Latin American model of parliamentary and constitutional government for sixty years from joining the so-called ‘Madrid-Buenos Aires’ axis.”[78] Department of State of officials took a more pragmatic reading of the problem. Emphasizing the regime’s ties to the most intolerant sectors of the Church and the landowning elites, US diplomats bemoaned the government’s refusal to uplift the state of siege, the suspension of individual liberties, and the arbitrary displacement of Liberals from public service posts. While sympathetic to the regime’s anticommunist disposition and the will to cooperate with hemispheric security, the State Department assumed a cautious stance, withholding its recommendations for loans and reducing high-level diplomatic, military and naval visits – including a request by Gómez to visit the US – to avoid “unfavorable press reception.” Ostensibly, the goal was to “persuade” Gómez to “relax its present restrictions upon democratic institutions” and urge him to “avoid drifting into a dictatorship.”[79]

Another issue of grave concern for US observers was the increase of religious intolerance in the country. Indeed, the Conservatization campaign had involved the persecution of Protestants, including the burning and dynamiting of churches and the displacement of church goers through intimidation and physical aggression in small-scale operations carried out by semi-organized mobs against those who they considered religious enemies. US sources noted that although some of this violence could be explained by the party affiliation of the victims (“most Protestants are Liberals”),

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[78] “Colombia in danger,” The New York Times, 19 November 1949, 16.

[79] Department of State. “Policy statement,” 8 May 1950. Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between the United States and Colombia, 1945-1959 (Wilmington: Scholarly Sources, 2003) (hereafter cited as USCOL 1945-1959), 611.21/5-850.

American missionaries had also been targets of beatings, unjustified imprisonment and property confiscation.[80]

These episodes prompted US officials to push for the inclusion of the religious question in the negotiations of a commercial treaty between the two countries. However, officials of the Colombian Foreign Service were keen on pointing out to the Executive that ratifying the treaty "would not aggravate nor increase in any way the danger of Protestant propaganda. In fact, it would provide an effective juridical instrument to terminate, if deemed convenient, the activities of North American Protestant associations in Colombia." In their view, this would "eliminate any fears with respect to the religious stipulations of the treaty," which, in their reasoning, was fundamentally an issue of avoiding "the entry and permanence … of persons who come with undesirable purposes, to create religious problems and offend the Catholic sentiments of all Colombians." [81]

US pressures on the Gómez administration seemed to have had a limited effect, despite the gestures given by US diplomats with respect to the government's restrictions on constitutional liberties and the apparent tolerance of religious violence, along with the concerns about "civil violence," banditry, and criminality.[82] Ultimately, Gómez's anticommunist credentials (a result, partly, of his success in appealing to American fears of communist activity in the region[83]) as well his openness for US capitals and pro-US posturing in inter-American affairs, overshadowed concerns for the erosion of the constitutional order in Colombia.

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[80] Department of State, "Policy Statement Colombia," 22 May 1951, USCOL 1945-1959, 611.21/5-2251.

[81] "Memorandum sobre las estipulaciones referentes a actividades educativas y religiosas," 26 April 1951. Caja 276, Carpeta 23, f. 39-43. Fondo Presidencia, Secretaría General – MRE Correspondencia, AGN-COL.

[82] Department of State, "Policy Statement Colombia," 22 May 1951.

[83] In 1950, in a speech before the American Society in Bogotá and in a conversation with the daily El Relator of Cali, Gómez had reaffirmed Colombia's full support for UN intervention in the Korean War, and conveyed fears of a major communist offensive in Colombia, as well as his concerns for communist activity in Panamá and the Caribbean basin at large. Ambassador William Beaulac would personally thank

Indeed, out of the consultations and negotiations with Latin American governments, Colombia was the only Latin American nation that followed through with the commitment to collaborate with the UN-led operations in Korea by offering to send the frigate Almirante Padilla and over a thousand infantry soldiers for combat.[84] As I will explain in the following chapter, the soldiers and officers that participated in the so-called Colombia Battalion became crucial agents in the transmission and adaptation of global military expertise for Colombia's internal conflict, with the United States as the primary, but not exclusive, source of doctrinal influence.

Unable to defuse the opposition and weakened by heart disease, Gómez stepped down and, in July of 1951, appointed his Minister of War, Roberto Urdaneta, as interim president. Urdaneta sent mixed signals; in his inauguration, he foresaw the return to the constitutional regime, and later sought the support of the Liberal directorate to create a joint commission to oversee a broad program of constitutional reforms. As a conciliatory sign, Urdaneta decreed an amnesty for those sentenced for crimes against the security of

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Gómez for these statements. Despatch no. 100, From Bogota to Department of State, "President-elect Laureano Gómez wants Colombia to contribute toward improving world situation. Fears possible communist efforts in Colombia," 25 July 1950, USCOL 1945-1959, 611.21/7-2550.

[84] Noting their lack of training, discipline, and appropriate equipment, U.S. officials conditioned Colombian participation to the reimbursement of the cost of training and equipping the Colombian soldiers. This condition became another source of intense negotiations, as Colombia eventually requested the supply of modern armament for the maintenance of "internal order." Colombian diplomats did not hesitate to remind the Americans of their reimbursement clause, and appealed to the terms of set in inter-American and bilateral defense agreements as trading cards to pressure for a more favorable deal. Álvaro Valencia Tovar and Jairo Sandoval Franky, Colombia en la Guerra de Corea, la Historia Secreta (Bogotá: Planeta, 2001), 199-221.

the state who were willing to come forward and surrender their arms.[85] The amnesty included those already imprisoned for this type of offenses as well those tried *in absentia*, but left previous measures against the catch-all category of *maleantes* untouched. Urdaneta's decree constituted, in practice, the first conciliatory gesture through amnesty since the beginning of la Violencia. However, the changes in the penal system that increased the criminalization of conditions of social dangerousness (e.g. vagrancy) remained in place, punishing subjects for their "antisocial" state or disposition rather than their acts. This contributed to the continuity of a penal system that was guided by the criterion of efficiency (punishing dangerous subjects for probable future offenses as an "efficient" way to preempt criminal behavior), framed by the logic of internal war and the state of siege, and which seemed incompatible with the actual restoration of the constitutional order.[86]

In the following months, Urdaneta issued decrees for stricter controls on the press through the creation of the Office of Information and Propaganda – dependent on the President's office – and of a special department to authorize and supervise all labor union-related meetings and assemblies.[87] While Liberals still expected a rapprochement with Urdaneta, they protested the maintenance of the state of siege and the use of censorship to prevent them from publishing their critical views on a constitutional reform that, for them, seemed like "the crowning of a campaign of violence and illegality."[88] Moreover, the climate of violence inherited from Gómez's term persisted particularly at the local level, fed by the persecution against Liberals, the criminalization of public expressions of dissent, and the spread of bandolerismo as an economic and criminal enterprise. This environment informed the views of Conservative governors and local authorities, whose understanding of the situation reflected the same ambiguity expressed by Urdaneta: they defined the actions of *bandoleros* inherently as crimes against the life and property of Conservatives – thus as factional violence – but also referred to these groups as armed rebels (*alzados en armas*), reinforcing the notion of the *bandolero* as a both a political criminal and an ordinary felon.[89]

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[85] Decretos Extraordinarios y Decretos Reglamentarios de Leyes, Expedidos por el Gobierno Nacional del 1º de Julio al 31 de Diciembre de 1952 (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1953), 103-105.

[86] Gustavo Cote Barco, El Derecho Penal de Enemigo en la Violencia (1948-1966) (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana, 2010), 189-94.

[87] *Decretos Extraordinarios*, 31-32.

Facing persecution by *chulavitas*, the National Police and the Army, Liberal guerrillas and peasant self-defense groups became increasingly effective in holding on to their territorial influence, showing particular resilience in the regions where they had established strong connections with agrarian organizations. In addition, the territorial distribution of bandolero groups was increasingly uneven, creating different ways of insertion in local and regional structures of economic and political domination. Also, as they tended to diversify their activities, some bandoleros abandoned their initial political motivations to enter the business of racketeering; while others exploited the ambiguity of the space between criminality and rebellion. This plurality posed (and still poses, for scholars) important challenges to distinguish their political dimensions (i.e. party affiliation, autonomy-driven or insurrectional project) from their revenue-motivated activities.[90] This constant problem of legibility informed perceptions at various levels of Colombian society, also permeating the language used by US diplomats to analyze violence through the lens of bandolerismo as a matter of law enforcement and internal security. Moreover, and as I will explore in the following chapter, the plurality and heterogeneity of bandolerismo as a social phenomenon, and the indeterminacy of its representation as crime and subversion would inform the later development of the revolutionary Left, the conduct of state policy based on different practices of legibility towards these groups, and the social imaginaries formed around ideas of the bandoleros as enemies of the state and society.

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[88] Letter from the Liberal National Directorate to Luis Ignacio Andrade, Minister of Government. 16 July 1952. Transf. 6, Caja 86, Carpeta 9, f. 77-80, Fondo Presidencia, Despacho del Señor Presidente, Proposiciones Partidos Políticos, AGN-COL.

[89] This ambiguity appears in a communication from Gustavo Salazar, Governor of Huila, to the Secretary of the President's Office, where Salazar discusses a complaint against abuses by local police, raised by Lázaro Londoño, a Liberal coffee farm owner. Salazar argued that it was Londoño's employees whom, as members of bandolero gangs, had been harassing local Conservatives and that Londoño himself had to run away from these *alzados en armas*. "Oficio no. 0463," 27 November 1951, Caja 273, Carpeta 17, Fondo Presidencia, Secretaria General, Gobernaciones Correspondencia 1951, AGN-COL.

In April of 1952, former president Alfonso López attempted a mediation between the government and the guerrillas of the Eastern Plains, who demanded a blanket amnesty, the release of political prisoners, and the prosecution of abuses by the police and the Army. In a radio broadcast, Urdaneta categorically rejected this possibility, as, for him, it was inconceivable to place on the same playing field "the actions of those who break the law and those who fulfill their duty to uphold the law." For Urdaneta, this was not an issue of "individual acts of one group of men or another" but about the collective action of the bandoleros and of the Armed forces; or, as he put it, "of subversion and the methods used to repress it." Recalling the role of Liberalism in the violence of el Bogotazo, the president denounced this as a terrorist campaign based on propaganda and the spreading of rumors to destabilize the government and impede the implementation of its plan of economic development. For this, Urdaneta blamed the hatred inflamed by "the poisonous doctrines of historical materialism," against which a "Catholic peace" based on "the morals of Christ and Christian charity" would be the only remedy. [91]

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[90] On the development of bandolero groups in relation to socio-economic structures and different experiences and memories of political violence, see Sánchez and Meertens, Bandoleros, Gamonales y Campesinos, Chapter 3. On the intra-regional variation of bandolero and insurrectional activity in the case of the Western region of Valle de Cauca, see Betancourt and García, Matones y Cuadrilleros, Chapter 5.

Urdaneta's speech was, for many, an authorization to further the anti-Liberal campaign. For instance, the Centro Nacional Anti-Comunista, a Conservative group based in Bogotá composed of businessmen and led by retired general Liborio Benavides, expressed its support for the president's response to the "incendiary intentions of the communists of the Eastern Plains." The group offered to put their "solid organization" at the service of the government and warned the "agitators" to turn themselves in "before it is too late."[92] Similarly, the Conservative directorate in Bogotá reacted to an attack against the governor of Tolima[93] and released a statement declaring that they would not tolerate "the sacrifice of Colombians at the hands of insurgents that wave the red flags of the *antipatria*,"and that they were "organized and ready… to collaborate in the national campaign to extirpate, without consideration of any kind, the sources of violence and banditry throughout the country."[94] The anti-Liberal violence peaked when, in September of 1952, Conservative followers and policemen seeking retaliation for the deaths of five officers at the hands of *bandoleros* set fire to the headquarters of Liberal newspapers *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*. The mob also burned down the homes of Liberal leaders Alfonso López and Carlos Lleras, who sought refuge at the Venezuelan embassy and left the country in exile.[95] The actions were reviled by the government (and less emphatically by the Conservative party), and yet were scathingly justified by Urdaneta as a "natural retaliation" of "popular opinion" against the support that Liberals had lent to the *bandoleros*.[96]

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[91] Roberto Urdaneta Arbeláez, "Conferencia del Designado, Encargado de la Presidencia de la República, difundida por los micrófonos de Radiodifusora Nacional en la noche del 19 de abril de 1952," Escritos y Discursos, 319-339.

[92] Letter, Centro Nacional Anticomunista to Roberto Urdaneta Arbeláez. 20 April 1952, Transf. 6, Caja 86, Carpeta 9, f. 52-53, Fondo Presidencia, Despacho del Sr. Presidente, Proposiciones Partidos Políticos, AGN-COL.

[93] "7 muertos al ser atacado ayer el gobernador del Tolima, cerca al Líbano," El Tiempo, 6 April 1952, 1.

While American fears of a fascist Colombia did not materialize, in the aftermath of these attacks against prominent Liberals the assessment of US diplomats was rather pessimistic:

> There is every indication […] that [Urdaneta] is not the real head of the Government, but that a forceful group of Conservative extremists […] are calling all the plays. […] Unless the picture changes considerably within the next year and a half the administration may be driven to more arbitrary measures to continue itself in power […] Our policy toward Colombia is one of friendship and cooperation, while at the same time we deplore the chaotic internal situation and the religious and political intolerance and view with some concern the tendency of the present government to resort to totalitarian methods as it follows a trend farther and farther to the extreme right.[97]

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[94] Letter, Directorio Conservador de Bogotá to Roberto Urdaneta Arbeláez, 8 Apr 1952, Transf. 6, Caja 86, Carpeta 9, f. 40, Fondo Presidencia, Despacho del Sr. Presidente, Proposiciones Partidos Políticos, AGN-COL.

[95] "El liberalismo de todo el país con sus jefes y con su prensa," El Tiempo, 8 Sept 1952, 1,3.

[96] Alocución del Excelentísimo Señor Doctor Roberto Urdaneta Arbeláez (Bogotá: Dirección de Información y Propaganda de la Presidencia, 1953), 7-11.

[97] Memorandum. From OSA-Mr. Gerberich, To OSA – Mr. Bennett, "Summary Statement of Relations between the US and OSA countries" 26 September 1952, USCOL 1945-1959, 611.21/9-2652.

Bandoleros*: Criminals or Cold War rebels?*

The events of September 1952 were a breaking point in the attempts by Liberal leaders to rebuild the politics of *convivencia* and negotiate with the moderate factions of the Conservative party, in exchange of condemning popular resistance and any form of support to the rebels from their party structure. Others, seeking to reassert their status as opposition, remained somewhat skeptic of any sign of good will on behalf of the government, and encouraged Liberal supporters to resist the president's allegations and condemn the factional violence of the regime. A supporter of the latter posturing, prominent Liberal intellectual Luis Eduardo Nieto penned an open letter to Urdaneta accusing him of offering "false guarantees," and scorned the Minister of War, José María Bernal, for inciting further violence by stating that "in the fight against the bandits, for each fallen officer ten prominent Liberal should be abated." In his letter, Nieto also waged a defense of the rebels hinging on the ambiguities of the figure of the *bandolero*:

> [Bandits have existed] in all times and places, committing the most perturbing crimes, and acting as lost elements of society because they decided to live at its margins. But there are others who are honest men, victims of iniquities that pushed them towards despair, vengeance and, very likely, towards crime. All of this is condemnable, but explicable by the wrongs to which they were subjected, their souls wounded by the sacrifice and profanation of their loved ones. And there are the guerrilleros who have the Girondine ideal of the struggle, the love for freedom, the hatred for despotism; those who proclaim what in past times was known as the sacred right of insurrection, and who will remain in arms as long as there is no guarantee that they will not be subject to abuse if they surrender. Amongst those who sacrifice the lives of Colombians, the fiercest ones are the men in uniform. And even more responsible are those who give orders from an office […]"[98]

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[98] "El Seis de Septiembre. Carta de Luis Eduardo Nieto Caballero al Señor Presidente Urdaneta Arbelaez"; October 1952. Box 1, folder 1: Cartas de Luis Eduardo Nieto Caballero," GALAP.

Nieto acknowledged the illegality of the Liberal guerrillas that, by then, operated in regions like Caldas, Boyacá, the Eastern Plains, Tolima, and Antioquia.Yet, he reasserted their political status by deeming them as guerrilla combatants with a legitimate right to resist against a cruel and unjust order. This view hinged on the same ambivalence that the Conservative regime exploited to condemn the bandoleros as criminal, anti-social elements manipulated and sponsored by the Liberal opposition, turning it upside down to place the rebels on a political and moral high ground and deflect Conservative accusations of communist interference. In doing so, Liberals like Nieto focused on the atrocities committed by police officers and *chulavitas* in connivance with local and national authorities, which were attributed to factional grievances, at the expense of failing to grasp the novelty of the Liberal guerrillas territorial and political project, and, in truth, the development of organic links between peasant organizations and leftist activists. Thus, at least during the period between 1946 and 1953, anticommunist rhetoric had a limited impact amongst the ranks of the Liberal party, as members and sympathizers were considerably more concerned about the levels of sadism and cruelty taken by political persecution.

The political counterpart of this rhetoric of resistance came in the form of the discursive rendering of the insurgents, and of Liberalism at large, as enemies of the state, and with the mobilization of state resources to suppress them. For the Conservative regime, the guerrillas and their Liberal backers were a radical challenge to what was portrayed as the legitimate restoration of Conservative hegemony and to the project of authoritarian modernization opened by Gómez. Framed by the climate of persecution implemented under the state of siege, the response to this challenge followed a logic of retribution – i.e. for past acts of violence perpetrated by the Liberal Republic – and proportionality – i.e the Liberal insurgency as a threat to the integrity and security of the state that warranted a combination of political, military, legal, and extra-legal means of repression. These conditions contributed to the rendering of opposition, dissent, and even slight criticism as manifestations of the general "illness" of banditry and its association with communism. This implied an operation that mobilized different notions of social enmity – criminality as a challenge to established legal, social and moral norms; insurgency as a threat to internal security; and dissent or opposition as unlawful and illegitimate given its alleged connection to crime/insurgency. This radical politization of an otherwise apolitical agent (banditry) was the catalyst for the use of institutional mechanisms (emergency criminal legislation, militarization of law enforcement) that made collective para-police violence an essential tool in the redirection of the state as an outright punitive instrument for contending factions.

This multilayered construction of the bandit-guerrilla as enemy was a key aspect of the enduring social and political legacies of La Violencia. The murkiness of banditry as politico-legal category gave the phenomenon a particular sense of legibility (or lack thereof), with important implications in the conduct of later security and law enforcement initiatives. In this regard, the case of Conrado Salazar (aka Zarpazo) illustrates the endurance of bandolerismo as a source of constant perplexity, even in light of the eventual success of the anti-bandolero campaigns of the 1960s, given the failure to grasp the social standing of bandoleros as *both* villains and figures of resistance. Zarpazo's gang operated in the coffee-growing region of Quindío well into the 1960s, and like many other bandoleros that emerged as Liberal guerrillas during the "classic" period of

La Violencia, he remained active by fighting other bandoleros for territorial and taxation control, and by exacting protection (often through coercion) from the local population. Authorities had been for years unable to prove Zarpazo's connections to either party's machinery, or even to the self-defense Liberal guerrillas. In that sense, Zarpazo was one of the "residual" bandoleros whose motivations remained purely criminal in the eyes of the authorities and whose status as an insurgent stemmed fundamentally from operating in a context where being an outlaw was equated to posing a radical challenge to a precarious legal and political order. The memoirs of Evelio Salazar Buitrago, an undercover Army officer that infiltrated the gang of Zarpazo, are indicative of this continuous illegibility of the "residues" of violence after La Violencia. For Salazar, whose father had been killed by bandoleros, banditry was no more than "pillage, robbery, murder, kidnapping and extortion." Bandits, he affirmed, "were void of ideals and feelings, and had chosen to live beyond human and divine law." For him, they were "merciless monsters" living off extortion and illegal taxation of peasant populations.[99] However, according to Salazar, they were also "undoubtedly communist" because of their "diabolical technique" of "turning their guilt against the guardians of order,"[100] which also made it difficult to understand why "hard working people" would pay tribute to them.

Besides this symptomatic reading of bandolerismo as communism, Salazar's memoirs shed light on another crucial aspect of the anti-bandolero/anticommunist imaginary: the self-perception by the agents involved in anti-bandolero operations as protectors of the cause of the Homeland against the scourge of criminality and subversion. As attested by Salazar's view of his enemies as monstrous and inhumane, this mission of protection called for the use of unconventional methods such as the use of counter-intelligence and misinformation, the infiltration of bandit groups and the assassination of their leaders. Born out of the experience of early counter-guerrilla operations in the Eastern Plains and, later, in the central regions of the country, these practices and methods were perfected and systematized through US-sponsored professional military training, but were not, in strict terms, neither an imposition by external agents nor the result of a fully endogenous process that can only be understood in local terms. Awarded with the Star of Boyacá (the highest honor for a military officer) for his service in this "irregular" campaign against bandolerismo, Salazar was the prime example of how personal histories of retribution, a mystique of patriotic duty, and the lived experience of law enforcement as a form of unconventional war overlapped with the technical refinement of counter-guerrilla tactics and their implementation at a massive scale throughout urban and rural settings.

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[99] Evelio Buitrago Salazar, Zarpazo, the Bandit: Memoirs of an Undercover Officer of the Colombian Army (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1977), 7-8.

[100] Buitrago Salazar, Zarpazo, 30.

The illegibility around the criminal motivations of the bandoleros translated into a continuous perception about the unjustified and illegitimate nature of "residual violence," and the basis for the retributive and proportional response by the state to the threat posed by the persistence of bandolerismo as an unconventional enemy. With its local and global referents, the anticommunist imaginary put forward by Conservative ideologues and politicians, government officials, and the Conservative press played a significant role in the conflation of criminality, insurgency, and dissent, and in the dissemination and institutionalization of its political meanings.

As in other parts of Latin America, anticommunism provided a sense of consistency and purpose to the actions of internal enemies. In Colombia, anticommunism bolstered the Conservative regime's conviction that the bandoleros/guerrilleros and their Liberal sponsors were invested in violently provoking the collapse of the state in alliance with pro-Soviet agents, compromising national sovereignty and the integrity of a social order that was in danger of collapse due to the work of Liberals, criminals, and anti-socials. Unintendedly, and often against the will of Liberal party leaders, the violence of the "Conservatization" campaign and the responses to popular mobilization after the Bogotazo fostered the emergence of a rhetoric and practices of self-defense, resistance, and insurgency that would transcend the alleged end to factionalism (the National Front accords of 1958) and play a key role in the various cycles of amnesty, compromise, and relapse into violence throughout the course of Colombia's "Long Cold War."

Chapter 2. Violence after *La Violencia*: The Origins of Colombia's Counterinsurgent State (1953-1966)

For many Colombians, the period between 1953 and 1966 was marked by the incongruities and tensions of political and economic modernization, coupled with the development of an internal conflict that, past many transformations, would outlive its original protagonists. At the center of these incongruities lay several attempts to account for the roots and causes of La Violencia and the conflicting interpretations about how to overcome its legacies. Thus, one of the greatest challenges for Colombian society in this period was the coming to terms with two central contradictions: the one between the construction of a democratic system and the neutralization of factionalism and political passions; and the one between pacification and the waging of a multidimensional war against internal enemies.

By considering the Cold War as a global context as well as a lived experience construed by political actors, this chapter analyzes some aspects of the creation of Colombia's counterinsurgent state in the years prior to the Cuban Revolution and into the 1960s. The chapter highlights the historical shifts and continuities in the articulation of an anticommunist and anti-subversive imaginary informed by national and transnational forces and actors, showing the key role of anticommunism in accentuating a sense of urgency to contain, repress, and prevent violence by exerting it at various levels of the state and civil society. Moreover, by looking at the intersections between public opinion, state initiatives, and responses from below, the chapter examines the construction of the continuum between criminality and political violence as a central problem to the country's strenuous transitions into a dictatorial regime and, later, into a bipartisan coalition government that struggled to deliver its promises of peace, democracy, and security. Shaped by local and global notions of the Cold War as an unprecedented form of conflict, anticommunism in Colombia became a point of convergence and continuity between the repressive anti-violence measures of the early years of La Violencia, and the attempts by reformist elites to stifle the actions of criminal/subversive "enemies" and present Colombia as a model of non-communist socioeconomic transformation based on inter-American cooperation.[1] The creation of Colombia's counterinsurgent state was, in that sense, the product of seemingly contradictory, and yet mutually reinforcing processes of "pacification" through war and reform, which sought to involve Colombian society as a whole.

Dictatorship, amnesty and counter-guerrillas

By the early 1950s, Colombia had undergone a process of deep social and political change, characterized by the rapid deterioration of the Liberal-Conservative compromise; a dramatic upsurge of violence fueled by factionalism, and local and regional competition over prerogatives; and by radical contestations against the socio-economic status quo. In spite of these problems, tvhe first half of the 1950s was equally a period of economic growth (sparked by favorable coffee prices and a rise in US investments), of increased social mobility, and notable improvements in infrastructure carried out by the Conservative administration of Laureano Gómez.[2]

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[1] On anticommunism as a principle and instrument of Colombia's inter-American policies during the initial years of the National Front see Susana Romero Sánchez, "El miedo a la revolución: Interamericanismo y anticomunismo en Colombia, 1958-1965." M.A. Thesis, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, 2007.

As noted in the previous chapter, Gómez's long-time project had been to dismantle the secular and interventionist state inherited from the Liberal republic and impose a corporatist, presidentialist, and authoritarian model for political stability and economic development. As Gomez's constitutional project fell prey to divisions and schemes within his own party, in 1953 a pact between the relegated Liberals and anti-Gómez Conservatives allowed Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla to take power via a coup d'état that deposed interim president Roberto Urdaneta, preventing Gómez from returning to the presidency and forcing him into exile in Spain.

In different ways, Rojas's was, at once, a takeover, a continuation, and also a dramatic break from Gómez's failed "Revolution of Order." Rojas claimed to have responded to a potential power vacuum by acting on the resolve "to save Colombia from anarchy." The coup had the support of noted Conservatives such as Mariano Ospina and Lucio Pabón, who facilitated Rojas's takeover of a Constituent Assembly created in 1952 by Urdaneta to prepare for the implementation of Gómez's constitutional project. Rojas's primary political commitments rested with the Conservative party, which he praised for holding "norms and traditions that can guide a rational and patriotic constitutional reform," and for its allegiance to Catholic doctrine as an "endless wellspring of truth."[3] Although instrumental in the heightening of Gómez's "crusade" against Liberalism, the

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[2] James Henderson, Modernization in Colombia: The Laureano Gómez Years, 1889-1965 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 325-47.

[3] [Speech by Rojas Pinilla], 15 May 1953, Caja 57 Carpeta 12, f. 7-12, Discursos Varios, Despacho del Sr. Presidente (DSP), Fondo Presidencia (FP), AGN-COL.

Church also backed the coup, while Liberals remained relatively marginalized from the political scene, tainted by accusations of being associated to bandolero violence, subjected to the censorship laws established by Gómez and Urdaneta, and constantly under attack by Conservatives who called for the disappearance of their historical opponents.

All in all, the coup was perceived by public opinion as a victory of republican institutions. The press, both Conservative and Liberal, praised Rojas as "the Second Liberator" (in reference to the father of Colombian Independence, Simón Bolívar) and massive demonstrations showed popular support in favor of the overthrow of the *laureanistas* from power. At large, the coup was seen as a necessary, patriotic intervention by the Armed Forces to "restore public and moral order" and, particularly for Liberals, as an opening to hold clean, impartial elections.[4]

With the self-professed goal of addressing the "roots" of violence, Rojas declared the first general amnesty since the outbreak of La Violencia, which would be applied to all political crimes committed prior to 1954 (except for acts of "extreme moral insensibility").[5] Rojas also upheld the state of siege and placed all law enforcement and censorship functions under the supervision of the Ministry of War. The Office for State Information and Propaganda, a legacy of Urdaneta's interim term, would be in charge of regulating contents in radio broadcasts and the press, and of promoting a good image of the new regime, and particularly, of president Rojas.[6] Endowed with emergency powers, Rojas also decreed the creation of two agencies with complementary and emblematic functions in his plan to end violence: the Colombian Intelligence Service, a centralized and autonomous entity in charge of collecting information relevant to the internal and external security of the state; and the Office of Aid and Rehabilitation, an agency in charge of linking amnesty-seekers with employment, credit, and economic relief opportunities.[7]

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[4] Silvia Galvis and Alberto Donadio, El Jefe Supremo: Rojas Pinilla en la Violencia y en el Poder (Bogotá: Hombre Nuevo, 2002), 259-62.

[5] Decretos Extraordinarios y Decretos Reglamentarios de Leyes Expedidos por el Gobierno Nacional del 1º de Enero al 30 de junio de 1954. Primer Tomo (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1955), 586-87.

Notably, Rojas's plan for the "economic rehabilitation" of the frontier region of the Eastern Plains became a showcase for his approach to the problem of violence: an aggressive policy of civilian-military colonization,[8] and the deployment of military troops for the "cleansing" of resilient *bandoleros*.[9] The amnesty was a success to the extent that Gudalaupe Salcedo and Dumar Aljure, the main guerrilla leaders in the Eastern Plains, agreed to lay down their arms to negotiate the resettlement of displaced populations, the distribution of public lands, access to credit, and the building of infrastructure to fully incorporate the Eastern Plains into the national territory. In this sense, Rojas's solution to violence combined amnesty initiatives, coercive measures, and attempts to redefine the role of the Armed Forces as guarantors between party factions, and as overseers of a peaceful restoration of "civilized" bipartisanism. However, the shortcomings of resettlement, infrastructure-building, and law enforcement, [10] pushed for an escalating involvement of the Army to "pacify" the region, signaling the transformation of the state's actions against the social conditions that favored bandolerismo into a campaign of anticommunist irregular warfare.

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[6] Galvis and Donadio, El Jefe Supremo, 263-64.

[7] Decretos Extraordinarios y Decretos Reglamentarios de Leyes Expedidos por el Gobierno Nacional del 1º de Julio al 31 de diciembre de 1953. Segundo Tomo (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1954), 6-7; 10-11; 21; 327-31.

[8] In the Colombian context, colonization refers to initiatives to populate and increase the presence of the state in distant frontier regions, often by giving incentives for peasant settlement in exchange for land titles and protection. For a classic study of colonization initiatives and its ties to peasant movements, see Catherine Legrand, Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1850-1936 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986).

[9] "Plan de Reestablecimiento Económico de los Llanos Orientales". 12 December 1953, Transf. 6 Caja 268 Carpeta 28, f. 51-55, Ministerio de Guerra, Secretaría General (SG), FP, AGN-COL.

Defining their role in combating the problem of *bandolerismo* had been a source of concern for Colombian officers like Cnel. Gustavo Sierra Ochoa, who in 1954 published Las Guerrillas de los Llanos Orientales, a paradigmatic diagnosis of the situation in the Eastern Plains based on two years of experience in the field. Reiterating what had by then become a commonplace characterization of bandolerismo, Sierra identified the 1948 riots in Bogotá as the origin "subversive movement" in the Eastern Plains. Sierra reflected on that political origin of bandolerismo, noting that the actions of the guerrillas could no longer be understood as mere banditry, given the active training and indoctrination of peasants, and the Liberals' role in providing an organizational structure and a platform of legitimacy to otherwise scattered gangs of *bandoleros*. Sierra also warned about the growth of the movement's urban component, pointing to the emergence of "groups of individuals clandestinely promoting revolution" and "psychological action" in all provincial capitals.[11] Added to this novel urban component of insurrection, for Sierra the lack of communications infrastructure in the region, the strong political commitment of the rebels and, more importantly, the support of the local population, were factors that hindered the Army's repressive action.

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[10] Jane M. Rausch, Territorial Rule in Colombia and the Transformation of the Llanos Orientales (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 54-74.

[11] Gustavo Sierra Ochoa, Las Guerrillas de los Llanos Orientales (Bogotá: n.d., 1954), 12. For a testimonial on the involvement of urban actors in the Liberal guerrillas of the Eastern Plains see Eduardo Franco Isaza, Las Guerrillas del Llano: Testimonio de una Lucha por Cuatro Años de Libertad (Bogotá: Librería Mundial, 1959).

To undermine the actions of bandoleros, Sierra proposed creation of anti-guerrillas composed of local *llaneros* (the "courageous, selfless, sober" inhabitants of the Eastern Plains) whose "customs and lifestyle enables their unified action," albeit he recommended placing them under the advice and disciplinary supervision of military officers. Portrayed by Sierra as a "resistance movement," these anti-guerrillas would also be tasked with conducting a census of land, cattle, and rural workers, and cooperate with business and property owners to "maintain public order."[12]

Sierra's plan was not a mere hypothetical application of what was, at that particular historical juncture, an incipient global paradigm of anti-subversive irregular warfare. In fact, in suggesting this counter-guerrilla model, Sierra praised the efficacy of prior anti-bandolero operations in the Eastern Plains, more specifically the ones implemented in the first half of 1952, still under Urdaneta's interim presidency. From this experience, Sierra stressed the creation of a "spirit of struggle" amongst the anti-guerrillas and the adoption of tactics "that emerged from the study of the methods employed by the enemy in the environment of the Plains" (e.g. local intelligence and counter-intelligence networks).[13] Sierra's symptomatic reading of the situation in the Eastern Plains came with a caveat: the actions of anti-guerrillas and the presence of large numbers of regular troops could result in the extermination of the *bandoleros* but would not effectively address the roots of *bandolerismo*. That is, the lack of economic and political integration of the region into the national territory. In seeking this integration to reactivate local economies, the form of colonization implemented under Rojas relied heavily on the use of settlers (*colonos*) that, with the backing of army garrisons, would work the land and raise cattle in exchange of performing the same "cleansing" functions assigned to anti-guerrillas.[14]

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[12] Sierra Ochoa, Las Guerrillas, 29-31.

[13] Sierra Ochoa, Las Guerrillas, 46-52.

The continuity between the anti-guerrilla initiatives implemented under Urdaneta and, later, under Rojas was one of the most palpable results of a series of quick-paced transformations in the role of the military in the state's efforts to tackle bandolerismo as both a problem of "public order" as well as a political one. This transformation was possible because the generation of Colombian officers that partook in Rojas's regime sought to combine the incipient "anti-guerrilla" model with a law enforcement approach to the question of bandolerismo, which was based, to a great extent, on their own experience (including Rojas's) in suppressing the *gaitanista* uprisings of 1948 as a problem of criminality. More importantly, after their return from hostilities in the Korean peninsula, a new generation of officers such as Alvaro Valencia Tovar and Alberto Ruiz Novoa (both of whom would become Ministers of War in the following decade) played prominent roles in plans for the modernization of the Armed Forces, both in terms of strategy and infrastructure, to turn them into the main instrument for addressing the social, political, and economic factors of violence.[15]

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[14] Sierra Ochoa, Las Guerrillas, 103-107.

[15] The key role of the Korean War veterans was acknowledged early on by Colombia's ambassador to the United States, Eduardo Zuleta, whom in a meeting with Henry Holland, Assistant Secretary of Western Hemisphere Affairs, stated the government's intention to use the 4,000 returning soldiers as "a nucleus for a complete up-to-date army, based on American methods and the use of American equipment." Memorandum of conversation, "Colombian Ambassador Presents Respects to Assistant Secretary

While also concerned with the modernization of military instruction and infrastructure, Rojas continued to emphasize the combination of economic relief, anti-guerrilla operations and criminal legislation passed by executive decree. In 1956, Rojas introduced an explicit typification of communist activity as a criminal offense, comprising the distribution of propaganda; belonging to or financing a communist organization; and "expressing support" for communism in any form. These crimes carried sentences of up to five years of prison (doubled and quadrupled for public officials and police/military officers, respectively), or forced labor at a rural penal colony. Rojas also gave court martials (Consejos de Guerra) the authority to investigate and prosecute all offenses (common and political) linked to this sweeping definition of communist activity.[16]

The contradiction between granting amnesty for political crimes and the explicit criminalization of communism resulted, in practice, in the division between "ordinary" political crimes (the type that had been associated to the 1948 uprisings - sedition, rebellion, mutiny); and communism as a specific transgression entailing a particular state of dangerousness that merited a distinctive political and legal treatment.[17] This distinction

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Holland," 7 April 1954, Records of the US Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between the United States and Colombia, 1945-1959 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 611.21/4-754. On the Korean War as a formative experience for these officers see Alberto Ruiz Novoa, Enseñanzas de la Campaña de Corea, Aplicables a Colombia (Bogotá: Antares, 1956).

[16] Decretos extraordinarios y decretos reglamentarios de leyes expedidos por el gobierno nacional del 1º de Enero al 30 de Junio de 1956 (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1958), 76-77.

[17] "Political crimes" were vaguely defined as those motivated by a will to attack the government, or fueled by party factionalism. The decree excluded crimes committed against the Armed Forces (including defection) and also established a reduction of one year to all sentences for common crimes. "Decreto Número 1823 de 1954." Decretos Extraordinarios y Decretos Reglamentarios de Leyes Expedidos por el Gobierno Nacional del 1º de Enero al 30 de Junio de 1954. Primer Tomo. (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1955), 586.

was, in practice, an attempt to give a "clean slate" for amnestied bandoleros, while increasing the repression and punishment for those that knowingly chose to continue on the path of insurgency. Along with this anticommunist legislation came the reinforcement, via two executive decrees, of the mechanisms of censorship against public expressions of dissent, "disobedience," criticism, or even rumors, against the regime or government officials.[18] Defended by Rojas as a necessary instrument to "prevent more deaths" in the context of the government's efforts against the guerrillas,[19] this censorship affected important newspapers such as El Espectador, Diario Gráfico, La Tribuna, as well as the leading Liberal daily El Tiempo. El Tiempo remained closed from 1955 to 1957 after a bitter confrontation with Rojas over newspaper reports about the persistent and scandalous anti-Liberal violence, perpetrated by Conservative *pájaros* in Valle de Cauca.[20]

These measures took place in the context of mounting US concerns regarding the possibility of Soviet infiltration in Latin America. Following the successful experience of intervention in Guatemala, between 1954 and 1956 the Eisenhower administration sought to bolster the internal security of Latin American nations as a complement to the promotion of economic development, mainly through transfer of military materiel and training for both police and army personnel.[21] The plans proposed and implemented by Rojas mirrored, and to some extent pre-dated, the National Security Council Action No. 1290d, approved under Eisenhower. NSC 1290d stressed the need to assess the size of the "communist threat," increase anti-guerrilla and anti-subversive capabilities, revise legislation to allow more effective anticommunist action; and create "public information" programs as essential aspects of anticommunist cooperation.[22] During these years, Colombia in fact remained an object of limited concern for US officials, at least in comparison to other Latin American nations,[23] forcing Rojas to rely on minor forms of US assistance while dealing with the various structural, operational, and political obstacles to the counter-guerrilla efforts. In short, while aligned with these hemispheric initiatives, Rojas's plan was hardly the result of a straightforward imposition from the North, and consisted, instead, of a fragmented set of responses to local conditions that anteceded (or at the most, coincided with) US-led initiatives at a hemispheric level.

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[18] Decree 684 of 1954 established sentences of six months to two years in a penal colony for any form of disrespect or vilification towards any established authority, or for inducing or supporting disobedience. Decretos Extraordinarios, 208-209. Decree 2535 of 1955 banned the publication or dissemination of news, commentaries or illustrations against "the president of Colombia or the head of state of a friendly nation," as well as those that "affect public order by inciting to violent actions" or "endanger the national economy." Decretos Extraordinarios y Decretos Reglamentarios de Leyes Expedidos por el Gobierno Nacional del 1o de Julio al 31 de diciembre de 1955. Segundo Tomo (Bogotá, Empresa Nacional de Publicaciones, 1957), 198-199.

[19] "Que solo es para unos diarios la censura, dijo Rojas ayer en Quito," El Tiempo, 1 August 1955, 1.

[20] On July 9th, 1955, Emilio Correa Uribe, head of the Liberal newspaper El Diario in Pereira, was assassinated along with his son. El Tiempo reported on the case and denounced the persistence of factionalism and the impunity of the *pájaros* in Valle de Cauca, calling for stronger measures against criminality and an end to protection or connivance of authorities with the *pájaros*. "Otra obscura tragedia," El Tiempo, 9 July 1955, 4.

Backed by a Conservative-laden constituent assembly, Rojas's anti-violence plan relied heavily on repressive measures, but also on the implementation of rehabilitation policies that sought to reincorporate the insurgent groups, create a new equilibrium between party factions, and oversee a peaceful restoration of "civilized" bipartisanism, with the Army as the guarantor. Moreover, the Rojas regime conceived of anti-guerrilla operations as a combination of social policy and military expertise that could become tools of state-building and a source of legitimacy for a process of controlled reform, mainly through the extermination of guerrilla foci and the incorporation of guerrilla territories into the national economy.

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[21] For a general overview of US policies towards Latin America in this period, see Stephen Rabe, Eisenhower and Latin America: the Foreign Policy of Anticommunism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

[22] Dennis Rempe, "An American Trojan horse? Eisenhower, Latin America, and the development of us internal security policy 1954-1960," Small Wars and Insurgencies 10, No.l (Spring 1999): 36-37.

[23] Colombia was absent from a list produced in 1955 by a US working group that, created under the auspices of NSC 1290d, evaluated countries according to their degree of "communist threat. The list did included other Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Guatemala and Venezuela. Rempe, "An American Trojan horse," 37.

Often seen as a "residual" expression of the intense factional violence of the 1946-1953 period, the reemergence of "bandit" and guerrilla violence undermined Rojas's "pacification" and demobilization efforts in regions such as Tolima, Valle de Cauca and the Eastern Plains. Between 1952 and 1957, the "bandit guerrillas" underwent a process of transformation and diversification; some groups abandoned their political motivations and continued to exert control over small localities through extortion and contraband. Other groups that were still active in the provinces of Cundinamarca and Tolima (particularly those with closer ties to both peasant organizations and activists from the Communist Party) consolidated their control of particular regions as spaces of insurgent micro-sovereignty. These political bandoleros would often compete for the control of protection and taxation with post-*Violencia* gangs and the so-called *pájaros*[24], the groups of hired gunmen that emerged from the Conservatization campaign of 1946 and became a symbol of rural "residual violence" in the mid-1950s, often operating under the protection of local and national authorities.[25] Guided by economic interest but acting in highly localized markets of violence, *pájaros* would become key instruments of private and state actions against old and new Liberal/communist guerrillas. Coupled with the diversification of bandolerismo, the alliance between local landowners, authorities, security forces, and the racketeering of the *pájaros* became a central aspect of the state's reliance on de-centralized violence as an instrument of local governance.

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[24] Historians Darío Betancourt and Martha García note an important distinction between pájaros and bandoleros, as the former were not rooted in peasant society and lacked the popular backing that many Conservative and Liberal bandoleros had in the regions in which they operated. Most *pájaros* were, thus, smaller groups of hired assassins that were also outsiders to these communities, a condition that gave them both mobility and a degree of secrecy valued by the local politicians and landowners that hired them. Darío Betancourt and Martha L. García, Matones y Cuadrilleros, 106-119.

The ineffectiveness of "aid and rehabilitation" measures to defuse violence converged with a volatile political environment created by the extension of Rojas's term until 1958, the continuation of the state of siege, the tightening of controls over the press and labor unions, and the re-launching of a repressive crusade that expressly prohibited any political activity linked to "international communism." Ultimately, a key limitation for Rojas's anti-violence initiatives was the impossibility of overcoming this original intertwinement between state and non-state agents of violence, which was a fundamental factor in the persistence of these allegedly "residual" forms of violence.

Besides Rojas's shortcomings in fully addressing the roots of violence, the rift in the Conservative coalition that brought him to power had other factors involved, such as the regime's careless handling of the 1954 student protests at the National University. After a dozen students were killed by Army fire and another 500 detained by the police, support for Rojas waned rapidly, as student groups grew more confrontational and the government blamed the tragedy on "enemy fire" and on the presence of "extremists," communists, and *laureanistas* as instigators.[26]

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[25] The most notable of these protected bandoleros was the gang led by León María Lozano aka El Cóndor, a criminal from the region of Valle de Cauca known as "the King of the *pájaros*." Rojas's close relationship with El Cóndor dated back to the days of El Bogotazo, when Rojas became a notable figure in the suppression of various popular uprisings with the help of El Cóndor's gang as an unofficial instrument of state repression. Galvis and Donadio, El Jefe Supremo, 207-244; Betancourt and García, Matones y Cuadrilleros, 126-135.

Added to the widespread condemnation of the violence against students and the censorship against the Liberal press, Rojas clashed within his own ruling coalition when he attempted to create a third political party, grounded in the idea of an alliance between the Colombian people and the Army. In a gesture that flustered the political establishment, in 1955 former *laureanista* and Rojas's Minister of Interior, Lucio Pabón Nuñez, announced the creation of the Movimiento de Acción Nacional (MAN) which he described as an instrument to promote the regime's policies and seek the unification of "the people, whether conservative, liberal, socialist, rich or poor" against "the oligarchies."[27] Similar to Peronism in Argentina, the MAN represented, in this sense, a convergence of several critiques towards the political establishment, namely, the liberal model of development, the vertical politics of the Conservative leadership, and the influence of the Left in labor and student organizations. Pabón's own political profile – his sympathies for Francoism and for a corporatist economic and political model– accentuated the apparent ideological pragmatism of the new movement.[28]

The projected pillar of MAN would be the National Confederation of Labor (CNT), a former *gaitanista* organization that was given official recognition by Rojas in an effort to attract the type of heterogeneous support base that characterized *gaitanismo*.

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[26] "Los sucesos de ayer en Bogotá," El Tiempo, 10 June 1954, 1, 11, 13. "Examen de la situación hicieron el Presidente Rojas y los Directorios," El Tiempo, 10 June 1954, 1, 11.

[27] "Pabón anuncia la formación de un frente de 'Acción Nacional'," El Tiempo, 9 January 1955, 1, 21.

[28] César Ayala Diago, Resistencia y Oposición al Establecimiento del Frente Nacional. Los Orígenes de la Alianza Nacional Popular (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1996), 23-24.

Rojas himself had developed a series of discursive tropes akin to *gaitanismo,* referring to the presence of "the masses of flesh and bone" that gave support to his regime, and extolling his own function as "the sole representative of public opinion, authorized to speak legitimately in its name, acting and thinking in defense of national interests and far from capricious influences or opportunistic calculations." For Rojas, the coupling of "the People and the Armed Forces" rested, in fact, in the role of guardianship fulfilled by the latter, "to impede, by any means within its reach, that the people become disoriented again and become a victim of *politiquería* [petty politics]." This bond would constitute the core of Rojas's arguments in favor of keeping the state of siege and not holding elections before 1958, for "as long as we cannot guarantee coexistence and the reeducation of the perpetual exploiters of the people, it would be a crime against the Homeland to sacrifice the republic to satisfy the aspirations of an insignificant minority."[29]

Added to this paternalistic, anti-oligarchical rhetoric, Rojas's project for a unifying "Third Force" that could overcome the limits of the two-party system became a source of great distrust from the coalition of Church and Conservative figures that had initially lent him its support. Conservative leaders argued, for instance, that the MAN would in fact undermine the unity of the party and cause a departure from the original goal of Rojas's takeover as a Conservative initiative – "a right-wing solution to right-wing problems."[30] The Liberal reaction to the MAN, illustrated by an editorial in the daily *El Tiempo*, consisted of a fervent warning that invoked the memory of Spanish *falangismo,* and its self-ascribed label as a "movement," to argue against the MAN's project of dismantling the two-party system. For the editors of El Tiempo, the prospect of a movement like MAN, with its use of syndicalism as "shock troops" and with the party as mediator between the people and a military leader, resembled the "totalitarian formula" that they unequivocally identified with Stalin, Franco, Mussolini, Perón, and Trujillo, ultimately leading to the suppression of political liberty.[31]

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[29] Speech by Rojas Pinilla in Pacho (Cundinamarca). Transf. 6, Caja 92, Carpetas 35-36, f. 26-27, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[30] César Ayala Diago, "El Movimiento de Acción Nacional (MAN). Movilización y confluencia de idearios políticos durante el gobierno de Rojas Pinilla," Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura 20 (1992): 46-47.

Despite this opposition, on June 13th, 1956, a crowd of 60,000 (mostly government employees and military officers) gathered in a stadium to celebrate the third anniversary of Rojas's coup. There, Rojas announced the creation of Tercera Fuerza (TF), a party/movement that was to serve as the platform for his candidacy to the long-awaited 1958 presidential elections. TF hinged on nationalist, anticommunist, and Catholic-Conservative tropes, and guided, according to its leader, "by the dictum of God and Homeland, and the postulates of Peace, Justice and Liberty, which require an audacious and combative spirit and a clear conscience of what it would mean to go back to the state of affairs prior to June 13th [of 1953]… while the enemies of order, inextricably allied to communism, operate in the shadows to defy the Church, assassinate innocent people and perpetrate subversion and evil." For Rojas, TF was a vehicle for those that "fear God and love the Homeland" against *politiquería* and against "the oligarchies that diabolically combat this fraternal crusade of nationalist recovery." Appealing to the allegedly popular roots of the regime, Rojas offered TF as an instrument that the regime would put "in the hands of the working classes to defend themselves against political corruption."[32]

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[31] "El 'Movimiento' del Señor Pabón Núñez," El Tiempo, 13 January 1955, 4.

The new movement was also presented as a bulwark against communism, as Rojas declared his regime to be "the champion of the anticommunist struggle," and vowed to proceed against the "vandalistic hordes dedicated to the destruction of family and private property" and take measures against "the dissociating action of communism in the universities." In trying to attract support from students, Rojas appealed particularly to "the Colombian youth whose soul remains pure and untouched by the corrosive poison of *politiquería*" and invited them to join TF's "civic struggle against the excesses of the political parties" and build a nation based on "authenticity."[33]

Beyond its bombastic rhetoric, Rojas's was a relatively successful experience of corporatist mobilization, with genuine expressions of support from citizens who shared the same distrust towards the old political class and chastised Liberal and Conservative attempts to restore the status quo ante.[34] Rojas's explicit appeal to the links between bandolero violence, student agitation, and communism, and the portrayal of TF as a movement of unification under a nationalist-Catholic banner were, however, insufficient to appease the tensions with the Conservative party, the main pillar of his ruling coalition. Rojas also antagonized the Church, as Cardinal Crisanto Luque condemned the general's attempts to identify loyalty to TF as a form of obedience to Christ. Luque also expressed his distrust towards the mobilization of Catholic workers and the presence of former *gaitanistas* and some anticommunist socialists in the labor sector of the new party.[35]

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[32] Speech by Rojas Pinilla in Ubaté, 2 August 1956, Transf. 6, Caja 96, Carpeta 29, f. 31-37, Discursos, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[33] Speech by Rojas Pinilla in Bogotá, 20 July 1956. Transf. 6, Caja 96, Carpeta 29, f. 3-5, Discursos, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[34] For instance, José Márquez, a labor court judge in Medellín, conveyed a sense of admiration for the "social revolution" undertaken by Rojas and criticized the attempts to restore the constitutional order as a threat to peace (Letter, José Marquez to Gustavo Rojas, 29 March 1957, Transf. 6, Caja 107, Carpeta 61, f. 43-44, Partidos Políticos (PP), DSP, FP, AGN-COL). Another letter sent by Juan Navarro, a citizen of Sincelejo (Sucre) and a self-declared Catholic and Conservative, praised the military regime for having saved Colombia from chaos and stated the need to keep Rojas in power "for many years, until the last flame of discord capable of setting the Republic on fire goes out." (Letter, Juan Navarro to Gustavo Rojas, 8 March 1957, Transf. 6, Caja 107, Carpeta 61, f. 8, PP, DSP, FP, AGN-COL). School teacher Eduardo Pineda, from Medellin, also expressed his support for Rojas's candidacy for the 1958 presidential election, and for him to be reelected indefinitely "and give a solution to the evil of *bandolerismo* in North, South Western, and Western Antioquia." (Letter, Eduardo Pineda to Gustavo Rojas, 27 March 1957, Transf. 6, Caja 107, Carpeta 61, f. 32-33, PP, DSP, FP, AGN-COL).

Ultimately, the confluence of former *gaitanista* cadres and Christian-Democratic labor organizers, along with Pabón's attempts to capitalize on the revitalization of the myth of Gaitán to foster a sense of right-wing "popular" mystique, made MAN/TF a threat to Rojas's original "patriotic" mission and an obstacle to the restoration of Conservative hegemony via the candidacy of former president and leader of the Constitutional Assembly, Mariano Ospina. Rojas insisted in portraying those that contested his project as enemies akin to bandolerismo,[36] aggravating the confrontation with Conservatives and Liberals, left and right wing student organizations,[37] and the Church. In protest for Rojas's candidacy and his attempt to enlarge the Constitutional Assembly to legitimize his rule, the parties named Guillermo León Valencia as the candidate for their "Civic Front" for the 1958 election, which resulted in Valencia's house arrest and a new wave of strikes and protests against Rojas, commanded by students, shopkeepers, and workers.

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[35] Galvis and Donadio, El Jefe Supremo, 484-88; Henderson, Modernization in Colombia, 377.

[36] "We live in a boundless struggle against enemies, small and large, visible and cloaked ones. Some brandish homicidal weapons and throw themselves into terrorism in the countryside, sowing death and desolation. Others deceitfully speak of freedom and a republican order that they are willing to defend as long as they derive benefits from it." Speech by Gustavo Rojas in Arbeláez (Cundinamarca), 3 February 1957, Transf. 6, Caja 106, Carpeta 15, f. 13, Discursos, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[37] In a letter to Rojas, the Conservative youth organization Juventudes Libertadoras accused him of corruption and embezzlement, and demanded his resignation to avoid a major bloodshed: "Step down, murderer of students, you were a coward in overthrowing a harmless man, an immaculate personality like Laureano Gómez, but you should have the valor to resign before the blood of Colombians drowns the palace in which you hide." Letter, Juventudes Libertadoras to Gustavo Rojas, May 1957, Transf. 6, Caja 107, Carpeta 61, f. 57, PP, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

The rupture of the government coalition was the result of discontent against Rojas's repression of students protests and Leftist mobilization; the anti-totalitarian and anti-dictatorial rhetoric of Liberalism; the regime's inability to provide a definite solution to the problem of violence; and the fears of a third political force that could divide the Conservative vote (as Gaitán did with the Liberals) and muster another populist adventure.[38] Facing a dire economic situation due to growing public debt and a budget deficit, as well as rising discontent towards his repressive measures and failed pacification policies, Rojas was pushed to resign, forced to retire from the Army, and replaced by a transitional junta in May of 1957.

The idea of a democratic Civic Front was spearheaded by Alberto Lleras and Laureano Gómez, who in the declaration of Benidorm (1956) and the Pact of Sitges (1957) aimed to dismantle Rojas's constitutional assembly and restore the equilibrium of powers by creating "a government or succession of governments with the broadest coalition formed by the two parties […] to reestablish the abolished institutions and procure unity until the civilian regime is free of all risks."[39] These accords established a bipartisan agreement, known as the National Front, which resulted in a constitutional reform to implement the alternation of the presidency between the two parties every four years, for a total of sixteen, and devise a general scheme to create coalition cabinets and attain parity in all electable offices. In addition, the reform would grant women the right to vote, and establish the allocation of ten percent of the national budget for education. Legitimized by a plebiscite, the pact was to last until 1974. With this new arrangement, the party leaders that opposed Rojas sought to address the problems of democratic legitimacy and factionalism, the latter of which they deemed as the single most important source of the violence that preceded the accords.[40] As former anti-Liberal crusader Laureano Gómez put it: "if we want violence to disappear, there is one infallible way to eliminate it: to take hold of its objectives. Neither of the two parties needs violence. Violence is no longer of use."[41]

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[38] César Ayala has analyzed some of the affinities between socialist Antonio Garcia, gaitanista Jorge Villaveces and Liberal Abelardo Forero with Rojas's nationalist project, as well as some of the local expressions of *rojista* grassroots organizing. Ayala attributes the initial success of a popular form of *rojismo* to the confluence of anti-oligarchical discourse, the mobilization of workers and the lingering force of *gaitanismo*. Ayala Diago, "El Movimiento de Acción Nacional," 48-52; Ayala Diago, Resistencia y Oposición, 27-37.

[39] "Declaración de Benidorm [July 24, 1956]," El Tiempo, 8 June 1957, 3.

The National Front and the limits of dissent

A key aspect of the coalition pact was its appeal to restore 'political normality', understood by Liberal *jefe* Carlos Lleras Restrepo as "the regular functioning of democratic institutions and the exertion of public liberties in a context of peace, security, justice and order; equality of conditions for all political parties in struggle and the proscription of any illegitimate means to capture or preserve power."[42] This notion of a fully-functioning, plural democracy was meant to contrast the ongoing 'abnormalities' in national politics: the gap between legality and institutionality and the actual use and display of public power; the pervasiveness of bandolero violence in its strongholds; public discontent over the state of the economy; and the mutual distrust between parties.

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[40] The National Front has been labeled by political scientists as a "consociational democracy," that is, as a form of stable but fragmented democracy where elites engage in power-sharing arrangements to defuse conflict rooted in sub-cultural fragmentation. The links between political violence and social conflict in relation to "consociational democracies" are addressed in Arend Lijphart, "Consociational democracy," World Politics 21, no. 2 (January 1969): 207-25. For a treatment of the National Front as "consociationalism," see Jonathan Hartlyn, The Politics of Coalition Rule in Colombia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[41] "Rotunda condenación de la violencia hace el expresidente Laureano Gómez," El Tiempo, 24 November 1957, 1.

In this mission of normalization, the National Front regime had several interrelated goals. One was restore the two-party rule and institute a highly-regulated political sphere to defuse conflict based on party identification, and to transform the latter from being the source of violence into a decisive factor of reconciliation. This entailed exerting a strict regulation of dissident activity, including leftists as well as the lingering influence of Rojas Pinilla in the Army and in the various political organizations adhered to his Tercera Fuerza. The pact also reinforced the role of the state, particularly of the Executive, in reorganizing social life through a variety of juridical and political measures, such as the use of state of siege declarations and of emergency executive decrees to implement social and economic reform and to contain social and political contestation.

With three and a half million votes in favor of the agreement and a successful campaign of promoting the plebiscite as "the founding of the Second Republic," the National Front enjoyed a wealth of democratic legitimacy without precedent in the history of the country. After a much debated process to choose the first National Front presidential candidate amongst Conservatives, Laureano Gómez gave his support to Alberto Lleras, who won in a landslide election in 1958 against Conservative dissident and *rojista* Jorge Leyva. In trying to mobilize Rojas's remaining influence, *rojistas* had lobbied Cardinal Luque to make a call for Catholics to vote "no" in the plebiscite, warning that a victory for the "yes" would mean "a victory for Freemasonry, Protestantism, and communism." However, Luque, along with other members of the clergy, publicly endorsed the plebiscite,[43] as they had already made a pact with Lleras to support the process in exchange for clear initiatives from the new regime to preserve the prerogatives of the Church and combat communist influence.[44]

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[42] Carlos Lleras Restrepo, Hacia la Restauración Democrática y el Cambio Social. Nuevo Testimonio sobre la Política Colombiana (Bogotá: Planeta, 1999), 28.

The promoters of the coalition also feared Rojas would attempt to reinstate himself in power via a coup. Indeed, since July of 1957, the Colombian Intelligence Service had identified a series of "subversive movements" developing within the Armed Forces. In November, Cnel. Alberto Lozano, Secretary of Information of the Presidency, stated that the interim junta had requested the "preventive" arrest of conspirators who were plotting to carry out attacks against noted personalities, sabotage the National Front plebiscite programmed for December 1st, and request the return of Rojas to power.[45] After the plebiscite, the new regime established a congressional commission to investigate political and financial irregularities in Rojas's administration, including his ties to the famous *pájaro* known as "El Cóndor"[46] as well as other instances of abuse of power. Ultimately tried for minor offenses and not for his role in the repression against students or his complicity with the *pájaros*, Rojas was stripped of his political rights and military retirement benefits. After this, he remained, however, a target of suspicion.

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[43] "Los católicos tienen la obligación de votar en el plebiscito," El Tiempo, 20 November 1957, 1.

[44] Ayala Diago, Resistencia y Oposición, 79-80.

[45] "La Junta de Gobierno denuncia una conspiración," El Tiempo, 18 November 1957, 1.

[46] "Dos nuevas acusaciones contra Rojas por la libertad de El Cóndor y Sierra," El Tiempo, 5 November 1958, 1, 12.

In January of 1958, an assassination attempt against Liberal party leader Carlos Lleras was blamed by the press on a group of *pájaros*, "the dictatorship's agents of terror."[47] In December, the president declared a state of siege and put Rojas under arrest after uncovering a "subversive plan," devised by retired officers, former collaborators of Rojas, and "anti-social elements," to carry out more acts of terrorism and provoke the overthrow of the regime.[48] The plot was condemned by the Liberal and Conservative directorates, with strong statements by Laureano Gómez deeming plan as "an attack against the moral unity of the nation" and warning Conservatives about the incompatibility of the party's goals with any agenda linked to "the criminal activities of the mercenaries of tyranny."[49]

In January of 1959 the end of the state of siege coincided with the news of the triumphant revolution in Cuba, celebrated by the Liberal press as the fall of another "grotesque" and immoral tyranny like Rojas's,[50] followed by reports on the increasing activities of the Colombian Communist Party against austerity measures and a rampant crisis of inflation and unemployment attributed to "the disaster of the dictatorship."[51] For the Liberal daily *El Tiempo*, public protest against the economic crisis and plans for acts of sabotage were led by the communists, who, after the lifting of the ban established by Rojas, were "misusing their constitutional liberties" to undermine the democratic regime "in clear alliance with *leyvistas, rojistas,* and the enemies of the National Front." *El Tiempo*'s denunciation was based on the view that communists, in their "passion for the infiltration of all things," including the student movement and unions, had found allies in the extreme Right, which was, at the same time, looking to obstruct the legal process against Rojas by creating "a climate of agitation."[52] "As in many other places," claimed an editorial condemning protests against the raise in the cost of transportation, "extremisms find each other because they lack any moral restraint in their acts, and are concerned only about the ends, regardless of the means they must resort to."[53] This understanding of "extremism" by *El Tiempo* was symptomatic of the regime's own self-portrayal as the embodiment of bipartisan moderation, and of the explicit delimitation of boundaries for public – violent and non-violent – expressions of dissent.

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[47] "Gravísimo atentado terrorista perpetrado anoche en Bogotá," El Tiempo, 17 January 1958, 1, 9.

[48] "El presidente anuncia el estado de sitio" El Tiempo, 4 December 1958, 14.

[49] "Los planes de los complotados eran horripilantes, reveló el Dr. Gómez," El Tiempo, 4 December 1958, 19.

[50] "These Latin American dictators are grotesque and cut from the same mold. They lack any moral fiber. They are guided by an appetite for wealth and dominance. They have no ideals nor administrative plans. They flatter the people with absurd demagogical measures that they turn against the people itself. Perón, Batista, Pérez Jiménez, Rojas Pinilla; they are all primitive, they are all generals. A strike of luck puts them in power. Yet, as soon as their lives and wealth are in danger, they flee like rats… *Cuba libre!* At last!" "La danza de las horas," El Tiempo, 4 January 1959, 4.

One of the early achievements of the transition had been the creation an investigative commission on violence and an Office of Rehabilitation integrated by Lleras' cabinet members. Undergoing intense political pressures, the commission was able to conduct extensive fieldwork, including the gathering of testimonies and the mediation of peace in various regions across the country, which resulted in the publication, in 1962, of a two volume report titled *La Violencia en Colombia.* The report was the first exhaustive diagnosis about the social, political, economic and even cultural causes of violence in the country, and it contained important (although not entirely original) recommendations for pacification, such as the granting of amnesties, the enactment of economic rehabilitation policies, and the reincorporation of combatting factions into institutionalized politics. Ultimately, the commission's work to establish an interpretation of La Violencia by scrutinizing the recent past produced accusations of factionalism on behalf of Conservatives, and accentuated the contradiction between the actual continuity of violence in many regions and the goal of overcoming political confrontation, even if this meant overlooking the responsibilities of political groups that adhered to and partook in the National Front.[54] Aside from addressing its institutional and socio-economic conditions of possibility, creating a narrative of *La Violencia* that would render all future violence as unjustified and illegitimate would become the key political challenge for the National Front.

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[51] "Consecuencias del desastre dictatorial," El Tiempo, 8 January 1959, 4.

[52] "La infiltración comunista," El Tiempo, 12 January 1959, 4. "Actos de sabotaje se preparan para mañana," El Tiempo, 6 January 1959, 1,6.

[53] "Dios los cría…" El Tiempo, January 6 1959, 4.

The portrayal of dissent as agitation, and of *rojismo* and communism as right and left wing extremisms, respectively, would set the tone for the regime's understanding of the enduring structural conditions of violence, and thus for the proposed remedies to such conditions. This was clear when the Lleras administration announced preliminary plans to implement an ambitious agrarian reform that, according to the Minister of Agriculture, Augusto Espinosa, would address long-standing demands for economic development and social justice by promoting the creation of “millions of small proprietors” with access to credit, technology and a strong internal market. The Minister’s diagnosis presented the countryside as rid with long-standing problems such as the prevalence of subsistence agriculture, idle land, and lack of infrastructure. These ultimately stood as sources of the type of discontent promoted by “professional agitators, the enemies of democracy and understanding between Colombians; the disseminators of doctrines and methods radically opposed to those of Western civilization.”[55]

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[54] Jefferson Jaramillo Marín, Pasados y Presentes de la Violencia en Colombia. Estudio sobre las Comisiones de Investigación (1958-2011) (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014), 92-102. Also see Gonzalo Sánchez, "Rehabilitación y violencia bajo el Frente Nacional," Análisis Político 4 (1988): 26-53.

The Minister’s address to the powerful Agricultural Society of Colombia focused on the need for financial and structural measures to change the face of rural Colombia. Yet, the link between the dire social and economic conditions in the countryside and the actions of “agitators” became a recurring theme (although, historically speaking, not a novel one) in public discourse. Besides its goals of social improvement, development was also a means to eliminate the environment in which the actions of “enemies” increased their social traction. From this perspective, the “residual violence” of the early National Front period (a combination of active Liberal guerrillas, *pájaros*, and criminal bands) was seen as either a remnant of unwarranted, immoral factionalism, or the result of extremists capitalizing on the weak presence of the state and the poverty of rural populations. An unprecedented political consensus gave way to the creation of the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform in 1962, while the government endorsed the new National Peasant Association as a counterweight to landowners’ organizations. Both initiatives met the opposition of local vested interests as well as attempts from within the state apparatus to revert land redistribution, both braced by public discourse about the subversive nature of land occupations by discontented peasants as an expression or symptom of extremism in the countryside.[56]

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[55] “El gobierno explica sus planes de reforma agraria,” El Tiempo, 20 January 1959, 11.

The trial against Rojas Pinilla and the periodic eruption of protests against the government became another opportunity to mobilize these linkages between dissidence and political opportunism. For instance, Minister of Justice Germán Zea accused the opposition (mostly dissident Conservatives) of holding "nostalgia for the dictatorship" and partaking, willingly or not, in a "coalition of the enemies of liberty." Zea also referred to the problem of communism as having a Latin American dimension, rooted in the obliviousness of the ruling classes to stark conditions of inequality. Zea symptomatically rejected being a McCarthyist, and warned that anticommunism could lead to "reactionary movements." Yet, based on recent events such as the attack against Carlos Lleras and the anti-austerity protests, he reaffirmed the link between Rojas's sympathizers and communists in carrying out "acts of vandalism."[57]

President Lleras' address to the country on March 3rd 1959 referred to these disturbances as attempts to create "an artificial climate of uncertainty," detached from "the sentiments of the people." "There is no reason," Lleras said, "to choose paths of resistance or protest against a regime that has opened all doors to the critical examination of all initiatives and situations… There is a solid national opinion against these types of agitations and disorder."[58] In appealing to the "good judgment" of university students and reminding them of the democratic nature of the National Front, Lleras was effectively setting the terms of the regime's approach to protest and dissent.

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[56] For an analysis of the National Peasant Association and the politics of land reform during and after the National Front, see León Zamosc, The Agrarian Question and the Peasant Movement in Colombia: Struggles of the National Peasant Association, 1967-1981 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1986).

[57] "La oposición pretende volver a las épocas de la barbarie," El Tiempo, 29 April 1959, 10.

[58] "La zozobra artificial tiene inequívoca finalidad política," El Tiempo, 3 March 1959, 17.

From the President's view, the figure of public opinion and the mandate of the plebiscite enabled scrutiny of government initiatives, but also limited the radius of action for groups that "willingly" placed themselves outside of the regime's democratic consensus. When Conservative dissident Jorge Leyva publicly denounced government censorship, an editorial in *El Tiempo* responded by affirming that those who claimed persecution did so implying an "impossible" condition of clandestinity, which was, at the same time, potentially criminal insofar as it sought to "subvert public order." Clandestinity was, thus, simply unconceivable, unjustified, illegitimate, and even illegal, under the democratic regime of the National Front.[59]

On March 19th, the police arrested university student Robinson Jiménez for his active role in causing disturbances during the protests against the raise in the cost of transportation. Labeled a communist agitator with "special training in Budapest," Jiménez was later confirmed to be a member of the leftist Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil y Campesino 7 de Enero (MOEC). With its outright rejection of the vanguardism of the Colombian Communist Party and its embrace of an alliance between workers and students, and later, with peasant organizations, the MOEC bewildered the intelligence services as a new strand of left-wing mobilization. The MOEC revindicated the platform of social justice promoted by *gaitanismo*, and its founders had played an important role in the student protests against the military regime, establishing important points of contact with socialist militants and particularly with urban communists disaffected by their party's disregard for Gaitán's figure. Their interpretation and recovery of *gaitanismo* was, thus, a stepping-stone towards the idea of united popular front that could overcome the trauma of what they saw as Gaitán's failed revolution.[60] The emergence of MOEC was, to this extent, not a direct result of the Cuban revolution (as the emergence of the Latin American New Left is often interpreted).[61] Rather, it was the result of a synchronic development that was informed by over a decade of *gaitanista* and anti-Rojas mobilization, the restrictions on popular protest by the National Front, and the regional climate of anti-dictatorial and national-revolutionary revolt not only in Cuba, but also in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and neighboring Venezuela.[62]

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[59] "There is no justification for the alleged clandestinity in which certain groups are trying to place themselves […] This is an austere and authentic democratic regime that does not fear opposition, even if it is a fierce or stupid one. If the *clandestinos* want to seek refuge in that condition to subvert public order, then the problem is one of policing, and the regime will seek the proper legal means to defend itself from those that attempt to disturb peace in Colombia." "No hay clandestinidad posible," El Tiempo, 17 April 1959, 4.

The appearance of MOEC in that context and the ensuing connections between remaining rural guerrillas and student activism, along with the reported presence of Cuban envoys in Colombia, created the perception within the Colombian intelligence services about the building up of an insurrectional force sponsored from the outside. This added to the public acknowledgment that the problem of violence persisted in those regions endemically affected by bandolerismo, despite the regime's policies of rehabilitation and rural development, as it was evinced by an attack against a parliamentary commission visiting the region of Carare to supervise rehabilitation initiatives.[63] The attack was part of a larger wave of violence that affected the Valle de Cauca and Quindío regions, targeting coffee planters and Liberal sympathizers.[64] Press reports established the political nature of this violence based on the fact that victims were asked about their political affiliation before being executed. However, as a way to neglect the continuation of political violence, the Liberal press and the government insisted in the solely criminal motivation of the perpetrators. The idea of this continuity of violence as residual, non-political (that is, not connected to party allegiance), and thus as purely criminal in the terms set by the National Front, coexisted with the perception that these bandoleros were simply using politics as an excuse to terrorize and extort local populations and perpetuate their territorial control. Similarly to what happened in the aftermath of the 1948 Bogotazo, bandoleros were portrayed by the government as part of a systematic and cohesive attempt by *rojistas*, students, and foreign agents, to create a climate of agitation.

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[60] José Abelardo Díaz Jaramillo, "'Si me asesinan, vengadme'. El gaitanismo en el imaginario de la nueva izquierda colombiana: el caso del MOEC 7 de Enero," Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura 36, No.2 (2009): 136-39.

[61] This approach restricts the notion of the New Left in Latin America to the rural and urban guerrillas that proliferated in the region post-1961 and particularly in the context of the Tricontinental Conference in Havana (1966). For an example of this approach see Thomas C. Wright, Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution (Westport: Praeger, 2001). For an alternative notion of New Left conceived as a "movement of movements" encompassing various aspects of politics, society and culture, see Eric Zolov, "Expanding Our Conceptual Horizons: The Shift from an Old to a New Left in Latin America," A Contracorriente 5, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 47-73; Van Gosse, "A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left," in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., A Companion to Post-1945 America (London: Blackwell, 2002), 277-302.

[62] For a unique study of this process with some reference to its regional context, see José Abelardo Díaz Jaramillo, "El Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil Campesino 7 de Enero y los orígenes de la nueva izquierda en Colombia, 1959-1969," MA Thesis, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Bogotá, 2010.

Building the counterinsurgent state: crime as subversion, subversion as crime

By the early 1960s, bandoleros and guerrillas controlled the sixteen so-called "independent republics" which became a showcase for the shifting dynamics of rural violence. In these territories, residues of inter-party violence mingled with criminal elements and competing strongholds of former Liberal self-defense groups and guerrillas organized by the Communist Party. Bandolerismo remained a socially heterogeneous phenomenon, marked by its localism, the rapid disintegration of its ties to party directorates, and its integration into networks of patronage by political bosses and local authorities, in some cases, and to insurrectional or resistance movements in others.[65] This heterogeneity remained an obstacle for making violence legible in terms of party polarization and economic backwardness. Bandolerismo was, from this perspective, an amalgamation of criminality and subversion with no political status other than that of a threat to the stabilization of the country and the main hindrance for the pacification promoted by the National Front.

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[63] "Asaltada en el Carare comisión de la Cámara," El Tiempo, 20 April 1959, 1, 9

[64] "Eficaz persecución a los bandoleros en el Carare," El Tiempo, 21 April 21 1959, 1, 23

In January of 1960, the government announced a special plan of pacification for Tolima, involving the Army, the police and the intelligence service, and focused on "studying new methods to combat the outlaws and achieving greater penetration of the instruments available for the administration of justice."[66] The plan came as an acknowledgment of the persistence of bandolero violence in comparison to other neighboring departments, and in response to local rumors and the denunciation by the leader of the Liberal guerrillas of Southern Tolima, Jesús María Oviedo ("General Mariachi"), about a subversive plan orchestrated by former self-defense groups and criminal elements to create a communist-sponsored unified command in the region. The information was, however, contradictory, insofar as petty conflicts between Liberal and communist *cuadrillas* stood in the way of any effort for unification.[67]

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[65] Sánchez and Meertens, Bandoleros, Gamonales y Campesinos, 47-52.

[66] "Se emplearan todos los recursos para la pacificación del Tolima," El Tiempo, 3 Jan 1960, 1.

Deemed by Alberto Lleras as "the main, and perhaps the only one source of disruption for the tranquility of Colombia,"[68] Tolima became a testing ground for localized initiatives against violence, such as the establishment of an autonomous military command in the region and the appointment of military mayors. The plan came with other measures such as the restriction on alcohol sales and a ban on gambling, as local officials briefed a presidential commission on the dire situation of "public order," its links to "moral licentiousness," and the demand for more army and police presence in light of the problem of *desplazados*, the violence between Liberals and Conservatives, and El Mariachi's statements about growing communist influence.[69]

The Tolima campaign coincided with, and to a great extent relied on, various efforts towards the professionalization of the National Police. As a civilian institution dependent on the Ministry of War (and thus considered as part of the Armed Forces), the National Police saw itself as a key instrument in maintaining public order and in addressing criminality as a social and political problem. Indeed, in its official annual bulletin, titled *Criminalidad*, the National Police attributed the problems of law enforcement to the fact that crime grew “more premature, more brutal, more technical, and more international every day,” which added to “the lack of citizen collaboration” and the “ominous social insensibility” towards criminality. A deep reform of the justice system and a move towards harsher sentencing were seen as complementary to a “social awakening” that would lend full support to all government initiatives against criminality.[70]

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[67] "'Mariachi' denuncia un nuevo plan subversivo en el Tolima," El Tiempo, 4 January 1960, 3. A military intelligence report confirmed that General Mariachi's warning matched rumors among the local population, and made note of contacts between elected representative Juan de la Cruz Varela (former guerrilla and communist militant) and Liberal guerrillas in the neighboring Sumapaz. The report also speculated about existence of guerrilla training camps led by individuals indoctrinated in Cuba. Comando General de las FF.MM. Estado Mayor Conjunto. Departamento 2. "Apreciación de situación interna no. 22." 4 October 1961. Caja 322, Carpeta 2, f. 320-341, Ministerio de Guerra Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[68] "Más ayuda en la lucha contra la violencia pide el Presidente," El Tiempo, 7 January 1960, 20.

[69] "Informe sobre el departmento del Tolima." January 1960. Caja 316, Carpeta 1, f. 3-18 Orden Público - Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

By early 1961, notable improvements in gathering intelligence on bandolero gangs (*cuadrillas*) produced crucial data on the membership, firepower, political affiliation, and main activities of some 69 cuadrillas operating throughout the national territory. Government (particularly military) reports showed an overall decrease in factional violence (codified as homicides of Liberals and Conservatives) and the death or arrest of hundreds of bandits in various regions, including the violent Tolima. At large, the gradual reduction in homicides was attributed in military reports to the joint action (*acción conjunta*) of police and military forces, civil authorities, the Church, and the citizenry, a scheme thought to “necessarily reduce violence, and, with time, abolish it completely.”[71] This experience would become the basis for a later proposal, presented by General Alberto Ruiz Novoa in 1962, to create civilian-military committees “to promote a national mobilization against violence.”[72]

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[70] “Un anhelo social: justicia aplicada,” Criminalidad 1961 (Bogotá: Ministerio de Guerra), 6-7.

[71] Comando General de las FFMM, Estado Mayor Conjunto, Departamento 2. “Informe complementario no. 10 del cuadro de violencia.” 10 March 1961, Caja 322, Carpeta 1, f. 56, Ministerio de Guerra Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[72] “Comités Cívico-Militares anuncia el Gral. Ruiz Novoa,” El Tiempo, 20 August 1962, 1,28

However, these efforts to make violence more fathomable also rendered a complex picture where police reports described communist cuadrillas appearing alongside, and often in competition with, liberal and conservative ones, with activities ranging from common theft, extortion, and cattle-rustling to "political vengeance" and assassination.[73] Paradoxically, as intelligence became a key component of *acción conjunta*, the legal and military repression of cuadrillas did not translate into a significant reduction of other forms of violence, as made evident by the relatively steady trend in homicides of citizens of "unknown affiliation" – that is, of those not identified a Liberal, Conservative, or bandits.[74] Ultimately, in Tolima the government campaign raised issues, noted by local authorities, regarding displaced peasant populations (limited access to land, no social safety net) and the lack of economic resources to increase the presence of law enforcement. More importantly, these local actors would often complain about the absence of a true commitment by local Conservative and Liberal party operators to effectively implement the reconciliation promoted by the regime.[75]

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[73] Comando General de las FFMM, Estado Mayor Conjunto, Departamento 2. "Apreciación de situación interna no. 21. Anexo 3- Relación de cuadrillas en actividad, nuevos focos de violencia y cuadrillas en receso." 5 Sept 1961. Caja 322, Carpeta 2, f. 343-359, Ministerio de Guerra Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[74] A report produced by the Sixth Brigade of the Colombian Army, based in Ibagué (Tolima), shows an overall decrease in the number of murders in the departments with a persistent bandolero problem (Antioquia, Caldas, Cauca, Huila, Tolima and Valle). In Tolima, the homicides went from 1302 in 1958 to 549 in 1960. Homicides were classified according to the victim's identity: Liberal, Conservative, unknown, bandolero and Armed Forces, with the murder of "unknowns" going more or less constant in that same time period (from 296 in 1959, to 181 in 1958, to 192 in 1960). "Cuadro Estadístico de Violencia en el Tolima, Años 1958, 59 y 60," 23 January 1961, Carpeta 26, Despacho del Sr. Ministro, Fondo Ministerio del Interior, AGN-COL.

[75] "Informe sobre el departamento del Tolima" 5 January 1960. Caja 316, Carpeta 1, f. 3-18, Orden Público – Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

The early 1960s saw the implementation of a range of initiatives to address the challenges of violence and protest, which were frequently informed by rumors of increasing communist activity and widespread perceptions about the overlaps between criminal violence and a resurgence of armed rebellion. In October 10, 1961, Lleras declared a national state of siege and, through executive decrees, banned all public demonstrations, established limitations on the broadcasting of news or any other content related to military operations or situations of "social and political disorder," and imposed censorship on all cinema newsreels.[76] Justified by *El Tiempo* as "indispensable to avoid the poison of the extremisms plotting against legality and the essence of democracy," the measures were a response to further episodes of violence between guerrillas/bandits and military troops, and to the activities of Rojas Pinilla, who, while stripped of his political rights, would seek the presidency as a candidate of his newly formed Nationalist Popular Alliance (ANAPO). On the other side of the political spectrum, the challenge came from the Liberal Revolutionary Movement (MRL), led by the son of former president López, Alfonso López Michelsen. From within a sector of the Liberal party, López challenged the arranged alternation established by the National Front and mobilized dissident Liberals, but also urban-based leftists (including former *gaitanistas*), who advocated for a more open and pluralistic political system and the "recovery" of Liberalism as a combative political identity within a democratic framework.[77]

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[76] "Prohibidas manifestaciones; control para la radio y TV," El Tiempo, 14 October 1961, 1, 22.

[77] On the origins of the MRL and its national and regional impacts, see César Augusto Ayala Diago, "El origen del MRL (1957-1960) y su conversión en disidencia radical del liberalismo," Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura 22 (1995): 95-121.

Incentives to treat violence as a multifold problem of law enforcement, internal security and political stability also came from the Eisenhower administration, which in October of 1959 sent a special Survey Team assess Colombia's internal security conditions. Led by a CIA head agent, the group was composed of US military experts with field experience in Korea, along with Col. Napoleon Valeriano, a US Army expert in counter-guerrilla operations and former chief of police in Manila. Unsurprisingly, the report produced by the Survey Team pointed to the need to restore the public's trust in government and reinforce the legitimacy of the National Front.[78] Consistent with later Department of State assessments, the report deemed the problem of violence as concerned mainly with criminality, impunity, and a non-functioning judicial system, and, to a lesser extent, with subversion.[79] Also, the report recommended the formation of a special anti-guerrilla army unit to tackle both bandit criminality and guerrilla subversion, the development of an internal intelligence agency and an information program (referred to as "psychological warfare"). These measures would be accompanied by an ample campaign of civic action, under the supposition that addressing political, economic, and social factors was a necessary complement to any operation conducted by security forces.[80]

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[78] Dennis Rempe, "Guerrillas, bandits, and independent republics. US counterinsurgency efforts in Colombia 1959-1965" Small Wars and Insurgencies 10, no. 1 (1995): 305-306.

[79] Memorandum, From Bogota To Secretary of State, 4 Apr 1962, Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Colombia, 1960-1963 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001; from hereon USCOL 1960-1963), 721.00/4-962.

[80] Dennis Rempe, "The origin of internal security in Colombia: Part I – A CIA Special Team surveys *La Violencia*, 1959-1960," Small Wars and Insurgencies 10, no. 3 (Winter 1999): 39.

The report failed to make a bold contribution to a novel understanding of violence in Colombia, and, as noted by Col. Edward Lansdale, Assistant Secretary of Defense, most of its practical recommendations placed the burden of responsibility on President Lleras's capacity to build a strong support base "so that every other action – military, economic, or psychological – has meaning."[81] Lansdale also pointed out the absence of a clear political basis for the recommended actions and the need to go beyond emergency and containment measures. He equally regretted the report's ambivalence regarding the role of US human and financial resources, as the Survey Team informally negotiated future assistance with the expectation that funding would come primarily from the Colombian government.[82]

Most notably, the reports' core recommendations were almost identical to those formulated by Col. Sierra Ochoa in the mid-1950s, with Rojas having already taken steps to implement them, even if with limited success. In meetings with US officials, Lleras himself referred to the recommendations as "conventional," and stated the much greater importance of US gestures in favor of land reform in Colombia and the need to diminish the "state of turbulent unrest" in the countryside, noting also the complexity and high cost of colonization initiatives, building infrastructure, and providing credit for rural development.[83] Lleras also requested the increase in training of Latin American military on how to deal with "the new internal danger of guerrillas, rather than on the outdated external danger of aggression." Even the representative of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs expressed his reservations on the Survey Team report, citing disputes amongst CIA operatives and officials at the Departments of State and Defense regarding the future of US involvement in Colombia.[84] Ultimately, Lleras's administration had it clear that situations like the one in Tolima required a rapid process of professionalization and modernization of Colombia's security apparatus, and that the US should play a key role in supporting it both politically and economically.

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[81] Memorandum, Edward Lansdale to General Erskine, "Preliminary Report, Colombia Survey Team," 23 February 1960, USCOL 1960-1963, 721.5.MSP/2-2360

[82] Memorandum, Lansdale to Col. Valeriano, 22 March 1960, USCOL 1960-1963, 721.00/3-2260

[83] Memorandum, "Conversation between the Secretary and President Lleras of Colombia: Guerrilla problem and survey team," 7 April 1960, USCOL 1960-1963, 721.11/4-760.4319. Memorandum, "Conversation between the Secretary and President Lleras of Colombia: Agrarian reform," 7 April 1960, USCOL 1960-1963, 721.11/4-760.4320.

In the following years, the government undertook measures to build the counterinsurgent capabilities of the Army and the National Police, all under the purview of Gral. Alberto Ruiz Novoa (a veteran of the Colombia Battalion in Korea) as Commander General of the Colombian Army and later as Minister of War. In addition to incoming, if still limited, US military material support,[85] the Army increased the presence of its officers in intelligence, psychological operations and counter-resistance training courses at Fort Bragg and the Panama Canal Zone.[86] Ruiz Novoa also oversaw the reorganization of the Intelligence Service as the National Security Service, and, later as the Administrative Department of Security (DAS). The DAS would become the main state intelligence agency, centralizing all information gathering in collaboration with the National Police and the Armed Forces. DAS agents would be incorporated into a structure of professionalized and well-trained detectives with law enforcement and judicial functions. This professional profile was meant to eliminate factionalism from law enforcement, putting agents under strong scrutiny, sometimes at the expense of their self-perceived "loyalty" and the value of the expertise acquired by experience.[87]

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[84] Memorandum, "Conversation between the Secretary and President Lleras of Colomba: Role of the military," 7 April 1960, USCOL 1960-1963, 721.11/4-760.4357; Rempe, "The origin of internal security in Colombia," 49-50.

[85] A memorandum by the Ministry of War mentions the importance of the Mutual Aid Program (MAP) in securing US material support for "operations to control public order," namely, three Hiller helicopters for personnel transport and an undisclosed amount of "transmissions materials." "Memorandum de las principales actividades desarrolladas por el Ministerio de Guerra en el lapso comprendido entre el 20 de julio de 1960 y el 1º de Julio de 1961," July 1961, Caja 322, Carpeta 2, f. 284-287, Ministerio de Guerra Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[86] Rempe, "Guerrillas, bandits, and independent republics," 309.

As part of the professionalization efforts, Ruiz Novoa created the Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas, a publication that aimed to disseminate "military and civilian thought concerning all problems related to National Defense." Sponsored by the newly created Superior Council for National Defense (a collegiate body of decision-making that included strategic ministries and representatives of the Armed Forces), the Revista was to address what it deemed "the intellectual underdevelopment of the country in matters of national defense… which we attribute to the country's characteristic pacifist sentiment and our natural political introversion."[88] The Revista became a vehicle for the diffusion and local interpretation of emerging Cold War notions of national defense as a state of preparedness for war in its national and international dimensions.[89] Through this publication, Colombian officers provided informed arguments on the interplay between the democratic aspirations of the National Front and the dilemmas of local and global conflicts, and reflected, for instance, on the key political role of the Army in sustaining the democratic system during times of peace and in "directly advising the supreme authorities of the state" during wartime.[90] The Revista thus reflected a growing concern within the officialdom about the need to revise traditional notions of war and peace, redefine the role of the Armed Forces accordingly, and reorganize the state as an *estado de guerra* following the global (the Cold War) and local (banditry, subversion) political imperatives of this emerging doctrine.

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[87] In 1963, Gonzalo Cifuentes, a veteran of the Colombia Battalion in Korea, requested to President Guillermo León Valencia his reinstatement as a DAS agent after being dismissed for "political sectarianism." Cifuentes argued he had been punished for denouncing the collusion of DAS agents with "communist terrorists," and that his work and experience in infiltrating a communist organization in Cali, and his successful curtailing "of many terrorist plots at a national scale" during Valencia's own presidential campaign made him an loyal and invaluable asset for the DAS. Cifuentes also reminded Valencia of his own personal pledge, made in 1958, to give aid to Cifuentes and a group of his relatives, all veterans of the Korean War. Letter, Gonzalo Cifuentes to Guillermo León Valencia (GLV), 21 November 1963, Caja 340, Carpeta 1, f. 260-262, Departamentos Administrativos, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[88] "Nuestros propósitos," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 1, No. 1 (April 1960): 3-6.

[89] Alberto Ruiz Novoa, "Política y doctrina de guerra," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 1, No. 2 (June 1960): 231-238.

In the context of the National Front, one of these political imperatives had a very concrete content: "We require a force that protects the development and survival of our social, economic and cultural doctrines from foreign interests… It will be necessary to create a structure for that force and provide it with the means to fulfill the goal of protecting the continuity of the political arrangement we have chosen."[91] Framed by the Cold War, this protective role implied a close intertwinement between this *doctrina de guerra* and "national aims," as well as an understanding that the distinction between external and internal threats had been blurred, just as conventional notions of war and peace had ceased to operate. As Col. Luis González Aristizábal put it: "the various challenges posed by the Cold War cannot and should not be considered as purely internal problems. They are connected and dependent on local, regional and hemispheric factors, like links in a chain of deliberate actions that go unperceived in their initial stages."[92] For González, "cold war" was not only a competition between superpowers, nor a mere global context shaped by such competition. "Cold war" meant, in fact, a new form of subversive political warfare that combined the local, the national, and the international, "a state of provocation" aimed at exploiting the deficiencies of the enemy to conquer political goals with a minimum of military engagement. Subversion, rebellion, strikes, sabotage, pacifist and disarmament campaigns, and even indigenous mobilizations were deemed by González as "methods of cold war" that had a decentralized execution but a centralized planning, direction and control.[93]

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[90] Gerardo Ayerbe Chaux, "Ejército y democracia," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 1, No. 2 (June 1960): 363-366. Luis González Aristizábal, "Política del estado de guerra," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 1, No. 3 (August 1960): 529-536.

[91] Alberto Hauzeur, "Propósito nacional y doctrina de guerra," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 1, No. 4 (October 1960): 65.

Aside from standard appeals to the importance of strategy and information in facing these challenges, González offered a cryptic suggestion: "The Cold War must be fought through a cold war,"[94] implying that the clandestine, covert, and non-conventional nature of this form of political warfare could only be countered through, precisely, clandestine, covert, and non-conventional means.[95] From this perspective, the Cold War was seen as essentially a conflict fought in the "fourth dimension of war"; that is, not only in traditional military spheres of land, sea and airspace, but, primarily, in the minds and consciences of democratic men. "Now more than ever," wrote Col. Alberto Beltrán,

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[92] Luis González Aristizábal, "La Guerra Fría," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 1, No. 5 (December 1960): 483-484.

[93] Besides reflecting on it as a method, González Aristizábal also understood the Cold War as a three stage process: a preparatory stage featuring the clandestine creation of movements and structures; the political stage that would see the creation of the conditions for subversion, through the manipulation of "popular psychology" to create discontent; and the stage of action, marked by the use of terrorism to destroy trust in the government, promote confrontation, and undermine the morale of the Armed Forces. González Aristizábal, "La Guerra Fría," 484-486.

[94] González Aristizábal, "La Guerra Fría," 489.

[95] González Aristizábal, "La Guerra Fría," 479-489.

"we need a close military-civilian coordination. These two pillars of society need to be absolutely identified with each other to destroy any environment, possibility, or situation that permit the action of communist ideas on the often naïve mentality of over-trusting citizens."[96] In this critical juncture of both the Latin American Cold War and of the government's fight against subversion and criminality, the seeming consensus was that, given the nature and characteristics of the enemy's tactics, methods, and intentions, the pacification of the country would not come from purely military measures, but, as Gral. Valencia Tovar would put it, "from the creation of a national will to extirpate violence." Thus the problem of violence, or rather, of implementing pacification, was constructed essentially as one of public morality and collective conscious political decision.[97]

While violence was seen as a symptom of moral and social decay that required the unification of purpose and action between the security apparatus and the population, bandolerismo, subversion, and criminality remained problems that pertained to the security of the state and that were of primary concern in the plans to restructure the country's security forces. As part of the Armed Forces, the National Police, for instance, emphasized the importance of law enforcement and crime prevention, but also gave its own perspective on communism as a paramount source of criminal activity (*causa criminógena*) and, plainly, as "a violent attitude." Similar to the views held by the military officialdom, the rationale behind this assessment was that Colombia was a "wrongly conceived" democracy, suffering from licentiousness in the press, a lack of proper social and economic organization, and the "inauthenticity" of its politicians. International communism would thus seek to exploit these conditions by instigating all forms of crime, and by promoting subversion, illegality, and violence.[98]

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[96] Alberto Beltrán Rocha, "La cuarta dimensión de la guerra," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 3, no. 7 (April 1961): 24.

[97] "Un criterio militar ante el problema de la violencia," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 3, no. 8 (June 1961): 267.

For the National Police, violence was not a generic, catch-all term. Rather, it was distinguishable from criminality and also essentially political as it encompassed a range of activities

> conducted by a group of individuals who are subordinated to caudillos or jefes, and entailing the professionalization of aggressive conduct… [Violence] does not derive from a sudden impulse, as it happens with common criminality; it is a system consisting of a mania for homicide. It has as its main features the disregard for legitimate authority and the coordinated use of force, without a necessary link between the victims [*los sacrificados*] and the violent ones [*los violentos*].[99]

The threatening character of violence thus stemmed from the perception that bandolero criminality had become a way of life and a system that worked in a more or less coherent and calculated manner to undermine all forms of authority. As stated by influential anticommunist commentator Alonso Moncada, bandolerismo and criminality were but outcomes of the communists putting into practice a "philosophy of brute force" that manifested globally by armed insurrection, regimes of terror, and imperialist aggression.[100] Crime was, in short, one of the subversive instruments of the *violentos*.

According to the National Police, between 1963 and 1964, the crusade against violence resulted in a quantitative reduction in violent crime (homicides linked to bandolerismo and subversion), and a nil presence of crimes against the security of the state. Official statistics show, however, a sharp increase in the "collectivization of crime" (organized delinquency), in crimes against property and of the so-called "states of social dangerousness" (e.g. vagrancy and drug use). The Police assessed that this transformation of delinquency was determined by "the modalities of social change," defined as "not only the evolution of economic processes, but also the mutation of customs, institutions and beliefs,"[101] an idea that essentially placed the burden of the explanation on the socio-cultural shifts brought about by modernization. A 1964 report referred to this transformation in the nature of delinquency as the result of a successful campaign of pacification, the support of public opinion, and the help of "honest peasants" that made possible the actions of security forces. However, the Police also warned about "an explosion of kidnapping," perpetrated by organized criminals mainly against the higher urban and rural classes, as well a sharp increase in terrorism, mostly in the form of attacks with explosives. Deemed as "a Castro-communist maneuver" and a novel form of violent crime, terrorism was understood as the quintessential criminal instrument of international communism, "the materialization of the inability of those who call themselves 'defenders of the proletariat' to fight with intelligence, instead appealing to the use of brute force to impose their doctrines of lie and deceit."[102]

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[98] "El comunismo como causa criminógena y como actitud violenta," Criminalidad 5 (1962): 151-153.

[99] "La violencia en general," Criminalidad 5 (1962): 120.

[100] Alonso Moncada Abello, *Un Aspecto de la Violencia* (Bogotá: n.d., 1963), 93-118.

In addition to this law enforcement approach to violence, the perceived link between criminality and communist subversion also shaped the type of assistance US officials sought to lend to their Colombian counterparts. The year 1962 marked the beginning of the US-sponsored Plan Lazo, also known by some as Latin American

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[101] "Aspectos generales de la delincuencia en Colombia en 1963," Criminalidad 6 (1964), 18-21.

[102] "Terrorismo y comunismo," Criminalidad 7 (1965): 26-28.

Security Operation, or LASO, as a way to (misleadingly) emphasize its US manufacture.[103] A combination of civic action, propaganda and military operations against the guerrillas, Lazo consisted essentially on the implementation of the changes proposed by Colombian officers such as Gral. Ruiz Novoa, which, as noted above, can hardly be attributed to the straightforward application of US counterinsurgency doctrine, which was itself still in formation. Surely, Lazo relied on the technical support provided by the US Military Assistance Program (MAP) and the so-called Military Training Teams, producing public safety and civic action programs, strategic communication projects, and intelligence and counter-intelligence training in surveillance and interrogation. These programs were meant to address a joint agenda of "counter-violence," that is, the combat against the hybrid forms of criminal and guerrilla activity in localized regions.

In April of 1964, the Armed Forces announced a campaign of civic-military operations in South Tolima, which they presented to the press, and in clear reference to Plan Lazo, as "a Colombian plan, for a Colombian Army, and for a Colombian problem."[104] Known as Operation Sovereignty, this major anti-guerrilla offensive sought to finally take hold of what Conservative politician Álvaro Gómez Hurtado had denounced since late 1961 as the "independent republics": segments of territory in the regions of Tolima, Huila, Cauca, and Cundinamarca, fully under the political and economic control of guerrillas that, he said, "do not acknowledge the sovereignty of the Colombian state. As noted by historian James Henderson, there were two clashing positions regarding the challenge posed by these "republics": one that saw them as actually posing no significant threat to national sovereignty; and another that stressed their revolutionary and subversive potential.[105] The existence of these "independent republics" had been point of tension between Liberals and Conservatives, particularly as the latter accused the former of using their local party structures to violate the principles of coalition rule and sponsor a reemergence of violence.[106] At the heart of the violence in the emblematic "independent republic" of Marquetalia (South Tolima) lied the decade-old conflict between communist and Liberal guerrillas. Rooted in sharp ideological differences such as the role of private property or the sanctity of religion, the confrontations between Liberal *limpios* and Communist *comunes* would play a significant role in the success of Lazo, insofar as *limpios* collaborated with military operations by making public statements (such as General Mariachi's anticommunist denunciation), working as informants, and often by carrying out the assassination of *comunes*.

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[103] In order to stress its US origins and mechanisms of implementation, some sources, particularly from Colombian and Latin American scholars and commentators, have reproduced the notion that LASO was the acronym for Latin American Security Operation. However, official documents from Colombia and the United States refer to the plan as Lazo (noose, or, more broadly, link or bond), with no observable reference to LASO. Francisco Leal Buitrago, La Seguridad Nacional a la Deriva: del Frente Nacional a la Posguerra Fría (Bogotá: Alfaomega, 2002), 43-44.

[104] "Gran plan de acción cívica militar presenta el Ejército," El Tiempo, 15 April 1965, 1, 14.

Capitalizing on the material and strategic improvements under Lazo, the development of an information network (which included payed local informants) run by the DAS allowed the gathering of more extensive and precise intelligence on the activities of the guerrillas, particularly on the structure, activities, tactics, and external links of the Marquetalia-based guerrilla led by Pedro Antonio Marín ("Manuel Marulanda" or "Tirofijo"), considered the strongest in terms of combatants, available firepower, and local support.[107] With the participation of 2,000 troops, air and artillery support, Operation Sovereignty's main target was to capture Tirofijo and to dismantle the economic and political structures of the Marquetalia "republic." Managing to escape from Marquetalia and as other "independent republics" fell under control of government troops, Tirofijo and other guerrilla leaders from Tolima, Cauca, and Huila would ultimately come together to found the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).[108] While successfully doing away with Marquetalia and the independent republics of El Pato, Riochiquito, and Guayabero, Operation Sovereignty galvanized the rejection of the National Front and its policies by peasant organizations who, already alienated by dire economic conditions, avowedly rejected militarization, and expressed their backing for the agrarian project of the FARC and thus for the emerging unified guerrilla front.[109] At large, the execution of Operation Sovereignty was a fundamental test for the National Front's ability to gather support for what was as a necessary effort to root out the main sources of new waves of violence after *La Violencia*. The success of the operation certainly bolstered the credibility and cohesion of successive National Front presidencies, but also became the catalyst for the radicalization of the revolutionary Left, the toughening of the state's repressive apparatus, and for a new stage in the dispossession and displacement of rural populations caught in the war.

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[105] Henderson, Modernization in Colombia, 402-403.

[106] Sánchez and Meertens, Bandoleros, Gamonales y Campesinos, 199.

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[107] "Informe especial de inteligencia," 25 April 1964, Caja 344, Carpeta 1, f. 44-48, Orden Publico – Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[108] There are multiple and very rich accounts on the formative years of the FARC, many coming from former or actual militants. See, for instance, Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, Las FARC (1949-1966): De la Autodefensa a la Combinación de Todas las Formas de Lucha (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1991); Arturo Alape, Las Vidas de Pedro Antonio Marín, Manuel Marulanda Vélez, Tirofijo (Bogotá: Planeta, 2004); Jacobo Arenas, Cese al Fuego: Una Historia Política de las FARC (Bogotá: Oveja Negra, 1985); Jacobo Arenas, Diario de la Resistencia en Marquetalia (Bogotá: Editorial Abejón Mono, 1972). Few academic accounts of the early history of the FARC have been written in English. A recent contribution that locates the history of the FARC in relation to pacification and amnesty initiatives is Robert Karl, Forgotten Peace: Reform, Violence, and the Making of Contemporary Colombia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017). Also see James J. Brittain, Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia: The Origin and Direction of the FARC-EP (New York: Pluto Press, 2010).

[109] This is shown by letters sent to President Valencia by peasants from regions affected by militarization, who pointed to the lack of credit and infrastructure, the unfair prices paid for their products, the harassment by bandoleros, police officers and soldiers, and the overall conditions of social abandonment in the region, as the reasons for their willingness "to die fighting, before kneeling down to the executioners of the Colombian people." Letter, Comité de Solidaridad del Paujil Centro Caquetá to GLV, 16 July 1964, Caja 151, Carpeta 1, f. 69-70, PPC, DSP, AGN-COL.

The counterinsurgent state and the new violencias

With the offensive at Marquetalia as its most paradigmatic product, Plan Lazo has been deemed as the beginning of a new stage in the Colombian state's approach to internal security and a distinct phase of the armed conflict in Colombia. This new stage was characterized by the attempts to delineate more consistently the role of the military in fighting violence, but also, and mainly, by the overwhelming influence exerted by the United States.

Indeed, the implementation of Lazo was preceded by a new US Survey Team report, led by Col. Brig. William Yarborough, whose team concluded, not too differently from the 1960 report, that the country needed drastic improvements in communications, transport, intelligence and counter-intelligence (including "anti-bandit propaganda"), in addition to further US advising and training in Colombian soil. However, acknowledging the limitations of the formal recommendations and the potential for political instability, a "secret supplement" in the report also contemplated the creation of a US-backed clandestine civilian and military structure "to pressure towards reforms known to be needed, perform counter-agent and counter-propaganda functions and as necessary execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents […] This would permit passing to the offensive in all fields of endeavor rather than depending on the Colombians to find their own solution."[110]

In suggesting the incorporation of civilians into anti-guerrilla "resistance operations," the report noted that the DAS already had set up a structure (the Rural Security Service, or Rurales) that could fulfill these functions. Following the years-old project of building a network of agents recruited from local populations (including former "rehabilitated" guerrillas and bandoleros) and dedicated to intelligence, counter-intelligence and law enforcement, the *Rurales* operated successfully since 1960 in the Eastern Plains, and later in Tolima, often in conflict with police and army troops, some of whom expressed, often violently, their resentment towards the Rurales' prerogatives and their purported non-factional and professional profile.[111] Thus, in practice, and save for the desired US control of this military-political instrument (which was rejected by the Colombian government), the civilian side of that clandestine structure of paramilitary activity was already operating through the formal incorporation of former *pájaros,* bandoleros and Liberal guerrillas into the anti-violence apparatus as agents, informants, or as actual police officers; or informally, as armed bands that collaborated with the Army in anti-subversive operations. While it is clear that the initiatives of successive

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[110] "Visit to Colombia, South America, by a team from Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina," 26 February 1962; cited in Rempe, "Guerrillas, bandits and independent republics," 311.

[111] According to DAS sources, these tensions with police and army officers were caused mainly by a lack of coordination and communication between agencies and by misinformation circulated through rumors, e.g. the belief that DAS detectives were guerrilla spies or undercover bandoleros (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad. Sección Huila. No. 02475, 11 December 1962, Caja 331, Carpeta 1, f. 207-208, Correspondencia, PP, SG, FP, AGN-COL). Other DAS reports describe situations where police officers sought to confront DAS detectives out of resentment for their judicial prerogatives. This was the case for a DAS agent that was killed after conducting a stop-and-search on a police officer with family ties to a known bandolero. (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad. "Informe sobre la muerte del detective rural no. 2961," 12 December 1962, Caja 331, Carpeta 1, f. 219-220, Correspondencia, PP, SG, FP, AGN-COL).

National Front governments relied heavily on the diagnoses, plans and diplomatic foundations set by these previous US missions, they were built by taking advantage of pre-existing structures, actors and practices of counter-guerrilla / anti-bandolero operations instituted throughout the 1950s and normalized, often informally, during the upsurges of violence in the first half of the 1960s.

The US was hardly the sole source of doctrine molding the development of Colombia's counterinsurgent state. In fact, the participation of Colombian officers (including Gral. Valencia Tovar) in the First Inter-American Course on Counterrevolutionary War (Buenos Aires, 1961) integrated the country's officialdom into the process of formulation and institutionalization of a new doctrine of "internal war" with Latin American and global influences. With the Argentines and the Brazilians at the forefront, this event sought to reframe outmoded ideas of national defense and provide a Cold War legibility to local realities, actors, and "threats," taking advantage of existing practices of counter-subversion, while placing them in a broader regional and global context. As instruments like the Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas show, there was a conscious effort to make sense of the Cold War in local terms, but also, and more importantly, to make sense of Colombia's *violencias* in a global Cold War cypher informed by earlier and concurrent experiences of anticommunist/anti-subversive warfare (the Philippines, Korea, Indochina, Algeria, Malaysia, Vietnam) and the emergence of other global centers of counterinsurgent knowledge with equally strong transatlantic connections, such as Portugal or Spain.[112] As an initiative of the Ministry of War, the

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[112] In 1964, Dr. Luis González Barros, an envoy of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Relations, visited various countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa accompanied by a Portuguese delegation. In a report sent to President Guillermo León Valencia, Barros praised the advancements made by the Portuguese in developing a military academy "specialized in subversive guerrilla warfare, sabotage and all the techniques

Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas would become the main conduit for the dissemination of the counterinsurgent expertise assembled at the Inter-American Course. Starting in 1961, the Armed Forces complemented this knowledge with the edition of key European and Latin American texts on anti-subversive warfare as part of their instructional collection "Librería del Ejército," reflecting the increasingly globalized nature of counterinsurgent expertise and the eagerness of Colombian high command to assimilate and adapt its theories and put them into practice.[113]

As it occurred with the implementation of Plan Lazo, these professionalization and modernization initiatives were not carried out without conflicts. General Alberto Ruiz Novoa, Commander in Chief and later Minister of War, would take the lead as the representative of "military reformism," pointing out, publicly and in several occasions, to the futility of a purely military solution to violence, the weakness of the judicial system, the links of bandoleros to authorities and politicians, and the importance of securing the collaboration of the population.[114]

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of revolutionary war, with instructors that were veterans of the wars in Greece, Indochina, Algeria, Angola and Katanga," and noted the recent presence of a delegation of 42 Argentine officers in the academy. Attached to Barros' report came a copy of *Guerra revolucionaria*, a manual of restricted circulation written by Maj. Hermes Araujo de Oliveira, one of the most prolific authors in this "genre" in Portugal. Letter, Luis González Barros to GLV, 25 February 1964, Transf. 7, Caja 149, Carpeta 1, f. 85-89, Correspondencia, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[113] Librería del Ejército edited, for instance, Roger Trinquier's infamous "dirty war" manual La guerre moderne (1961), in an early translation (1963) made by Maj. Gustavo Martínez Salcedo; Gabriel Bonnet's Las guerres insurrectionelles et revolutionnaires (1958, translated in 1963); and Russell Gugeler's Combat actions in Korea: Infantry, Artillery, Armor (1954, translated in 1961). The collection also included works by Latin American authors, such as the Argentine Osiris Villegas (author of the influential Guerra revolucionaria comunista), and Col. Alberto Lozano Cleves, a retired officer that partook in the 1957 military junta, and who was also a member of the Colombian Academy of History and author of various works and compendia on military history.

[114] On Ruiz Novoa's trajectory in the Armed Forces and his rise as a reformist officer, see Pablo Andrés Nieto Ortiz, "El reformismo doctrinario en el Ejército Colombiano: una nueva aproximación para enfrentar la violencia, 1960-1965," Historia Crítica 53 (Mayo-Agosto 2014):155-176.

Ruiz Novoa was convinced that initiatives of "joint action" through civilian-military committees, along with clear policies to address misery and unemployment, and full technical and material support for special training and operations in guerrilla warfare, would ultimately increase citizen trust in the government and bolster the effectiveness of its pacification measures. Ruiz Novoa adopted an even more polemical tone in a speech delivered in May of 1964 at the Agricultural Society, where he spoke of the need to attain a more just distribution of wealth and "reduce the gap between classes in Colombian society. It is an urgent matter to modify the structures of our society. The government is being hindered by sectorial interests and a few influential individuals."[115] President Guillermo León Valencia's reaction was to reluctantly agree with part of Ruiz's diagnosis, while clarifying that such transformation could only happen through legal means; otherwise, "given the ignorance of the mass of the Colombian people […] recklessly pushing for a revolution could lead us to an uncontainable disaster of chaos, anarchy, dissolution and death."[116]

In the context of these tensions, the Union of Colombian Workers (UTC) called for a general strike scheduled for January of 1965, which Ruiz Novoa refused to repress despite pressures from Commander General Gabriel Revéiz. "I had to explain to General Revéiz the difference between illegal and subversive, which he just would not understand," Ruiz told the press,[117] shedding light on how entrenched this equation between crime and subversion had become in the conduct of state affairs and to these actors' views on social protest. Ruiz would eventually accused of disloyalty, of overreaching and intervening in politics, of pushing a personalistic political project and of "sedition,"[118] as he became suspect of conspiring with Rojas Pinilla and the UTC to overthrow Valencia. Forced to step down, Ruiz was substituted by Revéiz, a hardliner and firm believer in giving the military more autonomy to procure a non-political (and thus non-interventionist) and purely repressive solution to crime and subversion.[119]

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[115] Cited in Nieto Ortiz, "El reformismo doctrinario en el Ejército Colombiano," 166. Ruiz Novoa's diagnosis coincided and, as Robert Karl has suggested, was part of the larger impact of the publication of La Violencia en Colombia, the watershed study conducted by the investigative commission led by *tolimense* priest Germán Guzman and sociologists Orlando Fals Borda and Eduardo Umaña Luna, and published in 1962. Karl, Forgotten Peace, 161-162.

[116] "Habrá cambios de estructuras pero por medios legales," El Tiempo, 28 May 1964, 1,28.

In May of 1965, the government declared a state of siege motivated by a wave of kidnappings and extortions, the public emergence of the urban-based National Liberation Army (ELN), the violent protests in support of a national student strike, and fears of a plan for a large scale campaign of agitation.[120] Under the state of siege, president Valencia decreed the use of Consejos de Guerra against *los violentos* – kidnappers, agitators, "anti-socials," and bandoleros.[121] In essence, the measure restored the pre-National Front militarization of law enforcement and the administration of justice by allowing Consejos de Guerra to prosecute crimes against the security of the state, organized delinquency, arson, kidnapping, extortion and specific "anti-social behaviors"

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[117] "Ruiz Novoa relata su retiro," El Tiempo, 29 January 1965, 28.

[118] "El paro y los generales. Subversión, no. Sedición," El Tiempo, 31 January 1965, 4.

[119] Leal Buitrago, La Seguridad Nacional a la Deriva, 50-51.

[120] Amidst violent confrontations between students and the police, the military claimed to have seized pamphlets outlining a plan for "aggressive physical violence" that included acts of sabotage and terrorism using homemade explosives. "Prevención sobre planes violentos," El Tiempo, 22 May 1965, 1,30

[121] "Consejo de Guerra para los violentos," El Tiempo, 22 May 1965, 1, 31.

(as defined by a 1964 executive decree) including the possession of explosives and firearms, and attacks against property. As further protests extended to universities around the country, the President's office reasserted the government's will to bring to military justice anyone planning or carrying out disturbances.[122] The label of *violentos* for groups or individuals who engaged in political crimes or who were said to pose danger to public safety had further implications for mechanisms of legal repression that included, but were not limited to, the Consejos de Guerra.

In October of 1966, student demonstrators threw stones, bricks and tomatoes an official motorcade driving President Carlos Lleras and his guest, the financier and philanthropist John Rockefeller III, through the campus of the National University. As the protestors chased them out, a puzzled Rockefeller inquired a Colombian reporter: "Is this disorder against me or against the president?"[123] As the attack took place, Lleras ordered the intervention of soldiers and military police, resulting in the arrest of 76 students, who were charged with assault, damage on property, and *asonada* (a crime against the constitutional regime), and tried by Consejo de Guerra.[124] Condemned by the University Superior Council as a "conspiracy to close the National University," the students' actions were deemed by the press as an act of cowardice, an attack against liberty and democracy, and a demonstration of extremist intransigence.[125]

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[122] "Advertencia a la ciudadanía," El Tiempo, 25 May 1965, 1, 20.

[123] "Rockefeller aterrado por la pedrea," El Tiempo, 25 October 1966, 6.

[124] "76 Detenidos," El Tiempo, 26 October 1966, 28.

[125] "Cobarde atentado al presidente"; "Execrable agresión"; "Relato de los hechos"; El Tiempo, 25 October 1966, 1, 4, 6. "Conjura para hacer cerrar la U.N.," El Tiempo, 26 October 1966, 28.

The immediate outcome of these events was the passing of legislative decree 2686, a measure that, despite acknowledging the absence of any serious threat to the stability of the regime, referred to the subversive spirit of the Tricontinental Conference in Havana earlier that year as the motive to outlaw all travel to Cuba, and ban public demonstrations and subversive publications. The decree also authorized the detention and "retention" of suspects of giving economic, political or ideological support to "the subversive activities of armed bands."[126] The measure gave the DAS the prerogative to generate lists of suspects who could be subject of surveillance, "confinement" (restriction on the freedom of movement), detention and/or trial by Consejo de Guerra, with prison sentences of up to five years. This created a peculiar space of arbitrariness involving the Council of Ministers, which worked as a body of executive decision for supervising, modifying, and approving of the lists; and the DAS, where detectives studied individual cases to determine the fate of suspects, including those who "despite their ideology, are simple theorists without a clear link to extremist elements."[127] This resulted in the "retention" of hundreds of individuals (many of them university students and professors linked to the ELN and MOEC) who were branded by Lleras as communists, fanatics, extremists, and accomplices of "those who murder officers, soldiers, and peasants."[128] The production and approval of these lists, and the inclusion of a wider range of suspects (e.g. peasant and labor leaders) would become an ordinary aspect of discussions at the

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[126] "Memorando sobre aprehensiones y retenciones de militantes comunistas," November 1966, Caja 358, Carpeta 1, f. 109, Correspondencia, PP, SG, FP, AGN-COL. "Severas medidas de orden público"; "Tres decretos sobre orden público," El Tiempo, 27 October 1966, 1, 28.

[127] "Información especial," November 1966, Caja 358, Carpeta 1, f. 110. Correspondencia, PP, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

[128] "No hay fuero para los delincuentes," El Tiempo, 28 October 1966, 1, 20.

Council of Ministers, made possible by the key function of the DAS as an increasingly efficient structure of policing and intelligence-gathering.

In March of 1967, the government carried out a nation-wide anti-terrorist campaign in response to a wave of kidnappings, followed by guerrilla raids against police and army troops, and the robbery and bombing of a railroad convoy in Santander. The operation quickly unfolded into the arrest of hundreds of leftist activists, many of them profiled suspects already under confinement or surveillance by the DAS.[129] The nature and scale of the operation was, according to the daily *El Tiempo*, "unprecedented, at least since April 9th, 1948, and [constituted] a decisive blow to *criollo* [homegrown] communism."[130] While newspaper headlines kept referring to the perpetrators as "bandoleros," press and government discourse on the wave of violence stressed the collaboration between the student movement and guerrilla organizations throughout the country, a link that, as would remain a source of concern for Lleras Restrepo and for subsequent National Front presidencies. Presented to the Colombian public as a project of "national transformation," Lleras sought to revitalize the National Front with a reformist platform was met with sympathy and accommodation on behalf of the dissident MRL,[131] and with hostility from the revolutionary Left.

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[129] Dirección de Información. Servicio de Noticias. "Retención a colaboradores de la acción subversiva" 10 March 1967, Transf. 7, Caja 160, Carpeta 1, f. 84-85, Consejo de Ministros – Actas, FP, AGN-COL. "80 bandoleros vuelan un tren en Santander: ocho muertos," 10 March 1967, 1, 21. "En marcha plan antiterrorista. Gigantesca operación para reprimir los brotes subversivos," El Tiempo, 11 March 1967, 1, 9.

[130] "Dirigentes comunistas detenidos en el país," El Tiempo, 11 March 1967, 9.

[131] Alfonso López Michelsen, leader of the MRL, had declared the compatibility of his political project with Lleras' platform in the 1966 presidential election, pushing many of the radical elements of the MRL into revolutionary agrarian and urban organizations. López would become senator, governor of the northern department of Cesar, and the Liberal presidential candidate for the 1974 election.

Anticommunism, civil society and the doctrine of autodefensa

Perceived as a combination of old and new *violencias*, and yet primarily as a product of plots originating in Havana and Moscow, the escalation of Leftist activity between 1965 and 1967 created the perception amongst the military officialdom that the nature of violence had morphed in such a way that the country had entered a state of undeclared war. Playing on familiar tropes, the high command would stress the transformation of criminality into the most effective instrument for subversion, focused on economic and political sabotage and the "moral weakening" of the nation.

Not far from what Gral. Ruiz Novoa had proposed earlier that decade, the solution to these challenges was, according to the Attorney General of the Armed Forces, Miguel Peña, to strengthen the collaboration between the people (which he deemed as the supreme and highest power in a democracy) and the Armed Forces. [132] The military would insist on the importance of this bond as a key factor in reducing violence and addressing the objective and moral conditions for subversion. Indeed, as stated by the Minister of War Gabriel Revéiz in a televised speech, a fundamental aspect of the process of social and political degradation had been "the absence of civic-mindedness and an unwillingness of the population to collaborate." Revéiz's proposed formula was thus to adapt the notion of "civil defense" to the organization and mobilization of the citizenry through structures of urban and rural "self-defense," noting the success of this kind of initiative in places like Medellín.[133]

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[132] Miguel Peña Bernal, "Pueblo, Fuerzas Armadas," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 9, no. 31 (March-April 1965): 6-9.

[133] "El Ministro de Guerra en la televisora nacional," Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas 9, no. 31 (March-April 1965): 15-24. "Seguir el ejemplo de Medellín pide Revéiz," El Tiempo, 18 March 1965, 1,8.

In December of 1965 and still under a state of emergency, president Valencia signed a Law of National Defense (decree 3398) that was, in many ways, a direct product of these pressures to devise uniform principles in tackling the problem of violence. The law was set to become a true instrument for the redefinition of the relation between state and society, setting the grounds for the "mobilization" of the population and the resources needed for national defense against external aggression or in situations of "internal commotion" and "public calamity." Framing "mobilization" as a state prerogative but also as a civic duty, the law introduced the obligation for all Colombians to "actively participate in national defense, when public necessity demands it to defend the independence of the nation and its institutions." It also established the constitutional prerogative for authorities to seize, confiscate or occupy goods and property, pending restitution, for the purposes of national defense. Non-compliers would be treated, in practice, as political criminals, with prison sentences of up to five years, and trials under Consejo de Guerra only "in times of war, armed conflict, or public disturbance," which, by then, had become a normal and quasi-permanent condition.

To manage the "mobilization" of citizens, the legislation instituted a structure for civil defense, described "a set of non-aggressive measures meant to avoid, annul or lessen the effects of the enemy's action, or of nature, on the life, morals and property of the social conglomerate." In this structure, all Colombians, men and women, were to be at the disposal of the government "to be used in activities that contribute to the restitution of normalcy,"[134] a notion that bore resemblance to the use of civilians as counter-guerrilla elements, and that more clearly responded to Minister Revéiz's proposal of "civil defense" as a mechanism of grassroots counterinsurgent action. The new Directorate of Civil Defense would eventually become devoid of its expressly political orientation and transformed into a mechanism to deal with natural disasters. However, in 1966 Valencia's emergency decree was turned into permanent legislation, becoming the legal basis for the training, arming, and mobilization of civilian self-defense groups, and thus, arguably, the origin of state-sanctioned paramilitary forces. [135]

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[134] "Estatuto orgánico de la Defensa Nacional. Decreto Número 3398 de 1965 (Diciembre 24)," in Oscar Bonilla Echeverri, El Fuero Penal Militar para la Policía Nacional (Bogotá: Policía Nacional, 1968), 225-34.

At a broader level, and beyond the specific practice of paramilitarism, by institutionalizing this notion of civil defense the Colombian state sought to increase its law enforcement and repressive capacities in a structure that promoted civilian involvement as a form of active citizenship against crime and subversion.

Assessments made by the National Police would replicate this endorsement of counterinsurgent citizen action promoted from above, stressing the importance of "instructing all citizens on the practices of civil defense, particularly those that inhibit crime [through] coordinated and permanent action."[136] This institution would use precisely the term "counter-guerrillas" to refer to its own role as a body of repression (and not just prevention) of crime, and to the creation of self-defense groups as two key factors that, along with the Consejos de Guerra, the coordination between security forces, a better technical training in counterinsurgency, and the implementation of civic action initiatives, had contributed to the rapidly decreasing crime rates in the country.[137] Moreover, according to the National Police, in quantitatively reducing the incidence of crime, the initiatives of pacification had indeed isolated the political elements of bandolerismo, exposing the perceived communist project of subversion-through-crime.[138] In other words, from this perspective, as the criminal aspects of bandolerismo quantitatively subsided, the core of its original subversive purposes (still linked to the memory of the 1948 Bogotazo) was left uncovered. Retrospectively, this amounted to another shift in institutional perceptions of violence – the evolution of criminality into an organized, expressly subversive project – and almost a full inversion of the post-1948 rendering of armed dissidence as "residual," criminal violence.

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[135] Leal Buitrago, La Seguridad Nacional a la Deriva, 47-48. In 1966, executive decree 893 authorized the use of military-grade armament by civil defense groups.

[136] "Introducción: Toda la nación cooperará en la conservación del orden público," Criminalidad 8 (1965): 5.

The development of the Colombian state's counterinsurgent capabilities relied on the gradual redirection of institutions and legal structures towards security functions in a scenario of anti-subversive warfare. This process was linked to new episodes of political polarization and the evolution of the state's own "cold war methods," including the organic extension of counter-subversion into civil society. A crucial aspect of this civilianization of anti-subversive warfare was the proliferation of the self-defense groups publicly endorsed by the Minister of War, particularly in regions with a recent history of factional, bandolero, and *pájaro* violence, where armed militias had reemerged intermittently and in which the Minister's message had an immediate authorizing effect. As attested by the use of anti-guerrillas in the Eastern Plains, or the use of *pájaro* squads to eliminate bandits, the existence of a doctrine and practice of anticommunist *autodefensa* clearly anteceded the law of national defense and Revéiz's speech outlining the principles of civil defense.

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[137] "La pacificación en cifras," Criminalidad 8 (1965): 22-47.

[138] In this regard, the National Police noted, somewhat optimistically, that "in 1965 the only cuadrillas that expanded to other departments […] were those of Manuel Marulanda Vélez (a. Tiro Fijo) and Ciro Trujillo Castaño (a. Mayor Ciro)," and stressed a perceptible change in the methods of bandoleros, namely, the abandonment of "acts of refined and infinite cruelty" and a clear attempt to reduce casualties in their operations. Without mentioning Tiro Fijo and Mayor Ciro's affiliation to the FARC, the Police assessment was that the resilience of these bands was due to the fact that these groups were led by individuals who were "frenzied sympathizers" of communism. "2.9 Las Cuadrillas en 1965," Criminalidad 8 (1966): 44-47.

The political climate of the early 1960s would produce various forms of anticommunist mobilization that appealed to the paradigm of autodefensa, with gestures such as Revéiz's statements effectively authorizing their further proliferation. In 1963, for instance, an organization called Fuerza Nacionalista Anticomunista (FUNAC) had sent a letter to president Valencia, explaining its existence as result of the incapacity of the government to fight "the most treacherous enemy of all times," and proposing what amounted to a strategy of strict social control comprising the identification, surveillance, boycotting, and expulsion of communists from communities.[139] FUNAC also called attention to the presence of communists in public posts, and accused the MRL of being a front of communist activity "to turn humble citizens into enemies of society." Operating in the conflictive Valle de Cauca, FUNAC distributed pamphlets throughout the region accusing the communists of dividing the country with their violence, and called for the population to collaborate with the Armed Forces in a united struggle against communism "and their comrades, the bandoleros." "Long live Colombia; death to the communists," they vowed.[140]

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[139] Letter, Fuerza Nacionalista Anti-Comunista to Guillermo León Valencia, 23 July 1963, Caja 45, Carpeta 1, f. 15-18, Correspondencia, PP, Secretaría Privada (SP), FP, AGN-COL.

[140] Fuerza Nacionalista Anti-Comunista, "Colombianos apoyemos a el gobierno contra el comunismo en Marquetalia," 1964, Caja 344, Carpeta 1, f. 96-97, Orden Público – Correspondencia, SG, FP, AGN-COL.

Aside from propaganda, surveillance, and forms of social disciplining, the formation of armed groups was a key dimension of anticommunist *autodefensa*. For instance, in 1965, shortly after Minister Revéiz's speech on "civil defense," a group of Conservative sympathizers from Timbío (Cauca) requested from President Valencia funds and weapons for a "battalion" of over 800 armed civilians who were allegedly ready and willing to collaborate with the "pacification of the country" and had the endorsement of the mayor and the local priest. Although the sender admitted a personal motivation (to avenge the death of a family member at the hands of bandoleros) he also stressed the patriotic values of the fighters and their "faith and hope that if we Colombians form one single body of defense, the traitors will fall in righteous hands that will erase them from the face of our Colombian soil." [141]

As a form of collective action "borrowed" or re-appropriated from the enemy (i.e. Liberal or communist peasant self-defense groups of the earlier *violencias*), the activities of FUNAC and of the "patriotic battalion" in Timbío shed light on the political and social dimensions of anticommunist *autodefensa.* They show, for instance, the deep roots of *autodefensa* as practices of semi-autonomous, concerted grassroots mobilization; the legitimacy they derived from governmental "gestures"; and the motivations by personal grievances that were, for its protagonists, inseparable from a perceived need to remain in a permanent state of preparedness against the actions of enemies. Hinging on its conception as a manifestation of patriotic citizenship, *autodefensa* practices meant also an opportunity to exert civic duty, as one concerned Conservative from Medellin conveyed to president Valencia:

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[141] Letter from Jesús Arcos Sarria to President Guillermo León Valencia, 31 March 1965, Transf. 7, Caja 54, Carpeta 1, f. 14-16, PP, SP, FP, AGN-COL.

> Today we hear only of communism and *rojas-pinillismo*. When I was a child I would ask permission from my mother to go glance at the national flag waving through the streets of Medellin during the national holidays. Today the streets look sad and desolate; only ambition and evil remain. As a patriot I will collaborate however I can, as I did in the past elections helping the Conservative Directorate to watch for fraud, just like on the 9th of April [of 1948] I did something for the Homeland by reporting on *los clandestinos*. [142]

These stories show how, as part of the deep-seated attraction of the anticommunist imaginary shaped by *las violencias*, the notion of a joint responsibility in the fight against Colombia's enemies became a bridge in the continuum between the individual and collective memory of past violence, practices of mobilization and counter-mobilization, and the lived present. These links allowed ordinary citizens to give legibility to contentious issues that were often framed "from above" and to understand themselves as able to participate in strategies of social defense (whether armed or not) that were reminiscent of their personal and/or collective (communal, local, national) experience. It is in this sense that anticommunism – or rather, the meanings given to anticommunism as a fight against Liberal resistance, revolutionary agitation and bandolerismo as crime/subversion – played a central role in actualizing the memory of grassroots counter-subversion through *autodefensa* practices, in a present threatened by the continuity of violence, and the disorder and social disintegration brought about by enemies.

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[142] Letter from Rosario Muño Botero to President Guillermo León Valencia, 22 January 1965, Transf. 7, Caja 54, Carpeta 1, f. 5-8, PP, SP, FP, AGN-COL.

Just as ordinary citizens recalled a relative's assassination or the violence of El Bogotazo as the basis for their own involvement in this "undeclared war," they also incorporated a vocabulary of repression to back government action against "subversives," or, actually in some cases, to demand a consistent and unapologetic use of all means to deter their activities. One notable example was the effect of the 1965 reinstatement of Consejos de Guerra to prosecute political and common crimes. Amid a deadlock in a conflict between students and authorities at the University of Antioquia, President Valencia requested the resignation of the rector, driving professors and administrative staff to block the procedures and join students in protesting against government interference. This prompted the National Association of Catholic School Parents to demand punishment for "the rebels" through a Consejo de Guerra, on the basis that their behavior amounted to straightforward mutiny and an act of disobedience towards the president's authority during a state of siege.[143]

Shortly after, the same Association would publish a statement calling for collaboration between ecclesiastical and civil authorities to wage a "Christian crusade" and protect the sphere of education as vital to the preservation of "the faith in God and in Colombia."[144] Thus, Consejos de Guerra were not just a militarized judicial procedure to prosecute rebels, agitators and *sediciosos*. In the anticommunist, anti-subversive social imaginary that emerged in these years, Consejos de Guerra embodied the legitimate power of the state to expeditiously punish acts and attitudes of dissent or disobedience.

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[143] Letter, Manuel Guillermo Guerrero Villamizar to President Guillermo León Valencia, 26 May 1965, Transf. 7, Caja 49, Carpeta 1, f. 52-53, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[144] Asociación Nacional de Padres de Familia de los Colegios Católicos, "Acuerdo no. 10," 19 June 1965, Transf. 7, Caja 49, Carpeta 1, f. 58, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

These expressions of support for swift reprisal, along with support for restrictions against alternative political forces and for the control over the flow of information (and potentially, of expressions of discontent), gradually gave way to an anti-subversive political imaginary that found resonance in a wide range of social actors, who saw the shifts and continuities in criminal/insurgent violence as clear signs of the unfolding of a foreign plan to tear down the coalition government and carry out a Cuban-style revolution in Colombia.

As noted above, the emergence of the MOEC as an opposition movement sustained by urban elements with ties to rural guerrillas and assisted by Cuba had made the government wary of a revolutionary ferment with strong domestic backing that could potentially include the movements founded by Rojas (the ANAPO) and López Michelsen (MRL). These dissident groups represented a challenge for the regime insofar as the advocates of the National Front imagined pacification as the result of the disciplining of political passions within party structures and their abidance by the democratic mandate of the 1957 plebiscite, giving way to much caution regarding the idea of a more plural political system.

This desire for temperance was made patent in 1960 by President Lleras, who in a much publicized speech in Palmira (Valle de Cauca) lamented the divisions within Conservatism as the loss of "the moderating force of the Right." Moreover, lambasting the "rowdy and adventurous clamor" of revolutionary utopianism, Lleras warned Colombians about the danger of passivity vis-á-vis the actions of radicals:

> We all sow impatience and inconformity, but only extremists reap the fruit of the radicalization of these sentiments, guiding them towards a revolutionary utopia with the promise of immediate satisfaction […] You [the people] have two parties […] which are the instruments for translating your will into acts of government…

> if you stay silent, if you hide, if you don't demand the unity of your leaders […] don't be surprised if your voice is substituted by the protests of the comrades and the conspiracies of the ambitious ones.[145]

Besides his longing for the Conservative party to fulfill its historical role as a source of republican moderation, Lleras's speech was an avowed disapproval of López Michelsen's MRL. With its modest but visible electoral success (from 11% of votes in the 1960 legislative election to 20% in 1962) and its ability to garner support in Liberal party structures at the local level, the MRL had gradually become a democratic challenger and a nuisance to the National Front.

Lleras' address was received with outrage by MRL sympathizers, particularly by those that understood themselves as radical, democratic, non-insurrectional dissidents of a regime that had failed to overcome the limits of bipartisanism. For instance, members of Acción Femenina Liberal (the women's section of the MRL) in Valle de Cauca denounced episodes of anti-MRL violence in Cajamarca (Tolima) and Huila allegedly sparked by Lleras' speech and criticized the President's insistence to conflate criticism and dissidence with communist agitation. "As conscious women capable of deliberation we cannot accept", they wrote, "the suggestion that the demonstrations of the MRL are communist, or that Dr. López Michelsen and fellow leaders are ambitious conspirators. Is it credible that 300,000 people that voted for alternative candidate lists are all hypnotized and manipulated by Moscow?" [146]

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[145] "Trascendental discurso del Presidente Lleras en Palmira ayer," El Tiempo, 12 October 1960, 1, 14.

[146] Letter, Acción Femenina Liberal de Colombia to Alberto Lleras Camargo (ALC), October 1960, Caja 126, Carpeta 1, f. 177-180, Partidos Políticos – Correspondencia, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

For its members, the MRL was more than just López's personal project. As historian César Ayala has pointed out, the MRL was a point of convergence for alternative interpretations of Liberalism that saw the party as a channel for local Liberal mobilization, and as the repository of a political tradition that could accommodate the legacies of *gaitanismo* and the enthusiasm for the Cuban revolution to spark dialogue for a "national democratic front" with the Left, including the Communist Party.[147] Moreover, local MRL committees worked as platforms where Liberal sympathizers could express their support for pacification and stability and their commitment to the party's values and project, while still critique the regime for its use of the state of siege; its failure to curtail violence[148] and stop abuses by security forces; and, as in Lleras's speech, for encouraging violence by pitting citizens against dissidents.

In contrast, for pro-National Front Liberals, the MRL stood as an immediate source of disruption, both in terms of its defiance of "party discipline" and its critique towards the anti-pluralistic constraints of the regime, both of which placed the group as an ally to anti-democratic communist agitators.[149] For Conservatives, particularly at the local level, the MRL's ties to the armed and non-armed Left put them on the side of the *violentos* and thus of communism.[150] These conflicting perceptions of what the MRL's platform meant for the integrity of bipartisan agreement indeed exposed the contradictions in the National Front's democratic promise, and gave non-armed leftist dissidents inside and outside of Liberalism a space to contest the regime in both reformist and radical terms. [151] When López Michelsen dismantled the MRL in 1966 as a gesture of support for the government program of then president-elect Carlos Lleras Restrepo, the party remained a key point of reference for leftist critics of the regime, and, more importantly, for those that sought to delegitimize dissidents as collaborators of communist subversion.

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[147] For Ayala, it is no coincidence that the Atlántico region of the country, one of the bastions of gaitanista mobilization in the 1940s, had strongly embraced the project of the MRL since its early days as a locus of criticism towards the National Front. Ayala Diago, "El origen del MRL," 101-103. On gaitanismo in the Atlántico region, see John W. Green, "Vibrations of the collective: the popular ideology of gaitanismo on Colombia's Atlantic Coast, 1944-1948," Hispanic American Historical Review 76, no. 2 (1996): 283-311.

[148] In a letter to Lleras, an MRL committee from Girardot (Cundinamarca) denounced the impunity with which bandoleros operated in the neighboring Tolima, and demanded the removal of the governor and the end of the state of siege "for it is no more than a cloak for the cruelties and savagery of assassins." Letter, Comando de Recuperación Liberal – Girardot to ALC, 6 July 1960, Caja 123, Carpeta 1, f. 13, Ministerio de Guerra – Correspondencia, DSP, FP, AGN-COL.

[149] A letter sent to to President Lleras Camargo by Liberal party representatives in Palenquito (Bolívar) illustrates this distrust towards López Michelsen and the association of the MRL with communism: "Two communist elements from the city of Magangué, tireless followers of Alfonso López Michelsen, have taken over a sector of this otherwise peaceful town, those that cannot distinguish between good and bad, that is, the most ignorant, to bring them on the path of dissidence." The "communists" in the letter were, in fact, two spokesmen for the Liga Campesina who, according to the complainants, did not "obey" the Liberal party line. (Letter, Liberal Directorate of Palenquito to ALC, 27 July 1960, Caja 126 Carpeta 1, f. 180,

Fears of foreign-sponsored leftist subversion and lingering suspicions of *rojista* conspiracies added to an increasing external perception that the National Front was struggling to defuse violence, particularly the enduring problem of banditry. For instance, by 1961, the US consulate in Medellín was weighing on these issues, raising concerns about potential threats to the integrity of the Panama Canal coming from the convergence

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Correspondencia, PP, DSP, FP, AGN-COL). A similar complaint was sent to Lleras by Liberals in El Banco (Magdalena) regarding the appointment of MRL members ("unapologetic enemies of the current system of government") as local and departmental officials (Letter from Josefina Mazenet de Lara to ALC, 23 September 1960, Caja 126 Carpeta 1, f. 158-159, Correspondencia, PP, DSP, FP, AGN-COL).

[150] In July 1961, MRL member and alleged bandolero Libardo Molina was killed in a skirmish with the Army and his body taken to be buried in the local cemetery by MRL sympathizers. Conservatives and Catholics in Buga demonstrated against the forceful burial of Molina in a Catholic cemetery as a desecration, on the grounds that the Bishops of Cali, Palmira, and Armenia had ruled to excommunicate all *violentos*. "Un excomulgado sepultado a la fuerza en cementerio católico," El Tiempo, 2 July 1960, 3.

[151] This is, at least, the assessment made by historian James Henderson, who points to the fact that the Liberal-revolutionary rhetoric of López Michelsen was at odds with that of "MRL hard-liners" who were in closer contact with leftist groups in the countryside. Added to López's own class extraction, this tension, according to Henderson, ended up pushing López back in the Liberal mainstream. Henderson, Modernization in Colombia, 393-394

of support for Castro (which included the MRL), the possibility of Cuban arms reaching bandit groups, and the failure of the Colombian state to subdue bandit activity in the northwest region of the country.[152] Previous to the implementation of Plan Lazo, US concerns for the stability of the National Front referred to tensions within the coalition government and by Conservative divisions that translated into a feeling of "institutional weakness" in government circles. As noted by a US embassy report, "the basic dilemma of Colombian politics" was whether the National Front could operate with sufficient authority and effectiveness to implement necessary changes and avoid instability caused by "extremists." With much clarity and a dose of mockery, embassy officials asserted that "leaders… are now conscious of the dangers of Communist and pro-Castro infiltrations… [they] are without a doubt 'running scared'" [153] Notably, the embassy assessment gave more prominence to the fractures within the National Front as a factor that amplified anxieties with regards to the danger of communist infiltration, which remained a real concern, but certainly not the main one for the stability of the regime.

The leaders referred to in the report were not only the Liberal and Conservative *jefes*. In fact, rather than simply "running scared," noted businessmen and members of the political class were tirelessly promoting public and covert initiatives that, hinging on the potency of the anticommunist message, sought to discredit Leftist influence in the public sphere by reaching to students, workers and peasants as their target audiences. An example of this type of private sector initiatives seeking to muster support from domestic and external state actors was the Centro de Estudio y Acción Social (CEAS).

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[152] Interestingly, the consulate could not confirm information on Soviet or Eastern bloc arms contraband from Cuba, stating that all of the weapons confiscated by authorities were, in fact, of US or Western manufacture. Memorandum, From AmConsulate Medellin To Department of State, "Increasing Banditry – Does it threaten the Panama Canal?" 17 Feb 1961. 721.00/2-1761. Digital National Security Archive. URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1679049561.

[153] Memorandum, From AmEmbassy Bogotá, to Department of State. Despatch No. 240 "National Front in ferment – the crisis of political understandings," 19 October 1960. USCOL 1960-1963, 721.00/10-1960.

In October of 1960, the executive director of CEAS, Aurelio Correa (businessman and former head of the National Bank) held a series of meetings with US embassy officials, to whom he requested support to combat communist propaganda and agitation. With an executive board composed of noted industrialists, many of whom had also occupied important ministries and political posts, CEAS's goal, according to Correa, was to concentrate on a covert fight against Communist ideas, maneuvers, and influences. Correa candidly gave details about CEAS's capacity to exert political influence, noting that the President was aware of their plans and that they would use the group's powerful political connections to carry out operations "in a variety of spheres and in any number of ways."[154]

At the offer of the embassy official, Correa expressed interest in acquiring "educational" anticommunist materials (books and films) that would be made available through the United States Information Service and distributed at the expense of the Centro. Noting that CEAS members tended to "react, rather than take initiative," Correa also requested help to get proper "technical assistance" from "professionals, knowledgeable in communist tactics and methods, and skilled in countering them."

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[154] Memorandum, Despatch no. 245, From AmEmbassy Bogotá To Department of State, "Anticommunist campaign," 19 October 1960. USCOL 1960-1963, 721.001/10-1960. The members of the Centro's executive board were fairly representative of high spheres of political and economic power in Colombia: Hernán Echavarría, noted industrialist, former minister of Economy, and, until 1959, Lleras' Minister of Communications; José Gómez Pinzón, also an industrialist, former dean of the National University, and former director of the National Office for Rehabilitation; Alberto Samper, a major entrepreneur, owner of Cementos Samper and director of Bavaria, Colombia's landmark brewing company; Gregorio Obregón, an elite businessman from Barranquilla; and Andrés Restrepo, a wealthy banana planter.

Cautious about the diplomatic implications of such assistance, the embassy official suggested providing it through private non-government sources, and stressed the potential in influencing Colombian public opinion “both constructively and negatively against Communism.”

The CEAS kept close communication with the US embassy, as shown by another conversation held in December of 1960, when the group announced to US officials that a CEAS committee was to travel to the US to gather support and present itself as an instrument of effective anticommunist action, “without the red tape or delays of governmental bureaucracy.”[155] Once in the United States, they insisted their visit was not with the intention of acquiring funds for their activities, but rather, as they had told the ambassador in Bogotá, to establish forms of cooperation and coordination with US agencies to bolster ongoing initiatives involving the Church, labor unions and university professors.[156] Sources suggest these propositions were received with skepticism by US officials, who saw the group’s anti-Castroism as a positive, but were wary that their “anticommunist bias” would be too enmeshed in domestic politics and go “too far off the track.”[157] But rather than dismissing the initiative, the Embassy backtracked only after receiving instructions to “phase out of the picture [because] CAS [CIA Covert Action Staff] will pick it up from here.”[158]

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[155] Letter, Vaky [AmEmbassy] to Frank Devine [Bureau of Inter-American Affairs]. “Anticommunist Group ‘Center for Social Action and Studies,’" 5 December 1960. Digital National Security Archive. URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1679067905.

[156] International Cooperation Administration. Memorandum of Conversation. Luis Robledo with Ralph A. Visbal. “Communist infiltration in Colombia.” 9 December 1960. Digital National Security Archive. URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1679049478?accountid=147304.

[157] Letter, Vaky to Devine, 5 December 1960.

Wishing to disseminate information about the alleged connections between Fidel Castro, international communism and the MRL, the CEAS famously became the target of accusations by MRL leader López Michelsen about the existence of a *mano negra* (“black hand”) that was guiding an all-out offensive against Leftist opposition to the National Front. Indeed, after the trip of the CEAS committee to the United States, the Center initiated a wide campaign of air-dropping anticommunist leaflets over rural areas, painting city walls with anti-Castro messages, pulling strings in the two major national labor federations to oust communist leaders, dismissing and blacklisting of leftist workers, and withdrawing of advertising from leftist publications, including the MRL’s well-known *La Calle*.[159]

Bogotá was not the only site of business-backed anticommunist mobilization. The creation of Fundación Pro Bienestar Social in Medellín was received with a similar mix of caution and enthusiasm by US officials. Funded by the National Association of Industrialists, the Fundación was led, according to the US consul in Medellin, by “forward looking prominent persons convinced something must be done to fight communism using the latter’s methods if necessary.” [160] The group worked in coordination but separately from CEAS, promoting social development programs, disseminating anticommunist literature, and keeping "close watch on movements and activities [of] known communists in the area." In Barranquilla, an important site of leftist student and labor activism, industrialist Adolfo Gieseken would jumpstart a similar organization, with a much detailed program of propaganda and grassroots mobilization that sought to exert influence particularly in labor unions and high school and university students. Gieseken's anticommunist plan sparked the interest of the US consul in Barranquilla, who decidedly requested the State Department to facilitate "technical assistance" for Gieseken. Such assistance would come from the New York-based Latin American Information Committee, a business-sponsored think tank that committed to establishing a training program for anticommunist leaders as well as the provision of pamphlets and booklets for propaganda purposes, as recommended by Gieseken's advisor, Julián Devis Echandía, an anticommunist journalist and director of the newspaper *El Nacional* in Barranquilla.[161]

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[158] Memorandum, from Viron Vaky to Frank Devine. [U.S. Visit of Colombian Citizens Involved in Formation of Anticommunist Group], 28 November 1960. Digital National Security Archive. URL: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1679065831.

[159] Norman Bailey, “The Colombian Black Hand: A Case Study of Neoliberalism in Latin America,” Review of Politics 27, No. 4 (1965): 11-12.

[160] Airgram, from AmConsul Medellin To Secretary of State, “Re our WIROM 3”. 25 July 1961. *USCOL 1960-1963*, 726.00/7-2861.

With its resort to local, national and transnational networks for the provision, distribution and exchange of anticommunist expertise (and funding), this onslaught from the private sector was part of an increasingly coordinated effort to curtail Leftist influence from above and from below. The Catholic Church and various civic groups claiming a Catholic agenda created alliances with these anticommunist entrepreneurs, and took on the mission of denouncing the confluence of dissidence with the international goals of Castro-communism. Informed by decades-old unresolved conflicts about secularization and the nature of modernization in the country, the Church's reaction to the Cuban revolution and to the increased visibility of the Colombian Left would trigger various forms of public intervention in delivering a clear message against the deleterious political, social and moral effects of communist influence.

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[161] Despatch no. 27, From AmConsul Barranquilla To Department of State, "Anticommunist movement in Barranquilla," 26 September 1961, USCOL 1960-1963, 821.46/9-2660.

For instance, the Revista Javeriana, published by the Jesuit-controlled Universidad Javeriana, took on a role as a prominent advocate of anticommunism, leaning on its authority and reputation as an academic venue and a voice for theological and political discussions about the role of Catholics in political life. In 1959, the Revista published an "anticommunist warning" that, reminiscent of old battles against the Liberal Republic, claimed that communism was a form of "organized barbarism waged by the totalitarian and atheist state," and placed the highest responsibility on Catholicism ("the natural enemy of communism") to denounce "the communist campaign that is permeating all sectors of the nation." The Revista's warning put special emphasis on universities and labor unions as the foci of Red propaganda and action, from which communism was allegedly attempting to destroy its two greatest spiritual and political enemies: the Church and the United States.[162] This warning was an almost exact reproduction of the statement issued by the Third Inter-American Congress of Parents' Associations which, in October of 1959, called for the renovation of "the Christian spirit," the study of social issues and the propagation of knowledge about communism's "destructive character" as the best instrument to combat its effects. Endorsed by the Vatican, hosted by the Colombian Parents' Association and attended by the Minister of

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[162] "Advertencia anticomunista," Revista Javeriana, Tomo LII, no. 260 (November 1959): 342-345.

Education, Abel Naranjo,[163] this meeting was a paradigmatic example of the confluence of the Church's institutional apparatus with civic organizations and government officials in building and promoting a civil society-based anticommunist consensus.

In the early 1960s these forms of collaboration between the Church, the private sector, civic groups, and the government were unsystematic and were often financially or logistically limited. However, the ways in which they articulated actors from different sectors shed light on the galvanizing effect that anticommunism had at different levels of Colombian society. Groups such as the aforesaid CEAS and Fundación Pro-Bienestar were indeed part of wider networks of covert and overt anticommunist activism, working domestically as enthusiastic practitioners of anti-subversive citizen collaboration, and at the transnational level as members of the International Union of Catholic Employers' Organizations (UNIAPAC).[164]

Marked by a strong influence of the business sector and the Church, Medellin became a significant meeting point for national and foreign actors seeking forms of cooperation in this common enterprise. Founded by Cuban exiles and Colombians, the anti-Castroist group MAMBI had the backing Medellín's wealthy industrialist families, and the endorsement of Archbishop Tulio Botero, who responded positively and promised "Christian collaboration" with their cause. According to US sources, despite its avowed goal to mount "a just and necessary war for the liberation of Cuba," the group worked more as a fund-raising entity with little insurrectional potential, but its existence revealed the economic and political investment that Medellín's elites (industrialists, newpaper owners and radio broadcasters) were willing to put on the cause of Cuba's "liberation," including the funding of anti-Castro publications and the nurturing of ties with other exile groups in Miami.[165]

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[163] "Naranjo Villegas inauguró el Congreso de Padres de Familia," El Tiempo, 1 October 1959, 1,11.

[164] Based in France, UNIAPAC grouped a number of business organizations from around the world proposing a Catholic agenda. The link between UNIAPAC, CEAS, Fundación Pro-Bienestar and other business organizations in Colombia is suggested in a document of undisclosed authorship titled "Communism in Colombia," which was forwarded to the Department of State by Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wisconsin). Memorandum, Proxmire to Rusk, 1 August 1961. USCOL 1960-1963, 721.001/8-161.

Also in Medellín, the head of the Marian Congregation, father Darío Arango created the Centro de Cultura Social in 1961, with support from the national industrialist's association and in collaboration with Fundación Pro-Bienestar. Like his fellow anticommunists at CEAS in Bogotá, Father Arango met with the US consul in Medellín to inform him of his project and of some of its financial needs. In the conversation, Arango revealed that, aside from offering medical and legal aid services for the poor, the goal of the Centro was to recruit young workers and students to create "leaders who will in turn be able to form their own small group of adherents." These recruits would receive military training from ranking officers of the 4th Army Brigade in Medellin who, according to Arango, had already committed to aiding with the Centro's mission. The US consul expressed caution about Arango's intentions to create a militant anticommunist organization, and yet, wishing for a more unified anticommunist initiative, regretted "the dissipation of energies from the activities of several organizations here." [166]

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[165] From AmConsul Medellin To Department of State, Airgram no. 6, "New Cuban Exile Movement Founded in Medellin," 1 August 1962. USCOL 1960-1963, 721.00/8-162.

[166] From AmConsulate Medellin To Department of State, Despatch No. 15, "New anticommunist group Centro de Cultura Social formed in Medellin" 17 August 1961. USCOL 1960-1963, 721.001/8-1761.

Arango's project and his readiness to request aid from the US consulate were not atypical in the environment created by the shifts in Leftist politics and the sense of instability that still permeated the National Front. Like Father Arango's organization, other concurrent Catholic initiatives such as Acción Cultural Popular, Acción Católica, and Coordinación Nacional de Acción Social were linked to early or pre-Cold War efforts to promote political action by Catholics, engage in initiatives of community development following the social doctrine of the Church, and reinforce the historical presence of the institution in Colombian society in a critical juncture marked by a sense of social and political vulnerability. US diplomats greeted these initiatives and clearly understood their importance in fighting communism at the grassroots level, even if they exerted no real control over their activities, and held some reservations about their viability and, in some occasions, about their close ties to the Church.[167]

In a period when US influence seemed to over-determine the nature of Colombia's counterinsurgent state-building, the emergence of these civic organizations linked to the Church and the business sector abroad shows the various levels at which Colombian society embraced the Cold War as a political imaginary that enabled action in various spheres of politics, society and culture, and not just as a context shaped by superpower politics. In practice, these forms of mobilization around key domestic, regional and global issues (guerrilla warfare, Cuba, the student movement) shortened the distance between these actors and the Cold War, and brought them together, with various degrees of cohesion and success, in an effort to make the period's conflicts more intelligible.

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[167] Given of the legacies of religious discrimination and intolerance passed on from the years of La Violencia, Protestant organizations in the US would express their concern about the overwhelming presence of the Catholic Church in US-sponsored initiatives, and how they affected not only US missionaries but also Protestant communities that continued to be displaced by violence and received no government support. Letter, Glenn L. Archer to Dwight Eisenhower, 11 March 1960, USCOL 1960-1963, 821.413/3-1160. Memorandum of conversation, "New problems for Protestants in Colombia," 11 April 1960. USCOL 1960-1963, 821.413/4-1160.

From a national perspective, the Cold War provided a set of discursive tools on which political actors could build arguments on the legitimacy, plausibility and contestability of their actions and projects. Anticommunism occupied a special place in this landscape, as it allowed the groups behind the National Front agreement to frame the mission of their coalition government as one concerned with reconciliation after *La Violencia* as well as with the eradication of agents that could jeopardize an already weak political equilibrium. Borrowing from a political language that preceded the Cold War, the anticommunist imaginary of the 1960s also allowed the Colombian state to rationalize its accelerated and often partial process of building its capacity to respond to internal challenges by framing the problem of "banditry" as both rural criminality and communist subversion, and thus essentially as a question of order and disorder. Lastly, by tightening the bonds with American officials and embracing anticommunism as a hemispheric enterprise, the ruling coalition acquired an unprecedented sense of regional leadership as a paragon of anticommunist Third World modernization, which in turn legitimized and enabled other forms of anticommunist collective action that sought to turn communism's weapons of choice – ideology, infiltration, clandestinity, subversion – against itself.

The effective implementation of Plan Lazo and the success of Operation Marquetalia stood in contrast to the democratic deficits of the National Front in dealing with the opposition. Significant achievements in economic performance and infrastructure were overshadowed by political obstacles to agrarian reform, the National

Front's drawing of strict political boundaries, the radicalization of the armed Left, and the later amalgamation of organized crime and the drug economy with security forces, guerrillas, and paramilitaries. Despite the relative success in ending factional violence and reinventing the norms of political coexistence, one of the National Front's most enduring legacies was the use of the state of siege as a normal instrument of government to enforce different degrees of social and political control and increase military intervention over civilian affairs under the mantle of national defense/security. Moreover, the alleged democratic consensus of the regime instrumentalized the anticommunist imaginary as an pool of representations that gave legibility to the sources, actors, and motivations of violence, and a sense of legitimacy and righteousness to those that sought to wage war on "the violent ones."

Colombia was, in these and many other ways, a laboratory of the Cold War, but the rugged history of the country can hardly be reduced to the backyard politics of empire or to the insurrectional obstinacies of Marxist adventurers. The collective memory and the range of experiences that Colombians went through during *La Violencia* certainly shaped subsequent *violencias*, just as the constant presence of enemies (communists, paramilitaries, criminals) elicited the state's own "memory" (the use of the state of siege and its authoritarian legality; the logic of "self-defense" violence) drawing a link between the past and present of Colombia's internal conflict. Facing the challenges of political and social reform, the early counterinsurgent state brought together the political imperative of democracy as the upholding of the rule of law and the principles of security as selfpreservation against enemies, and, allowing, and even promoting, for parts of society to turn against society itself.[168]

From the quasi-permanent state of siege, to the passing of the infamous Security Statute of 1978,[169] to the crisis of kidnappings and disappearances in the 1980s, to the atrocities of the paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, to the trampling of human rights under President Álvaro Uribe's "Democratic Security" policies,[170] the unfolding and more recent history of Colombia's internal conflict was deeply shaped by the institutional, political and social legacies of this historical period. Rooted in the social and institutional memories of earlier *violencias*, the anticommunist imaginary played a central role as a set of practices, discourses and social dispositions that legitimized the use of legal and extra-legal violence to silence, punish, or wage war against the purported enemies of the nation.

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[168] Daniel Pécaut has proposed a view of Colombia's internal conflict as a "war against society" waged by armed state and non-state actors. See Daniel Pécaut, Guerra Contra la Sociedad (Bogotá: Espasa, 2001). This approach has been questioned for obscuring the political dimension of such confrontation (the capture of power vis-à-vis the maintenance of the status quo). For a critique, see Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, Una Democracia Asediada: Balance y Perspectivas del Conflicto Armado en Colombia (Bogotá: Norma, 2004).

[169] Decreed by President Julio César Turbay (1978-1982), the Security Statute of 1978 increased the government's censorship capabilities; effectively criminalized demonstrations, strikes, and other forms of protest; and gave unprecedented levels of autonomy to the Armed Forces, including full law enforcement and judicial powers, the ability to carry out preventive detention of suspects, and the use of court martials against civilians. For an analysis of the historical background, implementation and legacies of the Statute, see Francisco Leal Buitrago, El Oficio de la Guerra: La Seguridad Nacional en Colombia (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1994).

[170] On the conduct of Álvaro Uribe's Democratic Security plan and its undermining of democratic guarantess and human rights, see Francisco Leal Buitrago, "La Política de Seguridad Democrática, 2002-2005," Análisis Político 19, no.57 (2006): 3-30; and Rubén Sánchez David and Federmán Antonio Rodríguez Morales, Seguridad, Democracia y Seguridad Democrática (Bogotá: Universidad Colegio Mayor Nuestra Señora del Rosario), 2007.

Part II. Revolution Through Reaction: Nationalism and Anticommunism in Argentina's Cold War, 1946-1970

Chapter 3. Anti-Peronism, the "National Revolution" and the Anticommunist Imaginary in Argentina (1946-1962)

> *For the well-being of the world, the hour of the sword has come* […] *Just like the sword attained our greatest achievement, our independence, it will also create the necessary order, it will establish the indispensable hierarchy that democracy has spoiled due to its natural tendency towards demagogy and socialism.*
>
> - Leopoldo Lugones, "The hour of the sword" (1924)[1]

The 1930s in Argentina were a period of deep political crisis, characterized by fraudulent elections, an intense mobilization by the labor movement and the political Left, and the perception, held by right wing intellectuals and the military, of liberal democracy was the root of the country's problems. Presenting itself as an authoritative solution to the calamities of this so-called "Infamous Decade" and to the threat of socialist/communist "agitation," in 1943 a faction of the Argentine Armed Forces known as the *Grupo de Oficiales Unidos* (GOU) staged a coup d'état against civilian president Ramón Castillo, giving way to a new era of military dominance in Argentine politics.

For its protagonists, the coup appeared as a revolution against the forces of the anti-*patria*, as a restoration of order and authority, and as a as a preemptive measure to counter those groups and forces moved by the "ferment of rebellion" and "the uprising against the established order." Adding to the denunciation of a generalized state of "social corruption," the GOU's diagnosis was characterized by the admonition of an anti-Catholic (and thus "anti-Argentine") international Masonic conspiracy (a "Jewish creation," according to one of their communiqués) that would surrender Argentine sovereignty to foreign interests, be them those of capitalism or communism.[2]

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[1] Leopoldo Lugones, "El discurso de Ayacucho," El Payador y Antología de Poesía y Prosa (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), 305.

A key component of the Argentine *nacionalista* imagination, anticommunism had deep roots in the political experience of the 1930s, particularly in the attempts by right wing intellectuals and fascist activists to put forward a diagnosis that saw the country's liberal tradition as responsible for leaving Argentina in the hands of anti-national foreign agents, such as British and US capitals, Jewish immigrants, and anarchist and communist militants. This chapter examines the transformations, ruptures, and continuities in this form of Argentine *nacionalismo* throughout the first two decades of the Cold War, particularly in relation to the rise, fall, and unremitting political influence of Juan Doming Perón, and to the contested meanings of *nacionalismo*'s perpetually unfulfilled aspiration for a "national revolution." The chapter points to the centrality of anticommunism as the core of *nacionalismo*'s politics of enmity, emphasizing its multiplicity of contextual meanings, as well as its role in radicalizing the Peronist/anti-Peronist divide, and in bringing about the securitization of state affairs by deeming Peronism as a subversive "national-revolutionary" precursor to communist aggression.

Nacionalismo*, fascism and the question of Peronism*

Stirred by what historian Alberto Spektorowski has referred to as the "reactionary modernism" that characterized Argentina's interwar period, the military "revolution" of the 1943 junta was an explicit rejection of liberalism and modern democracy. The junta vindicated the autonomy and predominance of the Armed Forces, implemented a conservative educational reform, attacked Leftist influence in labor and pursued a program of industrialization, all while maintaining Argentine neutrality in World War II. Politically, the GOU's "revolution" was perceived by *nacionalista* enthusiasts as an opportunity to overcome the faults of the conservative military regime of José Félix Uriburu (1930-1932),[3] an anti-liberal and traditionalist dictatorship that fell short in radicalizing its *nacionalista* moment of 1930.[4]

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[2] Robert Potash, Perón y el GOU: Los Documentos de una Logia Secreta (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1984), 101-103.

Undoubtedly marked by other authoritarian experiences in Europe and Latin America, the GOU regime showcased the identification of *nacionalista* military officers, political activists, and intellectuals with fascism, in which they found not a mere political "model" to replicate, but rather an ideological and even spiritual framework for the realization of Argentine (and eventually Latin American) "originality."[5] N*acionalistas* like the poet Leopoldo Lugones had indeed interpreted and experienced the Uriburu regime as the coming of "the hour of the sword" and the beginning of a new order. Even after Uriburu's death in 1932, *nacionalistas* claimed ownership of a political legacy that prompted them to vindicate *nacionalismo* as a form of Argentine fascism, an anti-liberal revolution to restore and protect the nation against Jewish, Leftist, and other foreign enemies.[6]

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[3] On the ideology and legacy of the Uriburu regime in the nacionalista imagination see Federico Finchelstein, Fascismo, Liturgia e Imaginario: el Mito del General Uriburu y la Argentina Nacionalista (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002). On *uriburismo* and its relation to Argentine and other South American nationalisms, see Sandra McGee Deutsch, Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900-1932: the Argentine Patriotic League (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); and her Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[4] Alberto Spektorowski, The Origins of Argentina's Revolution of the Right (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 179-84.

[5] Spektorowski, The Origins, 109. On the question of fascism as a means to attain "Argentine originality" see Federico Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War: Fascism, Populism, and Dictatorship in Twentieth Century Argentina (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), chapters 2 and 3.

While the reverberations of global fascism left a deep imprint in Argentina's interwar nationalism, the local manifestations of that anti-liberal reaction were mediated, "translated," and often revised by homegrown nationalist-Catholic ideologues and intellectuals. Throughout the 1930s, several of these nationalist "interpreters" and interlocutors of fascism (Fathers Virgilio Filippo, Leonardo Castellani, Gustavo Franceschi and Julio Meinvielle; as well as laymen Carlos M. Silveyra, Julio Irazusta, Juan Carulla, Jordán B. Genta, Nimio de Anquín, and Hugo Wast, amongst others) held an important presence in the public sphere (mainly in government posts, higher education and cultural institutions, radio broadcasts, and the press), and cultivated close ideological and personal links to the Armed Forces. This allowed a number of them to join the GOU regime as ministers, governors, and university officials, and others remaining as prominent voices in public opinion.[7] From these outposts, these *nacionalistas* promoted a view, shared by the GOU junta, of Argentina as a Christian nation under siege, historically threatened by liberalism, Judeo-Masonic conspiracies, communist agitation, anarchist immigrants, and foreign intervention.[8]

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[6] Federico Finchelstein, Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919-1945 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 66-73.

[7] Carlos Silveyra was the director of Clarinada, an anti-Semitic and anticommunist publication with large influence amongst *nacionalista* intellectuals. An author read widely throughout Latin America, the anti-Semitic novelist Hugo Wast (pseudonym for Gustavo Martínez Zuviría) became the GOU's Minister of Public Instruction and was instrumental in implementing religion in public education. Father Filippo hosted a famous radio broadcast in the 1930s, where he discussed political and social issues, with a strong anti-Semitic and anticommunist message. He later became a National Deputy for the Peronist Party and a strong supporter of the Alliance between the Church and Perón. Franceschi was a Catholic labor organizer and, from 1932 to 1957, the director of the review Criterio, the main Catholic publication in Argentina throughout the twentieth century. Leonardo Castellani, a prolific writer, published extensively in *nacionalista* reviews Cabildo and Nuevo Orden, and embraced the 1943 coup as a blow dealt by the military against liberalism. Spektorowski, The Origins, 180-181; Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War, 44-51.

With the advent of World War II, the conservative-corporatist regime of the 1943 junta appealed to *nacionalista* aspirations for the enlargement of Argentina's global reputation through the defense of Argentine autonomy in Latin American affairs, which also appeared as a vindication of national sovereignty and the portend of an authentically Argentine "third way." Informed by the intellectual tradition of *revisionismo histórico*[9] and with the war as a global critical juncture, *nacionalista* intellectuals insisted on the idea of "the national revolution" as a radical break with the "foreignness" of liberal Argentina and its alleged responsibility in the social and political decay of the "infamous decade" of the 1930s.

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[8] See, for instance, Gustavo Franceschi, Totalitarismos (Buenos Aires: Difusión, 1945); or his Visión Espiritual de la Guerra (Buenos Aires: Difusión, 1940); Julio Meinvielle, El Judío (Buenos Aires: Antidoto, 1936); Virgilio Filippo, El Monstruo Comunista (Buenos Aires: Tor, 1939) and Confabulación contra la Argentina (Buenos Aires: Lista Blanca, 1944); Leonardo Castellani, Canciones de Militís (Buenos Aires: Editoriales de Formación Patria, 1945); and El Nuevo Gobierno de Sancho (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1942); Jordán B. Genta, La Formación de la Inteligencia Etico-Política del Militar Argentino. Conferencia pronunciada en el Círculo Militar el 5 de septiembre de 1941 (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos D. Sersosimo, 1941); and Acerca de la Libertad de Enseñar y de la Enseñanza de la Libertad (Buenos Aires: A. Sapere, 1945).

[9] According to Tulio Halperín, Argentine historical revisionism was closely linked to early 20th century intellectual discourses on the decadence of Western civilization and, more concretely, of the Latin American republics. While represented by a heterogeneous body of historical, sociological, and literary writings, *revisionismo* can be characterized by its critique of formal democracy, its vindication of the epics of anti-colonial struggle, and its positive reinterpretation of 19th century *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas, whose dictatorial regime came to be seen as the epitome of a popular, Catholic, and "national" government. Many important figures across the spectrum of *nacionalismo*, such as Julio and Rodolfo Irazusta, Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, José María Rosa, amongst others, favored *revisionismo* as one of the basis for the *nacionalista* project. See Tulio Halperin Donghi, El Revisionismo Histórico Argentino como Visión Decadentista de la Historia Nacional (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2005). Also see Michael Goebel, Argentina's Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011); Diana Quattrocchi, Los Males de la Memoria: Historia y Política en la Argentina (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1995).

Linked both to revisionist readings of Argentine history and the irradiation of European nationalisms (both conservative-authoritarian and revolutionary-fascist ones),[10] the debates amongst *nacionalistas* centered on finding a common ground for what they understood as a *nacionalista* "movement," the instrument and vehicle for their "national revolution." While coming from a range of Catholic, conservative, syndicalist, and even socialist backgrounds, *nacionalistas* generally espoused an anti-liberal, anticommunist, and clerical rendering of fascism as the solution for Argentina's "diseases." Similar to other movements of the global nationalist-authoritarian and fascist orbits, these Argentine *nacionalistas* continuously dealt with the tensions between their deep-seated notions of the enemy (communism, Judaism, Freemasonry, liberalism), and with the difficulties of effectively articulating and carrying out a common program amounting to a revolutionary, non-liberal, anticommunist, and yet "authentically Argentine" response to the challenges of modern mass politics.[11]

Akin to the uncertainties brought about by the global crisis of liberalism, the rise of authoritarian dictatorship and fascism in Europe, and the perpetual multivocality and tentativeness regarding the direction of the *nacionalista* movement, the idea of "the national revolution" became subject to diverse interpretations and appropriations – from openly fascist projects, to military-corporatist dictatorship, to socialism and national-populism. In short, for *nacionalistas*, the strong anti-liberal disposition and the various perceptions of the authoritarian and/or fascist experiments in Europe and Latin America, did not yield a uniform conception of what it meant to be a *nacionalista*.[12]

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[10] On European authoriaritarian dictatorships, see Antonio Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[11] Spektorowski, The Origins, 114.

In the *nacionalista* imagination, the "national revolution" was intimately tied to the emergence of fascism as a national and yet "universal revolutionary spirit," and a tool to combat communism both locally and globally. The fascist appeal, however, also posed a potential problem for the hopes for a regime form that could reflect the "authenticity" of Argentina's own national essence. Like for their Colombian, Mexican, and other Latin American counterparts, the secularist (or even "pagan") undertones of Italian and German fascisms remained a conundrum for Argentine *nacionalistas*, and even the appreciation of the most culturally recognizable fascist experiments (the regimes of Miguel Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco in Spain)[13] led to cautious acknowledgments of the contextual and thus contingent character of foreign models. Thus, while united in a rejection of liberal democratic values and institutions and attracted to the ideals of pan-Hispanic cultural authenticity, *nacionalistas* struggled to navigate the tensions between the imitative adoption of a fascist "model" and the search for an Argentine "third way" that remained within the boundaries of tradition and "national character," as they understood them.[14]

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[12] For instance, the poet Leopoldo Lugones and the revisionist writer José María Rosa were proponents of a military fascist "solution" to liberal Argentina; César Pico, Juan Carlos Goyeneche and Mario Amadeo also embraced a dictatorial project, rooted in their admiration for Spain's military regimes and the cult of *hispanidad*, while other *nacionalista* intellectuals such as Raúl Scalabrini and Arturo Jauretche remained closer to a socialist critique of liberal politics and economics. See Spektorowski, The Origins, 151-160; Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War, 33-44.

[13] One of many admirers of Francoism, nationalist intellectual César Pico took on the notion of *hispanidad* as the common cultural ground through which both Spain and Latin America could face the challenges of modernization (Spektorowski, The Origins, 116-120). However, as Finchelstein has noted, Pico and other nacionalistas understood the need to avoid a mere importation of fascism and instead placed their own version of "Christianized fascism" as part of a universal fascist constellation (Finchelstein, Ideological Origins of the Dirty War, 40).

Amongst denunciations against the fascist sympathies of the military junta and their push for the implementation of a corporatist-authoritarian state, the election of Juan Domingo Perón to the presidency in 1946 raised the stakes for the prospects of a *nacionalista* mass movement. While favored by his closeness to the Catholic Church, his mounting reputation as the GOU's Secretary of Labor, and, more importantly, the vast support of the Argentine labor movement, Perón also faced considerable opposition from within the Armed Forces and the distrust of US diplomats who warned against his fondness for fascism. Yet, Perón seized the impulse of the GOU's conservative revolution to craft his own political platform (*justicialismo*). This novel iteration of Argentine nationalism embodied what Spektorowski refers to as "the integralist-populist synthesis": a peculiar amalgam of anti-imperialism, corporatism, statism, and social reformism, bolstered by the emergence of a political movement – the Justicialista Party – that placed "the masses" and their *conductor* at the center of the political stage.

In this regard, the consolidation of the Peronist regime relied considerably on the ritualization of Peronism as a political ideology with an appeal to the Argentine working class and the religious undertones evoked by the idea of the "Catholic nation."[15] Peronism was undeniably a product of local and global critiques of liberalism that rebuked the socialist alternative and moved towards different forms of social corporatism and authoritarian politics. However, the postwar global and national context pushed Peronism away from the aggressive militarism and glorification of war of its European nationalist-fascist forefathers. Instead, it adopted a personalistic and populist style that, despite its quasi-totalitarian conception of the state, enjoyed a great degree of democratic legitimacy and expanded social and political rights, while the limited pluralism it enforced did not translate, in practice, into initiatives to conquer or exterminate its purported enemies.[16]

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[14] Spektorowski, The Origins, 151-160.

[15] On the links between Perón's regime and the Catholic Church, see Loris Zanatta, Perón y el Mito de la Nación Católica: Iglesia y Ejército en los Orígenes del Peronismo (1943-1946) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999); and Lila M. Caimari, Perón y la Iglesia Católica: Religión, Estado y Sociedad en la Argentina, 1943-1955 (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia, 1995). On Perón's success in mobilizing workers and the urban poor see Daniel James, Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On Peronism's political rituals and their institutionalization through education, see Mariano Plotkin, Mañana Es San Peron: A Cultural History of Peron's Argentina (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 2003),

Heir to the nationalist “reactionary modernization” promoted by the 1943 junta, *justicialismo* became a reformulation of some of the nationalist Right’s ideological tropes and resorted to the mobilization of “enemy images” by invoking the idea of *antipatria* and the denunciation of Freemasonry and communism as “diseases” to condemn all forms of imperialism and foreign intervention. J*usticialismo* sought to incarnate the synthesis of Argentina’s nationalist response to these external threats. Early Peronism situated the 1943 “revolution” and the election of Perón in an ideological matrix that explicitly rejected but implicitly appealed to fascist motifs of strong leadership, mass mobilization, and national sentiment, placing the Armed Forces as the central actor of the impending “national revolution.” As early Peronist enthusiast Alberto Daniel Faleroni put it: “The Army saved the Fatherland. The bloodthirsty, maddening, emasculating process of Capitalism could not corrode the Army’s moral barricade. [T]he Argentine Revolution

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[16] Spektorowski, The Origins, 197-200; Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War, 73, 86-87.

[…] led by General Perón […] broke the decadent cycle of colonialism imposed by Anglo-Yankee imperialism.[17]

A former militant of the anti-imperialist Popular Revolutionary Alliance of the Americas (APRA), [18] Faleroni, like other *nacionalistas*-turned-Peronists, aspired to carry out the "national revolution" by building a national-syndicalist state in which Perón would stand "in history and before the world as the creator of the first social, functional, generous and humanist democracy of the twentieth century."[19] Faleroni's Peronist zeal was thus indicative of a broader trend in Argentine *nacionalismo* that fathomed the election of Perón as the long-awaited rise of a military leader ("General Perón") who would take charge of an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist democracy, rooted in "national tradition" and geared towards reviving Argentina's "essential" Catholic and anticommunist roots.[20]

Prompted by the advent of the Cold War, the wave of Popular Front-style anti-fascist and pro-democratic initiatives in the hemisphere, and the need to secure the support of the labor movement, Perón steered *justicialismo* towards a populist-reformist project that he sought to institutionalize with the passing of the 1949 constitution. This shift, however, did not translate into the abandonment of the political language of Catholic nationalism. In fact heavily relied on it, as it constituted a crucial unifying element for Peronist militancy. The new *justicialismo* also maintained the corporatist organization of interest groups as central to its notions of political representation. However, in reasserting the social function of capital and expanding state intervention in the economy and education, the new charter accelerated the disaffection of Catholic-nationalists towards Perón's alignment with domestic capitalists and, more broadly, with the populist-democratic elements of *justicialismo,* pushing anti-Peronist *nacionalistas* to join the liberal and left-wing dissenters of the regime.

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[17] Alberto D. Faleroni, La Conquista del Estado por la Revolución Nacional (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Montoneras, 1947), 26.

[18] In the 1930s, Faleroni was an activist for the "Indo-Americanist" and anti-imperialist APRA, a transnational movement founded by Peruvian politician Victor Haya de la Torre. Faleroni became the first leader of the Partido Aprista Argentino and a regular contributor to the *aprista* magazine *Claridad*, where he defended the possibility of a Leftist and anti-imperialist and yet peculiarly Argentine rendering of *aprismo*." See Alberto D. Faleroni, *Aprismo y Lucha de Clases* (Rosario: Editorial Continente, 1939). On the early convergence of *aprismo* with this strand of Argentine *nacionalismo*, see Leandro Sessa, "'Semillas en tierras estériles': la recepción del APRA en la Argentina de mediados de la década de los treinta," Sociohistórica 28 (2011): 131-161.

[19] Faleroni, La Conquista del Estado, 19.

[20] "Our society repudiates communism; it is essentially anticommunist. Our anticommunism derives from the convictions rooted in the depths of History, encompassing the moral, ethical and telluric dimensions […] Our Catholic, militaristic, and chivalric tradition does not allow the advance of such ideological upheavals." Faleroni, La Conquista del Estado, 14.

For Father Julio Meinvielle, one of the earliest, sharpest, and most vocal *nacionalista* critics of Peronism, *justicialismo* had failed to capitalize on the support of workers, intellectuals, and the Church to steer the regime towards the original *nacionalista* agenda. For him, the *justicialista* state that sprung from the 1949 Constitution came short of addressing the harms of capitalism, distorted the ideal of the social function of property, and excessively enshrined the state as the overseer of the economy.[21] More importantly, Meinvielle wrote, the new charter had failed to provide "the bases for a 'third position' that stands as a departure from the wretched clash between capitalism and communism." Then, for Meinvielle, Perón's legacy would be one of "proletarianization" and "Mexicanization," both synonyms for the prevalence of collectivism, and the totalitarian massification and bureaucratization of the country.[22] In short, the Peronist revolution, with its promise of overcoming liberalism and implementing a social Christian state, was not the one foreshadowed and yearned by the *nacionalista* movement.[23]

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[21] Julio Meinvielle, "Estado servil y constitución" (Presencia, 2 November 1949), in Política Argentina, 1949-1956 (Buenos Aires: Trafac, 1956), 19.

Many *nacionalistas* like Meinvielle distrusted the statist and populist project of *justicialismo*, which they deemed as a prelude to communism. In addition, broader denunciations against the "Peronization" of Argentine society and the allegations of Perón's sympathies for fascism allowed a heterogeneous anti-Peronist opposition – *radicales* (members of the Radical Party), socialists, liberals, and *nacionalistas* of various leanings – to promote the image of Perón as a totalitarian and tyrannical leader. By the early 1950s, *peronista* and *antiperonista* became a widely-used binary that drew a radically disruptive political cleavage within Argentine society, one that pitted "the Argentine people" against "the oligarchs" or "the agents of imperialism" on one account, and the forces of freedom and democracy against those of tyranny, on the other.[24]

The *peronista* / *antiperonista* divide had a devastating effect amongst *nacionalistas*, as they grappled with the reality of Perón's abandonment of the original blueprint of the 1943 "national-revolutionary" state and what they saw as the regime's compromise with the forces that the 1943 junta had sworn to combat, namely those of economic liberalism, American diplomacy, and leftist labor organizations.

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[22] Julio Meinvielle, "Nueva Constitución" (Presencia, 25 March 1949) in Política Argentina, 40.

[23] Julio Meinvielle, "La revolución que vivimos" (Presencia, 11 November 1949) in Política Argentina, 89.

[24] Besides its postwar context, the potency of anti-totalitarian discourse had its roots in the strong liberal traditions shared by different political collectivities in Argentina, including the Socialist and Radical parties. On the confluence of liberalism, anti-fascism, anti-totalitarianism and anti-peronism, see Jorge Nallim, Las Raíces del Antiperonismo: Orígenes Históricos e Ideológicos (Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2014). For an analysis of liberalism in inter- and postwar Argentina, see Jorge Nallim, Transformations and Crisis of Liberalism in Argentina, 1930-1955 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

The period between 1950 and 1955 was thus characterized by the rapid alienation of the Armed Forces and the Catholic Church from the Peronist regime. In 1951, a failed coup by General Benjamín Menéndez led to Perón's declaration of a state of "internal war," the jailing of anti-Peronist dissidents, the replacement of Navy and Air Force ministers, and the closure of opposition newspapers. Perón's landslide reelection in November of that same year and his attempt to "Peronize" the Armed Forces by introducing Peronist doctrine courses in the War College proved insufficient (and counterproductive) in quelling the discontent amongst the military, whom, in association with retired officers and anti-Peronist civilians (including *nacionalistas* and *radicales*) continued to operate clandestinely against the regime.[25]

Rooted in denunciations of Peronism as a totalitarian, statist experiment that neglected the Catholic imprint of the 1943 "revolution," the growing conflict of the Church with Perón was equally detrimental to the regime's perceived legitimacy. Between 1954 and 1955, the participation of priests in anti-Peronist mobilizations led to the targeting of Church members for removal from the country. Catholic publications (amongst them, Meinvielle's *Presencia*) and dissident student groups were closed down. Continuing the conflict with the Catholic opposition, the Peronist-dominated Congress legalized divorce and prostitution, removed religious festivities from the list of public holidays, and ultimately eliminated religious instruction in public schools altogether. In this last regard, the dispute that arose from the "Peronization" of school textbooks and the displacement of the Church from its role in education was also of key importance. A sign of what Mariano Plotkin has deemed "a struggle for the control of symbolic space,"[26] these clashes reflected the tensions between Peronism's aspiration to become an all-encompassing "civic religion" and the pressures on behalf of members of the Church to steer *justicialismo* towards the configuration of a Christian order – or, in Meinvielle's view, a non-democratic, corporatist-authoritarian state.[27]

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[25] Robert Potash, El Ejército y la Política Argentina (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1985), vol. 2, 140-142.

Symptomatic of the *nacionalista* repudiation of Perón's late clashes with the Church and what was perceived as his latent totalitarianism, the anticommunist rhetoric used earlier to decry the enemies of the "national revolution" turned into a powerful instrument of anti-Peronist critique. For instance, in Father Meinvielle's own diagnosis of this "turning of tables," Peronism had given way to a form of "Marxist nationalism" that was leading to "social revolution" and the submission of the country to "armed worker militias."[28] Meinvielle condemned Peron's nationalism as too lenient with respect to alleged communist and Masonic conspirators that had given *justicialismo* a "materialist turn."[29] His assessment was based on a particular reading of the postwar world order, one in which "the nationalist experience, properly speaking" withered away with the defeat of the Axis powers. This state of affairs, said Meinvielle, left the door open for different appropriations of *lo nacional* – from Tito's "communist nationalism" in Yugoslavia to Salazar's Catholic dictatorship in Portugal. The challenge for anti-Peronist *nacionalistas* was, then, to overcome Perón's "rhetorical assimilation" of *nacionalista* doctrine and his failure to "integrate it into national life," and to mend the course of *nacionalismo* by restoring it to a "universal conception of Christian values"[30]; that is, to turn it into against those forces that threatened the "true sense of social justice" and the realization of God's kingdom on Earth. The political crisis that led to the downfall of Perón was thus the result of a deep rupture not between *nacionalismo* and Peronism, but between the Peronist state – and its apparatus of mass mobilization – and the original interpreters and ideological mediators of the nationalist project that, according to them, Perón had sequestered and betrayed.

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[26] Plotkin, Mañana Es San Peron, 85-103.

[27] Julio Meinvielle, Concepción Católica de la Política (Buenos Aires: Theoria, 1961), 187-99. For Meinvielle, as for other *nacionalistas*, Oliveira Salazar's corporatist Catholic dictatorship in Portugal was a particularly promising model to emulate in pursue of this Christian order. On social corporatism in Portugal see Howard J. Wiarda, Corporatism and Development: the Portuguese Experience (Amherst: University of Massachussets Press, 1977).

[28] Julio Meinvielle, "¿Hacia un nacionalismo marxista?" (Presencia, 23 December 1949), Política Argentina, 113-121; and "La situación política argentina" (Presencia, 11 November 1955), Politica Argentina, 290.

[29] Meinvielle denounced Ángel Borlenghi, Rodolfo Puiggrós and Jorge Abelardo Ramos as communist infiltrators in the Peronist movement, and accused them of being responsible of the "materialist turn" in Peronism. For Meinvielle, this "materialist turn" (the emphasis on worker's rights and social and economic justice) was part of the Masonic conspiracy, a global plot to undermine the Argentine economy and create the conditions for the "subversion" of the masses. ("Sobre un complot de la masonería," Presencia, 26 August 1949; in Política Argentina, 66-73.

In June of 1955, the clash between *peronista / antiperonista* groups and, most prominently, between factions of the Armed Forces, reached a point of no return with the air raids on Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo against *peronista* demonstrators and the burning of churches by Peronist youth groups, both signs of the ideological polarization that the regime was ultimately unable to appease or suppress. On August 31st, and against the expectations of the rebellious officers, Perón reasserted his firm determination to stay in power at any cost, and delivered a speech in which he drew a radical antagonism marked by the struggle between the *peronista* and *antiperonista* camps, one that would later feed the imagery of Perón as "the tyrant" and the division between the "addicts to tyranny" and the "forces of democracy."[31]

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[30] Meinvielle, "Hacia un nacionalismo marxista," 113-114. Here, Meinvielle cites revisionist historian Alberto Ezcurra Medrano – author of Las Otras Tablas de Sangre (1934); Catolicismo y Nacionalismo (1939); and Sarmiento: Masón (1952) – as an example of an Argentine rendering of "integrated nationalism" along the lines of Oliveira Salazar's in Portugal, and in contrast to Tito's "communist nationalism" in Yugoslavia, or the "proletarian-*indigenista* nationalism" of Sukarno in Indonesia.

On September 16th 1955 a major offensive by the rebel officers forced Perón out of the country. Later denounced by Perón as a move by the "reactionaries" – the oligarchy, "certain priests" and the "parasitic" professional sector – to use "force, the Right of beasts," to solve "a problem of opinion,"[32] the coup was immediately backed by the Church and a prominent sector of the Armed Forces identified with Catholic nationalism. Student unions, liberal intellectuals, anti-fascist organizations, the Radical and Socialist parties, each with different motivations and agendas, also participated through the anti-Peronist civilian cadres that maneuvered during the coup – the so-called Revolutionary Civilian Commandos (CCR). Prominent *nacionalista* figures such as Mario Amadeo and Juan Carlos Goyeneche also supported the rebels and established close contacts with the core group of officers that lead the coup (Eduardo Lonardi, Pedro E. Aramburu, Isaac Rojas, and Juan Francisco Guevara). These *nacionalistas* had been, in principle, attracted to Perón's anti-imperialism and anticommunism, but rejected the ritualization of Peronism, its underlying populist egalitarianism and late anticlericalism.[33]

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[31] "We offered them peace, and they declined. Now, we shall offer the struggle, and they know that when we are determined to fight, we fight until the end. Each and every one of you shall remember that the keyword now is 'struggle,' which we will pursue in all places. Let them know that this struggle shall not end until they are crushed and annihilated." "Discurso del dictador, pronunciado el 31 de Agosto de 1955," Libro Negro de la Segunda Tiranía (Buenos Aires: Comisión Nacional de Investigaciones, 1958), 263-264.

[32] Juan D. Perón, "La fuerza es el derecho de las bestias," Obras Completas (Buenos Aires: Proyecto Hernandarias, 1984), v. 20, 175-76.

[33] Maria Estela Spinelli, Los Vencedores Vencidos: el Antiperonismo y la Revolución Libertadora (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2005), 228-33.

Whereas the intensity of the anti-peronist impulse worked as a catalyst for a multi-class and heterogeneous alliance against Perón's "tyranny," the nature of the new regime came to be determined by the prominent role played by both the anti-peronist military and the *nacionalista* intellectuals in limiting the scope of democratic freedoms, justified by the de-Peronization of Argentina, and the "prevention" of a full-fledged communist insurrection.

The "second tyranny" and the threat of "revolutionary war"

Under the guise of an anti-totalitarian and anti-tyrannical crusade, the so-called *Revolución Libertadora* of 1955 sought to carry out a process of *desperonización* of Argentine politics and society. These efforts deepened the radicalization of the peronista/anti-peronista divide, and ignited the formation of the *Resistencia Peronista,* an active network of political mobilization composed for the most part by unionists from Perón's main source of political support, the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT).

In November of 1955, in the context of a general strike promoted by the CGT, Gen. Lonardi was forced to step down and replaced by Gen. Pedro E. Aramburu, partly due to his public call for reconciliation ("*ni vencedores, ni vencidos*"; neither victors nor vanquished), his refusal to use violence against the Peronists, and his gradualist approach to replace Peronist ministers and military officers with "liberal" or anti-Peronist ones.[34] The rise of Aramburu signaled a more aggressive process of purging of state bureaucracy and, more importantly, of the medium and lower ranks of the Armed Forces, exemplified in its most extreme form by the execution, under martial law, of a group of "counterrevolutionary" officers and civilians in June of 1956.[35]

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[34] For an analysis of the failure of the formula of "de-Peronization and pacification," see Maria Estela Spinelli, Los Vencedores Vencidos, 53-93.

After forcing Perón into exile, the officers behind the *Libertadora* sought to bolster the new regime's sense of transparency and legitimacy and decreed the creation of a National Commission to investigate the crimes and "irregularities" of the previous administration. The Commission's inquiries resulted in the publication of the *Black Book of the Second Tyranny*, which was presented as a comprehensive report of the "destructive work" of Perón's regime and an attempt to shed light into "its purposes, accomplices and collaborators, methods of corruption and propaganda, and illegal operations."[36] As suggested by its title, the report sought to locate Peronism as the reincarnation of a previous tyranny, the regime of nineteenth-century *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas (presented as a strongman emerging from conditions of anarchy), and as a new attempt to undermine Argentina's "national tradition" of liberty, equality, and democracy.[37] While the stress on the affinities between Perón and Rosas's tyrannical *caudillo* leadership had been an early instrument of opposition against Peronism,[38] the *Libertadora* sought to bring together Argentina's experience with *caudillo* dictatorship and the postwar global anti-totalitarian imagination to present a portrait of Perón that could legitimize a barring of Peronism from all instances of public life.

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[35] Daniel Mazzei, Bajo el Poder de la Caballería: el Ejército Argentino, 1962-1973 (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2012), 41.

[36] El Libro Negro, 21. The "Black Book" was reedited in 1979 by this Commission, presided by one of the leaders of the *Libertadora*, Adm. Isaac Rojas, as a vindication of the anti-Peronist program behind the *Libertadora* and a clear gesture against any attempts to "rescue" Peronism in the context of the junta regime that took power in 1976.

[37] El Libro Negro, 23-34.

[38] For instance, an editorial published in 1946 in the dissident newspaper La Prensa located the opposition against Perón in both the global struggle against Nazi-fascism and in Argentina's archetypical struggle between "civilization and barbarism." "Despotismo y Libertad," La Prensa, 24 March 1946, 5.

To accomplish this, the *Black Book* referred to Peronism as a symptom of the influence of Italian fascism and German national-socialism in "a weak democracy," and to Perón as a leader that sought to arouse "the inconformity of the masses" and provoked their resentment.[39] In the same vein, Eva Perón ("*La Señora*") was branded as "the most extraordinary element of propaganda at the service of the dictator" with a mission that lay "not in persuasion, but in promoting action, igniting passions, and dispensing vengeance."[40] The rendering of Perón as a tyrant also made reference to his notion of justice and his treatment of the judicial apparatus[41]; his project of an "integral government" and the strengthening of *justicialismo* as a party/movement that could occupied all spaces of the political sphere[42]; and his calls, particularly after 1952, for action against the regime's internal and external enemies (the *antipatrias*).[43]

The accusations waged in the *Black Book* reach their peak with the description of the "great crimes" of Perón and the Peronists, which the Commission attributed to "the dictator's own fear," evinced by his heightened rhetoric and his use of shock troops from the CGT and the Peronist Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN) to attack dissidents.[44] Thus the violent events that took place in the eve of Perón's fall – the burning of the Jockey Club and of the offices of the Radical, Socialist and Democratic parties; the attacks against churches and church-goers; the expulsion of priests – were not only seen as the last gasps of a desperate tyrant but also served to build a court martial case against Perón. The list of charges – a collection of moral and political "misconducts" – was extensive: "sowing hatred amongst the Argentine family by inciting crime and violence"; "burning the flag"; "failure to safeguard the Constitution"; "disloyalty to the institution [the Armed Forces]"; "living lavishly"; "keeping a relationship with a minor"; and "not confronting responsibility".[45] Thus, in this rhetorical and legal construction of Perón's regime as a period characterized, according to Cdr. Isaac Rojas, by the "violation of ethical, moral and legal norms," the new regime reasserted its *revolución* as the "coming together of the civilian population and the Armed Forces," but primarily as a responsibility of the military to respond to "the call of the Fatherland and the voices of history".[46]

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[39] El Libro Negro, 40.

[40] El Libro Negro, 44.

[41] The Commission's report "reconstructed" Perón's "sense of justice" from several phrases in Perón's speeches (including the infamous "*al amigo, todo; al enemigo ni justicia"*) and on Perón's decision to build a "political trial" against the Supreme Court after it declared the unconstitutionality of the Peronist Labor Code. El Libro Negro, 110-123.

[42] El Libro Negro, 124.

[43] El Libro Negro, 84-85.

In the aftermath of Perón's overthrow, a strongly authoritarian and militaristic *nacionalista* current demanded the new provisional head of state, Pedro E. Aramburu, to pursue a deeper "cleansing" of all liberal, masonic, communist and Jewish influence in society. According to the periodical *Combate,* edited by clerico-fascist Catholic ideologue Jordán B. Genta, the urgency of the times called for the action of the true *nacionalistas*, defenders of a society modeled after the values of hierarchy and Catholicism.[47] For Genta and his collaborators, Lonardi's conciliatory gesture had lacked the type of authoritative decision required to crush the real reviled enemy (liberal constitutional democracy) and to fully reverse the premises of secularization and social justice of the Peronist Constitution of 1949. The late Peronist regime was, in their view, a Marxist, pro-Jewish, and Masonic tyranny. They saw democracy, in its liberal or Peronist forms, as having "no roots" in Argentina's "young Republic," and deemed it a Rousseaunian and Jacobin farce that exploited the low instincts of the plebs.[48] Peronism was thus the "rotten fruit" of democracy: a corrupt tyranny chosen by a deceived people.[49] In the eve of the 1957 parliamentary election, *Combate* posed a fatal dilemma: the choice between Peronism and its popular sovereignty; or a revolutionary anti-Peronism, led by the Church and the military, as the basis for a corporatist authoritarian state like those of Spain and Portugal.[50]

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[44] El Libro Negro, 270. The report points out the key role that the ALN played in Perón's plan to use civilian shock troops to carry out "the repression of alterations to public order."

[45] El Libro Negro, 268-77. According to a preliminary report by the Commission, these crimes were also constitutive of "genocide" as sanctioned by international law, an accusation that never made it to a domestic or international court of law (244-245).

[46] El Libro Negro, 10.

The extremism of *Combate*'s position contrasted with reactions by other *nacionalistas* to the fall of Perón. The periodical *Azul y Blanco*, for instance, appeared in 1956 as an effort by a group of anti-Peronist *nacionalistas*, led by Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Juan Carlos Goyeneche, and Mario Amadeo, to bolster *nacionalista* unity and to redefine the direction of the "movement" in the post-Peronist era. According to

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[47] "Nuestra definición," Combate 1 (8 December 1955): 1.

[48] "Catolicismo o democracia jacobina," *Combate* 3 (5 January 1956): 2.

[49] "Frutos podridos de la democracia," Combate 5 (9 February 1956): 1.

[50] "No hay solución democrática," Combate 6 (1 March 1956), 1; "La única alternativa," Combate 27 (18 April 1957): 1.

Goyeneche, their *nacionalismo* was a "reaction," conceived in biological terms as a phenomenon that revealed that the Argentine "social body" possessed "a solid moral hygiene" that periodically eliminated "the toxins of all kinds that poison the organism." For Goyeneche, *nacionalismo* was "a political phenomenon" and "a reaction of national sentiment against the harmful influences that tend towards the dissociation of *la Patria*," namely "the exaggerated influence of foreign finance" and of "doctrines and methods that disrupt national sentiment and the political equilibrium."[51] These *nacionalistas* thus saw themselves as the bearers of an essentially reactionary political tradition that was meant to stand the passing of time and guard the *patria* against its external and internal enemies. The *Libertadora* thus became an opportunity for the *nacionalista* project to regain the central role it played during the mid-1940s in bringing about the "national revolution" by exerting influence from important cabinet positions in Foreign Affairs, Education, Press and Propaganda, amongst others.[52]

Despite their initial enthusiasm for the de-Peronization sworn by the *Libertadora*, the *nacionalistas* of *Azul y Blanco* soon claimed that the new military *junta* had usurped the name of "the revolution" and that its incapacity to overcome its *de facto* condition would ultimately turn it into "another despotic regime." For them, if the coup of 1955 had been indeed an act of resistance against a tyranny, the regime of the Libertaodra was then but a restoration, or rather, a dictatorship in its purest sense: a transitory exceptional regime with the mission of preserving the constitutional order.[53] This state of affairs had given way to what they deemed as the "effeminization of politics;" that is, the excessive "affectivity" shown by the "feminine" masses after a long period of abuse and domination by a *macho* leader. This "rebellion of emotions" could, in their view, "give the current political moment a decidedly feminine character, and thus render it confusing and dangerous."[54]

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[51] Juan Carlos Goyeneche, "El nacionalismo," Azul y Blanco (23 April 1957): 3.

[52] Spinelli, Vencedores y Vencidos, 226-227.

[53] "Dictadura y Revolución," Azul y Blanco (12 September 1956): 1.

While retaining the idea of anticommunism as an essential or "natural" component of their *nacionalismo*,[55] the *nacionalistas* behind *Azul y Blanco* warned against the adoption of an all-out anticommunist campaign to undermine and repress Peronist unions. A lack of popular support for this initiative would be counterproductive, they argued, as the conflation between communism and Peronism could give the former "an aura of romanticism," turning both into "martyrs" and thus allowing communists to capture the sympathies of the persecuted and resented Peronists.[56]

Anticommunism, anti-Peronism and the CONINTES doctrine

Nacionalista suspicions regarding the potentially disruptive role of Peronism were related to the fact that it remained a sizeable electoral force and Perón to exert influence from abroad even after the illegalization of the Justicialista Party and the intervention of the CGT by the military. As Peronist blank votes dominated the 1957 parliamentary election, the presidential candidate from the Unión Cívica Radical, Arturo Frondizi, established contacts with one of Perón's personal representatives, John W. Cooke, in an attempt to secure Peronist support in exchange for amnesty and political concessions. Thus, despite the efforts of the *Libertadora* to "de-Peronize" Argentina by political and legal means, the pact provided Peronism a determining influence in the planned transition from the *Revolución Libertadora* to an elected civilian regime. For the Radical Party, the pact appeared as necessary given the de-stabilizing activities of the *Resistencia Peronista*, which after the fall of Perón had showed its tenacity through public acts of violence, including sabotage, bombings, strikes and street demonstrations backed by Peronist unions and underground organizations.

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[54] "Afeminamiento de la política," Azul y Blanco (4 July 1956): 4.

[55] "In our condition as zealous guardians of the Argentine nationality and men that believe in God, we are the opposite pole of communism; we are, let us say, naturally anticommunist." "Confabulación de las izquierdas marxistas," Azul y Blanco (10 October 1956): 2.

[56] "La campaña anticomunista," Azul y Blanco (26 September 1956): 2.

The government's response to the *Resistencia* relied on the militarization of the labor unions in those strategic sectors of the economy most affected by the strikes and acts of sabotage. This militarization took place by means of invoking Law 13.234 of 1948, a Peronist legislation inherited from the GOU regime that, amongst other things, authorized the "mobilization" of civilians for the purposes of "national defense" in times of "imminent threat of war." This law also authorized the executive to declare *zonas de guerra* to be placed under military control to ensure the conduct of the "war effort," the production of war materials, the functioning of public services, and "the maintenance of public order."[57] Perón himself had made use of this Law to repress a railroad workers' strike in 1951, declaring the "mobilization" of all personnel and, by consequence, the application of the Military Justice Code to the non-compliers. The *Libertadora* resorted to this legal instrument to repress strikes by banking, oil, railroad and aviation workers between 1956 and 1958,[58] in the context of the violent suppression of a rebellion lead by Peronist officers, the barring of all Peronists from labor organizations and the regime's adoption of the package of IMF-sanctioned economic measures known as Plan Prebisch.[59] During the Frondizi administration, the convergence of military "interventions" of factories, railroads, and other industrial workspaces; the process of de-Peronization; and the rhetoric of national liberation fostered by Perón and his agents, allowed for the *Resistencia* to be framed as a problem of terrorism and subversion, a notion that complemented the Libertadora's view of Perón as a Nazi-fascist and a tyrant.

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[57] [Law 13.234], 7 September 1948, Caja 1374, Archivo Centro de Estudios Nacionales, Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina, Buenos Aires (from hereon, CEN).

These continuities in the legal repression of dissenters and the rendering of Peronist violence as a situation bordering a state of "internal war" should be understood in the context of the Argentine military's adoption of the doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire* and its adaptation to local conditions. Developed by the French Army in light of its experience in Indochina and Algeria, and spread systematically through the École Supérieure de Guerre, the doctrine served the purposes of Argentine officers in crafting a legal and institutional blueprint that treated Peronism as the incarnation of a nationalist-revolutionary catalyst that resorted to terrorist violence and, if not handled properly, could lead to a communist takeover.

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[58] Carlos Zamorano, Fuerzas Armadas y Conflictos Sociales (la Doctrina CONINTES) (Buenos Aires: Liga Argentina por los Derechos del Hombre, 1990), 16-20.

[59] Devised by the world-renowned economist and government advisor Raúl Prebisch, the plan sought to establish fiscal discipline and stricter controls on salaries as means to provide incentives for foreign investors. Remaining for years a symbol of neo-colonialism and foreign interference in national affairs, the plan was rabidly contested by Peronists of Leftist and socialist persuasion like Abraham Guillén, Alfredo Jauretche, and Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, who tried, and failed, to initiate a public debate with Prebisch regarding the plan. See Abraham Guillén, La Conspiración de la Oligarquía. Radiografía del Plan Prebisch (Buenos Aires: Guitem, 1956); Alfredo Jauretche, El Plan Prebisch: Retorno al Coloniaje (Buenos Aires: n.d., 1955).

Scholars of this period have pointed to the affinities and cross-pollination between this Argentine interpretation and implementation of French counterinsurgency and the rationale behind the crafting and implementation of Plan CONINTES (Internal Commotion of the State).[60] As an instrument to neutralize Peronism and preemptively address the communist problem, CONINTES was not a well-delineated path of action, but a series of legal principles that stemmed from executive decree 9880 of 1958, a secret legislation that, while acknowledging the absence of a clear situation of war, invoked the wartime prerogatives established in Law 13.234. The decree aimed explicitly at neutralizing and suppressing Peronist "terrorism" through the suspension of *habeas corpus* and the military arrest, imprisonment, and trial of Peronists.[61] In that sense, while influenced by the training of Argentine officers in France at the time of gestation of the doctrine of "revolutionary war," CONINTES was equally the product of a domestic process in which both the *Libertadora* and, later, Frondizi placed the repression of Peronism under a constitutional guise, while also pushing for the militarization of the enforcement of CONINTES by framing it as a fight against "subversion."

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[60] Overstating the case as one of transfer and imitation, Mario Ranalletti and Gabriel Périès have located the root of the Argentine military's "French connection" in the presence of Lt Col Carlos Jorge Rosas and other Argentine officers at the École Supérieure between 1953 and 1955. When Rosas returned to Argentina, he became the director of the War College, and favored the military exchange with France with the explicit aim of reducing American influence in the Armed Forces. During Rosas's tenure, the French paradigms of "psychological warfare" and "revolutionary war," shaped by that country's experience with World War II and the colonial wars in Asia and Africa, became common knowledge for the graduates at the War College. See Mario Ranalletti, "La guerra de Argelia y la Argentina. Influencia e inmigración francesa desde 1945." Anuario de Estudios Americanos 62, no. 2 (julio-diciembre 2005): 285-308; Gabriel Périès, "La doctrina militar contrainsurgente como fuente normativa de un poder "de facto" exterminador basado sobre la excepcionalidad" in Daniel Feierstein (ed.), Terrorismo de Estado y Genocidio en América Latina (Buenos Aires: PNUD, 2009); and Gabriel Périès, "Un modèle d'échange doctrinal franco-argentin: le Plan Conintes 1951-1966" in Renée Frégosi (dir.), Armées et Pouvoirs en Amérique Latine (Paris: IHEAL éditions, 2004), 19-41.

[61] [Undated Memorandum], Caja 393, CEN.

In a process akin to the convergence of emergency authoritarian legality and the militarization of the prosecution of political crimes in Colombia, CONINTES became the legal and political basis for the evolution of Argentina's counterinsurgent state and for the local adaptation of global counterinsurgency to local conditions. This took place in the broader global context of decolonization and national liberation struggles, but, most importantly, amid the growing perception within the Armed Forces that the process of de-Peronization undertaken by the *Libertadora* had not come to an end. As Carlos Toranzo Montero, Commander General of the Army, conveyed to Frondizi, the fight against communist infiltration in unions, universities, and public administration was faltering, and Peronism remained a "totalitarian entity" whose activities could be encroached by communism.[62] Thus, the appropriation and reformulation of globally circulating notions of "revolutionary war," the construction of the Peronist/totalitarian enemy, and the institutional effects of CONINTES' exceptional legality framed the military's perception that civilian powers would ultimately be unable to handle a potential communist aggression.

Once elected, in 1958 Frondizi gave signs of a mild rapprochement with Peronism by eliminating the ban on Peronist symbols, inherited from the *Libertadora*, and by pushing for the passing of an amnesty for imprisoned Peronists. However, the legacies of the legal repression of Peronism as terrorism and its affinity with the notion of an impending "revolutionary war" sparked by Peronists gave way to a notion of "national defense," promoted by the military, which blurred the distinction between internal and external enemies and emphasized the link between Peronist dissidence and communist agitation. Frondizi, on the other hand, understood "national defense" to be comprised by economic, military, and spiritual/ideological factors. From a democratic standpoint, he argued, communism had to be fought "in its causes, and not only its effects" and emphasized the need to devise a "doctrine" and a "mysticism" that could counter those of communism. In this regard, Frondizi presented economic development as the main vehicle to defuse and prevent communist subversion, while repressive measures appeared as necessary but insufficient and potentially counterproductive.[63]

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[62] Memorandum. 12 October 1960, caja 1393, CEN.

However, Frondizi's public references to the limits of repression often came accompanied by a stress on the presence of "anticommunist factors" – the Church and popular religiosity; workers with a "national conscience"; the middle-classes; the Armed Forces – without which the repressive measures under the state of siege would be ineffective. Frondizi also rebuked the contradictory accusations that the opposition (particularly the *nacionalistas*) [64] waged against him – of being, at the same time, a communist, a capitalis,t and a Peronist. In typical anticommunist fashion, Frondizi denounced these attacks as a campaign promoted by the communists.[65] Moreover, both publicly and when facing inquiries by high-ranking officers, Frondizi reaffirmed his commitment to defend “Western values” and expressly shared a belief in the need to bolster the military’s role in the anticipation of communist aggression in the context of a global war.[66]

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[63] Frondizi even made a reference to the McCarthyite campaigns in the United States as an example of the detrimental effects of "witch hunts" to a country's democratic way of life, an observation that caught the attention of US embassy officials reporting on his delivery of the speech. "President Frondizi's speech on communism." Desp. No 706 From Amembassy Buenos Aires To DOS. 2 December 1960. Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Argentina, 1960-1963 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001; from hereon, USARG 1960-1963), 735.001/12-260.

[64] A good example of this is the *nacionalista* publication *Azul y Blanco*, which accused Frondizi of being responsible for "bringing the country to the brink of civil war" and not acting forcefully enough against "terrorism" ("Terrorismo," Azul y Blanco, 31 May 1960, 3). The editors of *Azul y Blanco* also made clear that they were not condemning resistance against an "anti-national" government, but terrorism as a "cowardly means to an end."

[65] "El Gobierno argentino y el comunismo. Discurso pronunciado por el Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la Nación Argentina, Dr. Arturo Frondizi, el 23-XI-60," caja 1673, CEN.

Espousing the tension between political repression and structural (economic and ideological) “prevention” of communism, Frondizi undertook the drafting of a new Law of National Defense, seeking to promote a moderate, democratic, and developmentalist approach to the fight against communism. The text of the project itself was revealing of the shift in global and local paradigms of defense and security, as it rested on the premise that there was “no clear division between war and peace, but only struggles for supremacy or survival”. In that sense, for its drafters, the Law was a response to an environment marked by the struggles for national liberation in the Third World and was meant to work as a legal instrument to implement a defensive program against the danger of so-called total war originated by internal or external “subversive aggression.”[67] The Law was also admittedly the product of the confluence of notions of collective regional defense rooted in postwar inter-American diplomacy and a notion of “subversion” – explicitly borrowed from French counterinsurgency – that stressed the role of “active minorities” in magnifying the effects of external aggression to break the established order.[68]

The Law of National Defense was also conceived as a Cold War, post-Cuban Revolution revision to the Peronist Law 12.384 that had originally established a framework for the *a priori* "mobilization" of state institutions, resources and population for war. The new legislation sought to institutionalize and socially disseminate the premises promoted by CONINTES, mainly the notion that the new type of global, regional and local "national-revolutionary" threat embodied by Peronists, communists, and "terrorists" required a regime of exceptionality in which the distinction between war and peace had become obsolete. Aside from establishing the creation of security agencies and a secret defense cabinet, and granting the Executive wartime powers in the absence of war, the Law conflated the goals of national defense and security with the conduct of everyday public administration, and the promotion of "national goals" and a "defensive consciousness of the basic values of our nationality."[69]

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[66] “Palabras vertidas por S.E. el señor Presidente de la Nación en la conferencia realizada en el Centro de Altos Estudios,” September 1960, caja 1393, CEN.

[67] “Ley de Defensa Nacional. Exposición de Motivos,” f. 2, caja 1421, CEN.

[68] “Ley de Defensa Nacional. Exposición de Motivos,” f. 3-5.

The Law of National Defense was the culmination of a gradual militarization of the state's approach to social and political conflict, initiated by the *Libertadora* and continued under Frondizi through CONINTES's founding "secret" decree. In this regard, the incorporation of the CONINTES decrees within the Law of National Defense sought to address the military's concern regarding the need to overcome the limits imposed on the state of siege by its own nature as a wartime, exceptional and thus temporally and legally bound measure. Now under a democratic framework, Frondizi used emergency executive powers to break the "insurrectional" strikes by oil, railroad, and transportation workers throughout 1958 and 1959. Like the junta of 1955, Frondizi decreed the military *movilización* of personnel and the localized application of state of siege legality, including the trial of detainees by military courts.[70] After dealing with the strikes and the accompanying protests against economic adjustment, the government resorted to the mechanisms of CONINTES and arrested alleged communist leaders, imposed a severe censorship of the press and, through executive decrees 5802 and 4965, declared the banning of all communist activities (including civic organizations allegedly linked to the Communist Party) and the creation of a state commission to oversee this prohibition.[71] These measures were accompanied by “emergency credits” to fund a budget increase for military and civilian initiatives related to CONINTES measures, which included a plan to build prisons for individuals detained under the state of siege.[72]

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[69] "Ley de Defensa Nacional" f. 1-2, caja 1421, CEN.

[70] Zamorano, Fuerzas Armadas y Conflictos Sociales, 21-23.

The combination of the political-legal doctrine stemming from Plan CONINTES and the premises underlying the doctrine of “revolutionary war” had a domino effect on the state’s conduct of its security policies. In March of 1960, Gen. Toranzo Montero announced the successful curtailing of a “nation-wide plan for subversion.” With great fanfare, Toranzo provided details to the press, revealing the key aspects of the gradual but agressive plot instigated by “the runaway tyrant”: 15,000 “acts of intimidation” since 1956, which constituted the first stage of Peronist agitation; followed by the organization of a “nation-wide mechanism of subversion,” the instigation of workers’ strikes, and the carrying out of terrorist actions. This, in Toranzo’s account, confirmed that Peronism was following the blueprint of other global national-revolutionary subversive movements: the provocation of chaos to break down the police apparatus, force repression by the Army, and spark a social revolution with the aid of alienated military officers and labor activists.

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[71] SIDE, “El problema comunista, 1956-1959,” August 1959, caja 1673, CEN.

[72] Untitled memorandums, 29 January 1959; 20 October, 1959, caja 137, CEN. “Informe sobre alojamiento de penados por tribunales militares con motivo aplicación Plan Conintes,” 1959, caja 1301, CEN.

After Toranzo's announcement, Frondizi revealed to the public the parallel structure of civilian-military command and enforcement behind CONINTES, and the national press published his declaration of a "state of internal commotion," which authorized the use of military force to repress "terrorism," and the prosecution of the detainees by military tribunals known as *Consejos de Guerra*.[73]

Another emblematic product of the CONINTES doctrine was the creation, in 1960, of the "Commission to Study and Investigate Communist Activities in Argentina," composed by military officers, the chief of the Federal Police, and a delegate from the Ministry of Interior. In one of its earliest statements, the Commission voiced the need for a "legal and psychological strategy" to defuse communist agitation and, at the same time, to prepare for "a war of special characteristics that escapes every norm established by international law […] a mortal war between two blocs […] a war that threatens our Western way of life, culture and religion."[74] The Commission urged the president to push for the passing of the Law of the National Defense to avoid the invalidation of all measures implemented under CONINTES, and recommended the centralization of all anticommunist government initiatives in order to wage a "high-level, organic, and rational" battle against communism.

By May of 1961 Frondizi decreed the transfer of all responsibilities – including intelligence gathering and enforcement – exerted by previous anticommunist commissions to the Secretariat of State Information (SIDE). Also, echoing the

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[73] "Plan CONINTES: texto del decreto," Clarín, 15 March 1960; "Se asegurará con energía la paz social en el país," Democracia, 14 March 1960; "El decreto de represión," La Nación, 16 March 1960.

[74] "Actas de la Comisión Decreto 12.681," 26 October 1960, f. 5-6, 10-11, Casa Militar 0.3.3.8 UC-10, exp. 266-60, CEN.

Commission's concerns, in August of 1960, the General Command of the Armed Forces revived a plan to structure "a political-administrative military government" that would place the "defense zones" established by Law 12.384 under military control in case of an "internal communist aggression," rendering the national territory as a "theater of war."[75]

Despite Frondizi's own assessment regarding the low risk of an actual communist attempt to take power, the military insisted that the convergence of communist agitation by a minority and the popular support for Peronism harbored a potential for "revolutionary action." As Gen. Toranzo Montero assessed after revelations of the "subversive plan":

> The intervention of the Army […] with the support of the security forces […] has defused an aggression to national order and internal peace […] demonstrating the existence of an organization whose scale, procedures, and objectives surpass those of common delinquency. This reveals the existence of a true internal enemy, and confirms the real development, within our national territory, of the worldwide phenomenon known as 'revolutionary war' in its subversive form.[76]

Between 1960 and 1961, and particularly after the public unveiling of CONINTES, an increase in Peronist underground activity[77] and the public projection of those arrested and tried by military tribunals as “addicts to the tyrant” reinforced the perception amongst Frondizi’s detractors that his administration’s apparent failure to control subversion was due to Frondizi’s own actual complicity with communism.

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[75] "Análisis de aspectos referentes a gobierno político-administrativo-militar de la directiva del Comando en Jefe del Ejército para la preparación del plan de operaciones V., variante 1 – Júpiter (Agresión Interna Comunista) (Op. 5)", August 1960, caja 1393, CEN. Despite having roots in a 1948 legislation passed by Perón, the strategy of creating special zones under military authority has been incorrectly deemed as a direct reproduction of the French Army's use of *quadrillage* (grid, or block warden system) in Indochina and Algeria. See Marie Monique Robin, Escadrons de la Mort: L'École Française (Paris: La Decouverte, 2004), 208-209.

[76] "Comunicado no. 4 del Comandante en Jefe del Ejército CONINTES," 1960, Caja 1673, CEN.

[77] Between 1958 and 1960, the youth section of the Peronist Resistance had given way to the Algeria-inspired National Liberation Front, the Peronist Revolutionary Movement, and the Uturuncos guerrilla. These, along with the Peronist labor "commandos" from the CGT, brought different sectors of Peronism (labor, students, professional associations) in contact not only with insurrectional *guevarismo*, but also with forms of militancy cultivated by the Peronist / anticommunist cadres of the *peronismo de base* (grassroots Peronism). Humberto Cucchetti provides an account of the decisive influence that Peronist / anticommunist worker and student organizations had in shaping neo-Peronist militancy, presenting it as a phenomenon of articulation between Catholicism, Peronism as "civil religion" and later forms of insurrectional Left-wing

The portrayal of Frondizi as an accomplice of Peronists and communists alike was a constant source of tensions between the Executive and anti-Peronist factions of the Army. These tensions lead, at their highest point, to a failed coup in 1959, justified by the “preemption” of a communist takeover. The attempted coup also revealed the dissenting officers’ connections to the Civic Revolutionary Movement (MCR), an anti-Peronist clandestine organization, linked to the anti-Peronist “revolutionary commandos” of 1955 and engaged in a vicious propaganda campaign against Frondizi’s alleged communist leanings. Moreover, according to intelligence sources, the MCR promoted “an open struggle” to “prevent the return of Peronism” and devised a plan to disguise as Peronist forces to perpetrate attacks against government officials, and justify the violent mobilization of the commandos to repress an alleged “Peronist coup.”[78]

Seeking to counter these negative perceptions, in March of 1961 the Minister of Interior Alfredo Vitolo recounted the achievements of the government’s fight against communism in a high-level meeting with the heads of the Armed Forces. Vitolo stressed the nature of communism as an anarchic and “dissolving doctrine” contrary to “our national ideal,” and characterized the government’s efforts as an ideological, cultural,

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militancy. See Humberto Cucchetti, Combatientes de Perón, Herederos de Cristo: Peronismo, Religión Secular y Organizaciones de Cuadros (Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2010).

[78] Intelligence reports noted that the most zealous anti-government activists in the MCR were Adolfo Sánchez Zinny, a *nacionalista* businessman; Socialist Party leader Américo Ghioldi; and several members of the anti-Frondizi faction of the Radical Party. “Actuación de los comandos civiles revolucionarios y del grupo golpista militar durante la reciente crisis, Junio-Julio 1959,” [c. July 1959], Caja 1338, CEN.

psychological, and political-legal battle against the enemy. Echoing civilian and military concerns about the future of the anticommunist crusade, Vitolo thus urged for the passing of a Law of National Defense that corresponded to the "reality" of "an internal front" that comprised "the entire nation, at all times."[79] The insistence on the centrality of the communist problem as a hindrance to the implementation of Frondizi's social and economic policies was likely meant to reassure the Armed Forces that, despite its initial pact with Perón, the Radical administration was committed to the key premises that inspired the *Libertadora*: the exclusion of "subversive" Peronism, the repression of communism, and the reinsertion of Argentina in the world economy in new terms.

Anticommunism and the "defense of democracy"

Under pressure by military officers to provide them with a "proper legal instrument" to continue the repression of communists and Peronists, Frondizi conveyed his reservations about constantly resorting to the state of siege, and warned against the effects of domestic and international perceptions of Argentina as a country in the brink of civil war. Moreover, to the commanders' insistence that CONINTES was in fact limiting their span of action by relegating them to "mere police functions," Frondizi expressed his fear that the Supreme Court could ultimately invalidate the emergency powers granted to the Executive via the CONINTES decrees, thus undoing the anticommunist and anti-Peronist legislation passed as emergency laws. Frondizi's solution was, ultimately, to give continuity, via an executive decree, to the use of the military apparatus for the physical and legal repression of dissidents via military "mobilizations" and the use of military tribunals for the prosecution of dissidents.[80]

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[79] "Reunión efectuada el 13 de Enero de 1961 a las 19:00 horas, en el salón de acuerdo de la presidencia de la nación," 13 January 1961, exp. 266 cde. 74, Casa Militar 0.3.3.8 UC-10, Caja 1393, CEN.

Following the meeting with the officers, Minister Vitolo issued a report, distributed to the press[81] and among the highest ranks of the Armed Forces, which synthesized the government's anticommunist efforts since the implementation of decree 4965 (April of 1959). The document recounted the detention of 195 communists, the closure of 217 Leftist organizations and 52 publications, the barring of the Communist Party from participating in elections, and the "reorganization" of the CGT to curtail the influence of the "communist minority" in the labor movement.[82] It also pointed to other "victories" in the "spiritual" and "ideological" fronts, which Vitolo attributed to the close collaboration with both the Church and the Armed Forces in promoting and celebrating the idea of Argentina as a nation belonging to the Western Christian tradition and as a bastion against communism.[83]

Vitolo's report also boasted about using the occasion of the celebrations of the sesquicentennial of national independence to "extol *argentinidad* and the principles that underpin our democratic and Christian society," with the Armed Forces appearing as a central actor in "hundreds of patriotic acts" celebrated throughout the country. In addition, Vitolo acknowledged the decisive influence of the anticommunist agenda set by the Sixth National Eucharistic Congress (Córdoba, 1959) and the First Inter-American

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[80] "Síntesis de lo expuesto en la reunión efectuada en el despacho del Excmo. Señor Presidente de la Nación" 14 March 1960, Caja 1683, CEN.

[81] "Acción anticomunista del gobierno," Clarín, 16 April 1961, 7.

[82] "El comunismo y la acción del gobierno," 13 April 1961, Caja 1421, CEN.

[83] "El comunismo y la acción del gobierno," Caja 1421, CEN.

Marian Congress (Buenos Aires, 1960), both of which Frondizi and other government officials attended in an effort to appeal to the Catholic audiences that massively gathered at these events.[84]

This pattern of attempted collaboration between the military, the Church, and the civilian administration consolidated in 1961 when, in a similarly significant gesture, Frondizi attended, along with Monsignor Antonio Caggiano, the inauguration of the First Inter-American Course on Counterrevolutionary War, headed by General Alcides López Aufranc, at the War College. With a curriculum that emphasized the study of Marxism-Leninism, the theory of revolution and counterrevolution, and various forms of counter-guerrilla operations, the event signaled a clear intent by the Argentine military to position the country at the forefront of "continental defense," and as the main mediator for a distinctively Latin American rendition of American and European notions of counterinsurgency, which was also imagined as a product for export to other armies in the continent.[85]

As explained in the influential writings of Gen. Osiris Villegas, the dissemination of the Argentine rendering of the doctrine of *guerra revolucionaria* had the purpose of showing "the peoples of Spanish America" the principles of the political and military thinking of communism and the measures and cautions that had to be taken to fight it.[86] For Villegas, for instance, the standard notion of "total war" had to be replaced by

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[84] On Frondizi's presence at the Eucharistic Congress in Córdoba, see Miranda Lida, "Entre Perón y Frondizi: El VI Congreso Eucarístico Nacional, Ciudad de Córdoba, 1959" in Gardenia Vidal, Jessica Blanco, comps., Catolicismo y Política en Córdoba, Siglos XIX y XX (Córdoba: Ferreyra Editor, 2010), 165-183.

[85] "El Ejército Argentino en la defensa y cohesión continental," 1961, Caja 1622, CEN.

[86] Osiris Villegas, Guerra Revolucionaria Comunista (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1962), 17.

"integral war," as the enemy became a "pacifist aggressor" that sought to destroy democracies from within and in a single global theater of operations with many internal and external fronts.[87] Villegas' proposed approach to communism's "pacifist aggression" – the infusion of "Christian values" into Argentine democracy and the creation of appropriate "legal instruments" for its defense – coincided, and certainly informed, Frondizi's attempts to bring together the fight against communism, the pursuit of economic development, and the maintenance of the constitutional order.

Thus, while the Armed Forces promoted the expansion of Argentina's "internal front" to all of Latin America, Frondizi insisted on the need to pursue the legal repression of communism at home. Indeed, his final proposal for the "Law for the Defense of Democracy" barred the Communist Party from electoral politics, while also expanding the scope of repression to other groups with a "totalitarian ideology"; that is, to Peronism, and eventually to groups located on the extreme Right.[88] The reasoning behind the Law was that the democratic state had the "legitimate right of self-defense" against "groups, organizations, and individuals seeking to replace it with a communist state or any other form of totalitarian government." The "totalitarian enemy" targeted by the Law was also portrayed as an agent of "extremism" and an accomplice of foreign interests invested in hampering "national development" and perpetuating Argentina's position of dependency in the world economy.[89] Thus, while emphasizing the moral weight of legality as a political instrument, Frondizi contributed to a notion of "national defense" that stressed the “dissolving” and “disaggregating” nature of the enemy’s ideas, doctrines, and values. Consistent with the idea that democracy’s only way to defend itself was through legality and the safekeeping of liberties, the repression of these *enemigos disolventes* had a strong penal component via the criminalization of “extremism,” and by delegating the enforcement of this measure to the state’s intelligence agency and main instrument of anticommunist repression, the SIDE.[90]

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[87] Villegas, Guerra Revolucionaria Comunista, 192-193.

[88] "Explicación y motivos del anteproyecto de Ley de Defensa de la Democracia," caja 1681, CEN.

[89] "Legítima defensa de la democracia," Clarín, 22 July 1961, 14-15.

In this way, Frondizi’s liberal-democratic anticommunism sought to reconcile a commitment to uphold the constitutional order with the pressing need, put forward by civilian and military sectors of his cabinet, to root out the ideological and material conditions that allowed the action of “subversive elements.” In addition, Frondizi emphasized the importance of attracting the support of Peronists through a combination of coercion and negotiation.[91] Ultimately, criticism from various political sectors, including the Socialist Party and anti-Frondizi Radicals, prevented the passing of the Law for the Defense of Democracy, as many noted the potential problems arising from the law’s vague definition of “totalitarianism” and the possibility of rendering detractors as enemies of the state, and questioned Frondizi’s self-portrayal as the custodian of democracy.[92]

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[90] “Explicación y motivos del anteproyecto de ley de defensa de la democracia,” [undated], Caja 1681, CEN.

[91] According to a US embassy official, a SIDE informant revealed that the main political purpose of Frondizi’s law was to “emasculate the Peronist movement, to scatter its forces and to force the integration of Peronists into the ranks of the official UCRI party.” Despatch no. 144, AmEmbassy Buenos Aires to DOS, “Law for the defense of democracy sent to Congress,” 1 August, 1961, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/8-161.

[92] “Comentarios a la ley de defensa de la democracia,” [undated], Caja 1424, CEN.

Throughout his term in office, Frondizi himself was the object of anticommunist suspicions due to his moderately neutralist foreign policy, his anti-imperialist positions, and his refusal to give in to pressures from the military. His willingness to negotiate with Perón, [93] his failure to "discipline" a revolt by Gen. Toranzo Montero,[94] his resistance to break relations with Cuba, and his political and familial ties to Peronists and Leftists, were all seen by his detractors as clear signs that he was, in fact, aiding to "further communist interests."[95]

The Cuban question was of particular transcendence for the weakening of Frondizi's anticommunist credentials. In 1959, Frondizi welcomed Fidel Castro to Argentina, and in 1961 he had a secret interview with Che Guevara that was later leaked to the press. In that meeting, Frondizi expressed his sympathy for the revolution but requested that Cuba use its influence to reduce Castroist activity in Argentina to relieve pressure from the military and avoid the rise of a regime that would be hostile to Cuba.[96]

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[93] According to Cnel. Juan Francisco Guevara (a protagonist of the *Libertadora* and a functionary at the Ministry of War and the Army's Chief of Staff during the Frondizi administration), Frondizi indeed allowed the participation of Peronist candidates in the election, as a gesture of democratic opening. However, aware of the electoral influence of Peronism, Minister Vitolo publicly framed the 1962 legislative and gubernatorial election as a potential "leap into the abyss" if the Radical Party's candidates were defeated by Peronist ones. Juan Francisco Guevara, Argentina en su Sombra (Buenos Aires: n.d., 1970), 137.

[94] When Toranzo's disgruntlement became known, he was forced to resign as Army Chief of Staff, and began a revolt in September of 1961, only to be reinstated by Frondizi at the expense of the Secretary of War, Gral. Elbio Anaya. These vacillations were an important source of discontent within the Armed Forces, as Frondizi's decision appeared as detrimental to military notions of authority and discipline. Guevara, Argentina en su Sombra, 125-131.

[95] According to US diplomatic sources, Frondizi's detractors were distrusting of Frondizi's brothers, Silvio and Risieri, who were known militants of Leftist organizations, and also of his close political relationship with developmentalist economist Rogelio Frigerio (also Frondizi's main mediator with Perón). Deptel 2072, From Buenos Aires To Secretary of State, 13 April 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/4-1362.

[96] "Entrevista del Che Guevara con el Dr. Frondizi en la residencia de Olivos," 18 August 1961, Caja 1381, CEN; "Una versión sobre la entrevista Frondizi-Guevara," 24 August 1961, Caja 1381, CEN.

The pressure increased when, after Guevara's visit, a group of Cuban exiles publicized a series of documents, allegedly provided by a former Cuban diplomat, which outlined a plan to destabilize Argentina through the training of guerrillas, the smuggling of arms, and a campaign of propaganda. The documents were in fact counterfeits, produced by the Cuban exile organization Frente Democrático Revolucionario with the intent to polarize Argentina and push for further isolation of Cuba from the inter-American system.[97] Despite public clarification by both Castro and Frondizi, reports from the Navy Intelligence Service defended the authenticity of the Cuban documents, and advised the administration to break relations with Castro and "immediately take the most severe measures of social prophylaxis" to defend "our hemisphere and our Christian way of life."[98] In early 1962, Navy and Air Force officers gave an ultimatum. "Communism," they claimed, "is a defense matter more than a purely political one… International communism constitutes at present time the greatest danger against liberty and democracy."[99]

Combined with the Cuban question, at the root of military and civilian distrust towards Frondizi was the question of whether a reincorporation of Peronism could keep communism in check by deactivating the main cause of agitation, or if Perón's followers, aided by the communists, would expand their "subversive" activities and bring the country to a state of civil war. Even as Frondizi eventually broke relations with Cuba, the military increased pressure to purge the cabinet from elements close to Rogelio Frigerio, the Secretary of Socio-Economic Affairs who was also Perón's contact with Frondizi.[100]

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[97] "La cuestión de los documentos secretos y la conveniencia de provocar un debate de clarificación," 18 October 1961, Caja 1381, CEN.

[98] "Al Excmo. Señor Presidente de la Nación," 9 October 1961, Caja 1625, CEN.

[99] Telegram no. 1283, From Buenos Aires to DOS, 31 January 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/1-3162.

The political crisis that led to the coup of March 29th 1962 made clear that neither the transitional period of the *Libertadora* nor the return to a constitutional regime had alleviated the Peronist / anti-Peronist divide, and that the exacerbation of the perceived Peronist-communist connection had reduced the tolerance of the military for the "democratic uncertainty" of fair and open electoral processes. This was clear in the justification given by the Chiefs of the Armed Forces in a communique that assessed Frondizi's removal as the consequence of the "political aloofness" and the "absolute silence" imposed on the military by the elected civilian authorities and their "liberal tradition." In their view, the President's loss of authority and "the reappearance of extremist forces infiltrated in democracy" (a reference to Peronism, and to some extent, to the Left) had forced the military to safeguard the constitutional order.[101]

Presidents José María Guido (interim between 1962 and 1963) and Arturo Illia (1963-1966, overthrown by coup) inherited this weakness of the Executive vis-á-vis the factional disputes within Armed Forces, added to their inability to provide a solution to de-radicalize the Peronists and defuse the possibility of another "preemptive" anti-Peronist coup. Directed by the military, Guido declared the annulment of the 1962 elections and the military intervention of the provinces with a Peronist majority. Also, resorting to the anti-tyrannical rhetoric of the *Libertadora*, he restored the anti-Peronist ban on "images, symbols, signs or expressions that tend to the undermining of democratic principles," as well as Frondizi's anticommunist edicts of 1959, reinforcing them with a new statute of political parties that completely proscribed the Communist Party for its pretended goal to "annihilate freedom and rule by dictatorship."[102] For Guido, these measures were a means to push Peronism to participate in politics by recognizing the "irreversible deposition of dictatorship." "Extremisms do not fit into the national spirit," he claimed; "we repudiate communist extremism as well as that of the Right."[103] Yet, the reaction from various political forces was identical to that against Frondizi's Law for the Defense of Democracy: while union leaders denounced the reactivation of Peronist influence amongst workers and the impending danger of "criminal subversive action,"[104] the opposition deemed the measures as totalitarian and unnecessary, and the Peronists warned that political repression could steer the movement towards "foreign doctrines."[105]

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[100] Telegram no. 1389, From Buenos Aires to DOS, 15 February 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/1-1562.

[101] "Communique issued by the Armed Forces Chiefs after the overthrow of President Frondizi" Despatch No 1251, From Amembassy Buenos Aires to DOS, 3 April 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/4-362.

Unsurprisingly, attempts to open a space for the incorporation of Peronism and push it towards moderation by means of "conciliation" candidacies – such as the neo-Peronist Unión Popular or the conservative Frente Nacional – were curtailed by the reaction from the Armed Forces.[106] This revealed another layer to the Peronist / anti-

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[102] Anuario de Legislación (Nacional y Provincial), 1962 (Buenos Aires: Revista de Jurisprudencia Argentina), 209-210.

[103] Telegram no. 2171, From Buenos Aires to DOS, 26 April 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/4-2662.

[104] "32 Bloc of Pro-Democratic Unions Attacks Peronist and Communist Activities," Airgram A-126 To Secretary of State From AmEmbassy Buenos Aires. 27 July 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/7-2762.

[105] Telegram no. 265. From Buenos Aires to Secretary of State. 26 July 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/7-8668.

[106] In a conversation with US ambassador Robert McClintock, General León Justo Bengoa, a key figure in promoting the Frente as a conservative moderating force, expressed his hope that the US government could persuade Perón to keep his followers in check or else request the Franco regime to expel Perón from Spain "on the ground that his irresponsible political attitude was aiding the Communist penetration in Latin

Peronist divide: the "nationalists" (the groups, mostly conservative, that sought the reincorporation of Peronism), who prioritized the coexistence with Peronism and de-radicalization of the Peronist movement; and the "democrats," the anti-Peronists in the military and the Radical party for whom "democracy" meant the preservation of the political and legal exclusion of Peronism as the most important legacy of the *Libertadora*.

Throughout the 1960s, the tension between the military's take on communism as a matter of national defense, and the attempts by various factions within Peronism to contest, disrupt, but also negotiate with civilian and military regimes exerted all kinds of pressures on the *nacionalista* constellation, particularly on its younger militants and adherents. Despite its portrayal as a national revolutionary ferment associated with communism and the attempts to banish it from the public sphere, Peronism remained a central referent across the political spectrum, both in positive and negative light. Whether as a source of chaos and disorder, as a radical and revolutionary impulse, or as a renewed instrument for the attainment of the national revolution, the Peronist-communist question would continue to inform public perceptions and political involvement (or even indifference)[107] at various levels of Argentine society, particularly for the young radicals who, from the trenches of the Left and Right, sought to position themselves vis-á-vis Peronism to contest, reject, reclaim, and/or resignify its legacies for their own purposes.

America". Airgram A-130, From AmEmbassy Buenos Aires to DOS, "The Political Views of Brig. General (retired) Leon Justo Bengoa," 27 July 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/7-2762.

[107] In his analysis of the Argentine middle-classes of the 1970s, Sebastian Carassai debunks the myth of a preponderant radical youth, showing various ways in which middle class youth expressed and acted out their frustration towards the political through "indifference" and a very political rejection of politics, and how popular culture adopted and reflected on these attitudes. See Sebastían Carassai, The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

Chapter 4. Revolution or Restoration: Argentina's New Right in the Long Sixties

> *We, the militants of this new* nacionalista *generation, refuse to recognize ourselves in the mirror of the men of conservative* nacionalismo […] *A new path will be opened when the sickened, rebellious youth of both the Left and the Right understand the reality of National-Syndicalism, the perfected thesis of the transcendent, of the national and the social, and break the narrow molds that impede facing the marvelous reality of la Patria.*
>
> - Alberto Ezcurra, leader of the Tacuara Nationalist Movement (1961)[1]

After 1955, *nacionalista* intellectuals, clerics, politicians and military officers pushed to accelerate the de-Peronization process initiated by the Revolución Libertadora. Their anti-Peronist consensus concealed, in reality, a multiplicity of interpretations of what the Peronist regime had meant to the country, and obscured the fact that their ideal of "the national revolution" could not escape the imprint left by their sworn enemy in the political imaginaries of the Argentine Left and Right.

This chapter examines the transformations and continuities within the *nacionalista* constellation caused by the paradoxical "absence" of Peronism as a formal political actor and its overwhelming presence in the horizon of Argentine Cold War politics. More specifically, the chapter analyzes the disruption introduced by the generational divide within *nacionalismo* with the emergence of the neofascist youth organization Tacuara, placing the latter in the context of other anticommunist initiatives in which military officers Catholic activists and civil society converged to formulate and carry out different strategies of national mobilization and transnational collaboration to tackle the threats of "revolutionary war."

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[1] "Los jóvenes rebeldes," Tacuara 10 (September 1961): 3.

Monks and guerrilleros: Tacuara's national revolution

The anticommunist and anti-Semitic organization known as Tacuara was a symptom of the transformations and fragmentations of *nacionalismo* caused by the fall of Perón, first, and the advent of the Cuban revolution, later. The trajectory of Tacuara and its various spinoffs has prompted a number of studies that emphasize the connections between its *nacionalista* roots and the group's straightforward anti-Semitic, authoritarian, ultra-Catholic, and anticommunist ideological matrix. This scholarly production has, in one way or another, identified Tacuara's broader significance for Argentine political history by drawing on the breaks and continuities in the group's ideology, forms of political action and articulation with their interlocutors and, most importantly, their purported "enemies." Indeed, the various Tacuaras were, at the same time, a reflection of the resilience of the most reactionary elements of *nacionalismo*, and a showcase for the relative plurality of positions within *nacionalismo* itself, engaged in redefining the nature of their orthodoxy in a volatile national and global context.[2] Caught in between the Peronista / anti-Peronista divide, the legacies of fascism and the radicalization of anticommunist Catholic militants, the young members of Tacuara embodied the conflicts and ruptures brought about by the clash between ideas of national and social revolution, counterrevolution and national liberation in a context of great political instability and polarization.

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[2] Scholarly production on Tacuara has portrayed the group as a link between fascist and neo-fascist violence in Argentina, emphasizing the relative stability of its discursive tropes and portrayals of "the enemy", and also as a phenomenon indicative of the plurality of nacionalismo. See, for instance, Federico Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*;* Daniel Lvovich, El Nacionalismo de Derecha: Desde sus Orígenes a Tacuara (Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2006); and María Valeria Galván, El Nacionalismo de Derecha en la Argentina Posperonista (1956-1969) (Rosario: Prohistoria, 2013). Also see Erik Nörling, "Arriba Tacuara!: Apuntes para la historia de un movimiento nacionalsindicalista argentino, 1957-1966" Aportes: Revista de historia contemporánea 22, no. 64 (2007): 45-55; and Michael Goebel, "A movement from right to left in Argentine nationalism? The Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista and Tacuara as stages of militancy," Bulletin of Latin American Research 26, no. 3 (2007): 356-77. The most well-known account from an investigative journalist remains Daniel Gutman, Tacuara. Historia de la Primera Guerrilla Urbana Argentina (Buenos Aires: Ediciones B, 2003). For accounts given by former militants see Roberto Bardini, Tacuara. La Pólvora y la Sangre (Mexico: Océano, 2002); and Juan Esteban Orlandini, Tacuara... Hasta Que la Muerte Nos Separe de la Lucha. Historia del Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara 1957-1972 (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor Argentino, 2008).

Tacuara emerged from a section of the Nationalist Union of Secondary Education Students (UNES), an activist student group founded in 1935 by Juan Queraltó, a militant of the pro-Peronist Nationalist Liberation Alliance (ALN). ALN had been a pillar of early *nacionalista* mobilization and an epicenter for the convergence of Argentine fascists and Catholic conservatives in the 1930s. Linked to the rise of the 1943 military regime, throughout the 1940s UNES gained significant presence in secondary schools in Buenos Aires and other provincial cities. Its later name, Tacuara, appeared publicly in 1945 as the title of a rudimentary student bulletin that sought to mobilize students in defense of "tradition, Catholicism, political independence and national dignity" against communism's attempt to promote "hatred and anarchy" in the country.[3] In a few months, Tacuara became the official publication of UNES and a platform for a "revolutionary syndicalist" project aimed mainly at combating "liberal education" for its atheistic, immoral, anti-scientific, and anti-patriotic principles.[4]

Like their ideological and spiritual mentors at ALN, UNES embraced *nacionalista* tropes and symbols, the veneration of nineteenth century *caudillos* and the use of the indigenous *tacuara* spear as a sign of true Argentine-ness.[5] Nationalism did not preclude

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[3] Tacuara: órgano oficial de la Asociación Otto Krause de alumnos industriales, no. 1 (July 1945): 11.

[4] Tacuara: vocero oficial de UNES 2 (October 1945): 16. Tacuara considered liberal education as "anti-scientific" for its lack of a true doctrine of transcendental values and its skeptical view of Good and Evil.

[5] "The tacuara spear is something that belongs to us. Our land placed it within the reach of the *criollos* that one day abandoned the rough duties of the countryside to take it into their hands, and to the scream of "liberty!" turned a colony into a new and flourishing nation." Tacuara 1 (July 1945), 1.

UNES from admiring ideologies and regimes that were perceived as part of a transatlantic common Christian and nationalist lineage. Indeed, their dictum ("For God and Country, until death do us apart from the struggle") echoed Spanish *falangismo*, and more concretely the figure of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, their role model of a true syndicalist national-revolutionary leader. The success of *falangismo* in defeating communism was seen by the UNES youth as the reencounter of the Spanish people "with the eternal Spain," possible only by the "spilling of torrents of blood to extirpate the communist virus."[6] Communism, with its atheism and radical foreignness, stood in in the way of *nacionalismo's* goal of attaining the "reencounter of the People with *la Patria*." As an antithesis to the communist "virus," *nacionalista* militancy demanded a reactionary vision of the "national revolution," one that paid tribute to a true Argentine essence by defending it from its most radical enemy. This negative (*anti*-communist) association and identification with nationalist causes hinged on the idea that the same "Red Anarchism" defeated by the *falangistas* was threatening all that Argentine *nacionalistas* deemed sacred: the unity and sovereignty of the Argentine people, its Hispanic heritage, and its Christian faith.[7]

In conflating revolution and reaction, UNES was a showcase for the legacies and interwar-to-postwar trajectories of fascism in Argentina, and a postwar iteration of Argentine *nacionalismo* that sought to heal the nation from the ills caused by the country's own liberal tradition, and the alleged complicity between Judaism, Freemansonry and communism. For the early *tacuaristas*, the full identification of *nacionalismo* with a radical and existential anticommunist struggle amounted to a defense of tradition, hierarchy and order, and, at the same time, gave the group its "revolutionary" quality, providing a link to other reactionary nationalist experiences abroad. In the words of Aníbal d'Angelo Rodríguez, editor of *Tacuara*, the militant youth of UNES understood "the urgency of subverting this decadent bourgeois order, to found a Nationalist State, both revolutionary and respectful of God and our national traditions."[8]

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[6] "Una definición de nacionalismo," Tacuara: vocero oficial de UNES 3 (November 1945): 5.

[7] The resemblance of UNES's anticommunism with Spanish *falangista* doctrine is striking, as attested by the following passage from *falange* ideologue, José Corts Grau: "For us to be anticommunists, it should be enough to understand, through a simple dialectic, how communism systematically negates the Fatherland by alienating men from their national roots, and how it destroys the values of Catholicism, the true substance of our people." José Corts Grau, "Nuestro anticomunismo," Revista de Estudios Políticos 35-36 (1947): 127.

For UNES, their revolution was rooted in "the national will to impose new conceptions, new norms for a different style." As a "quixotic minority," the Argentine youth were the carriers of a new generational force based on the ideal of a "heroic militancy": "Monks and *guerrilleros*; asceticism and rebellion; two modes of being […] The doctrine of this generation is a true apostolate. We are the apostles of the National Revolution."[9] At least discursively, UNES / Tacuara sought both a revolutionary, radical, and "heroic" subversion of liberal Argentina and the creation of a totalitarian state that restored the values of tradition and religion. The contextual meaning of these postulates was given by the shifting environment of the mid 1940s, in which UNES / Tacuara aligned itself with the 1943 revolution, first, and with early Peronism, later. Working fully under the mantle of the Peronist ALN, UNES adhered to the regime's attempts to rebuild Argentina from a nationalist-Catholic blueprint, through the continuous mobilization of the youth and the workers in favor of Perón's version of the "national revolution."[10]

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[8] Aníbal d'Angelo Rodríguez, "Nuestra posición," Tacuara 2 (October 1945): 1.

[9] "Generación y juventud," Tacuara 4 (August 1946): 7.

Although UNES limited its scope of action to the realm of student organizations and street violence, the fall of Perón in 1955 was the apex of the political crisis long-announced by the *nacionalistas* and amplified their perception that communism could capitalize on this instability and seize power. UNES was not alien to the divide between Peronism and anti-Peronism, and, through the ALN, it partook in the struggles, both physical and symbolic, to define the path of the "national revolution" and carry out its broad political claims – national unity, self-determination and the rejection of foreign intervention.

On the eve of Perón's downfall, the ALN remained loyal to Peronism, and under the new leadership of Guillermo Patricio Kelly, it worked as a propagandist cell that upheld the ideal of "Perón *nacionalista*," bolstered by a fierce anticommunism and the ideological trinity of Church, Armed Forces, and the Argentine people. While by 1954 the ALN was engaging in criticism of the regime's bureaucratism and the problem of inflation[11], the group clung to its Peronism, blaming the "traitors" – the "bad clergy," the communists, and the capitalists – for the crisis. In 1955, the ALN actively and violently intimidated anti-Peronist demonstrators, and led the burning of churches, as Kelly announced the creation of the National Anticommunist Commando, a Peronist pro-Catholic group that vowed to combat “to the death” the *antipatrias* and “whoever goes into the streets against the revolution and its Leader.”[12] Working as Peronist shock troops and later as a felonious offshoot of the Peronist Resistance, Kelly’s Commando was barred by the 1955 junta, and its members jailed under charges of rebellion, criminal association, and arms possession.

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[10] UNES's links to Peronism were not only ideological; these *nacionalistas* were close collaborators to the Peronist establishment, and more concretely, to one of the pioneers of the ritualization of Peronist symbols and liturgy: Oscar Ivanissevich, Aníbal d'Angelo's uncle. As Perón's ambassador in the U.S. and later as Secretary of Education, Ivanissevich not only facilitated the clandestine immigration of Nazi collaborators, but also played a key role in fostering the cult to Perón and Evita, and what Mariano Plotkin has called "the nationalization of May Day and the Seventeenth of October." See Mariano Plotkin, Mañana es San Peron, 73-82. On the immigration of Nazi war criminals to Argentina, see Ronald C. Newton, The "Nazi Menace" in Argentina, 1931-1947 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[11] "Burócratas del miedo. La rutina ahoga los impulsos revolucionarios," Alianza 25 (September 1954).

The criminalization of Peronist militants posed a serious challenge for the youth factions of the *nacionalista* movement whom, like their elders, were seeking to reposition themselves vis-á-vis an institutionalized identification of all Peronists as “totalitarians” and “addicts to the tyrant,” and of the Peronist Resistance as a “national-revolutionary” strand of subversion that could replicate the methods of communism. In this regard, the public reemergence of the UNES-based Tacuara as Tacuara Nationalist Movement (MNT) in the mid-1950s was the product of the redefinitions within *nacionalismo* vis-à-vis the *peronista-antiperonista* divide; and of the growing anxieties amongst various *nacionalista* groups regarding the possibility of a Leftist takeover of Peronism.

Tacuara was advised by Father Julio Meinvielle, an anti-Peronist and a notable intellectual figure who championed a version of *nacionalismo* rooted in Catholic integrism, anti-Semitism, and anticommunism. Tacuara embraced an essentially reactionary “national revolution,” along the lines proposed by another one of its mentors, the theologian Jordán B. Genta: a revolution against the enemies of both Western civilization and Argentineness – the Jews, the Freemasons, the communists, and the bourgeoisie. For Tacuara, this entailed a form of militancy defined by its idealist *occidentalismo* (for them, a concept usurped by the United States), and a "closed nationalism that extols the virtues of its people," finding solidarity in "all peoples that pursue the same militant *nacionalismo*."[13] Linked to the group's vindication of Catholic *hispanidad*, this notion of nationalist solidarity also prompted Tacuara to adopt a stout anti-imperialist *hispanoamericanismo*, in opposition to political, economic, and cultural foreign influence. Without abandoning its original fascist/*falangista* platform, Tacuara subtly refashioned its nationalism in favor of anti-imperialist positions which in the context of the 1960s seemingly redefined the boundaries of nationalist anticommunist solidarity to include a sense of affinity with the national liberation struggles in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.[14] Surely, far from being a clear shift to the Left, Tacuara's anti-imperialism owed more to *nacionalista* doctrinal views, passed down from Meinvielle and Genta, of communism and capitalism as products of the same imperialist impulses for world domination, inspired, or even directed, by Judaism.

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[12] “Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista reactivated – tense days ahead,” Despatch no. 1044, From AmEmbassy Buenos Aires to DOS. 12 May 1955, Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files: Argentina 1955-1959 (hereafter cited as USARG 1955-1959), 735.00/5-1255.

Led by José Baxter and Alberto Ezcurra, the MNT cultivated a nationalist-counterrevolutionary identity that understood Catholicism as an inseparable, defining element of Argentine nationality, and as a spiritual weapon against the enemies of Christianity and the nation. A crucial formative experience for these *tacuaristas* was their closeness to former Nazi collaborator and Peronist ideologue Jacques de Mahieu,[15] whose theory of the "communitarian state" worked as a link between early Peronism and the *tacuarista* project, as it was laid out in the group's "Basic Revolutionary Program."[16] This rapprochement of the *nacionalista* youth with Peronism through the latter's most illiberal strand was indicative of the dual memory of Peronism, present in Meinvielle and Genta's writings, consisting of a positive valuation of Perón's early adherence to an "integral" *nacionalismo*, and an avowed rejection of his regime's social-democratic and "liberal" aspects, present since its beginning but made clearer with the 1949 constitution. The mythical double betrayal of the "national revolution" (first, by the downfall of Perón, and later, by the insufficiently radical "de-Peronization" undertaken by the Libertadora) allowed Tacuara to honor its UNES roots as a period of heroic *nacionalista* mobilization and to frame the defeat of Perón as the triumph of the liberal and crypto-communist elements that allegedly destroyed the nationalist experiment from within.

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[13] "Nuestra zarza ardiente," Tacuara 7 (1959): 1.

[14] "The Revolution takes on the responsibility of liberating Spanish America from imperialist oppression. Only a *Hispanoamérica* united from the Rio Grande to the Antarctica will guarantee the peace and progress for the exploited peoples of the continent." "Programa Básico Revolucionario," Tacuara 10 (1961): 4.

[15] A collaborator of the Nazis in Vichy France, Mahieu arrived as a "refugee" in Argentina during the Peronist regime, and became a university professor and an advisor for Perón. On Mahieu's connections to the French Right, see Luis Miguel Donatello, "De la Action Française al peronismo. De Maurras a los

Tacuara's "solution" to the post-Perón *nacionalista* dilemma was, thus, to navigate the *peronista* / *anti*-peronista divide by reinstating its ideological and political links with the communitarian Peronist Right. In this way, Tacuara sought to stabilize the *nacionalista* imagination and promote its unity through a radical re-activation of its

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Templarios. Circulación de ideas entre Francia y Sudamérica en la posguerra"; in Fortunato Mallimacci and Humberto Cucchetti (comps.), Nacionalismos y Nacionalistas: Debates y Escenarios en América Latina y Europa (Buenos Aires: Gorla, 2011), 143-59. Also see Daniel Lvovich, El Nacionalismo de Derecha: Desde sus Orígenes a Tacuara (Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2006).

[16] Mahieu's theory of the state was a defense of a hierarchical and vertical distribution of power in political communities, rooted on the premise of "natural inequality," which translated in the innate ability of a minority to command, and the necessity of obedience by the majority. Mahieu was also a proponent of social corporatism as an alternative to liberal notions of representation, and an advocate of full state control of the economy. See Jacques Marie de Mahieu, El Estado Comunitario (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Arayú, 1962).

fascist traits – inherited from UNES - to combat the threats of Judaism and communism in the context of the Cold War and the challenges raised by the Cuban revolution.[17]

In the context of the political crisis that surrounded Arturo Frondizi's anticommunist initiatives, Tacuara presented itself as an agent of violent revolutionary action and for the unification of *nacionalismo*, and as a stern critic of "anticommunist hysteria" that, they argued, offered false solutions and alternatives to Marxism. "It would be extremely narrow-minded," they claimed, "to blame everything on Frondizi… it is not Frondizi or [his party] that need to be toppled, but the Regime that has been producing Frondizis for a hundred years […] To attain this goal, any means are valid, because what is at stake is the existence of *la patria* itself […] The time has come for the gunshots to be heard; otherwise one should ask the Chinese why the hell they invented the gunpowder."[18] Tacuara called to "stop masking the country's reality" and pursue national-syndicalist and revolutionary "New Order" to defeat the forces of Marxism, and, with "a bomber's passion," destroy the demo-liberal, capitalist and bourgeois regime. Tacuara's idea of the revolution was, in short, a reiteration of fascist tropes about the necessity of a radical and violent change to eliminate "the enemy" as the obstacle to this "New Order" and to the full realization of the Argentine naton. It was also a means to highlight the moral and political ineptness of Argentine liberal democracy in repressing communism.

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[17] "Nacionalismo y revolución," Tacuara: Vocero de la Revolución Nacionalista 10 (September 1961): 1. On the instability of the notion of "Peronist Right" see Juan Luis Besoky, "La derecha peronista en perspectiva," Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos [Online]. URL: http://nuevomundo.revues.org/65374

[18] "Nacionalismo y revolución," Tacuara: Vocero de la Revolución Nacionalista 10 (September 1961): 1.

Tacuara translated these political and moral imperatives into violent action. The most palpable expressions of this violence were the countless attacks against Argentine Jews: the bombing and vandalization of synagogues; the assassination of adversaries; the painting of swastikas in public places in response to Adolf Eichmann's abduction by Israeli secret agents; as well as public demonstrations and street fights with Jewish and Leftist students, all of which captured national and international attention.[19] This anti-Semitic violence caused public outrage and prompted demands to Minister Vitolo for government action. In 1960, under the state of siege declared by Frondizi, two police raids of the group's headquarters resulted in the arrest of dozens of *tacuaristas*, none of whom were sentenced or imprisoned. During Frondizi's term, Tacuara remained under the government's scrutiny but enjoyed a level of impunity that can be attributed to the group's covert connections to military officers, the police apparatus, and the Church.

A number of state intelligence reports indeed show that Tacuara's open anti-Semitism and anticommunist rhetoric, and their connections to *nacionalista* intellectuals behind the periodical *Azul y Blanco*[20] and to Catholic universities, baffled the Argentine security forces, who held ambiguous assessments of the group's political background and intentions. Army intelligence officers, for instance, argued that Tacuara had no connections to the military and in fact portrayed them as a victims of a communist attempt to blame anti-Semitic and "subversive actions" on to "elements of the Right."[21] In other intelligence reports, Tacuara was described as a well-organized *grupo de choqu*e of Catholics and ultra-nationalists militants trained in martial arts and handling of weapons, spread throughout various high school and university student organizations, thus ideal to "infiltrate atheist, anti-Catholic and Leftist groups." Thus, for the state's security apparatus, Tacuara was a movement that, like Peronism, needed to be "controlled" to keep their nationalist appeals from falling captive to the infiltration by "Leftist nationalists," who could then steer the organization into the ranks of Marxism.[22]

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[19] "Protesta estudiantil contra la entidad 'Tacuara'," Correo de la Tarde, 24 August 1960. In April of 1960, the American Jewish Committee reported on the increased activities of neo-fascist youth organizations in the US, Europe, and Latin America, presenting Argentina as the most concerning case of anti-Semitic activity in the Southern hemisphere. After Eichmann's detention, the AJC also expressed worry about Tacuara's documented actions against the Jewish community ("The Pathology of Anti-Semitism". American Jewish Commitee. 53rd Annual Meeting, April 22-24. Background material for Saturday Luncheon Session, 1960; American Jewish Committee, "Minutes of Executive Board Meeting," October 28-30, 1960). These reports prompted the U.S. Embassy to follow the group's activities, focusing on the virulent anti-Semitism, Nazi-fascist paraphernalia, and pro-Peronist campaigning of these "hoodlums." Airgram A-265, From AmEmbassy Buenos Aires to DOS, 13 March 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/4-1862.

[20] As historian Valeria Galván has noted, Azul y Blanco had a very sympathetic relationship to Tacuara, rooted in a positive valuation of the group's *nacionalista* doctrine and also through the collaboration of *tacuarista* Roberto Etchenique as a columnist for Azul y Blanco. Support for Tacuara came in the form of reports on the group's activities and, later, in editorials that either justified or denied the accusations of anti-Semitism waged against the Tacuara. See Valeria Galván, El Nacionalismo de Derecha, especially chapter 3.

These "suspicions" were, in fact, rooted in the reality of Tacuara's developing internal contradictions. In October of 1960, a major split in the MNT resulted from the tensions between Tacuara's genetic neofascist impulse and the shifting meanings of "national liberation" and "national revolution" in the context of the Cuban revolution and the anti-colonial struggles in the Third World. On one side stood Baxter and Ezcurra, who decried Peronism's fragmentation and lack of ideological coherence, and gradually sought to infuse their form of rebellious Catholic militancy into the insurrectional *nacionalismo* of the *Resistencia Peronista*.[23] And on the other, there was Father Meinvielle, who resented the movement's proximity to Peronism and the alleged Marxist turn of the young leaders, and, in response, founded the *Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista* (GRN).

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[21] This argument was made by SIDE agents in a confidential meeting with members of an important Jewish organization (the Delegation of Israelite Associations in Argentina) to convince them that any act of anti-Semitism was, in reality, an act of communist provocation and part of a plan for large-scale "subversion." Added to what they saw as "government inaction," various Jewish organizations requested, unsuccessfully, the authorization from Minister Vitolo to arm themselves against Tacuara's violence ("La nueva ola antisemita en la Argentina," 25 October 1961, caja 1626, CEN.) Nonetheless, several Jewish youth self-defense groups emerged from this context of anti-Semitic violence, many of them trained by Israeli instructors with a militant Zionist slant. See Raanan Rein and Ilan Diner, "Miedos infundados, esperanzas infladas, memorias apasionadas: Los grupos de autodefensa judíos en la Argentina de los años sesenta," Estudios, 26 (Jul-Dec 2011): 163-185.

[22] "Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara" [undated memorandum], caja 1424, CEN. On the interplay between public perceptions of Tacuara's actions and the treatment of the group by state security agencies see Valeria Galván, "Discursos de los organismos de inteligencia argentinos sobre el Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara durante la guerra fría (1958-1966)," Antíteses 2, n. 4 (jul.-dez. 2009): 741-767.

Under Meinvielle's guidance and with alleged links to an ultra-nationalist faction of the Army, GRN grew considerably and gained presence in Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Bahía Blanca and Mar del Plata.[24] GRN became visible proponent of anti-democratic and anticommunist conservative nationalism that extolled the national revolution as the only alternative to liberal legality's "complicity" with "Bolshevik subversion." Hinging on the notion of *restauración*, GRN attempted to distance itself from Tacuara's flirtations with insurrectional Peronism through a return to what they imagined as *nacionalista* orthodoxy, with Meinvielle, Irazusta, Castellani, amongst others, as their main ideological references. This orthodoxy consisted in a vindication of the national-syndicalist project and "the doctrinal principles of Catholic, traditional and hierarchical Nationalism"; and a reinjection of fascist and *nacionalista* tropes, such as a marked militarism, a rebuttal of Judaism, and the veneration for Mussolini's leadership, as well as the *caudillo* qualities of Juan Manuel de Rosas, who, in the revisionist - *nacionalista* imagination appeared as "the restorer of Law".[25]

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[23] Alberto Ignacio Ezcurra, "La crisis del peronismo," Ofensiva 11 (November 1962): 3-4.

[24] "Información: Brote de sucesos antisemitas en la Argentina," 25 November 1960, caja 1424, CEN.

[25] "Resolución del Consejo Nacional de la Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista," Nuevo Orden 2 (February 1963): 4.

GRN's awareness of the realm of politics was defined by stark dualities: there was, for instance, no struggle between East and West, but one between humanity (Christian and civilized) and inhumanity (atheist and anti-natural). Thus, theirs was a radical choice: "Either civilization steps forward in yet another triumphal crusade, with the Sword and the Cross in hand; or it will perish."[26] Their self-conception as fanatical defenders of God and tradition was also informed by a notion of sacrifice and the acceptance of "the struggle" as divine design, as shown in the group's "official prayer," "borrowed" and adapted from Gen. Jacques Massu, the French officer who led the paratrooper division at the battle of Algiers: "Give me Oh Lord, what is left from you / Give me that which is never requested from you… Give me the insecurity and the stir / Give me the storm and the struggle… Give me what others turn down / but give me also the courage, the strength and the faith."[27]

Paradoxically, the meanings of this restoration of orthodox youth *nacionalismo* were already contextually different vis-à-vis its historical referents. This was evident, for instance, in the book catalogue that GRN often included in its many publications: from classic figures of *nacionalismo* such as Leopoldo Lugones, Leonardo Castellani, and Julio Irazusta, to the integral nationalist writings of Charles Maurras, to theoretical and practical works on "revolutionary war," such as Claude Delmas' *La guerre*

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[26] "Falsos ídolos de Occidente," Restauración: Órgano de difusión de la Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista 2, no. 3 (April 1964): 3.

[27] GRN members performed this official prayer at every public and private meeting ("Un grupo de jóvenes nacionalistas, uniformados, con sus banderas y brazaletes, oficiaron una misa por los caídos," La Razón, 25 May 1965).

revolutionnaire and Mao's *On Guerrilla Warfare*.[28] These catalogues were an important showcase for the shape and content of this "restored" and yet novel iteration of *nacionalismo*, which understood itself as the product of both local and global politico-intellectual currents and thus subject to adjustment and adaptation to changing environments and new forms of political struggle.

A conference delivered by Meinvielle in 1962 at the nationalist bookstore Huemul on Buenos Aires' commercial Santa Fe Avenue illustrates precisely this fundamental shift for the restorationist *nacionalistas* who placed "the national revolution" in opposition to a Marxist one. According to Meinvielle, the dead end posed by liberalism and communism had left the Argentine people with the only one choice: to accept the Catholic City as the legitimate product of modern world. It was Meinvielle's was thus a "restoration, for the new circumstances, of the way of life inculcated by Catholic Spain." While not a central theme in his writings, Meinvielle paid attention to the problem of "revolutionary war," recognizing its all-encompassing nature of revolutionary war, and the need for the action of the nationalist youth

> in all spheres […] including, foremost, the sphere of armed struggle, so the bands of communist guerrillas trained in Moscow, Prague, and Havana face the opposition of young Argentines - students, workers, high, middle, and popular-class – who know how to fight, with the Cross on their chests and the rifle on their hand, for the great values of God and Fatherland, the only ones worth living and dying for.[29]

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[28] "De nuestro catálogo," El Restaurador (November 1963): 8; "De nuestro catálogo," Restauración 2 (May 1962): 23.

[29] Julio Meinvielle, Conferencia sobre la Guerra Revolucionaria y la Revolucion Nacional en la Argentina (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Plata, 1962), 18.

This idea of the restoration of the Catholic City in a modern Cold War context and through modern, violent means is an important revision within *nacionalismo* against a mere reiteration of previous attempts to formulate a political project that could mobilize popular support. Even the "traditionalist" strand of Meinvielle's following (the GRN) understood the combination of reactionary attitude with the enemy's methods of engagement (guerrilla warfare) as the only possible "modern" response to a rapidly changing Cold War context where the role and meaning of *nacionalista* orthodoxy itself was at stake.

In the period between 1960 and 1966, the distance between the MNT and GRN fluctuated constantly, with the conflation of Judaism and communism as one, if not the most important, shared ideological premise, and the relation to Peronism as a constant source of conflict even within the MNT itself. Throughout the 1960s, GRN was responsible for several acts of violence against Jewish and Leftist organizations, capturing public attention for the assassination of Jewish student Raúl Alterman in 1964. For GRN this act was a response to the enemy's "definitive steps towards direct action" and to "the opening of hostilities in the battlefront," signaled by the assassination of two Tacuara militants (whom, despite their differences, they still saw as fellow *nacionalistas*).[30] In 1965, in a public demonstration to honor Argentina's founding father, José de San Martín, GRN militants appeared dressed in khaki militia uniforms, haranguing against "the *antipatria*" in the Ministry of Interior, vowing to wage a war against freemasonry, communism and Judaism, and hailing the Homeland, King Christ, Juan Manuel de Rosas, and "the revolution."[31] By 1966, the group rejected the viability of an "open civil war" and clarified that their anti-Semitism was not racial, but political and thus an anti-Zionist position. By that time, GRN kept a militancy of some 200 members engaged in what they called a "purely ideological activism," which maintained its original neofascist traits.[32]

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[30] Restauración 2, no. 3 (April 1964): 4. Despite their pervasive anti-Semitism ("*Patria sí, judíos no*" was according to them a "cry for sovereignty") GRN often denied the charges of being *racially* anti-Semitic, and argued that theirs was a "political and economic concern" and demanded that the government pushed for the assimilation of all Jews as well as the end of Zionist activities in the country ("Racismo," Nuevo Orden 3, no. 4, April 1964: 2-3)

On Tacuara's side, Ezcurra's vociferous anti-Semitic harangues – "let the Jews be put to the sword! Let the Jews be put to the gallows!" – at a 1962 electoral rally for the right-wing Unión Cívica Nacionalista, were undistinguishable from the GRN's violent actions, and were equally a source of grave concern for Argentine and US officials, as well as Jewish organizations home and abroad. Himself a candidate for the UCN, Ezcurra also called for a violent cleansing of the "the system" and gave warning that, if outlawed, Tacuara would not limit themselves "to simply placing posters on walls… we will actually blow up the walls […] if an attempt is made to hinder us, the actions of the [French extreme right organization] OAS will seem like child's play."[33] At the end of the event, the attendees were prompted to join the final campaign rally for Andrés Framini, a Peronist CGT leader running for governor of Buenos Aires and with whom UCN held close ties.

Tacuara's compromise with Peronism did not necessarily come at the expense of the group's national-syndicalist and clearly neofascist imprint, made apparent in

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[31] "Así ocurrió," La Razón, 15 May 1965, Caja 2117, CEN.

[32] "Ellos quieren salvarnos," Panorama (February 1966): 108.

[33] "Tacuara campaign rally attacks Jews, the United States and Democracy" 18 April 1962. Despatch no. 1313, From AmEmbassy Buenos Aires To DOS, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00/4-1862.

Ofensiva, Tacuara's purported vehicle for the indoctrination of its members. There, the Spanish Falange, the Romanian Iron Guard, and the pan-nationalist organization New European Order *(Europäische Neue Ordnung*) were praised as sources of political inspiration.[34] Echoing some of *Combate*'s diatribes, in *Ofensiva* the *antipatria* enemy had a familiar face: Marxist intellectuals and "pseudo-scientific Jews" (a reference to Freudian psychoanalysis) who sought to destroy the basis of *nacionalismo* (dignity, fidelity, love, patriotism) with their reductionist appeal to the "primeval animal instincts" of "absolute materialism" and "sexual deviation."[35] For Tacuara, the Jews thus remained "first line" enemies of "Faith and Homeland," an attitude justified by one of the group's militants as rooted in a "spirit of medieval intolerance" and a lifestyle marked by "categorical negations and affirmations."[36] Much like the GRN, Tacuara held on to the rhetoric of the "Judeo-Marxist conspiracy," and throughout the first half of the 1960s, it often worked in conjunction with GRN to carry out acts of intimidation against the Jewish community under the name of "Guerrilla Nacionalista."[37]

The rift between GRN and the MNT lay on more nebulous territory. For the MNT, for instance, the idea of revolution posed a simple choice: if civil regimes were too weak and tolerant with communism, and the Armed Forces had relinquished their duty to defend "the most sacred values," only a "truly national" and "total" revolution could overcome the Marxist impulse.[38] GRN's notion of the "national revolution," on the other hand, was intimately linked to the idea of dictatorship as "an extreme and yet positive form of medicine" for a "living, organic entity that is besieged internally and externally by illness, blunder and evil."[39] Citing Spanish conservative thinker Juan Donoso Cortés, GRN saw dictatorship as the "miracle" without which legality cannot be sustained, and thus, in a context of general chaos, as the only way to "save society." In this respect, while MNT militants longed for the "strong hand" of a "macho man, a *caudillo criollo*" along the lines of Juan Manuel de Rosas, the organization's translation of Mahieu's communitarianism (rebuked by GRN) into a doctrine of social justice that could build concrete links with Peronist labor organizers,[40] gave the group's self-portrayal as "the synthesis of Tradition and Revolution"[41] a contextually different meaning vis-á-vis the GRN. Ultimately, as the fall of Frondizi raised the stakes for the MNT's alliance with the labor and *nacionalista*-Catholic wing of Peronism,[42] the tensions between Alberto Ezcurra's clerico-fascism and José Baxter's national-revolutionary Peronism caused the disintegration of the original MNT nucleus, with Ezcurra later abandoning the group to enter the Catholic seminary, and Baxter, along with future *Montonero* José Luis Nell, forming the new *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario Tacuara* (MNRT).

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[34] "Sobre las futuras elecciones," Ofensiva, no. 12 (December 1962): 7.

[35] "Sobre la espontaneidad y la improvisación," Ofensiva, no. 12 (December 1962): 2.

[36] R.V., "Una actitud equívoca," Ofensiva no. 9 (September 1962): 7.

[37] "Diversos atentados cometidos desde el 3.1.64"; "Diversas actividades nazis / antisemitas (desde abril 1965)," caja 2117, CEN.

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[38] "Fuerzas Armadas y liberalismo," Ofensiva, no. 9 (September 1962): 4-5.

[39] "Mesa de cerdos," Nuevo Orden, no. 2 (1963): 2.

[40] Tacuara's links to Peronist unions date back to the 1958-1959 labor mobilizations against Frondizi's economic program, where Tacuara militants attempted to "infiltrate" Peronism via the so-called Brigadas Sindicales. Unable to gain any political traction within Peronism, ultimately these Tacuara brigades ended up integrating themselves to the structures of Peronist unions. See Juan Manuel Padrón, "Trabajadores, sindicatos y extrema derecha. El Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara frente al movimiento obrero, Argentina (1955- 1966)." XIª Jornadas Interescuelas/ Departamentos de Historia. Tucumán, 2007.

[41] "Boletín de la Secretaría de Formación del Comando Mar del Plata. 'Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara' Noviembre de 1963. No. 4." Legajo 10411, f. 216, Archivo de la Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de Buenos Aires (La Plata, Argentina); frome hereon, DIPBA.

[42] Alberto Ignacio Ezcurra, "La crisis del peronismo," Ofensiva, no. 11 (November 1962): 3-4.

The MNRT made a spectacular debut in 1963 with the robbery of over a hundred thousand dollars from the Policlínico Bancario in Buenos Aires. A few months later, most of the participants were arrested and the "nationalist-leftist" faction of Tacuara was revealed to the public as the perpetrator of Operation Rosaura. Arguably portrayed by some accounts as "Tacuara's first armed strike," the hit became the basis for crediting Tacuara (and not just the MNRT) with being "the first urban guerrilla" in Argentina.[43] Conceivably, this interpretation of the MNRT as a genealogical precedent to the guerrilla groups that populated the revolutionary Left of the 1970s has given way to clashing interpretations about the fascist and neofascist genealogy of Tacuara and the converging histories of Left and Right wing violence.[44]

After Operation Rosaura, the MNRT publicly portrayed itself as a "the only paramilitary organization with training and armament… a popular army in a country occupied by foreign forces."[45] Shunned by remaining MNT militants, who flirted with Peronism but claimed to remain strictly anti-Marxist[46], the MNRT was working towards a full alliance with Peronism to provide it with the revolutionary element that, according to them, it had lacked since its illegalization. For the MNRT, the Justicialista Party had indeed functioned as a "petit-bourgeois vanguard party" that denied the "spontaneity" or "autonomy" of the masses,[47] and, in contrast, the new Tacuara saw itself as "the synthesis of *lo social* and *lo nacional*."[48] This populist element, central in the self-understanding of Peronism, was to become, according to the MNRT, the catalyst of the long overdue "national revolution."

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[43] This is the case of Daniel Gutman's thorough and well-known journalistic account in Tacuara. Historia de la Primera Guerrilla Urbana Argentina. The same applies to Karina García, "1963: Asalto al Policlínico Bancario. El primer golpe armado de Tacuara," Todo es Historia, no. 363 (August 1998): 8-19.

[44] Writing from the perspective of the history of the revolutionary Left, Gabriel Rot notes that the MNRT was, at the most, a parallel development to the emergence of other Leftist organizations with little or no connection to *nacionalismo* or Peronism. See Gabriel Rot, "El mito del Policlínico Bancario," Lucha Armada en la Argentina 1, no. 1 (Dic- Feb 2005), 16-21.

[45] "Esto se dijo," La Razón, 9 June 1965, Caja 2117, CEN.

[46] Such was the view of MNT militant Emilio Berra, who, questioned about the state of Tacuara after the assassination of anticommunist student Hernan Spangenberg, referred to Baxter as a "chantapufi" (charlatan). "Numerosos interrogatorios en la investigación por la muerte del estudiante activista anticomunista," La Prensa, 14 August 1965, Caja 2117, CEN.

As a result of this convergence, by the late 1960's the MNRT linked itself to Peronist syndicalism, the Peronist Youth, and the guerrilla group Peronist Revolutionary Movement, and was eventually absorbed by them. This convergence between *tacuaristas* and Peronist youth and syndicalist organizations stands precisely as an example of the political-religious articulations and dislocations between militant forms of Catholicism and Peronism that sociologist Humberto Cucchetti has deemed as central to understand the political traction of the Peronist Right throughout the sixties.[49] Certainly, the MNRT was a point of encounter between *nacionalista* militancy, Peronism and the revolutionary Left, whose development intersected with the *tacuarista* experience insofar as the questions of armed struggle and the alliance or integration into Peronism were pervasive amongst these political actors. However, rather than the "seed" of the revolutionary Left of the 1970s, the MNRT was a product of the consolidation of a much wider and ideologically imprecise Leftist turn within the wide spectrum and plurality of the Peronist movement. Like the latter, the MNRT was shaped by Latin American and global revolutionary currents (*guevarismo*, Maoism, Trotskyism, “Third Worldism”), while still owing to the neofascism of its “immediate family,” the original Tacuara and the Guardia Restauradora. Thus, the MNRT stands as an illustration of Peronism’s continuous assimilation of insurrectional forms and as an overdetermining force in the fate of various proponents of revolutionary solutions to the perception of a permanent national crisis.

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[47] Cóndor-MNRT, El retorno de Perón: Alienación y Contra-Revolución de las "Izquierdas" (Buenos Aires: Editorial Lanza Seca, 1964).

[48] "Estrategia nacionalista," Barricada del Nacionalismo Revolucionario 4 (Diciembre 1963): 3. On this convergence between Peronist national-populist appeals and the MNT's concern with attracting popular support see also chapter 5 of Federico Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War.

[49] See Cucchetti, Combatientes de Perón.

Beside broad connections between Catholic youth and Peronist mobilization, the legacy of the MNRT vis-à-vis the Left also lay in the broader impact of Operation Rosaura, which shifted the public perception of the group and, more importantly, its treatment by the security apparatus. The operation evoked a memory of earlier assessments of Tacuara as a neo-Nazi band that had to be “controlled,” and later, after the legal barring of GRN and Tacuara in 1963,[50] as an extremist organization whose activities had no place in public life. The media impact of Operation Rosaura thus placed the MNRT beyond the lineage of *nacionalista* organizations that walked the thin line between legality and illegality by linking themselves to a political movement or to state actors, instead rendering the group as a band of dangerous criminals without a clear political status; or simply as an agent of Communist infiltration, at best.[51] By the early

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[50] In 1963, under the interim civilian regime of José María Guido, Executive decree 3134/63 declared a prohibition for the activities of both the MNT and GRN, and established the closure of all their locales. The measures were minor in comparison to the repression adopted against the Communist Party “or any other association or organization defending communist-like ideas.” Anuario de Legislación (Nacional y Provincial) Año 1963 (Buenos Aires: Revista de Jurisprudencia Argentina, 1964), 6-7.

[51] For a more detailed analysis on MNRT’s public image and the impact of Operation Rosaura on public opinion, media and culture, see Valeria Galván, “El Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara y sus agrupaciones derivadas: una aproximación desde la historia cultural” (M.A Thesis, Universidad Nacional de San Martín, 2008).

1970s most of Tacuara's offshoots had either dissolved or incorporated into other movements and organizations on both the Left and Right, a testament to the multiple possibilities allowed by the transformations in the *nacionalista* imagination in relation to its context.[52]

Civil society and the anti-Peronist/anticommunist crusade

> *Public opinion has shifted with respect to "the Cuban question." Popular anticommunism has consolidated and is advancing due to people's leaning to have a clear position. In that sense, I am optimistic. Here in Argentina, Castroism has been hampered by anti-Castroism, and communists are facing the hard wood of the anticommunists' truncheons. This only logical and follows the Christian way; it was bound to happen.*[53]
>
> \- Alberto Daniel Faleroni (1961)

While determined, for the most part, by domestic factors, the crisis that led to the fall of Frondizi brought to the fore the reassertion of the political predominance of the Armed Forces and the importance of the Cuban question as a factor of anticommunist mobilization in Argentina. Yet, even after the coup that prevented the reincorporation of Peronists to electoral politics, the threat of "another Cuba" and the fear that local communists would take advantage of the momentum provided by Peronist mobilization remained a grave concern not only for US diplomats[54] and the military, but also for those sectors of society that shared the view of communism as the clearest and most present danger to "national aims."

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[52] MNRT leader Joe Baxter remains the best illustration of these peculiar ideological itineraries: after Operación Rosaura, he returned to Argentina, briefly joined the Uruguayan Tupamaros, incorporated the MNRT to the *Juventudes Peronistas*, and then joined the Trotskyist *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*, a major actor of the revolutionary Left throughout the seventies. Other *tacuaristas* from the original MNT, but also from MNRT and GRN ended up in the extreme-right wing Movimiento Nueva Argentina, and few others would become members of the infamous death squad known as Triple A in the mid-1970's. On the trajectory of former *tacuaristas* in other Right-wing organizations, see Finchelstein, The Ideological Origins, chapter 5; Goebel, "A movement from Right to Left."

[53] "Nota del Sr. Alberto Daniel Faleroni," 8 May 1961, caja 1424, CEN.

[54] US assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the Communist Party noted the actual low risk of a communist-led insurrection, as rather than growing in numbers or visibility, the Party instead was seeking to capitalize on the potential for Peronist-inspired violence. Despatch No. 1526, From AmEmbassy Buenos

As part of the broadening of anticommunism's target audiences, the rearranging of the *nacionalista* constellation and the attempts by its most visible figures to put forward a programme that could influence political outcomes, gave way to different manifestations of support for the radicalization of the anticommunist cause. In this regard, the first half of the 1960s represented, for many *nacionalistas*, a time of rupture and reformulation of the long-standing aspiration for a "national revolution," while aspiring to attract the Peronists and build a regime that reflected the Catholic, soldierly nation longed by the "revolutions" of 1930 and 1943.

One of the most notable forms of *nacionalista* mobilization in the context of Argentina's crises after the Cuban Revolution was the proliferation of anticommunist organizations of different sizes, constituencies, and degrees of public impact. Prompted by the perceived failure of moderate answers to the "communist problem," this emerging civic anticommunist movement found fertile ground to proselytize for a "national solution" against Frondizi's legacy of "disorder." For instance, the Argentine Movement Against Communism (MACEC), led by Conservative and anti-Peronist politician Eduardo Augusto García, was created in 1961 as a civic association that aimed at formulating "recommendations" to the national government regarding the various strategies to combat both Peronism and communism.

Aires To The Department of State Washington, "Assessment of communism in Argentina," 7 June 1962, USARG 1960-1963, 735.001/6-762.

The emergence of MACEC is an example of the increasing mobilization of small anticommunist groups throughout civil society. This type of activism sought to steer public opinion and state policies towards a clearer anticommunist posture, partly in response to the Latin American impact of the Cuban revolution, but also due to the unabated influence of Perón in national politics. This phenomenon drew the attention of US embassy officials, who applauded, for instance, the presence of student and Eastern European exile organizations in MACEC's events, even in the face of the latter's lack of "political effectiveness."[55]

In this regard, US officials were somewhat optimistic about the overall picture of local anticommunist initiatives, as they deemed the Argentine population to be "generally anticommunist" and politically oriented towards "Western Europe or the Western Hemisphere but with very nationalist overtones," and thus receptive of the message spread by organizations such as MACEC. At large, what stands out from the activities of these civic organizations is the creation of bonds across social groups based on concrete local and global referents, such as the memory of the 1955 coup against Perón or the critique of Frondizi's "soft" anticommunism, coupled with *nacionalismo* as a shared political language that despite its particularism was able to connect, in the case of MACEC, to the nationalist anticommunist experiences of Eastern European exiles.

Another example of the emergence of a heterogeneous grassroots anticommunist movement, was the Confederation of Anticommunist Organizations of the Argentine Republic (COARA). In contrast to MACEC's anti-Peronist origins, COARA was founded, in 1963, by former members of the ALN, the youth organization that worked as Perón's shock brigade with during the crisis that led to his overthrow.[56] Building on the legacies of Peronist *nacionalismo* and an outspoken exaltation of the Armed Forces as a bulwark against Frondizi's "false anticommunism,"[57] COARA's platform extolled the "Christian and democratic tradition of the Argentine people" and "the freedom of thought and belief for our children" as values to be protected from "alienating foreign doctrines."[58]

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[55] Despatch no. 556, From AmEmbassy Buenos Aires To Department of State "Joint Week No. 44" 2 November 1961, USARG 1960-1963, 735.00(w)/11-261.

Along with this reiteration of *nacionalista* tropes, reproduced in its two newspapers, *La Voz* and *La Escoba*, COARA reflected an awareness of the material and political limitations that characterized the *nacionalista* movement, with small-sized groups working dispersedly to fight a formidable enemy such as global communism. Thus, COARA's leaders framed the creation of this organization as a conglomerate of "institutions, associations, independent commandos, and democratic crusaders" willing to fight for "a homeland liberated from the threat of totalitarianism."[59] This intent to build a wide-ranging assemblage of groups sharing both a nationalist rejection of foreign interventionism and a project of democracy with "national character" allowed COARA to insert itself in a broader process of decentralization, dispersal, and delegation of the state's anticommunist crusade towards smaller-scale agents.

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[56] According to documents from the Buenos Aires police archive, all of COARA's main leaders had partaken in pro-Peronist riots or demonstrations during and after the *Libertadora*, and were involved in the Peronist resistance up to 1958. "Memorandum," 13 April 1963. Mesa A, Carpeta 37, Legajo 151, f. 2, DIPBA.

[57] Ricardo J. Maurente, "El 'anti-comunista' Frondizi," Alianza (October 1961): 4.

[58] "Primer comunicado de COARA," [undated], Mesa A, Carpeta 37, Legajo 151, f. 6, DIPBA.

[59] "COARA. Declaración de principios," [undated], Mesa A, Carpeta 37, Legajo 151, f. 8, DIPBA

In COARA's case, this was accomplished through informal and personal links to retired military officers, whom since the early sixties worked as "advisors" to COARA to create a network of anticommunist goons and informants (the Anticommunist Information Service or SIA) in close contact with military intelligence, police, and SIDE agents.[60] Initially praising the group's "good faith" and "plausible intentions," police reports in fact noted that, by 1967, COARA had been hijacked by a mafia ring which, in complicity with former federal police and SIDE agents, sold their alleged expertise on the repression of communism to business firms, engaging in fraud and contraband, and issuing fake press accreditations for their agents to pass as journalists.[61]

The obscure trajectory of COARA's members, on the other hand, was indicative of the inherent instability and organizational weakness of some of these anticommunist organizations due, to a great extent, to the ties between ALN / Peronist militants, the clandestine intelligence community and organized crime. Ultimately, these links led to the complete take over of COARA by agents of military intelligence who by the early 1970s used the group as a cover for political surveillance and anti-subversive operations.[62]

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[60] "Asunto: actividades agrupación COARA," 13 July 1966, Mesa A, Carpeta 37, Legajo 151, f. 16-17, DIPBA.

[61] "Confederación de Organizaciones Anticomunistas de la República Argentina," Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37, Leg 151, f. 85-94, DIPBA.

[62] COARA's Secretary of the Interior, Gregorio García Coni, remained part of the organization throughout the early 1970s. In 1973, García was detained and questioned by the Information Service of the Buenos Aires Police and revealed his long-standing ties to various intelligence agencies, including the Navy and the Federal Police, as well as COARA's collaboration with the investigation surrounding the assassination of Gen. Pedro Aramburu by the Montoneros guerrilla in 1970 (Untitled memorandum. 24 January 1973. Mesa A, Carpeta 37, Legajo 151, f. 95-97, DIPBA). In 2012, García Coni was a defense witness in the trial of his friend and military intelligence colleague Lt Cnel Rafael Braga, accused of the kidnapping and disappearance of 43 persons in Jujuy, during the Dirty War.

Aside from mustering a number of short-lived entities and several underground criminal elements, COARA also attracted the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista, as well as members of the Movimiento Nueva Argentina, an offshoot of ALN and Tacuara that in 1966 attempted to "recover" the Malvinas Islands through a clandestine commando operation.[63] The participation of the MNA in this new anticommunist coalition remains indicative of the links between the new anticommunist crusade promoted by state institutions and carried out by "civic" organizations; and Peronist *nacionalistas* that took on the path of insurrection in the immediate aftermath of the *Libertadora*.

The incorporation of these elements from Peronist youth *nacionalismo* was also symptomatic of a larger phenomenon across Peronist militancy: the fragmentation along different interpretations of what Peronism meant after the *Libertadora*, the ambivalent rapprochement with the political establishment during Frondizi's government, and the emergence of nationalist and Left-wing insurrectional strands within Peronism. Thus, on top of cleavages related to militants' ties to labor, Catholic organizations, and student activism, Peronists were also divided on the basis of their interpretation of Peronism as a revolutionary force. There were those, for instance, that understood Peronism as a restoration; that is, as the only way to revive and further the project of the 1943-1946 nationalist regime. For others, Peronism reflected the conditions imposed by their leader's exile and the framing of the *Resistencia* as a matter of national liberation. And while the latter emphasized the line followed by the early stages of the Cuban revolution, causing a strong rejection from the restorationist Peronists against what they saw as

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[63] "Ha sido creada la confederación anticomunista," *Diario El Argentino*. 22 January 1963. Mesa A, Carpeta 37, Legajo 151, f. 1, DIPBA.

marxismo nacional, both appealed to the search for an "authentic" Argentine path towards "the national revolution."

Within the broad spectrum of anticommunist positions, there were also those that navigated the ambivalent political spaces created by *nacionalismo*'s uneasy relationship with, particularly, the latter type of insurrectional Peronism. Perhaps the most visible (and also least studied) of these organizations is the Argentine Federation of Anticommunist Democratic Entities (FAEDA). FAEDA was the product of the fusion of two smaller, short-lived anti-Peronist organizations, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) and Revolutionary Anticommunist Action (ARA). These two groups came together in the context of the First Argentine Anticommunist Congress in 1963, organized with the purpose of coalescing these self-proclaimed activists of "the revolution" (the anti-Peronist coup of 1955) and gather support for the anticommunist cause. Created in 1961, the FDR was led by Apeles Márquez, an activist lawyer who vowed to turn the organization into a vehicle to "cultivate the ideals of *la Libertadora* in the Argentine citizenry." Márquez also participated as an advisor to ARA's leadership, composed of anti-Peronist union activists, retired military officers, businessmen and professionals who also vindicated the legacies of the *Libertadora* and denounced Frondizi as a "Marxist in anti-Peronist disguise."[64]

In 1962, ARA and FDR released a joint public statement in vindication of the "heroes of the *Libertadora*" and condemning Frondizi's approach to dealing with the

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[64] "Accion Revolucionaria Anticomunista. A diez años de la gesta heroica." October 1965, Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37, Leg 75, DIPBA.

"made-in-Moscow alliance between Peronists and communists."[65] Appealing to long-standing *nacionalista* tropes, the statement also stressed the need to defend "the Republic" from its most dangerous enemy, "Peronist-Castroist-Communist totalitarianism." The rise of these two organizations as the main nucleus behind FAEDA was the product of a stern disgruntlement amongst a sector of anti-Peronist *nacionalistas* that, after the fall of Frondizi, continued to criticize the civilian governments of José María Guido (1962-1963) and Arturo Illía (1963-1966) for their complicity and "soft treatment given to the agents of the *antipatria*."[66] From these positions in civil society, these activists sought to frame their anticommunism as the continuation of the anti-Peronist mission undertaken by the 1955 junta, and as platform to put pressure on the government to escalate the repression of subversives.

Even when their activities lacked the public impact of fellow-traveler anticommunist organizations like Tacuara, these members of FAEDA did not limit themselves to bombastic manifestos. Between 1963 and 1965, for instance, members of ARA and FDR appeared interchangeably in public and private anticommunist events under the banner of FAEDA, often requesting the authorization – and even the presence – of local police chiefs.[67] Also, FAEDA worked intensely during the Illía and Guido administrations to carry out a campaign of public denunciation against alleged covert and overt agents of "international communism," first through rallies and public talks, and, starting in October of 1965, through paid insertions (*solicitadas*) in the most important newspapers. In these *solicitadas*, FAEDA published the names of individuals and organizations (including intellectuals and artists) with alleged ties to communism, a red-baiting tactic that had a sizeable impact in the press, and forced many of the "suspects" to publicly refute the accusations.[68] This public indictment of artists, intellectuals, and academics had been a recurrent tactic used by anticommunist organizations to denounce, for instance, the "cultural war" waged by communists inside the university system.[69] FAEDA's anticommunist *solicitadas* placed the group under the spotlight and scrutiny of public opinion, and, despite accusations by politicians and journalists about the criminal background of some of FAEDA leaders as well as their links to SIDE, the campaign was a public relations success considering the relative marginality and small size of its member organizations.

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[65] "La Línea de Mayo", *Noticias Gráficas*, 22 August 1962; "Frente de Entidades Democráticas Revolucionarias," Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 11, DIPBA.

[66] Acción Revolucionaria Anticomunista. "A diez años de la gesta heroica," Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37, Legajo 75, f. 30, DIPBA.

[67] "Al señor Doctor D. Julio José López Aguirre, Jefe de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires" 12 February 1964, Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37, Legajo 75, f. 8, DIPBA; "Al señor comisario de la jurisdicción de Pehuajo" 14 April 1965. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37, Legajo 75, f. 15, DIPBA.

By 1965, FAEDA already congregated seventy three entities of various sizes, ranging from the pioneering MACEC, FDR, and ARA, to workers, students and professionals, to the Eastern European exile groups that accompanied MACEC since the early 1960s, as well as Cuban exile organizations involved in transnational activism.[70] FAEDA functioned as a federation of these smaller entities, each working autonomously under the FAEDA banner, which gave the organization a certain public visibility that drew the attention of the intelligence division of the Buenos Aires police (DIPBA). Indeed, early assessments of former FDR and ARA leadership by DIPBA agents sympathetically noted these group's "genuinely democratic tendency" and stressed their clear ideological and personal ties to officers involved in the *Libertadora*.[71]

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[68] Often targeting university professors, leaders of student organizations, local public officials and artists, FAEDA's *solicitadas* were vehemently denounced by journalist Augusto Bonardo as the beginning of McCarthyism in Argentina. See Augusto Bonardo, *Antología de un Asco en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: La Gente, 1965). Bonardo also pursued a public debate with FAEDA's leadership and denounced the organization's links to "some misinformed intelligence service," a reference to the military intelligence apparatus and the SIDE. "La tragedia de FAEDA" Revista Así 131 (11 November 1965), Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 132-135, DIPBA.

[69] During the Frondizi administration, a group called Civic Anticommunist Movement had denounced the "cultural war" waged by communism inside universities to "destroy, by engaging the youth, all the potential for national defense." The group blamed Risieri Frondizi, the president's brother, for favoring this "agitation" as the Dean of the University of Buenos Aires. See Andrés Bonafina Dorrego, ¿Comunismo en la Universidad de Buenos Aires? (Buenos Aires: Movimiento Civil Anticomunista. Servicio de Prensa, 1962).

Regarding FAEDA's activities abroad, DIPBA reports noted the linkages of the president of the organization, Apeles Márquez (a former legal advisor to COARA), with fellow Latin American anticommunists, such as the Brazilian Carlos Penna Botto, of the Interamerican Confederation for the Defense of the Continent (CIDC), as well as Márquez's participation as delegate to an anticommunist congress celebrated in 1965 in Manila, and organized by the Asian People's Anti-Communist League.[72] In 1967, Márquez, along with Luis Ángel Dragani, leader of FAEDA's youth section, acted as Argentina's representatives in the founding of the World Anti-Communist League in Taipei, with Márquez becoming a member of the League's Executive Bureau and a leading figure in the organizing committee for a Latin American Anticommunist League. FAEDA sought to follow the League's directive of promoting the anticommunist agenda through local, national and regional mobilization. After publicly stating its support for Onganía's coup of 1966, FAEDA made an unsuccessful request to the Ministry of Interior to provide financial and logistical support to host the first Latin American anticommunist congress sponsored by the World Anti-Communist League, framing the petition as a way to honor the regime's avowed mission to "act most energetically against communism."[73] Without official support, FAEDA still led the arrangements for a smaller-scale international congress of anticommunist entities in Buenos Aires,[74] and the group became the main Argentine representative in the first WACL congress in the Western Hemisphere, which took place in 1972 in Mexico City.

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[70] "Entidades adheridas, delegados titulares, suplentes y represententes de FAEDA," 13 December 1965 Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37, Legajo 75, f. 42-46, DIPBA.

[71] "Objeto: informar sobre Frente de Entidades Democráticas Revolucionarias," 5 November 1961. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 2, DIPBA.

[72] The Police reports also mention Márquez's trips to Europe "to study and garner experience on the methods of communist infiltration and how they should be contested." "Asunto: Antecedentes sobre FAEDA," Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 38, DIPBA.

Aware of its own limited influence but with the endorsement of key actors within the state security apparatus, FAEDA partook in the promotion the state's anticommunist agenda, led by the military high command and disseminated through systematic public exposure. An example of FAEDA's alignment and collaboration with this agenda was its response to the insurrectional message of the Tricontental Congress in Havana (1966). Maintaining its trademark redbaiting tactics, FAEDA published two *solicitadas* denouncing the threat posed by the "centralization of subversion" in the organizations, guerrillas, and the terrorism promoted by Fidel Castro. For FAEDA, the resolutions passed at the Tricontinental were a straightforward declaration of war, a sign of

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[73] "Ha organizado FAEDA un congreso para la lucha anticomunista" *La Razón*, 31 October 1967; "FAEDA pide ayuda oficial para efectuar en junio un congreso" La Razón, 21 February 1968. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 193, 197, DIPBA.

[74] "Iniciarán el 24 la reunión de entidades anticomunistas" El Mundo, 8 November 1967. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 101, DIPBA.

"communism's need to unleash bloody revolutionary wars in all free nations."[75] In addition to a call for a state of emergency "for all nationalists," FAEDA embarked on more localized battles against other agents of communist infiltration: youth counter-culture, Leftist student organizations, and "progressive" Catholics. Through press releases, public talks, and *solicitadas*, Luis Dragani, the leader of FAEDA's youth section, launched a lofty campaign to denounce "hippies" for "leading a diabolical plan" to corrupt the youth by promoting sexual promiscuity and then deliver their victims to agents of the "Castro-Communist plot."[76] Dragani also led an initiative to found a center for "Catholic Studies" to pursue the return of the "forces of Christ" and counter Catholic progressives (the "Red clerics") and "extremists" who allegedly aimed to "turn universities into training grounds for guerrillas."[77]

The activities of FAEDA were possible given the alliance they built with military intelligence services. A key figure in promoting these links between global anticommunist circles, civic organizations in Argentina, and the military was journalist and national security expert Alberto Daniel Faleroni. As one of the founders of the CIDC (the Latin America-wide anticommunist entity created in 1954 in Mexico City), Faleroni remained a permanent Argentine delegate to several CIDC congresses throughout the fifties, also working as representative and spokesman for the CIDC at anticommunist conferences throughout Europe and Asia, and as a member or collaborator to a number of anticommunist organizations throughout the globe.[78]

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[75] "Solicitada. Declaración de Guerra," Crónica, 29 January 1966. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 80, DIPBA.

[76] "FAEDA acusa a los 'hippies' de 'un complot castro-comunista'" Crónica, 12 January 1968. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 107, DIPBA. On FAEDA's campaigns against counterculture see Ernesto Bohoslavsky, "Contra el dexamil, las camisas naranjas y el comunismo. La Federación Argentina de Entidades Democráticas Anticomunistas, 1963-1969." In Florencia Levín (ed.), Temas y Problemas de Historia Reciente Argentina (Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2015).

[77] "La acción del extremismo en la universidad," La Nación, 19 September 1967, Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 100, DIPBA. "Manifestación de protesta contra el 'clero progresista'" El Día, 5 April 1969, Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 75, f. 124, DIPBA.

A former representative of the anti-imperialist APRA in Argentina, and an early enthusiast of Perón, Faleroni fiercely attacked Peronism and communism at national and international venues,[79] exemplifying the trajectory of certain sectors of *nacionalismo* who, having traversed from an anti-imperialist and socialist nationalism to an outspoken anti-Leftism, found a particular affinity with the post-1955 thesis of a Peronist-Communist project to push Argentina into a state of revolutionary upheaval. Faleroni was an instructor and advisor in the fields of Soviet studies, national defense, and revolutionary war, which he taught at the Superior War College, the University of La Plata, and the Catholic University in Buenos Aires, and at an anticommunist "scientific" institute directed by Faleroni himself. In these venues, Faleroni engaged in systematic attempts to formulate and disseminate an anticommunist doctrine that, without any claim of originality, was meant to reach local and global audiences.[80] In this sense, his writings reflect a detailed reading and understanding of the doctrine of revolutionary war - its emphasis on the omnipresence of the national-revolutionary threat and the need to train the military as the last moral and material "line of defense" against it – as well as a clear intent to devise "practical solutions" to the problem of subversion both in Argentina and Latin America.[81] By 1970, in his book *The war of the fourth dimension*, Faleroni formulated a program applicable to the entire continent ("because Latin America, as Bolívar and San Martín wanted, is one country"). The plan put forward commonplace *nacionalista* proposals, such as the promotion of economic development, the adoption of forms of government in which the people is "truly represented and not mere onlookers in a liberal democratic farce," and the implementation of national, regional, and global defense plans.

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[78] These organizations included, amongst others, the Ecumenical Christian Action (Spain), the League for the Freedom of Oppressed Peoples (France) and the Catholic Popular Party (Netherlands). Faleroni was also an "honorary member" of the Croatian Home Defenders, a nationalist organization founded in 1933 in Buenos Aires by Croatian émigrés and later maintained by former members of the Ustasa, Croatia's prime fascist and Nazi collaborationist party. Alberto D. Faleroni, La Subversión Comunista en América Latina (Buenos Aires: Frente Americano por la Libertad, 1960), 3-4.

[79] Faleroni actively promoted the idea that Perón had betrayed the *nacionalista* project by allying himself with Marxists. For instance, in 1957, Faleroni told a reporter from *La Vanguardia Española* that his intervention at the 3rd Congress of the CIDC in Lima had been to denounce and provide evidence of Perón's complicity with communism, his endorsement of terrorism and his desire to dissolve the Armed Forces. Faleroni used these allegations to request all Latin American governments to deny Perón of the right to asylumn when he was forced into exile. "Hispanoamérica contra el comunismo." La Vanguardia Española, 8 May 1957, 17.

However, Faleroni's platform also contemplated other more practical forms of fighting communism, such as the creation of institutes to educate leaders in knowledge about "the enemy's training, recruiting, and penetration techniques"; the use of "shock troops" to repel Marxists in all spheres and of "national popular guerrillas" to counter communist ones; and the incorporation of women into the struggle, given their key role in the family, in education and in public welfare institutions. In short, what this agenda reflected was a clear shift among this type of civic anticommunist activism, going from propaganda and denunciation campaigns to the formulation of practical applications of the knowledge extracted from a systematic, "scientific" study of communism to turn anticommunism into an all-encompassing social, political, and even pedagogical mission.

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[80] See, amongst others, Daniel A. Faleroni, Guerra Revolucionaria Total: Estrategia y Táctica del Imperialismo Soviético (Buenos Aires: Editorial Rioplatense, 1976); La Guerra de la Cuarta Dimensión (Buenos Aires: L. Lasserre, 1970); Estrategia y Táctica de la Subversión Marxista (Buenos Aires: Liga Anticomunista Republicana, 1968); El Comunismo contra Nuestras Fuerzas Armadas (Buenos Aires: Frente Americano por la Libertad, 1961).

[81] Aside from his systematic analyses of "the logic of communist subversion" and the history of Marxist revolutionary theory, Faleroni paid much attention to classics of French counterinsurgency such as Claude Delmas' La Guerra Revolucionaria, edited in Argentina by the nationalist publisher Huemul.

In this way, Faleroni and his followers, collaborators, and fellow travelers were committed to awaken and mobilize, from below but in collaboration with state agents, the "essentially anticommunist" Argentine society that *nacionalismo* had envisioned. Faleroni and the entities he partook in were in a privileged position as one of the links between the military-educational establishment (e.g. the War College), the global circulation of the doctrine of "revolutionary war," and civic anticommunist organizations home and abroad.

Another group linked to FAEDA as a result of Faleroni's successful dissemination of his counterrevolutionary and anticommunist expertise was the Anticommunist Republican Legion (LAR), which also exemplified the effort by these quasi-anonymous activist groups to play a supporting role in the surveillance and repression initiatives promoted by state agencies. Granted legal personhood in 1967, the LAR reportedly contacted SIDE agents to request support to publish a magazine or newspaper aimed at promoting their anticommunist program at universities, research institutes, and corporations. The group's stated goals were revealing of the ways in which FAEDA's cells sought to insert themselves in the agenda of the military regime that took power in 1966. SIDE sources show that LAR offered to alert the authorities about "the dangers of the ideological advancement of the extreme Left"; disseminate the principles of freedom and respect for the individual and private property; spread a culture of national pride and social organization based on the family; and promote apolitical and loyal labor unions.[82] LAR also projected (and achieved) the creation of the Institute of Strategic Political and Social Studies – directed by Faleroni – to undertake the "scientific study" of the actions of Marxism in Argentina, and of the conditions and motivations that inform "the climate of insurrection" at a regional and global scale. With only fifty members, the group was thus meant to function mostly as a propaganda organization aligned with the goals of the state's anticommunist agenda under the Onganía dictatorship, though "in extreme cases and only if needed, they would request the assistance of Tacuara."[83] Thus, by the mid-1960s and particularly after the military coup of 1966, FAEDA's public and clandestine links with SIDE agents and retired military officers (such as Gen. Federico Toranzo Montero, Lt. Benjamin Menéndez, and Brig. Gen. Bartolome E. Gallo, all of them outspoken anti-Peronists), along with its active participation in the Latin American and global anticommunist movement, had placed this federation of anticommunist organizations in a privileged position to carry out its agenda of civic anticommunist activism, both within and beyond Argentine borders.

Restoring the Catholic City: Ciudad Católica and the transnational counterrevolution

The military coup that toppled the presidency of Arturo Illía in 1966 was the product of the interventionist officers' success in presenting themselves to the Argentine public as the only ones capable of confronting the challenges of Peronist-communist agitation. Disputes between factions of the Armed Forces over their subordination to civilian powers were accompanied by a strong resurgence of *nacionalista* rhetoric emphasizing the key role of the military in safeguarding the nation from its enemies. The "Argentine Revolution" of Gen. Onganía effectively dissolved constituted powers, concentrating them in the figure of a military executive. Onganía's appeal to dictatorship as a means to restore the principle of authority eroded by a "formal and sterile legality"[84] had a deep resonance that cut across the Peronist / anti-Peronist divide, attracting the support of pro-*Libertadora,* anti-Peronist anticommunists, but also of those that came from ALN, Tacuara, GRN and various Peronist organizations.

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[82] "Legión Anticomunista: sus fines" Clarín, January 7 1968. Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 203, f. 6, DIPBA.

[83] "Asunto: Legión Anticomunista Republicana," 3 November 1967, Mesa A, Partidos Políticos, Capital Federal, Carpeta 37 Legajo 203, f. 4, DIPBA.

However, the initial enthusiasm on behalf of many of these groups quickly waned as the "Argentine Revolution" led by Gral Juan Carlos Onganía reiterated the Armed Forces' self-proclaimed mission as guardians of order, but also undertook a project to modernize Argentina through economic stabilization, liberalization policies, and the attracton of foreign investment. The disillusion with the Revolution was manifest amongst *nacionalistas* of all tendencies. For instance the old guard of *nacionalismo*, the *Azul y Blanco* group represented by Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, demanded that the Revolution make use of its prerogatives to overturn the legal and political structures in place and overcome an outdated constitutionalism.[85] Catholic organizations, such the National Catholic Crusade, lamented the Revolution's view of "the Fatherland as a business enterprise" and its capitulation to the "diabolical conspiracy of the liberal sellouts, the hammers and sickles, the Masonic aprons and set-squares, and the Stars of David and the synagogues."[86]

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[84] "Mensaje de la Junta Revolucionaria al Pueblo Argentino," Anuario de Legislación (Buenos Aires: Revista de Jurisprudencia Argentina, 1967), 231-236.

[85] Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, "La revolución argentina existe en tanto manifieste su propia fórmula jurídica de poder," Azul y Blanco 3 (2a época) (21 July 1966): 3.

For Onganía's right-wing detractors, the regime's emphasis on freedom of enterprise as a vehicle for development, its rapprochement with Argentine Jewish organizations in the context of Tacuara's anti-Semitic campaigns, and the appointment of known developmentalist economist Adalbert Krieger Vasena to the Ministry of Economy, were seen as signs of a "government that, while having the means to guide the country towards its national destiny, instead decided to maintain a sterile, harmful and perverse regime." This was, according to the Tacuara-linked student union at the Catholic University, a sign that the new regime sought the "imitation of their true masters: the United States."[87] Echoing this discontent, the stubbornly neofascist and anti-Semitic Guardia Restauradora Nacional condemned what they deemed as a "missed opportunity" to take advantage of a coup by the most "revolutionary" factions of the military and carry out the "deep, Argentine revolution that the people expect and that our organization pursues."[88] The frustration was, thus, about the recurrence of *nacionalista*-inspired ruptures and the incapacity of *nacionalismo* to capitalize on its ideological traction and guide the course of government. As Sánchez Sorondo put it: "They take our formulas, but not the spirit, the soul. The economic status quo remains the same."[89]

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[86] "¡Alto! ¡La Argentina no es una empresa, es una patria! ¡Es nuestra Patria!," El Cruzado Argentino 19 (August 1966): 1.

[87] "Editorial," De Pie. Boletín del Sindicato de Estudiantes de la Universidad Católica 2 (June 1967): 1-2.

[88] "A un año del golpe del 28 de Junio," Mazorca 12 (June 1967): 4.

[89] "La cuarta frustración," Primera Plana 229 (16 May 1967): 20.

While it signaled the rise of a new form of military interventionism that was selectively and arguably "modern,"[90] the Argentine Revolution was also a grand disappointment for the *nacionalista* constellation, much in the sense that integrist *nacionalista* Jordán Genta had expressed his frustration towards the Libertadora's lack of decision to crush the alleged enemies of the nation. Indeed, in the aftermath of the coup, Genta's newspaper *Combate* scorned Onganía's regime for committing the same mistake: the implementation of a dictatorship as a means to restore a constitutional order which ought to be fully abolished.[91] For *Combate*, the Revolution was thus "truly a civilian government, or rather, a military government with a civilian, university-reformist mentality" committed to "saving the demoliberal regime that this country has endured since 1853."[92] Similar to other *nacionalista* voices, *Combate*'s strongest criticisms against Onganía were, thus, the alleged handing over of university education to Marxism and the professionalization of the Armed Forces, which for ideologues like Genta, translated into a neutralization of the military's prime political role.[93]

But *Combate*'s activism had not been limited to the monthly dissemination of Genta's teachings, and in fact partook in the thriving and radicalization of the anticommunist agenda after the fall of Frondizi. In the context of massive strikes promoted by the CGT between 1963-1964 and the discovery of a Guevarist guerrilla organization in Salta, *Combate* announced its new role as the propaganda organ for the Nationalist Counterrevolutionary Legion (LNC), an new entity inspired by Genta's doctrine of counterrevolutionary war and led by retired Air Force officer Agustín de la Vega. Calling for the creation of local cells to form a "federation of autonomous groups," the LNC boasted on being the only nationalist organization "without ties to Peronism, the oligarchies, or the Marxists."[94] Indeed, in contrast to other *nacionalista* entities that warily navigated the overlaps between Peronism and *nacionalista* opposition to liberalism, representative democracy or Marxism, the LNC stood for a hardcore integrist line that remained ideologically untouched since early *nacionalista* enthusiasm with the project of a corporatist Catholic dictatorship.

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[90] The Onganía dictatorship was the inspiration for Guillermo O'Donnell's classic study on "bureaucratic authoritarianism," which he saw as a regime form that questioned the "optimistic" tenets of modernization theory (the intimate connection between economic development and democracy) through its focus on controlling, limiting or even canceling political pluralism as a necessary condition to develop the economy. See Guillermo O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1973).

[91] "¿Dónde va la Revolución?," Combate 137 (18 July 1966): 1.

[92] "Sigue el régimen," Combate 138 (October 1966): 1.

[93] "Sociología anti-militar en el Colegio Militar," Combate 137 (18 July 1966): 3.

Despite its claims for ideological purity, the LNC was itself as much the product of the long-standing project of clericofascist *nacionalismo* as it was of the context in which the organization appeared: the rise of the feared "nationalist Left," the omnipresence of Peronism, and the mobilization of the CGT against Illía's government. A speech by De la Vega for a rally that was banned last-minute by the government illustrates how this context, along with events abroad, stood for the self-fulfillment of the Legion's anticommunist ideology and the reiteration of the usual trope of government inaction: "The events in Santo Domingo, along with the situation in Bolivia, and other occurrences in Colombia, Venezuela, and Uruguay […] make evident the existence of communist aggression throughout our continent […] Argentina's official position is suicidal; we are defenselessly surrendering to the hands of the enemy." Inspired by

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[94] "L.N.C.," Combate 124 (June 1964): 2.

Genta's theological militarism, De la Vega exalted the virtues of the warrior, the notions of sacrifice and the overcoming of fear, and invited all his legionnaires to "be proud of serving in the ranks of the Legion, with subordination and valor, to suffer and die fighting communism and its ideological allies." For De la Vega, the new challenges posed by the timeless enemy (guerrilla warfare) were surmountable not only with the power of organization, but also by the sway of militant emotion and the appeal to the clericofascists' transnationally-shared founding myths: "This is no time for the security and comfort of a soft life or for petit-bourgeois hopes. It is time to be willing to live dangerously at the service of the high and pure reason that defines our position. Let us carry our Cross and say with Millán-Astray: *¡Viva la muerte!*"[95]

De la Vega's references to Spanish fascist icon José Millán-Astray and to Benito Mussolini's fascist imperative to "live dangerously" were thus more than ideological impulses passed on from Genta. These gestures were an integral part of the Argentine *nacionalista*-fascist repertoire and reflected particular reading of the Argentine political landscape of the mid 1960s as "a real war" that, analogous to the Spanish Civil war, aimed to "save the Fatherland and Christian civilization… and to undertake a National Restoration and the *reconquista* of Christ's dominion in this world."[96] More broadly, the LNC epitomized the endurance and adaptation of restorationist *nacionalismo*, one that abhorred liberalism, secularism and modern democracy, and that sought to impose regime that reflected a soldierly, hierarchical, authoritarian and corporatist order, and erase the legacies of Peronism as the most insidious and deceitful incarnation of Argentina's enemies. The LNC also confirmed Genta's status as an important figure for these circles of the extreme right, showing how the notion of a Christian restoration through violence played a key function in cementing clericofascism's symbiotic relation with sectors of the Armed Forces that were recurrently seeking a radical implementation of Argentina's covert and overt war against subversion. Lastly, the LNC also shows the recurrent tension between *nacionalismo*'s abrasive particularism and the allure of its global ideological referents, allowing these Cold War neofascist"warriors to claim a connection to a national and transnational fascist tradition that they sought to actualize in the context of Argentina's own imminent war.

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[95] "Lo que Legión no pudo decir. Discurso que debió pronunciar el Jefe Nacional del movimiento, Comodoro (E.R.) Agustín de la Vega, en el acto del 28 de mayo, suspendido por el gobierno," Combate 133 (10 June 1965): 2.

[96] "Lo que Legión no pudo decir," 2.

The LNC was not the only example of *nacionalista* efforts to mobilize anticommunists for a sacred, just, all-out war against subversion. Created in the late 1950s the group known as Ciudad Católica brought together theologians, Catholic activists, and military officers who pursued an alternative form of anticommunist counterrevolutionary mobilization. Rather than relying on collaboration with the government, these actors sought to promote grassroots Catholic mobilization and infiltrate key spheres of state and society to carry out their mission from above and from below.

As the local branch of the French religious organization Cité Catholique, Ciudad Católica was directly the product of the clandestine emigration of former collaborators to the Vichy regime and, later, of French military chaplains who joined Catholic seminaries in various Argentine provinces. However, while seemingly a transatlantic import, Ciudad Católica did not appear in a void, but rather took advantage of an accumulated intellectual and political capital and of local and transnational networks of activists, mentors, and recruiters for their project, which included prominent figures like Julio Meinvielle, Jordán Genta and Carlos Sacheri, as well as Col. Juan Francisco Guevara, a former member of the 1955 junta and a devout follower of communitarian theorist Jacques Marie de Mahieu.

Through these contacts, a former chaplain to the French extreme right organization Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS), Father Georges Grasset, recruited the group's first "political cadre," which included Col. Guevara, businessman Roberto Gorostiaga, theologian Roberto Pincemin, and the prominent *nacionalista* Juan Carlos Goyeneche.[97] In 1961, the head of Cité Catholique, Jean Ousset arrived in Argentina to fully endorse Ciudad Católica, and to gather support from other relevant figures of Catholicism in Argentina and beyond, such Cardinal Antonio Caggiano and various delegates from Catholic seminaries, as well as Plinio Correa de Oliveira, the founder of the Brazilian ultra-Catholic organization Tradiçao, Familia e Propriedade. Ousset remained in Argentina for two weeks, delivering talks at various universities, including one at the Airforce Academy in Córdoba.[98] With chapters in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Italy, Morocco, Spain, and Switzerland, between 1958 and 1961 Cité Catholique underwent a rapid process of internationalization, and became a meeting point of activism for Catholics invested in formulating a spiritual, social and political platform to fight against the enemies of the Church.

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[97] Elena Scirica, "Visión religiosa y acción política. El caso de Ciudad Católica – Verbo en la Argentina de los años sesenta". PROHAL Monográfico, Revista del Programa de Historia de América Latina 2 (2010): 32.

[98] "Tercera Jornada de la Ciudad Católica," Verbo 30 (November 1961): 5-8.

In Argentina, Ciudad Católica found a fertile ground to develop its activities, which comprised a wide range of conferences, talks, publications, study groups, and "spiritual retreats." A key factor in this success was the deep influence of the teachings of Jordan Genta and Julio Meinvielle on Ciudad Católica's most prominent members, which lend Ciudad Católica's a sense of familiarity and continuity with the counterrevolutionary persuasion of Argentine clerico-fascists. A pupil of Father Julio Meinvielle, neo-Thomist theologian Carlos Sacheri became the main intellectual figure for Ciudad Católica. Sacheri frequently paid homage to Meinvielle, whom he branded as "the greatest Christian theologian of the twentieth century." Sacheri followed Meinvielle's conception of communism as the "natural heir to five centuries of the permanent offensive against Christianity" and the priest's critique of Marxist dialectics as the logic of communist subversion. Sacheri saw himself as the repository of Meinvielle's theological teachings and took on the development of Meinvielle's insights about the prospects of a national revolution and the implementation or "restoration" of "the integral Catholic city" through counterrevolutionary violence as the remedy to the threat of revolutionary war and the only antidote against communism.[99]

Sacheri's intellectual connections to Genta and Meinvielle (a mentor during his university years) allowed him to earn a privileged position in Ciudad Católica's trademark publication, *Verbo,* and to capitalize on the links built by Genta and Meinvielle with other advocates of Catholic restoration in Europe and Latin America. As a product of the crisis of post-Peronist Argentina and of these transnational contacts, *Verbo* is an extremely revealing artifact. For its editors, *Verbo* was not just a publication, but "a working instrument […] the Master's book that needs to be an object of reflection and translated into common language." It was, in other words, a vehicle for indoctrination towards political struggle against the sworn enemies of the Church. *Verbo*'s main object of analysis (and contempt) was "the Revolution" which they associated with the constant flow of modern life, the predominance of the will of Man over the will of God, cosmopolitanism, secularization, and the imposition of the kingdom of Lucifer over the kingdom of Christ. The counterrevolution was, in juxtaposition, the battle against these forces in order to restore the rule of Christian law over society.[100]

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[99] Carlos Sacheri, "Estudio preliminar"; in Julio Meinvielle, La Concepción Católica de la Política. Los Tres Pueblos en la Lucha por la Dominación del Mundo. El Comunismo en la Argentina (Buenos Aires: Dictio, 1974), 311-325.

Ciudad Católica's central political concept was that of "action," which they understood as a way of "experiencing and submitting ourselves to the real in order to teach us the concrete way to instill the Catholic truth into the minds of men."[101] In fact, *Verbo* would dedicate extensive space to laying out specific "norms of action" that linked its broader counterrevolutionary mission with the specific aims of exerting their influence in all spheres of society. Their doctrine was not, however, "for the masses," but a pedagogical instrument for the formation of leaders, a clericofascist counterrevolutionary vanguard with the capacity to reach the elites but also to work from the bottom up, in what they called, in a strange Foucaldian way, "diffusion through capillarity." Ciudad Católica, they said, "is not a movement […] our efforts should branch out towards the various groups linked by friendship, profession, etc. through which our friends can infiltrate more easily the essential ideas for a Christian social order."[102]

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[100] "¿Qué es la revolución?," Verbo 2 (June 1959): 1-2.

[101] "Editorial," Verbo 2 (June 1959): 4.

An essential aspect of Ciudad Católica's proposed political platform was its emphasis on the work of counterrevolutionary education based on the principle of persuasion; "we must convince, not just affirm," they wrote in *Verbo*. This counterrevolutionary mission was to be carried out, again, in a capillary way, by non-regimented *células* of activists, united only by a common purpose and defined by their ability to adapt their "style" to any place and any environment.[103] According to the chief editor of *Verbo*, Roberto Gorostiaga, "the action of an active [communist] minority can only be countered by another active minority that knows how to combat the creeping of the ancient serpent. They shall be men devout of the Virgin and the Holy Rosary, a weapon of incalculable efficacy that has delivered so many victories for Christianity."[104]

Like many other anticommunist publications of its time, *Verbo* stressed the importance of systematically studying the logic of communism in light of Marxist dialectics and the longer historical trajectory of Revolution as the assault against the peace and harmony of the medieval Catholic City. Soviet communism was, in this sense, the third grand Revolution that inaugurated "an infra-animal and purely material life in which Man is deprived of all intellectual, sensible, spiritual joy, and reduced to a screw or cog in the great Machine of the modern City." With that diagnosis, *Verbo* proposed to work towards the re-establishment of the Catholic City, "the only possible answer to the city of the great Revolution, in whose barbarism we find ourselves submerged."[105]

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[102] "Normas de Acción," Verbo 5 (1959): 48-50.

[103] "Normas de acción," Verbo 7 (November 1959): 47-52.

[104] [Interview with Roberto Gorostiaga], Verbo 10 (March 1960): 48.

Ciudad Católica's metahistorical reading of dialectics as the essence of this great Revolution and of communism as its historically contingent manifestation raised the crucial question of defining the nature of action against communism. In this regard, in *Verbo* they appealed to the 1937 Encyclical Divini Redemptoris, known for its condemnation of communism and atheism, its proposal to fight the enemies of the Church via the regeneration of Christian life through the emphasis on Christian charity, social justice, and a proximity to worker organizations as the key to more effective forms of *acción católica*. *Verbo* would reformulate (and to a certain extent refute) this notion of Catholic action, which they deemed as insufficient, and pointed to the need to blur the lines between Catholic and political action, as the latter had fallen into the enemy's hands and had to be reconquered: "one ought to be insane to think that the means currently available to our side of the struggle can really constitute a serious obstacle to a diabolically prepared subversion."[106] Citing Lenin's own warning about Catholicism as the one force that the Revolution ought to fear, *Verbo*'s solution to this problem was to contest revolution's "virulent universality" with counterrevolution as a form of universalism "methodically adapted to the demands of the struggle" and as the bridge between *accion católica* and *acción política*.

The radicalization of Ciudad Católica's counterrevolutionary agenda coincided with (and was most likely caused by) two important events: the Second Vatican Council

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[105] "El comunismo y la ciudad católica," Verbo 8 (December 1959): 3-5.

[106] "Acción católica y acción política," Verbo 10 (March 1960): 40-42.

(initiated in 1962) and the political instability in Argentina caused by the overthrow of Arturo Frondizi. By 1963, *Verbo*'s editorial line reflected these circumstances, referring to the political crisis in the country as a manifestation of the enemy's readiness to fight the last and definite battle of an undeclared war, the so-called "communist revolutionary war" that was allegedly being waged in all fronts and by all available means.[107] From then on, *Verbo* would dedicate considerable space to the advertising and review of books on revolutionary war and communist subversion, and to explicit critiques of Catholic *progresismo* and the incapacity of the state to respond to the threat of communism. By the time of Gen. Onganía's coup d'etat of 1966 and under a new editorial board, *Verbo* had established links with Catholic publications in Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia, with which they exchanged materials for indoctrination and information via the Argentine Catholic Information Agency (AICA).

The increase in Leftist activity in the country and the frustration of a wide sector of the Argentine Right with the political and economic program established by Gen. Onganía (too modernizing and too ineffective in its battle against communism, in their view) prompted new questions about the "efficacy" of Catholic anticommunist action. For *Verbo*, the nature of the enemy's revolutionary war had caught the Argentine state unprepared for a proper response. Following the teachings of Jean Ousset, the key for effective counterrevolutionary anticommunist action was not to directly adopt the enemy's methods of struggle (e.g. the creation of anticommunist guerrillas, as Meinvielle had suggested). Instead, Ousset's followers were to emulate the communists' "acute sense of action driven by ideals, their constant concern for the formation of cadres, and their permanent will to think about action scientifically."[108] An attentive student of Lenin's political writings, Jean Ousset considered himself a theorist of revolutionary war and, like all of his fellow doctrinaires, claimed that his anticommunism was rooted in the study of Marxism itself, from Hegel to Mao. As historian Elena Scirica has suggested, the structure of Ciudad Católica proposed by Ousset indeed followed certain Leninist principles for the formation of cadres and cell organizations to create an elite that could reform society by influencing or taking over positions of power. the adoption and adaptation of "the enemy's methods" for the counterrevolutionary cause, as he consciously chose to shape the structure of Cité Catholique in the image of Lenin's cadres and cell organizations to create an elite that could reform society by influencing or taking over positions of power.[109]

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[107] "A los lectores," Verbo 37 (January-February 1963): 23-24.

As attested by the transnational nature of Ciudad Católica, and the global character of revolutionary war they claimed to be preparing for, this project was not to be limited to Argentina. In 1967, and perhaps in response to the sharp internationalist spirit of the Tricontinental Conference, *Verbo* noted the need for a continent-wide coordinated military strategy, but also for the formulation of an alternative to the helpless demo-liberal democracies, a "total political project" aiming to model states in the image of Natural Order.[110] *Verbo* insisted on the importance of heroic and martyr elites to lead in this new context, and posed the need to create "the conditions for resistance," beginning with a deep reform of community life, and moving from the municipal level to the full transformation of the liberal state into "an ethical, militant state against the forces of subversion."[111]

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[108] Jean Ousset, "Deberes y condiciones de eficacia," Verbo 68 (March 1967): 35.
[109] Scirica, "Visión religiosa y acción política," 31-32.

[110] "Condiciones para una acción militar interamericana," Verbo 72 (July 1967): 2-5.

Ciudad Católica's communitarianism paid special attention to the revitalization of municipalities as basic units of social and political organization, and as the sites where the combat against the conditions for revolution, brought about by modernity and mass democracy, would take place. According to this vision, the size and social immediacy of municipalities enabled participation in public affairs, made interests and passions more concrete and thus less susceptible to dialectics and "abstract and absolute ideologies." The municipality was also the basic radius of Catholic action based on the social doctrine of the Church: the education of "social leaders," the knowledge about the forces that subvert municipal life and destroy its freedom, and the implementation of initiatives such as communal banks, schools and hospitals.[112] In this sense, despite Ciudad Católica's emphasis on the formation spiritual-political elites, the restoration of a Christian social order was to take place "from the bottom up," from the local to the national community.

Delimiting these concrete realms for Catholic action would eventually raise the question of the role of violence, more specifically, of how to reconcile the notion of violence as something opposed to the natural order, with the state of necessity brought about by Leftist subversion. The answer was provided by the initiator of Ciudad Católica, Georges Grasset, who wrote for *Verbo* allegedly from Argentina and under a pseudonym:

> In the case of Man, a violent act may or may not be according to his nature; it may be reasonable or not, and thus legitimate or not. To deprive Man of the right to violence is as non-sensical as granting him the indiscriminate power to exert it

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[111] Miguel Angel Iribarne, "La guerra revolucionaria, hoy," Verbo 72 (July 1967): 19.

[112] "El combate a nivel municipal," Verbo 78 (March 1968): 48-52.

> […] the absolute negation of violence would give free way and impunity to all kinds of injustices and aggressions.[113]

Grasset would not, however, approve of revolutionary violence by these means, because for him, the subversion of order was simply unacceptable and illegitimate. For him, revolutionary violence was illegible, because for him the Left lacked a sense of responsibility and its claims were devoid of reference to real social injustices. Clearly invested in contrasting the absence of leadership and transcendent purpose within the Left with the project pursued by his own organization, Grasset also questioned revolutionary clandestine action, without fully condemning secrecy as a method:

> We cannot ignore that every action of violent opposition against an established power requires the protection of secrecy. But these *violentos* are excessively secretive; they obscure their thoughts for themselves and everyone else, their intentions are contradictory and they never fully know who leads or in the name of whom they are acting.[114]

For Grasset the principles of proportionality and retributive self-defense were key to wage a violence that was both just and necessary. Violence could be exerted "as mandated by God" (*como Dios manda*); that is, after a deep conversion to traditional Christian virtue, "a synthesis of vigor and softness, force and serenity, intransigence and compassion." In short, violence could be just, if exerted by the virtuous as a solution, a punishment, and a last resort against the acts of *los violentos*.[115]

While these reflections were clearly inspired by the fierce repression against the civil uprisings of El Cordobazo (1969) and the proliferation of political violence on behalf of Leftist-revolutionary and Peronist groups, *Verbo* also turned to the international scene. The electoral defeat of the Left in Uruguay in 1971, for instance, was seen as a sign that communism could be crushed, even as the election of Salvador Allende in Chile (1970) had appeared as a harbinger of socialism throughout the region.[116] Also, towards the late 1960s and early 70s, *Verbo* strengthened editorial and information exchange ties around the world, with news briefings and articles from Mexico (provided by the magazines Integridad Mexicana and La Hoja de Combate, both linked to Catholic Action in Guadalajara and Monterrey), and by reprinting articles authored by the Spanish neofascist Blas Piñar and the Portugal-based Aginter Press, an information agency founded by former OAS agents that served as a façade for covert right wing terrorist operations in Europe.

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[113] Juan Octavio Lauze, "El fantasma de la violencia," Verbo 103/104 (August/September 1970): 75.

[114] Lauze, "El fantasma de la violencia," 74-75.

[115] Lauze, "El fantasma de la violencia," 77-78.

In these years, *Verbo* also sponsored "The Civic Book Club" which held an extensive catalog featuring works by Charles Maurras, Jean Ousset, Jordan Genta and Julio Meinvielle, as well less conventional materials such as Che Guevara's *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Mao's *Military Writings*, and various counter-guerilla manuals. Thus, when the young theologian Carlos Sacheri took over the ideological project of Ciudad Católica, the group had turned into a bridge for two generations of integrist Catholic thinkers and a crucial point of the collaboration between a sector of the Catholic Church and the military. Following the steps of his mentor Jordan Genta, Sacheri became be a key figure in establishing an organic relation between Ciudad Católica and military officers, but also in spreading *Verbo*'s message through public talks in neighborhood associations, community centers and Catholic schools as well as several appearances in the press.[117]

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[116] "La lección de Uruguay," Verbo 116/117 (November/December 1971): 5-7.

Ciudad Católica has been treated as a mere spawn of Ousset's transnational project, making the group a peripheral manifestation of the ideological groundwork for the infamous "French school of counterinsurgency," a doctrine that has been presented as a ready-made doctrine for global circulation.[118] As I discussed in Chapter III, the process of transfer and implementation of these ideas in Argentina was far more nuanced. Ciudad Católica sheds light on a different circuit in which these ideas about Catholic action and counterrevolutionary violence circulated; and on the process of adaptation and convergence, based on elective affinities and common global ideological sources, between the long-standing Argentine clericofascist tradition represented by Meinvielle and Genta, and the restorationist project proposed by Ousset. Thus, rather than a French or European import, Ciudad Católica was one of the nodes in a venture that was transnational in nature and origin. It was a point of convergence with already existing networks and bodies of knowledge among sectors of the Argentine Right – the military, the Church and civic anticommunist activists, many of whom had historically taken part in the production and circulation of these doctrines since their inception in the original "Revolution of the Right" in the 1930s and 40s.

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[117] Elena Scirica, "Un embate virulento contra el clero tercermundista. Carlos Sacheri y su cruzada contra "La Iglesia clandestina" Anuario del Centro de Estudios Prof Carlos S.A. Segreti 10, no. 10 (2010): 299.

[118] The clearest and most well-known example of this approach is Marie-Monique Robin, Escadrons de la mort. Robin presents the doctrine of revolutionary war as a product of France's colonial conflicts, later "exported" to the US and Latin America. What this approach misses, however, is that the US and Latin America were not passive receptacles of this doctrine, nor was the doctrine itself a novelty from a practical point of view, neither in Western-hemispheric or global terms: the American war of occupation in the Philippines, the Marine interventions in Central America, the irregular European resistance militias of WWII and the American anticommunist campaign in Korea were as important global precedents as Indochina and Algeria for the configuration of a body of military and political doctrine that circulated widely, being the object of various forms of adaptation to local conditions.

The influence built by Ciudad Católica in Argentina was deeply rooted in historical transnational collaboration between politically active Catholics in and outside of Argentina to promote an integrist restorationist Catholicism and the furtive mobilization of the anticommunist imaginary in civil society. Ciudad Católica was both the product of a convergence between Argentine and global Catholic counterrevolutionary "restorationists," whose circuits of interaction ran parallel, and yet often overlapped, with the Argentine Catholic hierarchy, the military, and secular anticommunist agendas. It was also a site for Catholic activism from which *nacionalistas* and right wing anticommunists were attempting to formulate a radical alternative to the perceived failures of the Onganía regime (a rampant economic crisis, a relapse into liberal legalism, and the increased violence of Leftist clandestine groups).

In the early 1970s, as political instability and the calls for all-out offensive against communist subversion met the real prospects of Perón's quasi-mythical return from exile, the ideological agenda of the extreme Right increased its impact and significance. Ciudad Católica was, in this context, a rather ancillary group in the dense network of collaboration between the Armed Forces and the Church. Yet, Ciudad Católica was a significant vehicle to the national and transnational circulation of ideas about the imminence of civil war and the need for a counterrevolutionary program against subversion *and* for the protection and restoration of Christianity.

Ultimately, the disillusionment of a broad range of civic anti-communist activists with Onganía's "revolution" and the turn of an important sector of the *nacionalista* youth organizations towards Peronism, also empowered the clericofascist integrist *nacionalistas* and legitimized, in their eyes, their claims about an ongoing process of communist aggression and the gradual takeover of all instances of society and government. In this regard, Ciudad Católica worked as a nucleus of indoctrination that relied not so much on the type of "citizen pedagogy" of civic anti-communism, but on the long-standing formal and informal links between the Armed Forces and the Church. Thus, in the context of *nacionalista* fragmentation, the Catholic restorationist project provided a sense of unity and strong ideological purpose, and a plan for action spearheaded by an elite vanguard of soldiers and priests imbued in the idea of counterrevolution and anti-subversive war as a sacred enterprise, a duty to God and Nation.

Combined with the political dominance of the Armed Forces, both strategies – the dissemination of anti-communist tropes throughout civil society and the indoctrination of cadres for a sacred standoff against communist subversion – would situate Argentina as an intellectual and political beacon for Latin American anti-communists and a pole of attraction for global anti-communist crusaders throughout the period of the 1976 dictatorship and the Dirty War. Ciudad Católica partook in the consolidation of an anticommunist consensus that reunited the Peronist Right, the *nacionalistas* and other anticommunist activists throughout civil society to call for the purging of the insurrectional wing of Peronism and wage an internal war that, between the return of Perón to the presidency (1973) and his death (1974) and more clearly with the 1976 junta, extended to all realms of Argentine society.

Part III. Fighting "la Conjura Roja"*: the Anticommunist Crusades in Mexico (1946-1972)*

Chapter 5. The Revolution and its discontents: Anticommunism, right-wing dissidence and authoritarianism in Mexico (1946-1954)

With the end of the revolutionary process that began in 1910 and the beginning of a long and winding road of political, economic and institutional consolidation, the Mexican postrevolutionary state faced various external and internal challenges. A wrecked economy, the urgency of land redistribution, the pressures for improved conditions for workers, demands for infrastructure and the development of the educational system, would pit the new revolutionary political class with sectors of Mexican society that either resented from various standpoints the ways of implementing these changes, or simply rejected their political, social and even philosophical implications. In this sense, post-revolutionary state-making in Mexico resorted to a wide array of mechanisms of coercion, incorporation, and exclusion that allowed the mobilization of political support and the gradual rearrangement of local spheres of power, formerly resting on the figure of the *cacique* (political boss) and the revolutionary caudillo, and, later, on their assimilation and instrumentalization by the emerging National Revolutionary Party (PNR).

The political historiography of this period of post-revolutionary state-making has emphasized, for the most part, the regime's dealings with sectors of Mexican society broadly identified with the Left: intellectuals, agrarian movements, workers' organizations with an internationalist slant, anarchists, socialists, and communists. The emphasis on the cooptation and undermining of the Left by the postrevolutionary state has created a historiographical landscape and a historical picture that pay much less attention to conservative and right wing movements, despite these actors' utmost centrality as dissidents, collaborators, and, often, as interlocutors in defining the nature and scope of political and economic modernization. This chapter examines several episodes and critical junctures in which groups of conservative intellectuals and public figures, as well as politically active Catholics in civil society, acted as agents and proponents of anti-communism as an ambivalent instrument of collaboration with the regime, with implicit, or more often explicit, contestations and critiques on the course of the postrevolutionary state. I analyze various sites in which these contestations occured, particularly in the creation of a “civic” anti-communist movement with a transnational drive; the emergence of right-wing student organizations; and the formation of covert networks of collaboration between anti-communist activists, and state and private agents.

The post-Cristero Right and the critique of the postrevolutionary state

Informed by the revolution’s impending demands and animosities, the Cristero Wars of 1926-1929 and 1934-1938 comprised the largest and most violent conflict of post-revolutionary Mexico. A predominantly peasant rebellion led by the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty (LNDLR), the so-called *Cristiada* (a veiled reference to the conflict as a *cruzada* for Christ) was the product of a spiraling confrontation between Church and state over the regime’s efforts to curtail and set limits to the Church’s participation in public life. In this conflict, the constitutional prohibition for the participation of the Church in politics and the expansion of the state’s educational system at the expense of the Church’s influence were two of the gravest points of contention, and, along with unresolved pressures for land redistribution, two of the most important sources of popular mobilization against what was seen by the Cristeros as an outright attack on religious liberty and the basis of Mexican national identity.[1] As historian Jennie Purnell has noted, the conflicts at the center, but also those "behind" the Cristero War, demonstrate the clashes between revolutionary anti-clericalism, agrarian struggles, and the vindication of rights and liberties that stemmed from the rhetoric of the revolution itself, but also from the sense that the beliefs and practices of communities were threatened by an authoritarian government. Revisionist interpretations of the Cristero War as a popular rebellion, and not (at least not only) as an instance of outright manipulation by the Church to preserve its privileges, have indeed opened new avenues to research and interpret these experiences with religious mobilization as conservative and revolutionary at the same time. The Cristero War and its aftermath signaled, in this regard, the emergence and presence of a strong, popularly backed movements of political Catholics that, from a Catholic standpoint, contested the hegemony of the regime's revolutionary nationalism, often seeking to reclaim its meanings or pose alternative forms of social organization.[2]

The experience of the Cristero War and the subsequent truce between the Church and the government left a deep imprint in a generation of Catholic intellectuals and politicians that, from a variety of ideological standpoints, had condemned the regime's

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[1] The classic study on the social and political history of the Cristero War is Jean Meyer, La Cristiada. 4 vols. (Mexico: Siglo XX, 1973). Meyer can also be considered the initiator of an important revisionist current in Mexicanist historiography, not limited to studies of the Cristero rebellion, which questioned the simplification of religious resistance as reactionary or conservative. Also see Matthew Butler, Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927-29 (Oxford: The British Academy; Oxford University Press, 2004); Jennie Purnell, Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: the Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). This new historiography has also helped redefine the social and spatial boundaries of Cristero activism; for a study on Cristero activists and exiles in the United States, see Julia C. Young, Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugess of the Cristero War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[2] Purnell, Popular Movements, 7-10.

“totalitarian” revolutionary nationalism by equating it to Jacobinism and Bolshevism. With its aggressive anticlerical positions and the military campaign against the Cristeros, the presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928) would remain, in the collective memory of political Catholics, as a particularly dark period marked by the imposition of a socialist slant in education, the barring of religious practices from public places, and the persecution and expulsion of priests. Later, with its deepening of land redistribution, its support for the expansion of secular public education, its endorsement of state-sponsored labor organizations, and its alliance with avowed Marxist intellectual and labor politician Vicente Lombardo Toledano, the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1938) appeared, in the eyes of these dissidents, as the continuation of Calles’ authoritarian and anti-clerical program. Cárdenas’s proximity to the labor movement, his sympathies for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War, and his insistence on a socialist model of public education earned him the aversion of conservative dissidents who contested, often violently, what they saw as either a betrayal of the true promises of the revolution; or the logical continuation of a violent process that was seen as unequivocally detrimental to the eternal values of Catholic Mexico.

By the time Cárdenas attempted to moderate the anti-clericalism of the regime, the Church hierarchy and its affiliated lay organizations were already waging a campaign to counter state influence on worker and peasant organizations, and to warn Mexican society about the “false liberators of the people” and the faults of Marxism, and reassert the popular character of Catholicism. Eventually, the Church hierarchy eliminated the rhetoric of rebellion/resistance and acquiesced to Cárdenas's commitment to protect religious freedom.[3]

As the foundation of conservative dissidence to the postrevolutionary state, the post-Cristero Right spanned a constellation of organizations, intellectuals, and politicians that sought to formulate a coherent critique of the political and social shortcomings of the regime, and pose alternatives based on their diagnoses. The revolutionary-turned-dissident José Vasconcelos was perhaps the most emblematic figure of this generation. As rector of the National University and Secretary of Education in the early 1920s, he had been an intellectual and political "soldier" of the revolution, as well as a prolific writer, an icon of Mexican nationalism, and a palpable influence throughout Latin America thanks to his "Iberoamericanist" essay *The Cosmic Race* (1925).[4] In the late 1920s, the increasingly authoritarian and anti-clerical turn of the regime and the start of the Cristero War made him a fervent adversary of the revolutionary class, particularly of president and influential strongman Plutarco Elías Calles. After a failed presidential run (1929) that mobilized ample sectors of Mexican society, and six years of exile in the

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[3] Roberto Blancarte, "Intransigence, anticommunism and reconciliation. Church/State relations in transition," in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 72-73

[4] José Vasconcelos, La Raza Cósmica (Madrid: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925). In *The Cosmic Race* Vasconcelos proposed the idea of Iberoamerica as a cultural unity and the home of the fifth, "cosmic," universal race that would overcome its relegation by Anglo-Saxons. The book remained a key influence for Latin American thinkers on both Left and Right throughout the twentieth century. For a critical study of revolutionary Vasconcelos see Claude Fell, José Vasconcelos, los Años del Águila, 1920-1925. Educación, Cultura e Iberoamericanismo en el México Posrevolucionario (Mexico: UNAM, 1989). Also see Vasconcelos' fictionalized autobiography, Ulises Criollo (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1935). On *The Cosmic Race* as a conservative text, see Evodio Escalante, "José Vasconcelos, un hegeliano de derecha," in Dora Kanoussi (ed.), El Pensamiento Conservador en México (Mexico: BUAP; Plaza y Valdés, 2002), 75-92. The Cosmic Race also had a crucial impact on the Chicano movement in the United States, as its notion of *La Raza* derives from a particular reading of Vasconcelos' ouvre. On this appropriation see Ilán Stavans, Jose Vasconcelos: The Prophet of the Race (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

United States, Vasconcelos still considered himself president-elect and kept denouncing the plundering of the national treasure and the "bastardization" of nationalism, as grounds to call for an armed and "moral" insurrection against "the usurpers."[5]

The insurrection never came, but Vasconcelos remained politically and intellectually active, particularly during the rise of Nazi Germany and throughout World War II, through publications such *La Reacción(?)* and *Timón*. Mockingly adopting the regime's label for conservative dissidence, *La Reacción(?)* waged vicious attacks against liberal democracy, *cardenismo*, communism, and the United States, and put forward a reading of fascism that, without endorsing it, justified it as "the violent reaction of societies violently attacked by communism."[6]

In the context of the presidential campaign of 1940, the tabloid was openly for the opposition candidate, Juan Almazán, and excoriated the legacies of Cárdenas. For the writer and journalist Rubén Salazar Mallén (known for his pioneering anticommunist fiction),[7] *cardenismo* had brought nothing but "hunger and abjection"; the end of *cardenismo* would be, in his view, "the extinction of Mexico's worst epoch."[8] Even Judaism appeared as a problem, according to collaborator Carlos Roel, who wrote about

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[5] "Manifiesto de José Vasconcelos a la nación mexicana," in Gastón García Cantú (ed.), El Pensamiento de la Reacción Mexicana. Historia Documental. Tomo III: 1929-1940 (Mexico: UNAM, 1997), 85-87.

[6] Fernando de la Fuente, "El Komintern," La Reacción(?) 34 (11 May 1939).

[7] In 1932, the literary magazine *Examen* published advances of Salazar Mallén's *Cariátide*, considered the first anticommunist novel in Mexico. The magazine was subject to government censorship for Salazar's use of obscene language, making Salazar a figure of resistance against the government and the intellectual and artistic establishment. See Guillermo Sheridan, Malas Palabras: Jorge Cuesta y la Revista Examen (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 2011).

[8] Rubén Salazar Mallén, "Oportunidad de la oposición," La Reacción(?) 28 (28 March 1939).

Marxism and Bolshevism as "Jewish offspring" and against the influx of Jewish immigrants to Mexico.[9]

During the WWII, Vasconcelos directed the magazine *Timón*, a strongly anti-Semitic and straightforward Nazi propaganda publication, funded by the German embassy, which exalted the achievements of German culture and civilization. A short lived publication later banned by the government, *Timón* gathered former collaborators from *La Reacción(?)* as well as other figures of the Mexican conservative cultural scene whose nationalism allowed them to relate to the fascist imaginary, to its global figures (from Hitler and Mussolini, to Salazar and Franco), and to the idea of communism as an instrument of Jewish world domination, linked to Anglo-Saxon liberalism and to capitalist imperialism.[10] At large, *La Reacción(?)* and *Timón* were not just expressions of right wing provocation to taunt Cárdenas and express dissatisfaction with the regime, but a larger symptom of the possibilities offered by fascism as a language of resistance and potent contestation against liberal democracy and the Left.

For these intellectuals, the anticommunist core of fascism also provided the possibility of linking the combat of communism at home (that is, their battle against *cardenismo*) with, for instance, the Spanish Civil War, a central episode for fascists and anti-fascists in Latin America and elsewhere. In this regard, for Vasconcelos, anticommunism was a bridge to interpret Mexico's experience with dictatorial rule and anti-clerical violence as an immediate precedent to the Spanish Republic (which, in fact, he attributed to the global "contagion" of Calles's anti-clericalism and its endorsement by American Jewish bankers). [11] Communism manifested, in both cases, as anti-religious barbarism. And the rebellion of Franco, its nationalist (thus, neither fascist nor communist, according to Vasconcelos) antidote, one which Mexico could only hope for.

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[9] Carlos Roel, "Cartas a un israelita," La Reacción(?)33 (4 May 1939).

[10] A recent study of these aspects of Vasconcelos' thought in *Timón* is Miriam Jerade, "Antisemitismo en Vasconcelos: anti-americanismo, nacionalismo, y misticismo estético," Estudios Mexicanos 31, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 248-286. Also see Itzhak Bar-Lewaw, La Revista "Timón" y José Vasconcelos (Mexico: Casa Edimen, 1971); and Héctor Orestes Aguilar, "Ese olvidado nazi mexicano de nombre José Vasconcelos," Istor: Revista de Historia Internacional 8, no. 30 (2007): 148-157.

As in Argentina and Colombia, the victory of Franco's troops against the Republic injected new meanings to the anticommunist dimensions in this tradition of political Catholicism. Like Vasconcelos, other Mexican intellectuals would couple their reading of the Civil War with the recent memory of the Cristero rebellion, placing them along a continuum of anti-Catholic violence and as examples of religious sacrifice and nationalist valor. For conservative writer Jesús Guisa y Azevedo (known in his intellectual circle as "Little Maurras"),[12] Franco's victory had been a world-changing event that opened the world's eyes to the unsuitability and false universality of liberal democracy and socialism. "A new Spain," he claimed in 1939, "has raised victorious against liberal anarchy, democracy, petty politicians, and communism […] Over a century of demagogy has tired and sickened all peoples. Franco has come to cure us all."[13] Unlike Vasconcelos, whom he rebuked for his filo-Nazi venture in *Timón*, Guisa rejected Nazism's anti-Catholic, Germanic-Protestant, and pagan elements, which, in light of the Stalin-Hitler pact, he equated with communism ("the difference is that Germans are barbarians and Russians are savages," he wrote), and even with Islam.[14]

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[11] For Vasconcelos' views on the Spanish Republic as an expression of a global "*callista* contagion" backed by communist, Jewish and Anglo-Saxon imperialisms, see Qué es el Comunismo (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1936), 25-44.

[12] Guisa recognized Charles Maurras, the founder of Action Française, as a crucial influence on his reactionary political ideas. In addition, his views were also shaped by neo-Thomist philosophy, his readings of Spanish conservatives Jose María Pemán and Ramiro de Maeztu, and an intellectual admiration for José Vasconcelos, with whom he had collaborated in La Reacción(?). A founding member of PAN, Guisa was later a member of the National Synarchist Union, and joined the Mexican Academy of Letters with Vasconcelos' endorsement. José Díaz Nieva, "Apuntes para un estudio de la influencia de Maurras en Hispanoamérica," Anales de la Fundación Elías de Tejada 16 (2010): 91-93.

[13] Jesús Guisa y Azevedo, Doctrina Política de la Reacción (Mexico: Polis, 1941), 58.

Like other Latin American conservatives of his time, Guisa saw Franco's authoritarian Catholic state as the one capable of overcoming the "ineptitude" of democracy and the inauthenticity of liberalism and socialism. For him, Franco's fascism fulfilled a minimum fascist core that was worth emulating: "fascism is authority, dictatorship, strong State, totalitarianism, the unity of rulers and the ruled through a political mystique."[15] For Guisa, the uniqueness and novelty of Franco's fascism was defined by the religious element, and by the particularities of Spanish nationalism, and thus of Spain's history. "Authoritarian regimes are national," he wrote, "they have bathed themselves in history to be able to abide by national social realities […] What is truly universal about them is that they have vindicated authority and the nation both as ideas and as realities […] Authority begins with illumination and ends with the exertion of violence, all for our own and everyone else's good."[16] In these terms, Guisa's diagnosis of the postrevolutionary regime in Mexico was scathing. "The totalitarianism of the Mexican State is of an inferior kind," he stated; "it is made out of whim, of sensibility and animal instincts. Socialist education is a vilifying, prostituting thing… The only civilized thing about the Mexican State is its hypocrisy, which is a vice of civilization."[17]

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[14] "*Germanismo* translates into more hatred, more enmity, more ignorance, more negation of all values of Christian civilization, than Islamism. It is a new Islam that fights against us all, the civilized ones, with the weapons of all barbarisms." Guisa y Azevedo, Doctrina Política, 73. Also see Hispanidad y Germanismo (Mexico: Polis, 1945).

[15] Guisa y Azevedo, Doctrina Política, 60.

[16] Guisa y Azevedo, Doctrina Política, 61-62.

Setting distance from fascism's anti-Catholicism while embracing the fascist political imaginary – its notions of authority, violence, and of communism as the enemy – this alternate register of Mexican nationalism sought to become a radical contestation of the secular, labor, and peasant-oriented "revolutionary nationalism" that, by the end of the 1930s, had been successfully incorporated by the regime into the education system and as a banner of the official National Revolutionary Party (PNR).

Other currents of the post-Cristero Right situated themselves in different positions with respect to these debates about the nature of political Catholicism and the social doctrine of the Church. That was the case for the National Action Party (PAN), founded in 1939 by Manuel Gómez Morín (former rector of the National University and a collaborator at *La Reacción*), Efraín González Luna (a pupil of Guisa y Azevedo), and other post-Cristero conservatives who sought to become the main electoral opposition to the PNR through a broad Christian-Democratic program. Others, like the Mexican Revolutionary Action (ARM), took on a straightforward fascist model of organization, with an ultra-nationalist, anticommunist and anti-Semitic platform with no explicit Catholic content, and a flair for street violence.[18]

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[17] Guisa y Azevedo, Doctrina Política, 61.

[18] The ARM was the creation of Gen. Nicolás Rodríguez, who gave the ARM's gold-shirted shock brigades the nickname of "Los Dorados" as an homage to his years fighting alongside Pancho Villa's "Los Dorados" army. The ARM acted as a shock brigade against Leftist demonstrations and workers' strikes, first endorsed by the Calles regime and later by business organizations who incorporated them into a nation-wide crusade against the pro-labor policies of Lázaro Cárdenas. Hugh G. Campbell, La Derecha Radical en México, 1929-1949 (Mexico: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1976), 50-61. For a unique account on the origins of the ARM, see Alicia Gojman de Backal, Camisas, Escudos y Desfiles Militares. Los Dorados y el Antisemitismo en México (1934-1940) (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000).

Some lay sectors of the Church that were the active core of the Cristero rebellion and folded to the armistice with the government found their place in the Mexican Catholic Action (ACM), designed to bring radical Catholics under the reign of the Catholic hierarchy, while maintaining a platform of combatting "anti-Christian civilization by all just and legal means."[19] In 1937, those that continued on the path of radical resistance, even if a non-violent one, founded the National Synarchist Union (UNS). The *sinarquistas* put forward a nationalist and Catholic-integrist platform that played on anti-Semitism, anti-Americanism, and anticommunism to denounce the "anti-Mexican" policies of Lázaro Cárdenas and his associates. As an alternative, the UNS proposed a corporatist and collectivist state and the implementation of land reform under a "Christian social order" based on charity and generosity.

The sinarquistas aimed to reclaim the revolution from what they called "the false Mexicans" (those "contaminated by the gold of Moscow") by refusing to participate in electoral politics and seeking, instead, the restoration of Mexico's utopian, traditional, peasant past.[20] With Salvador Abascal as the nation-wide leader of sinarquismo, the UNS reached 500,000 affiliates at the peak of its political activity in 1941, before falling prey to divisions, and remaining under constant state monitoring despite being a marginal political force, save for regions in Central-Western Mexico historically tied to Cristero activism. [21]

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[19] John W. Sherman, The Mexican Right: the End of Revolutionary Reform, 1929-1940 (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 33-36.

[20] On these revolutionary/counterrevolutionary and utopian aspects of sinarquismo see Jason Dormady, Primitive Revolution: Restorationist Religion and the Idea of the Mexican Revolution, 1940-1968 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011), chapter 3.

[21] On the origins and ideology of the UNS in the context of the rise of the post-Cristero radical Right, see Campbell, La Derecha Radical en México, 1929-1949. On the various connections and important

In the 1940s, after winning a highly polemical election and calling for "national unity," president Manuel Ávila Camacho scaled back on Cárdenas' agrarian and labor reform, rebuked communism, made peace with an alienated and confrontational business sector, and publicly acknowledged his Catholic faith, signaling the regime's remarkable reconciliation with the Church and, ostensibly, with the political Catholics that had mobilized in favor of defeated opposition candidate Juan Almazán.[22] With the regime's turn towards "moderation," the radical post-Cristero Right, particularly the sinarquistas, lost its ideological traction as a bulwark of nationalism against "communist infiltration" in the government. However, much of the anti-liberal and anticommunist allure of the old Cristero Right subsisted amongst the traditionalist sectors of the Church and lay Catholic civic and student organizations, working as a political language to make claims vis-a-vis the state and converging with the secular anticommunist nationalism that was taking root in the PRI's corporatist apparatus, as well as the private sector and the press.[23]

The 1940s were, thus, a decade of transition for those that felt disaffected by the revolution but saw an opening to reclaim its meaning and change its course by fending off the legacies of anti-clerical, pro-socialist *cardenismo.* In the following decades, the memory of the violent conduct and repression of the Cristero War remained intimately

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distinctions between *sinarquismo* and fascism see Jean Meyer, El Sinarquismo: ¿Un Fascismo Mexicano? (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1979).

[22] Stephen Niblo, Mexico in the 1940s: Modernity, Politics, Corruption (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 94-95.

[23] For a study of the entrepreneurial sector and its changing relation to the state, see Roderic A. Camp, Entrepreneurs and Politics in Twentieth-Century Mexico (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). On the role of the printed press in the early postwar period, see Elisa Servín, "Propaganda y Guerra fría: La campaña anticomunista en la prensa mexicana del medio siglo," Signos Históricos 11 (2004): 9–39. On the influence of post-Cristero Catholic activism in higher education see Nicolás Dávila Peralta, Las Santas Batallas: La Derecha Anticomunista en Puebla (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 2001).

linked to the formulation of more or less radical contestations to the post-revolutionary state and the insistence on the latter's incapacity to deal with the problem of communism. In the words of former Cristero leader and Catholic intellectual René Capistrán Garza: "There is still no justice for the *Cristiada*. Today the world fights in anguish against totalitarian communism, and it is impossible to plan for the battle without the magnificent precedent of that crusade."[24]

Defending mexicanidad*: authoritarianism and "official" anticommmunism*

During the presidency of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), the rhetoric of anticommunism played a key role in role in reinforcing the ideological traction of the revolutionary nationalism of the official party, the freshly renamed Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI). Centered on the ideas of "social peace" and the modernization of the country, the *alemanista* project sought to neutralize conflict in the political sphere and promote economic development by a combination of regulation through state intervention, and innovation and creativity through private entrepreneurship and the attraction of foreign capitals.[25] As one of the pillars of Alemán's modernizing rhetoric stood the so-called doctrine of *mexicanidad,* which presented itself as a supersession of the idea of "national unity" fostered by Ávila Camacho throughout World War II. According to a peculiar manual of *alemanista* doctrine, the idea of mexicanidad implied a new understanding of "unity in peace and towards progress," inspired by a

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[24] René Capistrán Garza, La Iglesia Católica y la Revolución Mexicana: Prontuario de Ideas (Mexico: Editorial Atisbos, 1964), 79.

[25] Tzvi Medin, El Sexenio Alemanista: Ideología y Praxis Política de Miguel Alemán (Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1990), 30-33; Niblo, Mexico in the 1940s, 189-190.

"revolutionary faith" and the desire for "freedom from foreign influence."[26] In the context of the strategy of containment against communism delineated by the Truman doctrine (1947), *mexicanidad* translated into an explicit rejection of communism by PRI and state officials, and the formulation of a supposedly democratic "nationalist alternative" to left and right-wing totalitarianisms.[27] The consolidation of presidentialism and of the corporatist structure of the PRI, with its worker, peasant and "popular" sectors, were to serve as the political anchors of this project, aiming for a gradual and tightly controlled political opening and the promise of modernization, both validated by a constant appeal to the unfinished goals of the revolution and their adaptation to the postwar order.

With the PRI's attempt to grasp full control of the political system, labor became one of the principal spheres of action against so-called "communist influence," mainly through the gradual relegation of socialist and left-leaning organizations from the party's decision-making structures and the attempts to coopt their support base. Seeking to undermine the power of the Mexican Workers' Confederation (CTM), Alemán stood aside as dissident unions emerged and oil workers threatened with a strike to protest cuts in wages and benefits. Then Alemán announced that his administration would not allow strikes or stoppages, and maneuvered to expel left-wing dissidents from the oil workers' union. Arguing against union independence in the name of unity against the interests of imperialism, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, an avowed Marxist socialist intellectual and leader of the Latin American Workers' Confederation (CTAL), endorsed the measures. The government mobilized loyalist unions to stage anti-dissident and anticommunist demonstrations, coupled with the mobilization of the PRI's corporatist structure to push its worker, peasant, and urban-popular affiliated organizations towards an anticommunist platform.[28]

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[26] Helia de Acosta, Alemanismo: Teoría y Práctica (México: Libros de México, 1952), 26-28.

[27] Luis Medina, Del Cardenismo al Avilacamachismo. Historia de la revolución mexicana, vol. 18 (México, El Colegio de México, 1978), 176-180.

As part of this campaign, in 1948 the president of the PRI, Gen. Rodolfo Sánchez Taboada, announced the party's decision to fully adopt a position of "active anticommunist struggle." In typically evasive *priísta* fashion, Sánchez Taboada stated that the PRI's was "a positive struggle against communism," directed not against communist groups (because "fortunately these ideas that are alien to our idiosyncrasy and institutions have not infiltrated the body of the *patria*") but against demagogues seeking personal benefit by taking on that banner.[29] Sánchez Taboada's statements were indicative of a double discourse that combined a) an emphasis on the incompatibility of communism with Mexico's revolutionary history, and the warnings against dangerous foreign infiltrators; with b) the disparaging of communism as posing no actual threat to the regime, and of communists as lacking actual ideological commitments and acting out of pure self-interest.

This anticommunist campaign was aimed primarily at the alleged presence of communists as civil servants, and, despite Lombardo's support for Alemán's government program, also at labor organizations thought to be close to Lombardo's Popular Party or the CTAL.[30] PRI senators swore to promote anticommunist committees at the federal, state and municipal levels, seeking to "achieve a complete purge of communists and organize anti-Red events."[31] The same group of senators formed a Committee of Public Health against Communism, a gesture revealing the inquisitorial nature of these initiatives and the attempt to present them as "revolutionary." According to the press, the committee had the public endorsement of business groups and opposition parties, such as the PAN and the *sinarquistas* that formed the short-lived Fuerza Popular party.[32] A National Anticommunist Council, formed by PRI legislators, requested from the president a declaration of "a state of national emergency against communism," a call for "popular action" against all manifestations of Stalinism, the removal of communists from public offices, and their expulsion from the country for national treason.[33] Others, like the National Democratic Committee for the Struggle against Communism, led by CTM leader and PRI legislator Antonio Rivas, pledged to combat the communist virus amongst workers and all social classes, and promote harmony between capital and labor.[34]

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[28] Niblo, Mexico in the 1940s, 190-196.

[29] "Anuncia el PRI una lucha anticomunista," Excélsior, 23 April 1948.

Other voices outside the PRI chimed in. The fascist organization Mexican Revolutionary Action demanded "a vigorous determination against communist demagogues […] it is time for the government to terminate the activities of the half dozen parasites that discredit the regime from their public posts."[35] The National Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (CONCANACO) also applauded the campaign while bemoaning "the leniency of some Mexican officials to the Red cause, which has us exposed to the USSR's attempts to impose its hegemony on the world."

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[30] Rumors about Lombardo's role as a Soviet agent abounded, to the point that a DFS report discusses his personal friendship with the head of Soviet security Lavrenti Beria. Memorandum, "Informe de las actividades del Partido Comunista Mexicano," 23 September 1953, exp. 544.61-7, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines [ARC], Archivos Presidenciales [AP], AGN-MEX.

[31] "Campaña anticomunista con cuartel general en el Senado," Excélsior, 20 April 1948.

[32] "Acción del senado contra el comunismo," Excélsior, 28 October 1948.

[33] "Lucha abierta al comunismo" La Prensa, 26 April 1948.

[34] "En junta de todas las clases sociales, estudiárase un plan anticomunista," Excélsior, 22 April 1948.

In its complaint, CONCANACO made reference to Mexico's anticommunist posturing at the 9th Inter-American Conference in Bogotá. In their view, the country's official position was commendable but insufficient to address the problem of communism, as attested by the violence that took place after the assassination of Colombian politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9th. "The events in Bogotá," they said, "show the unmistakable mark of Red madness. It was the brutal imposition of the barbaric whim of a marginal rabble that had been prepared in advance for the moment in which an agent of communism would set the rage of the masses on fire, producing a flame of hatred against everyone and everything."[36] Even Ezequiel Padilla, a dissident of the PRI who ran against Alemán in 1946, vowed to return from his self-imposed exile in the United States to join the anticommunist struggle, along with some of his associates from the Democratic Mexican Party (PDM).[37]

These expressions of support for the PRI's "anticommunist struggle" materialized after the announcement of an anticommunist congress planned for November of 1948. Organized by PRI legislators, the congress became an opportunity for this critical mass of political and social actors to use anticommunism as a platform to align themselves with the regime and still wage a critique of its leniency towards communists. As stated in a press release by Jorge Prieto Laurens, Secretary General of the PDM:

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[35] "Insisten contra los rojos," La Prensa, 24 April 1948, 3, 6.

[36] Ibid.

[37] "Ezequiel Padilla dirigirá la lucha anticomunista," Excélsior, 10 August 1948, 3.

> Communists are a minority everywhere, but they form active groups backed by all sorts of national and foreign resources […] they are aggressive and operate in total impunity. Their cells act in government spheres, in unions, amongst teachers, students, rural communities, in the press, the Army and amongst scientists, artists and professionals […] The *criollo* communists […] are counting on the connivance of the phonies who, from the government, feign their support for the banner of anticommunism […] Without turning ourselves into systematic oppositionists, we can honestly and loyally serve the nation and the government by demanding the removal of communists concealed in all levels of the state bureaucracy.[38]

Prieto Laurens' view of communism as an active minority operating with impunity in all spheres of public life implied that anticommunism could not be left in the hands of a government-orchestrated campaign. Instead, he proposed that anticommunism become a platform undertaken by Mexican society at large, a civic duty embraced by all social classes and a contribution to "true national independence and the defense of our most sacred traditions."

Despite Prieto's desire to transfer the burden of the anticommunist cause to civil society, this iteration of a "national crusade" (as the press actually called it) was, however, clearly managed by the PRI-affiliated labor federations who strove to present the 1948 congress as a workers' initiative, infused with an anti-interventionist rhetoric that condemned communism, extolled the struggles of revolutionaries like Francisco Madero and Emiliano Zapata, and praised president Alemán as the embodiment and continuation of the revolution.[39] In 1950, in another congress organized by the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers, the attendees publicly rejected “communist theory in all its manifestations” and called for the illegalization of the Communist Party, the expulsion of all communists from government positions, and the creation of a national anticommunist commission led by civic organizations to foster collaboration with the government.[40] At large, these anticommunist congresses show the effectiveness of Alemán’s rhetoric of *mexicanidad* and how it went beyond being a mere instrument to delegitimize independent labor activism, by creating and operationalizing set of available discursive tropes about the incompatibility of communism with the legacies of the revolution.

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[38] "Excitativa a los miembros del Partido Democrático Mexicano en toda la República (contra el comunismo)," Excélsior, 22 November 1948.

While the structures of the official party focused on this type of smear-campaigning and red-baiting, the regime resorted to the Federal Criminal Code and made use of the so-called Law of Social Dissolution as a discursive and legal instrument to render dissenters as communists that endangered the principle of national sovereignty, thus becoming “political criminals.” This law emerged in the context of Mexico’s entry into World War II (1941), which prompted the Ávila Camacho administration to modify the Criminal Code to include espionage (punishable by up to forty years in prison) and the ill-defined crime of social dissolution, punishable by a prison term of two to six years. As defined in Article 145 of the Criminal Code, social dissolution involved the dissemination of political propaganda, more specifically “spreading ideas, programs, or forms of action for any foreign government which disturb the public order or affect the sovereignty of the Mexican state.” Explicitly defined as a political crime, social dissolution also encompassed any expression of ideas that threatened “the territorial integrity of the republic,” obstructed “the functioning of its legitimate institutions,” or spread “contempt on behalf of Mexican nationals toward their civic duties.”[41]

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[39] “Informan sobre la sesión inaugural del Congreso Democrático de Lucha contra el Comunismo,” 24 November 1948, f. 37-40, Caja 112, Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (IPS), AGN-MEX.

[40] “Resolutions adopted by First Anticommunist Congress sponsored by CROM, Mexico City, June 28-30, 1950,” From AmEmbassy Mexico To Department of State, Despatch No. 527, 24 August 1950, Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. Mexico, 1950-1954: Internal Affairs (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1986; from hereon, USMEX 1950-1954), 712.00/8-2450.

In 1950 Alemán amended the law to include acts of sabotage or any acts that “tend[ed] to produce rebellion, sedition, riot or mutiny,” and increased maximum prison terms to twelve years. Alemán introduced two other key changes. First, he expanded the definition of social dissolution to the “induction or incitation” to commit sabotage and acts “of provocation with the intent to disturb public peace and order.” And second, he instituted sentences of ten to twenty years in prison for acts that “prepare, materially or morally, for the invasion of the national territory or the subordination of the country to a foreign government.”[42] In short, the law codified certain beliefs or acts (even common, non-political crimes) as social dissolution based on their alleged intention to create the conditions of disorder and lawlessness, which, according to what became common knowledge, matched those sought by communist agitators to perpetrate their plans. In that context, in an effort to professionalize the Mexican intelligence apparatus and centralize its functions by linking it directly to the president’s office, Alemán created the Federal Security Directorate (DFS). Alongside the General Directorate for Social and Political

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[41] *Código Penal para el Distrito y Territorios Federales, en Materia de Fuero Común, y para Toda la República en Materia de Fuero Federal* (Mexico: Farrera, 1941). On *disolución social* as political crime see Evelyn Stevens, “Legality and extralegality in Mexico,” Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 12, no. 1 (Jan 1970): 62-75.

[42] Carlos Sánchez Cárdenas, Disolución Social y Seguridad Nacional (Mexico: Linterna, 1970), 182–184.

Investigations (DGIPS), DFS would become an instrument of political control for the regime, establishing the infrastructure and the means to surveil, contain, and suppress political crimes.[43]

In the early 1950s, the law of social dissolution was seldom invoked against political dissidents. The sentences were often lenient and subject to appeal, but press coverage of such cases emphasized the defendants' suspected communist allegiance and inclination for violence.[44] However, social dissolution became a common trope in public discourse to frame acts of dissidence, or even, the condition of being a dissident, as a state of constant and latent threat to stability, order, and national sovereignty. In this regard, one of the successes of this anticommunist "crusade" was the creation of a public environment of intimidation and persecution that, without a legal prohibition, kept the Communist Party from obtaining official registration, as party members' refused to have their names appear in official affiliation lists, thus making the party fall short of the minimum legal requirements to be officially recognized.

Besides its amalgamation into the *priísta* ideological and political machinery, and its direct influence on legislation geared towards the repression of dissent, the anticommunist and nationalist matrix of *mexicanidad* also worked to appease the lingering tensions between the Catholic Church and the PRI regime regarding the nature of public education, the control of labor unions, and the secular character of the state at large. Throughout the 1940s and despite important discords concerning the broader role of Catholicism in public life, relations between the PRI regime and the Church underwent a gradual reconciliation. This newfound harmony was based on the consensus that Mexican nationalism was incompatible with, and in fact actively condemned, the foreignness of "communist influence" in state and society. As Roberto Blancarte has suggested, the doctrine of *mexicanidad* allowed a convergence of governmental discourse with Catholic social doctrine to galvanize a form of anticommunist nationalism that allowed the Church to have a greater role in grassroots labor activism, promote economic *cooperativismo* (a lifetime project for anticommunists like Jorge Prieto Laurens), and, more broadly, to restore the place of Catholicism in national identity.[45] Also, while the limits imposed by PRI corporatism thwarted the creation of Catholic labor unions,[46] anticommunism allowed instances of veiled collaboration towards the promotion of an active Catholic-syndicalist identity to undermine the influence of Leftist unions.[47]

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[43] Aaron W. Navarro, Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 150.

[44] Jaime M. Pensado, Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture during the Long Sixties (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 111–112.

The alliance between the *alemanista* rendering of revolutionary nationalism and social Catholicism faced considerable resistance from within the Church and its most important civic and political branches, the long-standing Acción Católica Mexicana (ACM) and the Unión Nacional Sinarquista (UNS). For these lay sectors of Mexican

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[45] Roberto Blancarte, Historia de la Iglesia Católica en México (Mexico: Colegio Mexiquense; FCE, 1992), 110.

[46] On the roots of Catholic labor activism, see David Espinosa, "'Restoring Christian Social Order': The Mexican Catholic Youth Association (1913-1932)" The Americas 59, no. 4 (April 2003): 451-74.

[47] Historical tensions between Church and state did not prevent local instances of anticommunist collaboration between Church, state and even foreign diplomats. That was the case for the League of the Active White Cells, a "secret" anticommunist organization from Nuevo Laredo, led by Fr. Enrique Tomás Lozano. According to US sources, Lozano was an FBI informant on communist activity and a recruiter of "especially selected workers" from the eleven local unions controlled by the League to serve as counter-propagandists and "espionage agents" that would "report regularly and in detail to the priest" ("Communist activities and sympathizers in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico," From AmConsulate Nuevo Laredo to Department of State, Desp. No. 6, 1 August 1951, USMEX 1950-1954, 712.00/9-2761).

Catholicism, *mexicanidad* would prove insufficient to solve the conflicts over both the modernizing secular-liberal core of the PRI and the party's monopoly on corporatist organizations. This was clear in the 1952 campaign waged by the Catholic hierarchy to put forward demands for social justice, moral renovation, and religious freedom. "Moral renovation" was, indeed, an euphemism for condemning what the Church perceived as the harmful effects of secularization; namely, the corruption of social norms and values promoted by mass culture, the media, and state-run public education.[48] By the end of *alemanismo,* these demands served as a platform for a moderate but decided activism on behalf of the ACM, in alliance with active factions of the National Action Party who were pushing for a constitutional reform on public education, and the abolition of both civil marriage and divorce.[49]

Framed by these struggles over the scope of social reform and the overall political orientation of the post-revolutionary state, the 1952 presidential election appeared as a critical juncture for the renegotiation of the tensions unaddressed by *alemanismo*. Together with the active campaigning of the conservative opposition, the hegemonic *alemanista* faction of the PRI also faced an important challenge from within the official party. Gen. Miguel Henríquez, a veteran of the revolution and emblem of the social-reformist sector of the military, mobilized a sector of the PRI that demanded the democratization of the methods for selecting candidates for all government posts, a gesture meant as a protest against the potential presidential nomination of the president's cousin, Fernando Casas Alemán.[50]

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[48] Blancarte, Historia de la Iglesia, 126-30.

[49] For a critical study showing the regional dimension of persistent Church-state conflicts despite these realignments and collaboration, see Benjamin T. Smith, The Roots of Conservatism in Mexico: Catholics, Society and Politics in the Mixteca Baja, 1750-1962 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012).

By 1951, with the support of a federation of peasant unions, Henríquez formed a new party, the Federation of Parties of the Mexican People (FPPM), which put forward a platform against government corruption and the existence of privileged elites, while pleading allegiance to the principles of the Mexican revolution and vindicating the reformist legacy of former president Lázaro Cárdenas.[51] The FPPM presented itself as a "revolutionary opposition" and questioned not only Alemán's revolutionary credentials, but also the broader absence of political competition and the halting of the agrarian reform. The new party soon attracted the sympathies of a wide range of adherents outside the PRI – mainly students, teachers, middle-class professionals, some elements of the Socialist and Communist parties, and, perhaps most importantly, of military officers who, like Henríquez, sought to regain the political space lost to the civilianization of the PRI after 1946. Also, Henríquez's candidacy had the reticent approval of former president Lázaro Cárdenas, and the backing *cardenistas* within the PRI. This support was crucial for the success of the FPPM in mobilizing the peasant and popular sectors that still paid homage to *cardenista* social reforms.[52]

In the context of heightened Cold War tensions, the ideologically heterogeneous and oppositional nature of the FPPM raised concerns amongst both Mexican and U.S.

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[50] Olga Pellicer de Brody and José Luis Reyna, El Afianzamiento de la Estabilidad Política (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1978), 44-48.

[51] Pellicer and Reyna, El Afianzamiento, 52. For a thorough analysis of *henriquismo* and the FPPM, see Elisa Servín, Ruptura y Oposición: El Movimiento Henriquista, 1945-1954 (Mexico: Cal y Arena, 2001).

[52] Navarro, Political Intelligence, 234-236.

officials about the danger of popular mobilization allegedly instigated by communists and, more concretely, by *cardenismo*. As the campaign evolved, anti-oppositional discourse in the press resorted to the denunciation of Soviet communist infiltrators to discredit the *henriquista* movement. Although press characterizations of the FPPM varied, the main national dailies like Excélsior, Novedades, and El Universal, as well as the newspaper conglomerate owned by Col. Jose García Valseca (*El Sol de México andEl Sol de Puebla*, reprinted stories of explicit anticommunist content manufactured by U.S.-based news agencies, reporting, for instance on the Korean War or Sen. McCarthy's anticommunist witch-hunt in the United States. This allowed editors to link global events with national politics, attacking the Henríquez-Cárdenas connection and denouncing the presence of communist instigators amongst the ranks of the FPPM.[53]

This climate reached its peak the day after the election, when FPPM announced a rally in Mexico City to contest the results. Fearing a major political upheaval, the government banned the gathering, which turned into a street battle between protesters and security forces. Two deaths and 524 arrests followed, but rumors of an insurrection prevailed, as the press avidly denounced Henríquez's intention of declaring himself "president elect," and accused him of "stirring up citizens towards an uprising" guided by "the Reds." In a telling move, press coverage on *henriquismo* shifted from the front pages to the *nota roja* (the crime section),[54] where *henriquistas* appeared as "inebriated instigators of bloody acts of violence," and the communists as the culprits for the repression "which they caused with their sole presence."[55] Unable to sustain itself as an opposition party, the FPPM disbanded after a major government crackdown in 1954, which resulted in the cancellation of the its registration under charges of inciting violence and armed revolt. [56] Accused by the government of being an agitator and publicly discredited for alleged acts of corruption, Henríquez remained under strong surveillance by DFS, suspected of plotting a coup and the assassination of former presidents Lázaro Cárdenas and Miguel Alemán.[57]

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[53] Servín, "Propaganda y Guerra Fría," 22-32.

[54] On the importance of *nota roja* in reflecting and shaping social perceptions about the justice system and the presence of violence in the public sphere, see Pablo Piccato, "Murders of the *nota roja*: truth and justice in Mexican crime news," Past and Present 223 (May 2014): 196-231.

As historian Aaron Navarro has pointed out, the 1952 election left important lessons and legacies for both the regime and the opposition. For one, the regime was successful, at least temporarily, in setting limits to reformist contestations of the regime and to the political role of the military, particularly of revolutionary veterans like Henríquez who questioned its monopoly on the meanings of the revolution. Dissidents learned that electoral competition for the presidency was a political dead end, pushing them into another "cycle of submersion" and finding a new fertile ground in student activism. Also, the successful campaign of propaganda and surveillance consolidated the DFS as the country's prime intelligence agency and as an instrument of control, in close communication with the US embassy. [58] These lessons would be crucial for the emergence of new dissident movements that kept challenging the hegemony of the PRI from the Left, while galvanizing support for the anticommunist cause in key sectors of

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[55] Servín, "Propaganda y Guerra Fría," 34.

[56] Servín, Ruptura y Oposición, 344-352; Navarro, Political Intelligence, 246-248.

[57] Memorandum, "Se informa con relación al henriquismo," 25 August 1955, exp. 48-1-1955 L-11 f. 12, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[58] Navarro, Political Intelligence, 244-255

Mexican society that sought to build bridges with anticommunist fellow travelers abroad, under the vigilant but complicit eye of the regime.

Silent pioneers: The Mexican Anticommunist Front

Concurrent with the meteoric rise and fall of *henriquismo* and the purges of ”Leftist” elements from PRI-affiliated organizations, anticommunist activism increased its public presence through collaboration between civic associations linked to political Catholicism, business organizations, and *priísta* cadres that worked actively to prevent a rebirth of *cardenismo*. The most notable example of these alliances was the Frente Popular Anticomunista de México (FPAM), created in 1948 by Jorge Prieto Laurens, a veteran of post-revolutionary Catholic activism, a founding member of Catholic Action of the Mexican Youth (ACJM),[59] and, as noted previously, a zealous participant in the PRI’s anticommunist congresses of 1948 and 1950.

Heir to the anti-cardenista imprint of prior anticommunist campaigns, the FPAM partook in the oppositional impulses displayed by center-right political forces from the private sector, the conservative PAN, and the close circle of collaborators for Ezequiel Padilla’s dissident candidacy, which included several veterans of the revolution, including former *zapatista* Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, *priísta* Melchor Ortega, and

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[59] Created in 1912 by Fr. Bernard Bergöend after the model of the *Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Français*, the ACJM was a youth organization that combined a rejection of the “anti-Catholic” Constitution of 1917 with a deep commitment to the social doctrine of the Church. The ACJM also played an important role in proselytizing for the Cristero War (1926-1929), and functioned as the youth branch for the *Liga por la Defensa de la Libertad Religiosa* during that conflict. On the origins and development of the ACJM as a politically active organization of the Catholic youth, see David Espinosa, Jesuit Student Groups, The Universidad Iberoamericana and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913-1979 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014).

Prieto Laurens himself.[60] Conceived as a civic and cultural organization, the FPAM framed anticommunism as an initiative of concerned, patriotic and democratically-minded citizens, and defended a platform in favor of democratization, the equilibrium between property and labor rights, the substitution of class struggle for class cooperation, and the condemnation of the "brutish totalitarianism" of the Soviet Union.[61] With *alemanista* anticommunism as its backdrop, the FPAM spawned several state and municipal committees, and organized anticommunist regional congresses between 1949 and 1952 in cities like Tampico, Monterrey, Torreón, and Mexico City. Through these events, the FPAM gradually became a rendezvous point for political and civil society groups that demanded from the government a bolder stance against the rise of communist influence in both Mexico and Latin America.

These pressures reached an apex during the 10th Inter-American Conference in Caracas (March of 1954), where the Mexican delegation questioned the interventionist tone of a resolution promoted by the United States against the Árbenz regime in Guatemala. While endorsing anticommunism as a general premise, the Mexican delegates expressed doubts about the compatibility of the principles of democratic self-determination and non-intervention with the unleashing of a repressive anticommunist witch hunt throughout the continent. This bred tensions with other Latin American attendees and with U.S. officials who resented the Mexican accusation of "continental McCarthyism," while also increasing the outrage in national circles such as the FPAM.[62]

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[60] According to the memoirs of Prieto Laurens, Padilla and his closest circle left for the United States after losing the 1946 election and, from there, they planned an armed rebellion that never materialized. Alemán eventually granted amnesty to the rebels, and reincorporated some of them to the PRI's bureaucracy. Jorge Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años de Política Mexicana: Memorias Políticas (Mexico: Editoria Mexicana de Libros y Revistas, 1968), 329-342.

[61] Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años, 343-344.

Immediately after the Caracas summit, the FPAM launched an international call to participate in the "Congress against Soviet intervention in Latin America" to be held in Mexico City. Organized by the Inter-American Confederation for the Defense of the Continent (CIDC, led by Prieto Laurens himself) the congress sought to assemble Mexican and Latin American intellectual and political figures of different ideological backgrounds identified with the anticommunist cause.

In veiled reference to the political inadequacy of the Mexican position in Caracas, the FPAM reiterated the urgency to constitute a solid anticommunist front by stressing Mexico's "right to forge its own destiny, within the principles of our sovereignty, traditions, idiosyncrasy, and to defend our social, economic and political institutions, as well as Christian traditions."[63] In fostering an anti-interventionist and nationalist rhetoric against Soviet communism, the FPAM sought to provide an alternate way to reconcile the premises of *mexicanidad* and the claims to a Catholic national identity that could unite "all worker and peasant unions, bureaucrats, students, teachers, professionals and intellectuals in general." Apart from these internal concerns, the purported Latin American scope of the conference reflected the perception, backed by historical precedent, that Mexico was an important political referent and point of encounter for intellectuals and activists in the hemisphere, and thus fertile territory for pioneering the creation of a continent-wide network working against communism or other forms of foreign intervention in the region.

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[62] For a first-hand account of the debates between the U.S. and Mexican delegations at the Caracas Conference, see Isidro Fabela, La Conferencia de Caracas y la Actitud Anticomunista de México (México : Cuadernos Americanos, 1954)

[63] "Convocatoria. Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina," 21 April 1954, Enclosure no. 1 to "Congress against Soviet intervention in Latin America," AmEmbassy Mexico to Department of State, 20 May 1954, USMEX 1950-1954, 712.00/5-2054.

The rejection of U.S. intrusion in Latin America's internal affairs was a significant element of the FPAM's anti-interventionist position,[64] and Prieto Laurens categorically denied U.S. involvement in organizing the meeting.[65] However, according to US sources, the CIDC clandestinely pursued the endorsement of the U.S. government through contacts with its embassy in Mexico City. Erring on the side of caution, U.S. officials refused to provide assistance for the event, fearing potential accusations of interventionism, and expressed distrust towards Prieto Laurens' "pro-fascist" past, opportunistic profile, and limited influence in Mexican public opinion.[66]

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[64] "For many years, the peoples of Latin America have fought for absolute independence from the forms of domination and control that the United States of North America attempted to impose upon them. We all know the history of the relations of our peoples with North American power, and we are aware of the long and winding road towards our current condition of dignity, sovereignty and equality in the international stage." Jorge Prieto Laurens, Llamado a la América Latina (Mexico: FPAM, 1954), 3-4.

[65] In his memoirs, Prieto Laurens claims that an official from the U.S. embassy approached the FPAM and requested the delivery of 500,000 anti-Arbenz pamphlets to the Guatemalan delegates, written, accordng to Prieto, in a "barbaric" and "non-sensical" Spanish. Prieto claims to have rejected the embassy's petition, which was according to him, "the true lone contribution of the *yanquis* to the overthrow of Arbenz!" Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años, 347-48.

[66] For embassy officials Prieto appeared as "a prolific and vigorous anticommunist publicist who suffers, unfortunately from delusions of self-importance and a fondness for publicity." ("Continental Anticommunist Congress," AmEmbasssy Mexico to Department of State, Despatch No. 1050, 4 January 1954, USMEX 1950-1954, 712.00/1-454). They also doubted Prieto's political influence and questioned whether he had "the intellectual and moral stature necessary to win the sympathy for a broad sector of national anticommunist opinion." ("Continental Congress against Soviet intervention in Latin America," Desp. No. 1764 23 April 1954, USMEX 1950-1954, 712.00/4-2354). Moreover, Embassy records noted Prieto's past activities as a "Spanish Falange publicity agent in 1941." (Telegram 1345. From Mexico To Secretary of State, 17 May 1954, USMEX 1950-1954, 712.00/5-1654). This suspicion might have also been linked to Prieto's participation in the presidential campaign of right wing opposition candidate Juan Almazán, as well as his long-time friendship with Dr. Kiso Tsuru, the commercial attaché of Japan, who in 1940 made monetary contributions to Almazán with Prieto Laurens as intermediary. Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años, 319-23.

Yet, in May of 1953 an envoy of Prieto traveled to the US on a fake official passport[67] and in February of the following year secured the help of a CIA agent, who was to attend the assembly and, in passing, provide assistance for the group of Guatemalan exiles conspiring to overthrow the reformist government of Jacobo Árbenz.[68] In close contact with the FPAM leadership, the CIA handled most of the logistics of the conference, drafted its mission statement and program, and provided funds for FPAM representatives to travel to South America to bolster the anticommunist spirit of the Caracas conference and recruit sympathizers.[69] In the CIA plan, the CIDC meeting was to serve multiple purposes: to summon the Guatemalan conspirators; to incite anticommunism in the region; to establish contacts "for future KUGOWN [CIA propaganda] employment throughout the hemisphere;" and to "smokescreen U.S. activities in PBSUCCESS [the covert operation to invade Guatemala]."[70]

In interpreting the role of the CIA in organizing the CIDC congress, the FPAM could effectively be reduced to a front for US covert operations and one of the earliest instruments of the anticommunist strategies of the U.S. government in the region.[71] The reservations shown by DOS and embassy officials towards the right wing profile of Prieto and other CIDC delegates shows the other side of this instrumental view. Indeed, the FPAM's marginality in the broader picture of Mexican politics, accentuated by the lack of open governmental endorsement, made it an unlikely candidate to lead a continent-wide anticommunist initiative. However, the CIDC congress revealed the ability of these Mexican anticommunists to capitalize on the contradictory attitudes of the DOS and the CIA to position themselves at the forefront of the emerging Latin American anticommunist movement, and with relative autonomy vis-à-vis the Mexican government, given the latter's ambiguities towards the project. Moreover, as these activists understood the cause of the Guatemalan exiles as their own rather than one imposed from the outside, they placed themselves vis-à-vis the United States as anticommunist fellow-travelers with a common regional and global agenda that did not neglect the historically thorny relation of Mexico and Latin America with the United States.[72] The apparent contradiction between this weakness in the national political landscape and the actual success of the FPAM in pioneering this transnational network of committed anticommunists can be explained by the endurance of the formal and informal links that it cultivated for the following two decades with a constellation of state and non-state actors (foreign and national) identified with its cause.

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[67] Typed note, Secretaría de la Presidencia de la República, 29 May 1953, exp. 494/2, ARC, AP, AGN-MEX.

[68] Cable, To Director from LINCOLN, LINC 359, 3 February 1954. CIA Electronic Reading Room, URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000135938.pdf

[69] Memorandum, "Mexico City in Hemisphere Congress, Discussion between Langtry and Headquarters Officers on March 3 and 4, 1954." 4 March 1954. Retrieved from CIA Electronic Reading Room, URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000913138.pdf

[70] "Hemisphere Conference in Mexico, April, 1954" To Chief Western Hemisphere From Lincoln, Despatch No. HUL-A-76, 22 February 1954. Retrieved from CIA Electronic Reading Room, URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000928364.pdf.

[71] Monica López Macedonio, "Una visita desesperada: La Liga Mundial Anticomunista en México," Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research 12, no. 2 (2006): 99-103.

For the four days that it lasted (May 27th-30th), the CIDC conference gathered a number of emerging key figures of Latin American anticommunism. Amongst the most prominent attendants were Carlos Penna Botto, a Brazilian retired admiral and head of the Brazilian Anticommunist Crusade; Andrés de Cicco, a former military attaché of Argentina in Moscow; Alfonso Uribe Misas, Dean of the University of Antioquia (Colombia); José Baquero de la Calle, head of the Ecuadorian House of Representatives; and Alberto Daniel Faleroni, the Argentine journalist who, as noted in chapters 3 and 4, went from Peronism to anti-Peronism to become a noted activist and expert in anticommunism and national security. Together with Mexican delegates from the FPAM and worker, student and political organizations, these anticommunist activists shared a concern about the existential urgency and inescapability of furthering the anticommunist struggle throughout the continent, synthesized by Uribe Misas himself in a warmly applauded intervention:

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[72] On the history of intra-Latin American, and specifically circum-Caribbean forms of collaboration happening often in tension with US foreign policy goals, see Aaron Coy Moulton, "Building their own Cold War in their own backyard: the transnational, international conflicts in the greater Caribbean basin, 1944–1954," Cold War History 15, no. 2 (2015), 135-54.

> We stand today at a crucial moment for the world, a moment in which we cannot afford neutralities of any kind. We must 'split the Sun' [draw the battle lines] between the two tendencies that aspire to rule the world: on one side, there is what we call Christian civilization [applause], the one founded twenty centuries ago by The God-Man. On the other side, there stands Mongolic barbarism. We are thus forced to choose, without space for neutrality, between Lenin and Christ.[73]

This stark formulation of a clash between the forces of Leninism and those of Christianity was underpinned by a construction of the communist as the "authentic" enemy for which, according to Uribe Misas, there ought to be "no consideration, for the slightest benevolence will translate into fatality for us anticommunists […] The enemy must be vanquished." This rendering of communism as an absolute, mortal enemy is an example of the discursive tropes that anticommunists from Latin America and elsewhere deployed to muster support and build an anticommunist consensus based on the defense of Christian civilization.

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[73] [Proceedings of the CIDC Congress], "Segunda Sesión. Preside el Sr. Prieto Laurens," 28 May 1954, 4-5. Retrieved from: CIA Electronic Reading Room, URL: http://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000922999.pdf

However, the question of defining a joint platform of anticommunist action remained a source of dispute within the congress, effectively placing this consensus on weak ground. For instance, while the Brazilian delegates spoke of the theoretical shortcomings of the Marxist theory of value and defended an anti-egalitarian and hierarchical individualism, Prieto Laurens proposed that the Committee be guided by the principle of Christian equality, also putting question the Brazilians' "vulgar and economicist" characterization of Marxism, which would amount, he claimed, to a gross underestimation of the power of the enemy's ideology.[74] All in all, these tensions are indicative of the existence of important trasnational debates about the meanings and practices of anticommunism; of a certain plurality within the emerging Latin American anticommunist movement; and of substantial disagreements over the nature of the enemy and the methods to fight it. These frictions did not prevent the core group of international delegates, led by Prieto Laurens and Penna Botto, to create a permanent commission to organize subsequent CIDC meetings in Rio de Janeiro (1955); Lima (1957), and Guatemala (1958). These meetings would serve precisely to further theoretical and practical discussions, attract new adherents, and campaign for the formation of a worldwide anticommunist entity in merger with the CIDC's sister organization, the Asian People's Anti-Communist League.

Aside from the political necessity of gathering Latin American support for the Guatemalan anticommunists, the FPAM's platform attracted a wide array of political figures within Mexico who were dissatisfied with the government's position towards communists home and abroad. The FPAM received letters of support form noted public figures such as PRI dissident Ezequiel Padilla; the famous writer and icon of the conservative opposition, José Vasconcelos; the apostolic delegate Guillermo Piani; and Fernando de la Fuente, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court and former collaborator of Vasconcelos in the pro-Nazi magazine *Timón*, all of whom complimented the zealous participation of business associations, union representatives, student organizations, and retired military officers in the CIDC congress.[75] Showcasing an often overlooked ideological plurality, the Mexican delegates to the conference represented of a wide array of historically available anticommunist discourses: from doctrinal condemnations of Marxist materialism by anticommunist students from the National University; to attacks on secular education by the National Parents Union (UNPF); to anti-Semitic tirades by the fascist Nationalist Vanguards. With anticommunism as a common platform, the congress helped bring together groups on the democratic center-right and those occupying a marginal space on the fascist extreme right, who found in the FPAM a natural interlocutor and took the congress as an opportunity to criticize the overtly theoretical tone of the debates and call for more direct action, not without singling out Judaism as "the real cause of communism." [76]

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[74] "Segunda Sesión. Preside el Sr. Prieto Laurens," 18-20.

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[75] Other Mexican participants and adherents were prominent businessman Agustín Navarro, also director of the conservative think-tank Institute for Social and Economic Research and editor of the anticommunist journals Espejo and Temas Contemporáneos; Ignacio Pacheco, Secretary General of the PRI-affiliated oil workers union; Manuel Reyes, of the Catholic and anti-Semitic organization Los Dorados; Gabriel Coronado, a *priísta* leader of the Anticommunist Front at the National Polytechnic Institute; and Jesús Certuche, a retired military officer and member of the pro-government Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution.

[76] [Proceedings of the CIDC Congress]. "Segunda Sesión. Preside el Sr. Prieto Laurens," 28 May 1954, 4-5. A residue of the xenophobic nationalism set forth in the 1930s by the fascist Mexicanist Revolutionary Action (ARM) or "Los Dorados", the Vanguards were a rather marginal group in the broader

Government support for the CIDC congress seems to have been toughly negotiated, and not always easy to secure. In his memoirs, Prieto Laurens' claimed that in 1948 his longtime friend Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (then Secretary of Government) had agreed to the publication of six anticommunist articles by Prieto in the state-run newspaper *El Nacional*. When the director of *El Nacional* gracefully refused to print the articles, Prieto got *Excélsior* to run the pieces, and was authorized by Ruiz Cortines to print ten thousand pamphlets based on them.[77]

According to some sources, by the time of the CIDC congress and with Ruiz Cortines as president (1952-1958), the FPAM received direct funding from the office of the presidency while, at the same time, the government published a statement distancing itself from the congress, in an effort to remain consisten with a "non-aligned" foreign policy.[78] Nonetheless, in his opening speech at the congress, Prieto complained about "sabotage" from the government, which he attributed to the infiltration of "communist cells" in the secretariats of Government, Education (which denied access to the Palacio de Bellas Artes as a venue for the meeting) and Foreign Affairs (which allegedly hindered the arrival of some of the foreign delegates).[79] Thus while the CIDC congress had the approval of the government, the latter's support was often ambiguous, informal,

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anticommunist movement of the 1950s and their anti-Semitism did not earn the sympathy of other delegates to the congress.

[77] Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años, 345-47. A compilation of the six articles can be found in Jorge Prieto Laurens, El Complot Comunista (Mexico: Frente Popular Anticomunista de México, 1951).

[78] Olga Pellicer and Esteban Mancilla, El Entendimiento con los Estados Unidos y la Gestación del Desarrollo Estabilizador (México: El Colegio de México, 1978), 106; López Macedonio, "Una visita desesperada," 99-101.

[79] [Proceedings of the CIDC Congress], "Sesión inaugural. Preside el Sr. Jorge Prieto Laurens," 27 May 1954, 8-10.

and subject to the pragmatism, whim, or political calculation of proxies and high to mid-level officials and bureaucrats.

The FPAM managed to maintain its ties to political operators inside the PRI and the government apparatus, but also with sectors historically linked to the systematic opposition against the ideological and institutional hegemony of the official party's revolutionary nationalism. These alliances were not fully consolidated by the time the CIDC Congress took place. However, the confluence of national and foreign support, along with the relative plurality of political forces represented in the congress, reveal a critical juncture in the reconfiguration of national politics, in light of the tensions between factions within the PRI, and the rise of an anticommunist civic movement that was grappling with its contradictory push for autonomy from state agents while demanding collaboration from them. In that context, and despite its structural limitations and lack of mass support, the CIDC congress allowed the FPAM to become a unifying hub for this heterogeneous movement, allowing it to capitalize on the social resonance of its anticommunist message, in alliance with the entrepreneurial sector and the so-called political Catholics who demanded a less interventionist state, and *priísta* factions that resented the return of *cardenista* reformism.

The battle for education: anticommunism and student politics

Anticommunism gained noticeable political traction in the late 1950s allowing the reactivation of interest groups that demanded a greater voice in the reconfiguration of the post-revolutionary state. At the core of their disputes lay the demands to tear down the constitutional barriers for greater participation of the Church in politics, education, and public life in general; and the lessening of state intervention in spheres such as industry, taxation, and the arbitration of labor disputes. Despite the moment of rapprochement with the regime in light of Alemán's doctrine of *mexicanidad*, along with his support for the private sector and the state-led anticommunist campaign, these groups formed strategic alliances to push for their agendas, especially in the field of higher education.

The process that led to the founding and consolidation of the Autonomous University of Guadalajara (UAG) was the most emblematic precedent of these collaborations between the private sector and the Church. Originated in 1935 as Universidad de Occidente, the UAG was the first private university in the country, and the outcome of urban and rural Cristero activism in the state of Jalisco, particularly of the demands by the Student Federation of Jalisco (FEJ) for academic autonomy against the state government's attempt to institute a socialist model of education. Led by former Cristero activist Agustín Navarro Flores, the Universidad de Occidente achieved official recognition in 1936, and since then functioned as a beacon of antisecularism, anticommunism, and Catholic traditionalism, fostered through the FEJ and *Los Tecos*, a secret society created by student leader Carlos Cuesta, and financed by the Guadalajara-based Leaño family.[80]

Lacking official subsidies and subsisting mostly from donations by students and entrepreneurs, the UAG maintained a low political profile up until the early 1950s, concentrating its efforts in securing a place at the forefront of private Catholic education and anti-Marxist indoctrination.[81] As UAG's epicenter for political activism, the FEJ established itself locally as the spearhead of the local anticommunist movement, fueled by its clashes with its nemesis, the left-leaning and pro-cardenista Occidental Federation of Socialist Students (FESO). By the early 1950s, these historical battles of anti-secular conservatism in favor of academic autonomy and against secular state education coalesced with the diffusion of the anticommunist message by the business sector, PRI officials, and organizations such as the FPAM, effectively turning all universities into potential ideological battlegrounds.

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[80] According to DFS records, *Los Tecos,* also known as the Fraternal Association of Jalisco, was a secret society insofar as access to its ranks required a ritualized oath of loyalty, secrecy, and total obedience to the highly hierarchical chain of command. The organization was run by a "supreme council," lead by Cuesta Gallardo along with prominent businessmen and members of the Catholic hierarchy. Appointment to the supreme council was only possible after a thorough background check and by passing a doctrinal test based on classic anti-Semitic texts such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and *The International Jew* by Henry Ford. "Asunto: Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara – Tecos," 10 August 1970. "Tecos Asociación Fraterna de Jalisco," Legajo Único, f. 21-25, DFS, AGN-MEX.

The emergence of the University Anticommunist Front (FUA) in at least three major cities – Guadalajara, Mexico City, and Puebla – was as a symptom of the spread of the anticommunist impulse in the increasingly relevant sphere of student politics. While the origins of the name remain unclear, the creation of the FUA in Puebla was the product of a deep-seated dispute over the question of academic (and religious) freedom at the state university, in a context that paralleled the struggle for the founding of UAG. In 1955, amidst growing tensions between university authorities and PRI, Leftist, and conservative student organizations, a group of anticommunist students - Manuel Díaz Cid, Klaus Feldman, Ramón Plata Moreno, amongst others – announced their decision to lead the struggle against "communist infiltration" in the university and in defense of "Christian civilization." Using the FUA acronym, the group defined itself as an "organization that channels the virility of the university's youth," united to defend themselves “from the growing aggression of Communist and Masonic groups within the University”.[82] While the activism of the group seemed overdetermined by local political disputes, their idea of a virile and youthful struggle against the enemies of Christianity was the product of the early proselytizing of Fathers Jorge Vértiz and Manuel Figueroa Luna at Instituto Oriente and Colegio Benavente – both Catholic secondary schools where Plata Moreno, Feldman, and Díaz Cid became, in their own words, “infused with an active Catholicism.”[83] After fostering the first FUA cells in Guadalajara in collaboration with UAG authorities, Father Figueroa relocated to Puebla, where he received the support of Archbishop Octaviano Márquez and became a crucial figure in laying down the ideological and organizational groundwork for what would become the most notable FUA chapter in the country, cast in the image of their fellow anticommunist travelers at UAG. Without a clear centralized hierarchy and working mostly as shock brigades, FUA cells played a rather significant role in the violent clashes between Catholic, leftist, and PRI-controlled student unions in Guadalajara and Puebla. [84]

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[81] Laura Romero, "El movimiento fascista en Guadalajara" in Jaime Tamayo (ed.), Perspectivas de los Movimientos Sociales en la Región Centro-Occidente (México: Editorial Línea, 1986), 38-40.

Despite their apparent symbiosis, both the FUA and the Tecos-controlled FEJ were in fact local political competitors, as well as ideological adversaries in the conflicts within Guadalajara's Catholic circles. These tensions were spurred by the religious integrism of UAG's administration (controlled by Los Tecos) and its quarrels with the Jesuits, who also held a strong influence in student organizations and through their emblematic university the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Oriente (ITESO). In defiance of the Church's doctrinal prohibition against secret societies, UAG fostered the growth of Los Tecos as an organization of "counter-infiltration" that grew increasingly antagonistic to both the local Archbishop and the Jesuits, whose rising influence in secondary and higher education institutions was perceived by *Los Tecos* to be part of the same "Judeo-Masonic" conspiracy behind communism.[85]

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[82] Cited in Dávila Peralta, Las Santas Batallas, 90.

[83] Juan Louvier Calderón, Manuel Díaz Cid, and José Antonio Arrubarrena, Autonomía Universitaria: Luchas de 1956 a 1991. Génesis de la UPAEP (Puebla: UPAEP, 1991), 21.

[84] Sources from the early 1950’s barely distinguish between the FEJ and the FUA, suggesting a close-knit collaboration between the two. For instance, in 1950, after a street battle between members of the FEJ and socialist students, an organization identified as the FUA chapter from the National University in Mexico City sent “an investigative committee” and publicly denounced the prominent role of the socialists in the increase of communist agitation in Guadalajara. (“Student Factions Battle in Guadalajara,” To State Department From Mexico City, 27 January 1950, USMEX 1950-1954, 712.00/1-2750). Later, in 1952, representatives of FUA were present in a rally organized by the FEJ to denounce “a plan of communist agitation” schemed by students at the state-run Universidad de Guadalajara. (Guerrero Guerrero, Raimundo, Exp. 100-12-1 L-1, DFS, AGN-MEX).

Born as both a local contender and an ideological ally to Los Tecos, the Pueblan FUA spearheaded a campaign to denounce the danger of a complete takeover of higher education by the "Jewish, Masonic and communist conspiracy." With a motto that reflected the radical politicization of the struggle in which they saw themselves immersed ("our cowardice is the strength of our enemy"), FUA waved the banner of academic freedom (*libertad de cátedra*) as an act of resistance against the alleged persecution of Catholics at the university, enacted by both state officials and the campaign of "aggression" by the communists. FUA's founders understood conceived *libertad de cátedra* as analogous to religious freedom or "freedom of conscience," in the sense that it was guided by the "spiritual power" of the Church to oppose to the "militant atheism" of the Left. [86] In this struggle, they conceived education as the crucial frontline for the defense of "Christianity" against any ideology or agent perceived to be a negation of Catholicism. In Puebla, the group's militant rhetoric had the endorsement of Archbishop Márquez and of local business and civic organizations who shared the sense of a struggle that transcended the sphere of student politics. This support ultimately allowed the organization to lead the process that granted autonomy to the University of Puebla, and become a right wing pioneer in the forms of militant activism that characterized the student movements of the 1960s, where higher education became an arena of intense mobilization across the ideological spectrum.[87]

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[85] For an analysis of the profound political and doctrinal rupture conflicts caused by these disputes, see Fernando M. González, "Un conflicto universitario entre católicos: la fundacióndel Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO)," Vetas. Revista del Colegio de San Luis 7, no. 20-21 (Mayo-Diciembre, 2005): 9-38.

[86] Louvier Calderón, Díaz Cid y Arrubarrena, Autonomía Universitaria, 10-14.

As the Left strove to contest the hegemony of the PRI through increasing mobilization in labor and universities, the counter-mobilization of FUA, Los Tecos, and other right wing entities shaped the emergence of a deeply authoritarian political culture amongst the right wing university youth, rooted in ideas of repression "from below" and the full embrace of anticommunism as a form of "self-defense" mechanism waged by society against its enemies. This authoritarian political culture was forged by several decades of collaboration between the Catholic hierarchy and groups in Mexican civil society, but also in the informal linkages of these groups with different levels of government. These links played a central role in the consolidation of university student politics as the laboratory for mobilization and control of networks of patronage and political intermediation; in the proliferation of student *porras* or *grupos de choque* (shock brigades) as violent political instruments to regulate these networks; and in the rendering the anticommunist movement as an intermittent and yet strategic ally to the regime, despite its longtime ideological antagonism to the PRI's revolutionary nationalism.[88]

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[87] For an semi-testimonial account of the confrontation between FUA, left wing and PRI student organizations, see Alfonso Yañez Delgado, La Manipulación de la Fe: Fúas Contra Carolinos en la Universidad Poblana (Puebla: Imagen Pública y Corporativa, 2000).

Perhaps baffled by FUA's defiant rhetoric and its unrepentant radical right wing nationalism, intelligence sources tell a peculiar story about the group's foreign connections in its early years. Reportedly, an early chapter of FUA in Mexico City was under the suspicion of acting as a façade for communist agitation within the National University. The suspicion was grounded on FUA's release of a manifesto of anti-imperialist content, titled "The U.S. declares war on Mexico," which the group distributed throughout the Mexican capital. Although FUA presented itself as a Catholic nationalist organization, anti-imperialist propaganda was, according to one DFS agent, a tactic typical of the Communist Party, and FUA's anticommunist name was only a cover to further the agenda of the Komintern.[89] Other DFS reports claimed to hold evidence of the role of foreign agents in the creation of FUA, noting financial support provided by the Peronist regime in Argentina via its ambassador to Mexico, Julio Tezanos Pinto, who was also said to be protecting Leftist exiles from Peru, Venezuela, and Cuba in complicity with communists from Jalisco, as well as Soviet agents.[90] This connection between Peronism and communist activity in Latin America likely stemmed from intelligence reports that placed the Argentine embassy as a center of dissemination of Perón's *justicialismo*, which, according to the reporting agents' assessment, aimed to form a continent-wide pro-Peronist, anti-imperialist bloc and divide the nations of Latin America in case of a war between the United States and the USSR.[91]

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[88] For a detailed analysis of these processes as linked to the PRI's practices of cooptation and control of the labor movement, and in relation to Left and Right wing student movements during the 1960s, see Jaime M. Pensado, Rebel Mexico, chapter 7. Also see Hugo Sánchez Gudiño, Génesis, Desarrollo y Consolidación de los Grupos Estudiantiles de Choque en la UNAM (1930-1990) (Mexico: UNAM, 2006).

[89] Memorandum. "Informe sobre actividades comunistas," 4 June 1953, c. 544.61/7, ARC, AP, AGN-MEX. Memorandum. "Información sobre actividades comunistas," 10 June 1953, c. 544.61/7, ARC, AP, AGN-MEX.

[90] Memorandum. "Informe sobre actividades comunistas," 17 July 1953, c. 544.61/7, ARC, AP, AGN-MEX.

By reading these sources "against the grain," it is possible to infer that the DFS's inferences about the spurious anticommunism of FUA originated precisely in the illegibility of the group's anti-Americanism (a central element in Mexican right wing nationalism, from Vasconcelos to the sinarquistas) and its almost instinctive equation to Leftist propaganda. FUA's possible Peronist connections notwithstanding, it is also feasible that, in accusing FUA of being a subversive organization with an anticommunist mask, the DFS was merely attempting to further discredit this indisputably right wing organization by linking it to external forces and given its potential to cause major disruptions in the restless world of student politics.

While FUA's political prominence in Puebla contrasts with the difficulties of accurately reconstructing the group's structure in other localities, this pioneering organization left a palpable contribution to the formation of anticommunist youth identities. Indeed, the anticommunist collective selfhood built by FUA (nationalist-Catholic militants that fought mortal enemies, in the streets and in the classrooms, for the survival of Christianity) was the bold expression of a strand of radical youth anticommunism that was new and yet "familiar," given the history of the Catholic youth's involvement in the Cristero and sinarquista movements. Thus, FUA marked both a continuity - the primacy of the conflict over religion and education – and a critical break – the emergence and proliferation of new forms of anticommunist collective action, based on the recruitment and indoctrination of militant Catholic cadres that were to intervene in one Mexico's most important Cold War battlegrounds: university campuses. Thus, added to its notable public impact, FUA also provides an example of the political relations that enabled the diffusion of the anticommunist message beyond the realms of official anticommunism, in fact showing the reemergence of the radical anticommunist imaginary of the 1930s and 40s, but adapted and reframed in a new political context. Its legacies were the convergence of a political tradition of dissident Catholic civic organizing and an affinity with the logic of repression through violent action in the streets, while remaining profoundly distrustful of the regime (and often in confrontation with it) due to its alleged complicities with the enemy.

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[91] "Informe de las actividades del Partido Comunista Mexicano," 23 September 1953, exp. 544.61-7, ARC, AP, AGN-MEX.

Besides its pioneering forms of militant right wing student activism, FUA's little-known contributions to the Mexican anticommunist movement came also through personal acquaintances and covert forms of collaboration with the very regime they claimed to distrust. Indeed, the group played an inconspicuous but central role in building a network that, despite bitter disputes between the Catholic Right and the state, connected student leaders, fellow right-wing organizations (including FUA's uneasy allies, Los Tecos) with officials from both the PRI and the Secretariat of Government, in striking similarity with what the neofascist Tacuara accomplished in Argentina (see chapter 4).

The key link in this covert anticommunist network involving student organizations and state agents was the relationship between Francisco Venegas, leader of FUA in Mexico City, and Jorge Siegrist Clamont, a student activist at the National

University and a member of the Catholic-laden National Student Confederation (CNE). In 1953 Siegrist became the president of the CNE, from where he attempted to resurrect the anti-socialist tone of the autonomist student movements of the 1920 and 30s and free the National University from the patronage networks of the PRI to allow students to democratically elect the university authorities. Influenced by Vasconcelos (who in fact spoke at Siegrist's inauguration as president of the CNE),[92] Siegrist sought to couple an anticommunist agenda with the recovery of the university's ideal "humanistic" orientation and the fight against bureaucratization.[93] As a student leader, Siegrist adopted the corporatist methods used by PRI-controlled trade unions and student groups: bribery, racketeering, and the creation of shock brigades. Described by Siegrist as "falanges" these groups were composed of members of the university's athletic teams supposedly motivated by their identity as conservative students. Siegrist's "falanges" worked as propaganda groups, as thugs to intimidate fellow students and school authorities, and as campaigners for student elections, thus becoming a part of an intricate system of political control, violence, and corruption that had student leaders as proxies for political parties (mainly, but not exclusively, for the PRI) and for other groups interested in universities as spaces to exert political influence and recruit cadres.[94]

According to US sources, Siegrist built two crucial alliances for these purposes. First, through his associate Armando Ávila, he established contact with the U.S. Embassy and funneled resources to his organization to proselytize for the cause of the Guatemalan exiles that plotted to overthrow Jacobo Árbenz in 1954, offering to contribute "even with acts of violence against the communist government of Guatemala."[95] After a major conflict with Ávila, Siegrist's CNE underwent a split, and lost the support of the U.S. embassy. Siegrist then sought assistance from Venegas and the FUA. A rather obscure figure lacking Siegrist's flair for publicity, Venegas was the link to the extreme right in Guadalajara: he was the former president of the student federation of the Autonomous University (1946-1947), and, according to DFS records, had direct personal and business connections to Carlos Cuesta, the enigmatic leader of the secret society Los Tecos.[96] Venegas actively promoted FUA's anticommunist platform, delivering talks to students, and, as a collaborator for the conservative tabloid *Atisbos*, published accusations against the rector of the university and a group of professors for being "communist infiltrators."[97]

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[92] "XIX Congreso Nacional de Estudiantes," La Nación 521 (8 October 1951): 4.

[93] On Siegrist's project for a new autonomist movement, see Jorge Siegrist Clamont, En Defensa de la Autonomía Universitaria (Mexico: Jus, 1955). On the role played by post-Cristero political Catholics in the autonomist student movement of the 1920s, see David Espinosa, "Student Politics, National Politics: Mexico's National Student Union, 1926-1943," The Americas 62, no. 4 (April 2006): 533-62.

[94] Pensado, *Rebel Mexico*, 122-124; González Ruiz, *MURO*, 83; 95-97.

Besides his ties to Los Tecos, Venegas' political clout stemmed from his friendship with Luis M. Farías, a PRI congressman who, beginning in 1955 and well into the 1960s, provided funds and political protection for Siegrist. In 1958, Farías was appointed Director of Information at the Secretariat of Government, with Venegas as his closest collaborator. [98] There, Farías established a close relationship with Secretary

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[95] "Memorandum confidencial, inf. de Roberto Gómez," 24 March 1954. Attachment #4 to Central Intelligence Agency, HUL-A-489, 14 April 1954. Retrieved from CIA Electronic Reading Room, URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000923793.pdf

[96] "Investigación del señor Lic. Francisco Venegas Anguiano," 8 September 1958, exp. 66-4 L-3 H-1, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[97] "Informa sobre estudiantes de la UNAM," 10 July 1959, exp. 68-1 L-7 H-239, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[98] Confirmed by DFS intelligence reports, this connection between Farías and Venegas was revealed, through anonymous sources (most likely DFS agents), by journalist Manuel Buendía, who referred to the association as a cell of the extreme right infiltrated in the government. Manuel Buendía, La Ultraderecha en México (Mexico: Ediciones Océano, 1984), 161.

Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and with president López Mateos, who had him as his information and press coordinator in several of his foreign visits, and as a translator in conversations with President Lyndon B. Johnson.[99] Deemed by at least two DFS documents from the late 1960s as "extreme right wing,"[100] Farías was also López Mateos' emissary with Antonio Leaño, founder and rector-for-life of the Autonomous University of Gudalajara, and ostensibly the highest in the hierarchy of Los Tecos, right below the emeritus leader Carlos Cuesta.[101]

Built through nearly two decades of anticommunist "learning" and the gradual socialization of the anticommunist message in governmental spheres and in civil society, the strength and continuity of these interpersonal connections were of utmost political significance for the later development and national/transnational expansion of the Mexican anticommunist movement. The discursive, ideological, and mobilizational repertoire gathered by FUA, Los Tecos and the Anticommunist Front, along with the covert tactics of political opportunists like Siegrist, gave the anticommunist movement a network-like structure that relied on the diffuse and seemingly "weak" ties among the leaders of organizations, and with specific spheres of the state apparatus. More broadly, the growth and proliferation of right wing students, along with the mobilization of Catholics civic organizations, would become key processes in the political battles of the "radical sixties," particularly as the Cuban revolution stirred the forces that gave way to the New Left and galvanized the religious and secular Right around its longstanding grievances with the postrevolutionary state.

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[99] "Asunto: Estado de Nuevo León," 13 February 1967, exp. 100-17-1 L-11, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[100] One of these documents is a biographical sketch that notes Farías' background as a student leader at UNAM, his closeness to presidents Ruiz Cortines, López Mateos, and Días Ordaz, and his "extreme right ideology" "Farías Martínez, Luis Marcelino (Lic.)," [undated], exp. 100-13-1 L2, DFS, AGN-MEX. The second document is a note submitted to DFS by former president Emilio Portes Gil, warning about Farías' connections to the Christian Movement for the Family (MFC), an ultra-Catholic organization based in Farías' home state of Nuevo León. Portes Gil noted "the danger posed to our Revolution and its advancements if a person with reactionary affiliation" occupied that post, and attached a copy of an MFC bulletin congratulating "our brilliant *compañero* Lic. Luis M. Farías" for his appointment as Speaker for the Chamber of Deputies in 1967. Confidential note, 22 July 1967, exp. 21-310, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[101] According to a DFS document, Leaño provided the government with information about *henriquista* gatherings in Jalisco, and referred to Farías as the direct contact between Leaño and then-president elect Adolfo López Mateos. "Informa sobre Guadalajara, Jal.," 20 Novemebr 1958, exp. 100-12-1 L-4, DFS, AGN-MEX.

Chapter 6. Right wing radicals and the anticommunist imaginary in Cold War Mexico (1961-1972)

When a dog with rabies is loose and drooling through the streets, it is an absolute imperative, an act of prudence and sanity, to eliminate it in any way possible. Communism is just that; a loose, slobbering, rabid dog. To expect the rabid dog to lower its ears and lie down gently, tamed by mellow words and a loving caress is, plainly, an act of madness.

- René Capistrán Garza [Catholic journalist and intellectual] (1964) [1]

In June of 1961, just a few weeks past the failed invasion to the Bay of Pigs, Sunday church-goers in the eastern port city of Veracruz were handed pamphlets with an alarming message. "*Alerta mexicanos*," read the rustically stenciled leaflets; "RUSSIAN-CHINESE communism is looming over our dear Mexico; it is already in Cuba." Signed by two members of the Popular Anticommunist Front, the leaflet used bombastic rhetoric to warn about communism as "the monster that threatens humankind," a "crocodile that cries while engulfing its victims," a "haven for treason and crime" and an "organism of terror and brute force." The leaflet campaign in Veracruz also included calls for all Christians to "join this crusade" and pray for Jesus Christ "to save our Homeland from communism," and for the Holy Spirit "to enlighten and assist our president in preventing our Homeland from falling under the yoke of communism."[2]

Perceived as ominous signs of the growing presence and aggressiveness of communism, the Cuban Revolution and the heightened hemispheric tensions caused by the disastrous operation in Bay of Pigs prompted these responses by Catholics in

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[1] René Capistrán Garza, La Iglesia Católica y la Revolución Mexicana. Prontuario de Ideas (Mexico: Editorial Atisbos, 1964), 52.

[2] Enclosure no. 2 to Foreign Dispatch no. 12, From American Consulate Veracruz To Deparment of State (DOS), "Political Summary," 22 August 1961, Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files: Mexico 1960-1963, Internal Affairs (Lanham: University Publications of America, 1999; from hereon, USMEX 1960-1963), 712.00/8-2261.

Veracruz and many other Mexican cities. Fully backed by the Church and by groups like the Anticommunist Front, these initiatives sought to present a bold response to the mobilization spearheaded by Lefitst intellectuals, student organizations, and independent unions to reject US intervention in Cuba and defend the latter's right to self-determination with a simple call: "*¡Cuba sí, Yanquis no!*"

As explained in the previous chapter, the rhetorical portrayal of communism as a treacherous and absolute evil prone to violence, crime, and deceit, was not alien to the Mexican political imaginary, but rather central to it. Unlike the political opportunists running the PRI's anti-Leftist machinery, political Catholics had a much more vivid and experiential memory of their own struggle against communism, which they had understood as a mission with earthly and transcendental dimensions. That historical experience of the anticommunist struggle came to define, in very palpable terms, what it meant to be a Mexican Catholic in the eve of the "radical sixties," particularly as Cuba became identified as the new launching pad of this timeless enemy. Indeed, for the anticommunist movement, the sixties were also a period of radicalization and of searching for new ways to adapt to the actions of what they perceived as a constantly evolving threat. The Cuban revolution provided a unique opportunity for this radicalization, and, as I will analyze in this chapter, also for re-articulating a series of critiques to the post-revolutionary state coming from the Right, and for devising new forms of cross-class anticommunist counter-mobilization.

Castro's rebellion came at a particularly difficult juncture for the PRI regime. Between 1952 and 1958 the Ruiz Cortines administration attempted to capitalize on the anticommunist climate of *alemanismo* by incorporating a sector of the conservative *padillista* opposition and channeling their anti-*cardenismo* and anti-*henriquismo* into the structure of the official party. To that extent, official anticommunism was continually defined by political calculations with regards to the balance of power within the PRI, particularly as former president Lázaro Cárdenas remained an influential national figure to the dismay of priístas and conservatives from other parties who rebuked his ambiguous flirtations with the Left. Protests coming from the railroad workers, public school teachers, and university students also were met with increasing hostility by the government, while fostering greater coordination between dissenting movements. As Eric Zolov has noted, the "battle for Cuba" in Mexican politics "symbolized Mexico's own ideological battleground as the nation disputed the proper course of the revolutionary project, the nature of its leadership role vis-à-vis Latin America and its relations with the United States at a decisive moment in the Cold War."[3] The Cuban revolution was thus a blessing and a curse for the Mexican Left, as it forced the regime to reframe its self-portrayal as the repository of Mexico's own revolutionary tradition, giving a small window of opportunity for old and young leftists to gain visibility, while also triggering the radicalization of anticommunist positions within the government and in Mexican society at large.

The abrupt end of the *henriquista* dissident experiment of the 1950s prevented the consolidation of a stable oppositional force from the center-left of the ideological spectrum. Yet, the hegemony of the PRI showed signs of rupture, due to the regime's failures to address social discontent and effectively persuade or deactivate political dissenters. The movement led by agrarian leader Rubén Jaramillo in Morelos, and the protests of dissident factions from the teachers' and railroad workers' unions effectively rendered the second half of the 1950s as a period of contestation and fracture of the political and economic project of the PRI.[4] These challenges were met with demonization and repression by attributing them to the work of "agitators" inspired by "foreign doctrines," making them punishable by the law of social dissolution.

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[3] Eric Zolov, ¡Cuba Sí, Yanquis No! The Sacking of the Instituto Cultural México-Norteamericano in Morelia, Michoacán, 1961." In Joseph and Spenser, In From the Cold, 214-215.

Although the PRI regime maintained a solid stance against communist intervention in the inter-American system, the López Mateos administration was struggling to formulate a clear position in regards to the rapidly unfolding situation in Cuba. In terms of foreign policy, the rise of the revolutionary regime in the island raised a challenge for the Mexican doctrine of neutrality and for the country's role as a counter-balance to the radical approach towards communism endorsed by the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. Moreover, the mobilization of the Left and the reemergence of Lázaro Cárdenas as a champion of the Cuban cause in national and international venues put pressure on the regime's self-projection as "the institutionalized revolution" and as a bulwark for the principles of non-intervention and self-determination. Indeed, enthusiasm for the events in Cuba prompted a tremendous show of support by important sectors of Mexican public opinion, including unions, students, intellectuals, journalists and artists. Perhaps seeking to capitalize on this critical juncture and avert domestic and foreign pressures, López Mateos turned a strong supporter of the Cuban revolution in its initial stages, praising its program for national liberation and drawing parallels with Mexico's revolutionary history and with his own reformist program.[5]

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[4] Recent studies on these movements have emphasized this counter-hegemonic dimension, also locating many of these dissident movements in a larger trajectory of contestation against the authoritarian PRI state. On the railroad workers movement and its importance for dissident mobilization throughout the postrevolutionary period see *Robert F. Alegre, Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class and Memory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013). On the movement of Rubén Jaramillo as a link between the agrarian platform of the revolution, authoritarian compromise, *cardenista* clientelism, and the new peasant movements of the 1950s and 60s, see Gladys McCormick, The Logic of Compromise in Mexico: How the Countryside Was Key to the Emergence of Authoritarianism (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); and Tanalis Padilla, Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata:the Jaramillista movement and the Myth of the Pax Priísta, 1940-1962 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008). On the importance of teachers' unions and rural education in connection with the rural guerrillas of the 1960s, see Alexander Aviña, Specters of Revolution: Peasant Guerrillas in the Cold War Mexican Countryside (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Tanalis Padilla, "Rural education, political radicalism and normalista identity in Mexico after 1940" in Gillingham and Smith, Dictablanda, 341-59.

To the dismay of US diplomats and critics within Mexico, at the pinnacle of his "radical turn" López Mateos would go as far as publicly stating that his government was "within the Constitution, of the extreme left." Relations with the US became even more strained as López Mateos cheeringly hosted Cuban president Osvaldo Dorticós, allowing, and in fact encouraging, displays of popular sympathy for the revolutionary regime. As the PRI spoke of the virtues of *la izquierda atinada* (the pertinent Left) to tone down this "radicalism," López Mateos still spoke of his government's "radical" actions, and rejected being of "a dull, colorless center." "We are revolutionary realists, not utopian dreamers," he claimed, distancing his "Leftism" from that of the actual Leftists who were mobilizing in the streets.[6]

Even if Mexico strengthened its position as a balanced mediator between the US and Cuba, the heightened tensions between the two countries made Lopez Mateos' position untenable. Pro-Cuba demonstrations grew increasingly raucous and their anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist rhetoric became a serious concern for US diplomats and Mexican officials. Ultimately, anxieties about Cuba's export of its revolution to Mexico and Latin America prompted more vigilance and repression of Leftist groups, travel restrictions between Mexico and Cuba, and closer communication with the US embassy, particularly on the activities of the MLN.[7]

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[5] Renata Keller, Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Cuban Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 60-68.

[6] "Somos de extrema izquierda dentro de la constitución: ALM," Novedades, 2 July 1960; "Mensaje de Adolfo López Mateos a México y al Mundo" (Mexico: Partido Revolucionario Institucional, 1961). Caja 606.3/151, Adolfo López Mateos (ALM), Archivos Presidenciales (AP), AGN-MEX.

Surely, with his use of military forces to break the railroad workers strikes of 1958-1959 and the assassination by military troops of agrarian leader Rubén Jaramillo (1962), López Mateos could hardly be considered the champion of Leftist causes. He, in fact, left a legacy of repression that was embraced and furthered by his successor, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. Between 1963 and 1968, guerrilla activity in states like Guerrero, Chihuahua, Yucatán, and Chiapas came hand in hand with mobilizations by teachers, coconut oil workers, landless peasants, public hospitals' staff, and a vigorous student movement against repression and for democratization.[8]

After a failed Castro-style guerrilla attack against military barracks in Madera, Chihuahua (1965), the development of Mexico's repressive apparatus under Díaz Ordaz was notable, even if somewhat atypical when compared to other Latin American countries with rural guerrillas. Without the presence of US Special Forces or Mobile Training Teams (which were key in places like Colombia or Guatemala),[9] and more in the fashion of their Argentine, Brazilian, or Chilean counterparts, Mexican military officers underwent extensive training in US academies, and the Mexican War College readily incorporated guerrilla warfare manuals to its curriculum.[10] These forms of limited and yet effective military assistance remained fundamentally unchanged throughout the 1960s.[11] The government periodically refused to acknowledge the existence of guerrillas, deeming them as cattle-rustlers, bandits, land invaders, and outlaws, and yet tackled the long-heralded agrarian problem through raids, intelligence gathering, civic action and the creation, in 1964, of the Rural Defense Corps (communal militias).[12] The use of the military as an instrument of political policing by the postrevolutionary state was far from being a Cold War development, whether in political/ideological or chronological terms.[13] Yet the inter-American Cold War, with its privileging of internal security and stability following "US standards," certainly accelerated the integration of Mexico's repressive apparatus to transnational circuits of ideological, material and technical exchange in matters of national security and counterinsurgency.

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[7] Keller, Mexico's Cold War, 69-72. Information about the MLN's structure, membership, meetings, links to other Leftist organizations, and even its internal disputes appears in later DOS documents that suggest the presence of an anonymous informant within the MLN, and whose identity is redacted as a CIA declassification exemption. See for instance, Airgram A-96 From Mexico City to Secretary of State, "Further Evidence of Fraud in FEP membership lists," 8 August 1963, Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files: Mexico 1963-1966. Part I, Political, Governmental and National Defense Affairs (Lanham: University Publications of America, 2003; from hereon, USMEX 1963-1966), POL 12 MEX XR CSM 5 MEX.

[8] For a recent study of the interlocking platforms of many of these movements of the mid 1960s, particularly in the state of Guerrero, see Alexander Aviña, Specters of Revolution.

[9] Airgram A-709, From AmEmbassy Mexico City to DOS, "Use of US Special Forces," 18 December 1963, *USMEX 1963-1966*, DEF 19-2 MEX. Embassy officials cited foreign military presence was a

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"sensitive issue," and that the Mexicans "have not or do not desire" Mobile Training Teams on Mexican soil. The Ministry of Defense did, however, accept training on US ships (thus not on Mexican soil); English language training; and sending officers to the US or the Canal Zone. Airgram A-247, From AmEmbassy Mexico City to Department of State, "U.S. Mobile Training Teams," 27 August 1963, USMEX 1963-1966, DEF 19-2 MEX.

[10] Jorge Luis Sierra Guzmán, El Enemigo Interno: Contrainsurgencia y Fuerzas Armadas en México (Mexico: Plaza y Valdés, 2003), 48-49.

[11] Airgram A-1021, From AmEmbassy Mexico to DOS, "Policy and Procedures for FY 1968-72 Military Assistance Programs," 11 April 1966, USMEX 1963-1966, DEF 19.

[12] Sierra Guzmán, El Enemigo Interno, 61-62.

[13] On the political trajectory of the Mexican Armed Forces after the revolution, including their key role as overseers and enforcers of political stability in certain regions, see Thomas Rath, Myths of Demilitarization in Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

These policy developments and the context in which they took place have been incorporated into a narrative of the Cuban revolution as the beginning of Mexico's own Cold War. However, in taking the New Left as its point of reference, this narrative downplays the social, cultural and political Cold War dimensions of the mobilizations, the conflicts and the violence of the 1945-1959 period, or even those of what has been recently called "the Long Cold War," beginning with the Bolshevik Revolution.[14] As explored in chapter 5, these conflictual histories were as crucial for the historical trajectory and political relevance of the Mexican Right as they were for the Left.

For many on the Right, and for political Catholics in particular, the Cuban revolution was a certainly critical juncture; but it was also a self-fulfilling prophecy, the validation of some three decades of warnings about the danger of a communist takeover of the continent, and of struggles against what these actors saw as a secular, Jacobin postrevolutionary state constantly manipulated by communism. More specifically, the portrayal of Cárdenas and *cardenistas* as an agents of international communism had a long trajectory in the political imaginary of the Right, where Cárdenas appeared, first, as the continuator of anti-clericalism, as a an ally of avowed Marxists (e.g. Lombardo Toledano), as a protector of Spain's exiled republicans, and as the embodiment of the official party's crooked revolution. The Cuban revolution certainly galvanized an anticommunist sentiment that had taken root in important sectors of Mexican society thanks to the work of PRI officials, the Church, and the private sector. It also exacerbated the preexisting suspicion against the anti-imperialist and pacifist language of the Left and prompting for new forms of mobilization and counter-mobilization.

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[14] On "the Long Cold War" as an alternate periodization and a category of analysis, see Greg Grandin, "Living in Revolutionary Time: Coming to Terms with the Violence of Latin America's Long Cold War" in Greg Grandin and Gilbert Joseph, A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-42.

In an already stirred political environment, the disastrous attempt by CIA-trained forces to invade Cuba in April of 1961 triggered a new anticommunist crusade from various sectors of society. Official anticommunism and a heterogeneous anticommunist movement coalesced against a new incarnation of the enemy: Castro-Communism. While still lacking a political or associational structure that could summon all potential sympathizers, the anticommunist movement relied heavily on press conglomerates and grassroots activism as major vehicles for broadening its audiences and spread awareness about "the communist threat."

The nature and spirit of the new anticommunist crusade was best epitomized by the slogan "*Cristianismo sí, comunismo no,*" which framed a campaign endorsed by the Archbishops of Mexico City and Guadalajara as both the synthesis of the Catholic Church's position with regards to Cuba, and as a practical response to the "*Cuba sí, yanquis no*" used in Leftist demonstrations. Civic associations linked to the lay branches of the Church – such as the longstanding Catholic Action, its subsidiaries Catholic Action of the Mexican Youth, and the Christian Movement for the Family, along with the Movement for a Better World – became the portents of a renewed grassroots, Catholic, conservative anticommunism, motivated by a relentless opposition to the remaining constitutional limitations on the role of religion in public life, and the doctrinal condemnation of communism as inherently anti-Catholic.

Stirred by the Archdioceses' directive to promote the campaign amongst the rank and file of the Church, and by Catholic Action's call to fight the "anti-Christian forces" of materialism (socialism and capitalism equally), thousands of supporters (thirty thousand on April 19th; fifty thousand on May 15th) gathered at the Basílica de Guadalupe to protest against both the Castro regime and the growing influence of "atheist communism" in Mexico.[15] According to a bulletin released by Catholic Action (AC) and distributed in Spanish by the US Information Service (USIS), these "massive" and "spontaneous" rallies contrasted with the "artificial" demonstrations of "hired communist agitators," and revealed the absolute rejection of Mexicans to the implementation of a socialist state in Cuba and its open attack on Catholicism.[16]

Another notable and fervent reaction to the failed invasion appeared in Puebla, where local newspapers *El Sol de Puebla, Voz de Puebla*, and *Diario de Puebla* joined forces with FUA activists from high-schools and universities to denounce the local pro-Cuban communists and to gather support for a grand anticommunist rally to take place on April 24th. The ensuing street clashes between FUA members and Leftist students encouraged a group of Pueblan entrepreneurs to form a committee in demand of severe measures to protect private property and repress the "vandalistic" acts caused by the "outbreak of agitation." When both the governor and a general of the nearby army battalion refused to use force to repress the pro-Cuban students, the committee announced a tax moratorium and a commerce lockout to protest government inaction, and threatened to form its own private police to "repel force by force." [17]

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[15] Maria Martha Pacheco, "¡Cristianismo sí, Comunismo no! Anticomunismo eclesiástico en México," Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México 24 (Julio-Diciembre 2002): 156-58.

[16] Telegram no. 3054, From Mexico City to Secretary of State, 9 May 1961, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/5-961.

[17] Edgar González Ruiz, MURO, memorias y testimonios: 1961-2002 (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 2004), 36-42.

Since the 1930s, the private sector had been a key actor in the dissemination of anticommunist messages at different levels of Mexican society, often in alliance with political Catholics with whom they shared, for instance, a critique of *cardenismo* and socialist education, or the proposal to reduce state intervention in all spheres of society. The political climate of the early 60s prompted not only closer collaboration and coordination between these sectors, but also the attempts to articulate a political vision that could bring together the values of liberalism and entrepreneurship with Catholic concerns about the danger and immorality of communism.

The magazine *Temas Contemporáneos*, for instance, developed and disseminated a particular language that combined a rejection of the statist and protectionist aspects of socialism, with the promotion of liberal economics, free trade and entrepreneurial creativity as the keys towards social improvement. *Temas* appeared in 1953 and was edited by the Institute for Economic and Social Research, a private think-tank led by entrepreneur Agustín Navarro, who was also a devoted anticommunist that partook in the 1954 Latin American anticommunist conference in Mexico City. In addition to its economic libertarian agenda, inspired by Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Von Hayek, in the 1960s *Temas* turned towards a strong doctrinal criticism of the anti-democratic and anti-liberal aspects of communism, and provided spaces for collaborations by known Mexican and Latin American anticommunists, such as Peruvian writer and former Leftist militant Eudocio Ravines (also, an affiliate to Prieto Laurens' Anticommunist Front); Monsignor Rafael Rúa, Bishop of Orizaba and a known adherent to traditionalist anticommunism; and independent journalists such as Enrique Castro Farías, a renowned

Chilean anticommunist and activist who was also a regular contributor to the national daily *El Universal*.

During the 1950s, the limited national political impact of the Popular Anticommunist Front contrasted with the ability of its leader, Jorge Prieto Laurens, to widely propagandize about the "communist plot" using the transcriptions of Communist Party assemblies as evidence of its subversive plans. Reiterating his attacks against "foreign Stalinist conspirators," Mexican *comunistoides* (referring to Vicente Lombardo, head of the Popular Party), and cardenismo, by the early 1960s Prieto boasted of having proof of infiltration in key government sectors (mainly, the educational system) and in labor unions.[18] For the FPAM, the episodes of social unrest throughout the 1950s were, in retrospect, evidence of the historical immutability of the goals of *la conjura roja* (the "Red plot"): "the subversion of the constitutional order; the abolition of individual liberties and guarantees […] the suppression of private property and free enterprise, through the socialization of all means of production and the so-called 'dictatorship of the proletariat.'"[19]

The daily *Atisbos*, run by Prieto Laurens and his affiliates since 1949, established itself as the mouthpiece for the FPAM's insertion into the rising nationwide anticommunist wave. *Atisbos* also served as the editorial headquarters for the FPAM's *Publicaciones de divulgación histórica, orientación y propaganda*, which in 1961 began publishing Prieto's public talks and newspaper articles, along with reprints of anticommunist editorials from *Excélsior*, *El Universal*, *Atisbos,* and foreign publications such as Reader's Digest. *Atisbos* and the FPAM's *Publicaciones* attracted a wide range of political and intellectual figures, such as René Capistrán Garza (a longtime member of Acción Católica who would become chief editor at *Atisbos*), as well as former president Abelardo L. Rodríguez, one of the leading promoters of the anticommunist and anti-*cardenista* current within the PRI. In the same way as *Temas*, the group behind *Atisbos* constituted yet another circle of pragmatic convergence between Catholic activism, business interests, and the *priísta* establishment, who joined efforts to rally support for the converging anticommunist movements. From these venues, redbaiting and vague "calls for action" gave way to more specific strategies of mobilization particularly in the realm of civil society. As noted by Abelardo Rodríguez in a statement published by *El Universal Gráfico:*

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[18] Prieto upheld the alleged communist control of the teachers, oilers, and electric workers unions as proof of the advancements of the "communist plot" to hand Mexico's industrial and human resources over to the Soviet Union. Jorge Prieto Laurens, La Subversión Comunista (México: Frente Popular Anticomunista de México, 1961), 44-49.

[19] Prieto Laurens, La Subversión, 52.

> The Mexican people lacks an adequate organization to combat the acts of dissolution perpetrated by the agents – foreigners and native traitors – at the service of enslaving governments […] There lies the urgency for the representatives of groups with the means to counter these subversive activities […] to cooperate as much as they can – intellectually, materially and economically – with creating an independent organization to propagate the principles of political and economic liberalism amongst workers, peasants, employees, and the youth. […] Such organization will work intensely to create centers where well-organized groups of citizens will be trained as shock brigades […] with the ability to repel the acts of vandalism, social subversion and provocation perpetrated by the agents of Russian-Cuban-Chinese communism.[20]

The law of social dissolution historically shaped public discourse about the Left as a source of disruption, allowing the regime to purge key spheres of corporatist control (labor and student ferderations) by using the criminal law system to punish dissidence as a political crime.[21] The repression against the railroad workers movement of 1958-1959 was a paradigmatic case: demonized by the press, union leaders Demetrio Vallejo and Valentín Campa were prosecuted and jailed for social dissolution. A year later, painter David Alfaro Siqueiros and journalist Filomeno Mata Jr. were charged with the same "crime" for their involvement in a committee for the release of Vallejo and Campa as political prisoners. In 1958, when students protested the corporatist control of the National Univesity and mobilized in solidarity with bus drivers to improve working conditions, they were also disparaged by the press, which portrayed them as vandals and harbingers of social dissolution.[22]

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[20] Abelardo L. Rodríguez, "'Despierten, hombres de negocios de México" (FPAM, 1961) reprinted from El Universal Gráfico, 2 June 1961. Caja 2895A, exp. 21: Jorge Prieto Laurens, IPS, AGN-MEX.

In characterizing communists as "traitors" and agents of dissolution, the statement by Abelardo Rodríguez invoked the very recent memory of this repression and appealed to the broader meanings of social dissolution beyond its mere legal typification, particularly the association of Leftist allegiances with a constant attempt by foreign forces to subvert the political and social order and surrender national sovereignty. From this perspective, the methods that communists used to foster social dissolution demanded a form of social defense: the formation of shock brigades supported materially and intellectually by actors in civil society. This form of anticommunist violence would work beyond the institutional realm of the state, and its legitimacy would stem from the notion of anticommunist violence as collective action by civic-minded citizens who had devised their own methods to defend themselves and the country against communist aggression.

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[21] Historian Jaime Pensado has scrutinized the importance of corporatist forms of control in student and labor politics as a key aspect of the PRI regime, but also as the source of many interlocking student and worker movements that gave birth to the "New Left" in Mexico. See Jaime Pensado, Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), especially chapters 3 and 5.

[22] Pensado, Rebel Mexico, 130-132.

That Rodriguez's message was published by a major newspaper points to the continued role of the press in the dissemination of discourses about social dissolution that conflated Leftist activity with criminality and in amplifying the anticommunist message of the government. To some extent, newspaper owners, editors and journalists were keen to embrace anticommunist rhetoric not just out of compliance with official anticommunism, but also because they benefited from a system of direct and indirect payoffs from the government.[23] Moreover, many of these newspaper owners and journalists had longstanding ideological commitments, for instance, for political Catholicism and/or against the lasting influence of *cardenismo*.

Roused by the public debates about the new regime in Cuba, influential national newspapers such as *Excélsior* and *El Universal* featured pieces by Mexican and foreign editorialists who dedicated ample space to exposé pieces, anticommunist manifestos and reports on the rise of communism in Mexico. The new anticommunist onslaught appeared partly as a continuation of the Red Scare language that was characteristic of the *alemanista* period, in terms of its dominant tropes: a nation in constant danger of becoming a victim of "the Red conspiracy" (*la conjura roja*) machinated by Soviet agents and instrumented by the "Fifth Column" – a network of homegrown communist infiltrators and agitators that would facilitate a supposed invasion. For instance, journalist

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[23] On the historical importance of the press as an arena for the ideological reproduction of the regime, but also, and primarily, as a space for contestation and dissent in the process of producing and shaping public opinion, see Pablo Piccato, "Altibajos de la esfera pública en México, de la dictadura republicana a la democracia corporativa. La era de la prensa." In Gustavo Leyva et al., eds., Independencia y Revolución: Pasado, Presente y Futuro (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica; Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2010), 240-291.

Carlos Denegri's article series *La conjura roja sobre México* hinged on a narrative about communism that was neither new nor particular to Mexico, posing that the Cuban revolution had spurred an unprecedented plan of sedition by "enemies of Mexico," especially amongst students and workers, and with former president Lázaro Cárdenas as their behind-the-scenes leader and spokesman.[24]

Other figures connected to the spheres of the PRI and the press pursued a different route. For instance, in 1959, journalist and PRI political operator Mario Guerra Leal founded the National Anticommunist Party (PNA) together with a group of anticommunist professionals, with the mission of amplifying the official anticommunist message and countering the influence of Lázaro Cárdenas. The party was warmly but secretly endorsed by López Mateos,[25] and, despite the animosity of Secretary of Government Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, received funds to open offices throughout the country.[26] By the end of 1959 the PNA published the newspaper *El Anticomunista* and had over fifty thousand affiliates and endorsements by businessmen and artists. After a scandal involving Guerra rejecting an offer from the US embassy to secretly fund a Latin American anticommunist conference, the PNA became a shock brigade at the service of the government, until Díaz Ordaz pressured Guerra to instead lead a puppet Christian

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[24] Carlos Denegri, "La conjura roja sobre México," El Universal, 8-14 November 1961.

[25] Mario Guerra Leal, La Grilla (Mexico: Diana, 1978), 147-49.

[26] "National Anticommunist Party of Mexico," Despatch no. 1266, From Joseph J. Montllor, AmEmbassy Mexico, To Department of State, 25 April 1960, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/4-2560. "Memorandum para el señor licenciado don Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, Secretario de Gobernación, en relación a las actividades del Partido Nacional Anti-Comunista." 20 July 1960. Caja 236, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (GDO), AP, AGN-MEX.

Democratic party, in anticipation of efforts by *sinarquistas* to create an organization with that platform.[27]

Other initiatives came from the spheres of culture and journalism. Rodrigo García Treviño, a columnist for Excélsior, had a significant trajectory as an anticommunist intellectual and activist. Since the 1940s, he had published dozens of newspaper articles and reports denouncing Soviet activity in Latin America, becoming more boisterous after the triumph of the Cuban revolution, particularly targeting the Mexican Left's ties to Cárdenas and their vocal support for Castro. Emboldened by his reputation, in 1960 García Treviño even wrote a letter meant to reach the Secretary of Government, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, in which he alerted of a "general psychosis" in Mexico City, fueled by the agitation promoted by Cárdenas, and warned about "rumors" amongst foreign business groups and European intellectuals that Mexico was falling in "the orbit of communism and Castroism, endangering the unity of the continent."[28]

García Treviño became the head of the Mexican office of the US-based and CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF),[29] from which he founded the anticommunist magazine *Examen*. According to one of García Treviño's acquaintances at the CCF, *Examen* quickly abandoned its original mission of being an anticommunist voice from the left, instead choosing to engage in anticommunist polemics and become a platform for the extreme Right.[30] Indeed, *Examen* put forward, for instance, a defense of intervention in Cuba as a right and an obligation to defend freedom. According to Spanish liberal intellectual and *Examen* contributor Salvador de Madariaga, the principle of non-intervention (one of Mexico's prized banners in foreign policy-making)

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[27] Guerra Leal, La Grilla, 153-176; 188.

[28] Letter, Rodrigo García Treviño to Ramón Cañedo Aldrete, 16 August 1960, Caja 236, GDO, AP, AGN-MEX.

[29] For a recent study on the political trajectory of the CCF in Mexico and various other places in Latin America, as well as the debates between the communist and anticommunist Left, see Patrick Iber, Neither Peace nor Freedom: the Cultural Cold War in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

> has collapsed under the mere pressure of the new solidarity which has made of all the nations one single world community. For this reason, intervention is inevitable – at any rate in fact, even when such a fact is not officially recognized […] All that need be discussed is by whom, how, and in what spirit intervention should take place.[31]

García Treviño himself wrote in support of this aggressive position, lambasting the United States for its mistakes in Latin America and for showing weakness in putting its policies towards Cuba under consultation with Latin American governments. "The chivalry of the struggle is admirable," he wrote in *Examen*; "but when it is a case of political gangsters like the Castroists and Red Fascists in general, this becomes an element of defeat. No matter how disagreeable it may be, such knaves must be fought on their own ground and sometimes even with their own weapons. This is the only way to make them understand and see reason."[32]

Typically imagined as a menace instigated by distant enemies (China and the USSR), communism acquired a more disquieting face for many of these anticommunists activists. For them, *la conjura roja* was the driving force behind the "specter" of cardenismo, fueled by priísta fears of internal rupture, by the anxieties of conservative

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[30] Iber, Neither Peace nor Freedom, 185.

[31] Salvador de Madariaga, "The obligation and the right of intervention" in Castro, Latin America and the U.S.A. (Mexico: Impresiones Modernas, 1961), 4.

[32] Rodrigo García Treviño, "Latin America and the mistakes of Washington" in Castro, Latin America and the U.S.A, 24.

Catholics against Cárdenas's "socialist" legacies, and by the government's mistrust of the Left's vocal anti-imperialism and appeals to self-determination in support for Cuba. While Cárdenas's bonds and sympathies with leftists were not exactly a novelty, their new alliance in the context of debates about Mexico's position towards Cuba reinscribed the long-standing rebuttal of *cardenismo* into what was perceived as an imminent continent-wide communist offensive. For Mexican (and for that matter, Latin American) anticommunists, the Cuban revolution had indeed injected their Cold War with new meanings, new purposes, and new forms of understanding anticommunism as an end in and of itself. As expressed by Excélsior columnist and Cuban exile journalist Francisco Ichaso:

> Anticommunism is not a negative attitude; it is a belligerent one. It is a necessary attitude for all of us who reject the idea of Western Civilization going to hell […] we must oppose communism with the same forces it assembles; an equally intense and efficient propaganda, the same iron discipline, the same tactics of infiltration, the same traditional and nuclear weapons […] In other words, we must embrace and be prepared for the battle in all terrains […] This does not preclude giving our doctrine a positive content. But, for now, what we need is *la pólvora seca* [the dry gunpowder].[33]

Anticommunism and the contested meanings of the revolution

On August 24th, 1961, the Mexican Civic Front of Revolutionary Affirmation (FCMAR), an organization linked to the *alemanista* faction of the PRI, published a paid insertion in all national dailies where it put forward a strong anticommunist message, voiced in terms of the defense of national sovereignty, the rejection of foreign ideologies as "anti-Mexican," and a vindication of the existing constitutional order.[34] Aside from condemning the “false radicalism” of the alliance between Cárdenas and the Left, the FCMAR deemed revolution as “unnecessary” for Mexico, and referred to communism as “criminal” for instigating social upheaval and exploiting democratic institutions to perpetrate its agitation.[35] Behind the FCMAR and its manifesto were former presidents Abelardo L. Rodriguez and Miguel Alemán, joined by former minister and opposition candidate Ezequiel Padilla and other self-proclaimed “true revolutionaries” who sought to neutralize the much announced alliance between *cardenismo* and the Left.[36]

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[33] Francisco Ichaso, "La pólvora seca," Excélsior, 3 August 1961, 1.

[34] "Repudia el FCMAR cualquier doctrina antimexicanista," El Sol de Puebla, 22 January 1962.

Unlike his ambivalent position towards the *henriquista* movement of the 1950s, Cárdenas had manifestly turned to the Left, working together with the icon of the labor movement, Vicente Lombardo, to gather a group of Leftist intellectuals, and members and sympathizers of the Socialist and Communist parties at the First Latin American Conference for National Sovereignty, Economic Emancipation and Peace in March of 1961. The conference gave way to the founding of the National Liberation Movement (MLN), [37] which undertook a wide public campaign to promote a platform in favor of democratization, the release of political prisoners, the rejection of imperialism, and the unconditional support for Cuba. Cárdenas' relation to the MLN was, from the beginning marked by attempts to present himself as just another member and not the leader of the group, yet he was reportedly using his political clout to attract members of peasant and worker organizations to the MLN, and promote the presidential candidacy of his son Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.[38]

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[35] “People resort to revolutionary violence when they are oppressed, asphyxiated by an omnipotent tyranny […] this is not the case of Mexico; our people have already paid, with its blood and sacrifice during the tragic whirlwind of the Revolution […] It is criminal to agitate the nation preaching, as a solution to its painful troubles, a new calamity […] This is the aim of men of Communist tendencies […] They are linked to extra-continental interests […] They utilize our democratic institutions and demand guarantees to their liberties […] for their actions and propaganda[…]” “Discurso pronunciado por Luis L. León en la Asamblea del Frente Cívico Mexicano de Afirmación Revolucionaria,” Caja 1477A, exp. 14, IPS, AGN-MEX.

[36] Despatch no. 757, AmEmbassy Mexico DF to Department of State, “The Frente Civico Mexicano de Afirmacion Revolucionaria,” 21 December 1961, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/12-2161.

[37] On the trajectory of the MLN in the context of the Cuban revolution see Miguel Ángel Beltrán, Un Decenio de Agitación Política: México, la Revolución Cubana y el Movimiento de Liberación Nacional, MLN (1958-1968) (Caracas: El Perro y la Rana, 2009). More recently, in her superbly documented book, Renata Keller has placed the MLN in relation to the links between the Mexican Left and revolutionary Cuba, with Cárdenas as a central mediating actor; see Keller, Mexico’s Cold War, 87-127.

The implications of Cárdenas' role in the MLN were noted in a military intelligence report from Baja California, which referred to the group as a political party of "an extreme left tendency, intimately linked to the Castroist-Communist movement." To stress the possible disruption of PRI control over its affiliates, the report noted that the MLN sought the support "of all disgruntled groups, regardless of their political creed" through links to "isolated leaders of organizations belonging to the PRI, as well as students, neighborhood associations and even women," and stated that the MLN had been distributing guerrilla manuals amongst students in Mexicali and Ensenada.[39] From that moment, the MLN became a target of arbitrary detentions, surveillance, and infiltration as attested by numerous intelligence reports providing names of affiliates and describing, with excruciating detail, the activities of the group.

The increasing public presence of the MLN served as a validation of the anxieties that the anticommunist movement had regarding the subversive potential of an alliance between foreign agents and their "creole" accomplices. For Prieto Laurens, for instance, the negligible electoral strength of the communists was consistent with their strategy of capturing power and achieving "national liberation" through violent and non-democratic means. Moreover, the creation of the MLN appeared to Prieto's eyes as a logical consequence of governmental neglect of the *cardenista* bonds with international communism since the 1930s, an alliance against which anticommunist like himself appeared "isolated, disunited and lacking the program, discipline and necessary means to offset our common enemy."[40] In 1963, MLN sympathizers launched the Electoral Front of the People (FEP) and proposed communist Ramón Danzós Palominos as their candidate for the 1964 presidential election. This accentuated the accusations coming from the Anticommunist Front through the newspaper *Atisbos*, in which it revealed detailed information (most likely provided by intelligence agents) about the links between the MLN, the Communist Party, and other Leftist and *cardenista* organizations, and their role as "the Trojan horses of International Communism."[41]

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[38] Keller, Mexico's Cold War, 106-109.

[39] "Rinde informe relacionado con el partido Movimiento de Liberación Nacional," Exp. 27, Caja 1475A, IPS, AGN-MEX.

Apprehensions about Cárdenas' role in summoning the coalition of Leftist and *cardenista* PRI groups were shared by U.S. officials and diplomats, who begrudged Cárdenas's rebuttal of U.S. imperialism as an ally of the Mexican clergy and the oligarchies, as well as his reputation as a *caudillo* and his alleged affiliation with the Communist Party.[42] From the perspective of these local and foreign observers, political events in the country seemed to confirm these suspicions. The clash between the MLN-FCMAR; the suspicion of communist involvement in the post-electoral conflict in San Luis Potosí (where a civic movement lead by opposition candidate Salvador Nava mobilized against electoral fraud), and the overall psychological effect of the Bay of Pigs fiasco, had contributed to a heightened sense of threat regarding communist agitation in Mexico.

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[40] Prieto Laurens, La Subversión, 28-29.

[41] A compilation of these articles can be found in David Zamacona Villegas, Revelaciones sobre las Actividades de los Rojos en la República Mexicana (Mexico: Frente Popular Anticomunista, 1964).

[42] Letter forwarded by Sen. Strom Thurmond, 17 July 1961. USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/7-1761. A visit by Cárdenas to the state of Yucatán raised rumors regarding his "subversive" activities, as his presence coincided with the confiscation of weapons in the town of Tizimin, and with rumors about clandestine meetings between Cárdenas, two "bearded Cubans," and former Guatemalan president Jacobo Árbenz. "Lazaro Cardenas visits Yucatan" AmConsulate Merida to Department of State. Despatch no. 59, 6 June 1961, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/6-661.

A report sent by the U.S. consul in Mérida regarding the alleged existence of a "public consensus" that was pro-American, anticommunist, and pro-intervention is revealing. After detailing positive reactions by local citizens towards the attempted invasion of Cuba, the official praised the creation of a civic committee in Mérida working against communist influence through propaganda provided by the consulate and paid by García Treviño's Anticommunist Party. The consul also praised this committee's ongoing selective recruitment of high school and university students for "civic and moral" indoctrination and training in martial arts,[43] an initiative resembled (and most likely, was linked to) the proposal by FCMAR endorser Abelardo Rodríguez to form anticommunist shock brigades to repel and repress communist agitation. These forms of anticommunist grassroots mobilization were a reaction to perceived communist activity, revealing, perhaps paradoxically, that the alleged "anticommunist consensus" hailed by the US consul did not exist, and that there was in fact a growing tension between Leftist activists and their self-appointed anticommunist adversaries.

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[43] "Trends in thinking since the invasion of Cuba", From AmConsulate Merida to Department of State, Despatch no. 58, 31 May 1961, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/5-3161.

Amidst concerns about the *cardenista*-communist connection, the post-electoral conflict in San Luis Potosí developed into a violent confrontation between demonstrators and the police on September 15th, 1961. According to witness accounts collected by the US consul in Monterrey, supporters of opposition candidate Salvador Nava gathered in a park for a political rally. As street lights went out, the demonstrators marched to the city's main square, booing at the soldiers stationed there. When shots were heard in the dark, confusion reigned, and after finding out that a soldier had been killed, the troops fired indiscriminately at the crowd. Nava and his collaborators were arrested on charges of social dissolution, subversion, sedition and homicide, and labeled in the local and national press as communist-inspired.[44] Local PRI officials accused Nava of holding communists as close collaborators, although, according to US consular sources, Nava's reportedly close ties to the PAN and the right-wing sinarquistas[45] made him an unlikely ally of communism. Through the *navista* newspaper *Tribuna,* Nava's supporters rejected these charges and, in turn, blamed communists for having organized the disturbances and for firing the shots that sparked the repression. In a phone conversation with the US consul in Nuevo Laredo, they even accused the imposed PRI candidate Manuel López Dávila of "planning to pack the state offices with communists."[46]

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[44] "Civil disturbances in the city of San Luis Potosi as pro-Nava forces clash with federal troops following the Mexican independence day celebrations," From AmConsulate Monterrey N.L. to Department of State, Despatch no. 31, 27 September 1961, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/9-2761.

[45] Over the course of the conflict in San Luis Potosí, the regional leader of the UNS in San Luis, Mario García Ramos, published a bulletin in support of Nava's movement. The document was noticed by government agents, a fact that, given the history of the UNS as a reactionary dissident group, increased vigilance over Nava's candidacy. "Unión Nacional Sinarquista, Comité Regional," Caja 236, GDO, AP, AGN-MEX.

[46] "Independence Day disorders," AmConsulate Nuevo Laredo to DOS, 22 September 1961, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/9-2261.

Still, the perception of the *navista* movement being part of a larger insurrectional impulse gained plausibility as it coincided with a set of rural revolts that broke out in Veracruz, Chiapas, Morelos, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Coahuila. Government investigations quickly pointed to Gen. Celestino Gasca, a veteran of the revolution and former *henriquista*, and to an associate, the former student leader Jorge Siegrist, as the instigators. Both had been arrested and accused of subversion and sedition a week before the revolts, along with 252 followers, spending a few months in jail before receiving pardon from president López Mateos.

According to records from DFS, after the 1952 presidential election Gasca founded the *Federacionistas Leales* movement, which cultivated ties with peasant and worker unions across the country, with plans of instigating a rebellion to overthrow the government.[47] An active element of the *henriquista* movement of the early fifties, Gasca proposed a platform that combined demands to deepen agrarian reform and improve living standards for workers with broad claims for social justice and a vocal support for the Cuban revolution. Given his revolutionary past, Gasca's trajectory defied the parameters of permissible dissidence, and merited close government surveillance before and after his failed rebellion, as attested by a sizeable set of DFS reports documenting his meetings and activities in detail.[48]

Siegrist's loyalties and trajectory were somewhat different. Along with a small group of entrepreneurs and intellectuals, in 1949 he helped found the conservative

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[47] "Gasca Villaseñor, Celestino," 14 December 1965, leg. 3/4 f.74-78, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[48] For an analysis of Gasca's peculiar trajectory of dissidence from within the revolutionary class, see Elisa Servín, "Reclaiming Revolution in Light of the "Mexican Miracle": Celestino Gasca and the Federacionistas Leales Insurrection of 1961," The Americas 66, no. 4 (April 2010), 527-57.

Mexican Nationalist Party (PNM). In the context of challenges to PRI hegemony coming from the labor movement and religious organizations, the PNM aimed at capturing the vote of the "revolutionary Catholics" and "those that feel disillusioned with other parties."[49] Making explicit reference to the ideas of Catholic journalist and former Cristero, René Capistrán Garza, the PNM sought to mobilize these revolutionary Catholics to embrace the Mexican revolution as Catholic and anti-liberal in its core, and as compatible with the social doctrine of the Church (a premise that a government agent surveilling the PNM found "insidious").[50] This revolutionary Catholicism would translate into public statements by the PNM calling for the creation of a united front to defend the revolution from "the exotic invasion" of international communism.[51]

After spending several years leading a conservative student organization at UNAM and building political relations to lobby against "communists" at the university (see chapter 5), Siegrist took full control of the PNM in 1959, scorning previous leaders for turning the party into "yet another open wound" of a political system infected by the "national cancer" of the PRI.[52] Siegrist's main proposals to party affiliates were to embark on a campaign against the immorality of corrupt public servants ("because the prostitutes are now artists, the loan sharks are bankers, and the thieves hold public office") and to work towards a unified front of independent opposition parties, from Left and Right, to fight against the political monopoly of the PRI.[53] As the latter project fell apart, Siegrist pushed the PNM to cultivate ties with Gen. Gasca's *federacionista* movement and adopted a program of social and economic reform, industrialization, and national sovereignty, while maintaining a rejection of communism as a "fake solution" to the social question.[54] Despite these claims of autonomy and nonconformity, the PNM in fact remained a contradictory organization, weakened by internal disputes and by its original parasitic relation to the PRI. The party remained invested in attracting Catholic voters, and also, following Siegrist experience and "expertise" as a student organizer, operated as rabble-rousers and provocateurs, first against Gen. Henríquez's 1952 presidential campaign,[55] and later, in the early 1960s, as "agitators" sponsored by former president Abelardo Rodríguez and the anticommunist FCMAR.[56]

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[49] "Partido Nacionalista Mexicano," 12 June 1950, Exp. 49-7-50, f. 10, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[50] Memorandum no 3130, "Partido Nacionalista de México," 12 June 1950, exp. 49-7-50, f. 10, DFS, AGN-MEX; Untitled Memorandum, 13 October 1951, exp. 49-7-51, f. 54, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[51] Newspaper clipping, "Ciudadanos de México," 1949, exp. 49-7-9. DFS, AGN-MEX.

[52] "Mexico: Despierta. Informe que rindió el Sr. Lic. Siegrist Clamont," [undated], 48-5-1961 L-4, f. 158-169, DFS, AGN-MEX.

Marked by an enticing and open-ended nationalist appeal, and by parallel histories of dissidence, the unlikely partnership between Gasca and Siegrist shows that, in the context of the Cold War, the ambiguities of "revolutionary nationalism" and the oppositional nature of the anticommunist movement allowed for pragmatic alliances and peculiar episodes of mobilization by groups that, contradictions notwithstanding, converged on the idea of insurrection as a viable political enterprise.[57] While apparently inconsistent with his conservative ideological profile, Siegrist's decision to embark in armed struggle was perhaps symptomatic of a broader tendency in the lower echelons of the anticommunist movement to render violence as a necessary means to break the political impasses of the PRI regime and to contest its alleged leniency towards the Left, while seizing the discourse of social justice away from socialism and communism alike.

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[53] "Se informa en relación con el Partido Nacionalista de México," 26 February 1961, exp. 48-5-1961 L-4, f. 150-153, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[54] "Partido Nacionalista Mexicano," 26 February 1961, Exp. 48-5-1961 L-4, DFS, AGN-MEX. Since 1959, the new platform of the PNM, formulated by Siegrist, had shifted towards a battle against corruption and in favor of land reform, free public education, the improvement of workers' living standards and an independent foreign policy. "Ideario Nacional," [undated], exp. 48-5-1959 L-4, f. 129-131, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[55] "Transmittal of memorandum of conversations with officer of Partido Nacionalista de Mexico (PNM)," From AmEmbassy Mexico to Department of State, Despatch 786, 26 September 1951, USMEX 1960-1963,

[56] Memorandum. "Partido Nacionalista de México," 27 September 1961, exp. 48-5-5-1961 L-4, DFS, AGN-MEX.

In the context of a renovated anticommunist wave, both the *navista* movement and Gen. Gasca's rebellion raised several paradoxes for the emerging anticommunist coalitions. Rooted in political tensions that had remained unaddressed by the PRI regime (such as the lack of democratic opening or the abandonment of the revolution's social goals), these outbursts of dissent were expressions of a broader destabilization and transformation of notions of radical politics by some actors operating in these ambiguous ideological spaces. The *federacionista* appeal to the unfinished goals of the revolution, along with the *navista* demands for democratization, indeed challenged the relative elasticity of the ideological spectrum encompassed by the PRI's revolutionary nationalism.

With the MLN-FCMAR dispute as their backdrop, and with workers' strikes and the Jaramillista agrarian movement as precedents, these episodes of inconformity and rebellion became unclassifiable in the terms set by strict Cold War demarcations of Left, Right, communist or anticommunist. Instead, these actors understood themselves in relation to the multiple contestations and appropriations of the legacies of the revolution and the shape of the authoritarian PRI regime. While for the political Left the significance of these movements lay in their contribution to a broader climate of discontent and popular mobilization, the main group within the anticommunist movement (Prieto Laurens' Anticommunist Front) read them as being part of the larger insurrectional plot instrumented by "communist agents" operating within the MLN and with Cárdenas as their leader.[58] For others like Siegrist, this climate of mobilization and counter-mobilization opened a window of opportunity to build a nationalist bridge between the "revolutionary Catholic" ideals behind his own PNM, and Gasca's *federacionista* rebellion.

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[57] Servín, "Reclaiming Revolution," 545.

Judging by his next steps, Siegrist's "insurrectional" adventure was clearly not a turn to the Left. In 1964, as editor of the right-wing *Revista Nacional*, Siegrist gathered a remarkable list of contributors, including conservative nationalist intellectuals Alfonso Junco, Jesús Guisa y Azevedo, and Celerino Salmerón; noted businessmen such as Hugo Salinas Price and Agustín Navarro; anticommunist journalists Salvador Borrego, Manuel de la Isla, and Gustavo de Anda; along with Jorge Prieto Laurens and Manuel Salazar Arce, of the FPAM, and other right wing activists.[59] *Revista Nacional* put forward a broad nationalist and anticommunist platform which, in time, turned more clearly against *cardenismo* (and pro-government), and against progressives within the Catholic

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[58] See Prieto Laurens, La Subversión; Zamacona Villegas, Revelaciones.

[59] Junco, Guisa, and Salmerón were part of a generation of cultural and political nationalists that attempted to bridge past themes of religious and national identity with the new challenges of the Cold War. In writings such as La gente de Méjico (1937) and Cuatro Puntos Cardinales: la Madre, la Propiedad, la Estirpe, la Bandera (1963), Junco sketched a vision of "Méjico" as heir to Hispanic Christianity, a vision that led him to the founding of the Mexico-Spain Cultural Institute. Salmerón epitomized a long-standing anti-liberal and revisionist trend in nationalist thought, very influential in the Cristero and post-Cristero Right, which he exposed in his Las traiciones de Juárez (1960) and later in his En Defensa de Iturbide (1974). Guisa was perhaps the most attentive reader and admirer of French conterrevolutionary thinker Charles Maurras, and the author of several books (La Civitas Mexicana y Nosotros los Católicos; Doctrina Política de la Reacción) in which he vindicated the need for an actively political and reactionary Catholicism as a weapon to contest the liberal core of the postrevolutionary state.

Church.[60] Also, reflecting the sympathies and the international connections built by Siegrist and his powerful collaborators, *Revista Nacional* reprinted articles from fellow nationalist and anticommunist publications from the United States, Latin America, and Europe, and ran stories and interviews with a positive take on Francoism, Peronism, and European neofascism.[61]

Akin to other anticommunists of their time, the collaborators at *Revista Nacional* held seemingly ambivalent positions of critique against the regime's leniency for Marxist infiltration in universities and trade unions, for instance. Ultimately, they endorsed the use of repressive measures, and made more than clear gestures of sympathy and support for authoritarian solutions to the problem of communism:

> Not long ago, the communist conspiracy bid to create a climate of agitation: the students, the teachers led by Othón Salazar, the railroad workers led by Vallejo, the street harangues of David Alfaro Siqueiros, Filomeno Mata and other addicts to communism. With a strong and somewhat excessive hand, these agitators were given the truncheon, and the riot squads cracked some skulls here and there. The main dissidents were thrown into jail and accused of 'social dissolution' and nothing has or will be enough to set them free […] The sensible public does not precisely rejoice in the face of such severe repression […] But we are now aware

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[60] Agustín Navarro, "El papa condena el progresismo," Revista Nacional 6 (16 January 1965): 32-35*;* Jesús Guisa, "De Lázaro a Díaz Ordaz: de la barbarie a la sensatez," Revista Nacional 7 (15 February 1965): 37-35.

[61] With Jorge Siegrist as a traveling correspondent, *Revista Nacional* published an interview with Juan Perón during his exile in Spain. In the interview, Siegrist boasted of having met Perón in 1951, when Siegrist was a student activist at the National Student Confederation ("Perón vuelve! Antes de terminar 1964, espera estar en Argentina," Revista Nacional 3, 1 November 1964, 26-29). Siegrist also interviewed Manuel Fraga, Minister of Information and Tourism of the Franco regime in Spain (Jorge Siegrist "La realidad española. Entrevista exclusiva," Revista Nacional, 4, 1 December 1964, 40-42). The magazine also reprinted articles on the John Birch Society and the candidacy of Barry Goldwater (Gustavo de Anda, "Barry Goldwater, esperanza del mundo occidental", Revista Nacional 2, 1964, 30-31; Margarita Massana, "La verdad sobre la John Birch Society", Revista Nacional 2, 16 October 1964, 54-55), as well as reports on European politics written by Antonio Lombardo, of the Italian neo-fascist organization Ordine Nuovo, and by Jean Thiriart, of the "Third Position" organization Jeune Europe. See Antonio Lombardo, "En la Italia actual," Revista Nacional 9 (16 April 1965): 44-45) Jean Thiriart, "Europa, un imperio de 400 millones de hombres," Revista Nacional 11 (16 May 1965): 35.

> that we have closed the door to communist penetration and we are firmly decided to safeguard the authenticity of Mexico.[62]

Inherited from groups such as Prieto Lauren's FPAM, García Treviño's Anticommunist Party, or Siegrist's own PNM, this partly critical but ultimately sympathetic view of state violence would become a trademark of the anticommunist movement, and the basis for its affinity and inexorable collaboration with the regime. Moreover, as shown by the case of Siegrist and his network, this seeming ambiguity was functional for specific groups within anticommunist organizations, as the regime favored their work as brokers for the mediation and administration of political influence and resources. Built through decades of grievance with the postrevolutionary state, the anti-establishment dimension of these public interventions by anticommunists found a limit in the consent to the use of repressive violence (with some degree of moral uneasiness), becoming the central point of convergence between their defensive nationalism and the regime's willingness to "crack some skulls" to neutralize Leftist mobilization. As stated by a self-regarded "revolutionary Catholic," the journalist and conservative ideologue René Capistrán:

> Whether we like it or not, all of us (including the anti-Mexicans, the communists born in Mexico who want to destroy Mexico) […] are sailing on the same ship. It is of common interest that the ship sails safely […] If it sinks in high sea, crashes amid storms of the modern world, or sails adrift by a mutiny or because arsonists wielding the hammer and sickle set it on fire […] we will all drown and perish […] If some fools insist on crashing the boat against the cliffs, they must be locked securely in the dungeons, or thrown into the sea. It does not matter if the sentimental ones claim those fools are political prisoners. It is better to have prisoners on board, or that they lay at the bottom of the sea, than have innocents drown along with the sentimental and the pitied ones.[63]

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[62] Fernando Diez de Urdanivia, "Pasos a desnivel. México tiene sus propios caminos," Revista Nacional 1 (25 September 1964): 19.

[63] Capistrán Garza, La Iglesia Católica y la Revolución Mexicana, 66.

Neo-nazis, revisionists, and the anticommunist imaginary

Besides the crucial role played by strategic alliances between state agents, private entrepreneurs, political Catholicism, and the Anticommunist Front, there were other expressions of the anticommunist imaginary that provide different entry-point to understand how anticommunism made itself available and assimilable to a variety of social groups. With the anticommunist crusade described above as a backdrop, episodic eruptions of radical anticommunist messages in the early and mid-1960s showed a pattern of societal and political expressions that exceeded the limits set by the government-instigated anticommunist message, becoming a source of concern and vigilance on behalf of Mexican and US officials.

Some of these expressions had a quasi-anecdotal character. For instance, in 1960 a US consul reported the existence of groups of university students in Mérida and Campeche that "boast of being Neo-Nazis. They wear black shirts and paint swastikas on the blackboards in classrooms." As a precedent, the diplomat also noted that, in Mérida, during the screening of a documentary about the Nuremberg trials, some in the audience cheered and applauded when Hitler appeared on screen, while hissing and booing at images of the bombing of German cities.[64] In a similar event, the US consul in Xalapa, Veracruz, reported Nazi graffiti in public places, including the American consulate. Noting the absence of a German immigrant community in the city, the consul dismissed the actions as student pranks with no connection whatsoever with actual Neo-Nazis or anti-Semites.[65] These supposedly playful bursts of neo-Nazi behavior show the micro-level assimilation and socialization of neo-Nazi symbols, attitudes and motifs in the rebellious urban youth culture of the 1960s, even in cities like Mérida, Xalapa or Campeche that, in contrast to Puebla, Guadalajara, or Mexico City, were not at the center of anticommunist mobilization. Not coincidentally, these episodes took place at the same time, and were perhaps connected to, the anticommunist campaign carried out by the civic and ecclesiastic structures of the Church.

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[64] "Neo-Nazi movements", From AmConsulate Merida to Department of State, Despatch no. 32, 2 February 1960, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/2-260.

Attributable to the success of the "*Cristianismo sí, Comunismo no*" campaign, these seemingly innocuous "pranks" are also indicators of the often unacknowledged historical impact of global fascisms in Mexican political culture. In the early 1960s, different sectors and generations within Mexican society participated in the circulation and assimilation of anticommunist, nationalist, and anti-Semitic literature holding a deep affinity with the deep distrust of the regime historically promoted by the Church and rooted in Catholic popular imagination and historical experience. For instance, it is quite probable that by the early 1960's writings such as Salvador Borrego's openly pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic, anti-liberal, and rabidly anticommunist *Derrota Mundial* (Worldwide Defeat, 1953) had reached ample audiences.[66] A best-selling journalist and revisionist "historian," and surely the most important intellectual referent for the right wing youth in

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[65] "Monthly political report of March 1 1960" From AmConsulate Veracruz to Department of State, Despatch, no. 16, 11 March 1960, USMEX 1960-1963, 712.00/3-1160.

[66] Salvador Borrego, Derrota Mundial: los Orígenes Ocultos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial (Mexico: n.d., 1953). While difficult to assess, a rough indicator of the size of Borrego's audience is that the book reached its second edition and seventeenth re-printing in 1966, for a total of 52 re-printings by 2011, in Mexico only. The book was also edited in Argentina by Editorial Nuevo Orden (publisher of works by Catholic nationalists like Jordán Genta and Julio Menvielle); in Spain by the Spanish neo-fascists Fuerza Nueva (1974); along with dozens of "unofficial" editions (even electronic ones) throughout South America to this day.

Mexico,[67] Borrego became an ideological bridge between Catholic nationalism, post-Cristero opposition to the PRI regime, and Cold War anticommunist activism.

As an employee of the García Valseca news conglomerate, Borrego founded the conservative newspaper El Sol de Guadalajara in 1948.[68] During his tenure as the daily's director, Borrego published his classic Worldwide Defeat, where he presented a revisionist interpretation of world history leading up to World War II. Driven by an admiration of both Hitler's leadership and the anticommunist and anti-Semitic nationalism of the Nazis, Borrego attributed the defeat of Germany to the "unholy" alliance between the United States and the forces of "international Judaism" to save communist Russia. For Borrego, the war itself had its origin in the revolutions of 1848 and would continue, according to him, throughout the twentieth century by pitting the forces of communism against those of Western Christianity. The victory of the Allies had thus been the result of the complicity between capitalist-Jewish usury and communist terror, who were also to blame for the "exaggerations" about the Holocaust. In the context of the Cold War global order, Borrego's concerns focused on the expansion of communism to Eastern Europe and on what he called "the transmutation of Marxism" into "supracapitalism" (a notion explicitly borrowed from the Argentine priest Julio

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[67] In a 2008 interview, at age 93, Borrego vindicated the contents of the book, referring to its numerous "hidden" sympathizers, and complained about censorship at the International Book Fair where he was scheduled to appear alongside Spanish neo-Nazi activist and editor Pedro Varela. Álvaro Delgado, "Salvador Borrego: vigente, la 'derrota mundial'" Proceso 1678 (2008). URL: http://www.proceso.com.mx/204464/salvador-borrego-vigente-la-derrota-mundial

[68] El Sol de Guadalajara was one of the dailies owned by newspaper mogul José García Valseca, a veteran of the Revolution and a stern anticommunist since the 1940s. By the time of his assassination in 1973, García Valseca owned 37 newspapers around the country, including branches of El Sol in Puebla, Guadalajara, and Mexico City. On García Valseca's trajectory in business and politics see Salvador Borrego, Cómo García Valseca Fundó y Perdió 37 Periódicos y Cómo Eugenio Garza Sada Trató de Rescatarlos y Perdió la Vida: Biografía (Mexico.: Editorial Tradición, 1985).

Meinvielle)[69] and in which he saw a new iteration of the synthesis between Jewish and Communist materialism and, thus, of American complicity with Soviet Russia. The book merited the warm endorsement of Mexico's prime cultural nationalist figure, José Vasconcelos, whom in an enthusiastic prologue to the 1955 edition considered Worldwide Defeat as "one of the most important books published in the continent." Himself an avowed Catholic anticommunist, Vasconcelos warned about the growing threat of communism ("the anti-Christian monster") in postwar Europe, and identified with Borrego's interpretation of World War II, praising it as one that stood for "the highest interests of all Spanish-speaking peoples" concerned with the age-old struggle against the "enemies" of Catholicism.[70]

Borrego's book was an editorial success: from 1953 to 1966 there were seventeen reprintings of Worldwide Defeat, with a total of 82,000 printed copies, often funded by Borrego himself through private donations. After Worldwide Defeat, Borrego published América Peligra (Latin America in Danger, 1964), which capitalized on its author's reputation, also bolstered by his new role as the founder and director of another García Valseca newspaper, El Sol de México. Like Worldwide Defeat, Latin America in Danger presented the theory of the Masonic-Judeo-communist conspiracy applied to a particularly reactionary interpretation of Mexican history, and its ensuing extrapolation to the conditions of the Cold War in the continent.[71] A crucial piece in this interpretation was Borrego's protracted theory of Mexican "national consciousness." According to him, Mexico was still a nation in the making, struggling with the traits of indigenous *pre-mexicanidad*, the absence of a strong "racial core" (in the *vasconcelista* sense of *raza* as a spiritual unit), and the marginal and yet promising presence of a minority of "true Mexicans" – the industrious worker, the productive peasant, and the efficient bureaucrat. Like Vasconcelos, Borrego idealized *mestizaje* and saw Mexico's "unfinished" racial, social and spiritual integration as its strength for the future. Also echoing Vasconcelos, Borrego deemed the youth as the main carrier of the nation's "vital force," which made them the main target of the "international attack to seize the new generations by capturing their consciousness."[72] This idea of Mexico as a "young nation" susceptible to the schemes of conspirators translated into a diagnosis of its problems as rooted in the immaturity of masses of "pre-Mexicans" and their predisposition to be "molded by either Good or Evil"; and in the presence of a small but active nucleus of "anti-Mexicans" working for the interests of "foreign forces."[73]

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[69] Borrego, Derrota Mundial, 311.

[70] Borrego, Derrota Mundial, 10.

[71] Salvador Borrego, América Peligra (Mexico: Impresos Aldo, 1966). It should be noted that, similar to Derrota Mundial, América Peligra has multiple editions and reprintings (twenty five in total), the latest from 2013.

Akin to post-Cristero views of the conflict between Catholic Mexico and its liberal-democratic enemies, in Borrego's historical interpretation the "anti-Mexican" minority was exemplified by nineteenth century liberalism – Benito Juárez and his political heirs – who were alienated by foreign ideologies and responded only to the designs of "world Jewry." Borrego joined other right wing intellectuals, such as René Capistrán, in posing that the Mexican Revolution had been, in fact, a popular rebellion against anti-Mexican liberalism, more concretely, against the Francophile dictatorship of

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[72] Borrego, América Peligra, 14.

[73] Borrego, América Peligra, 18.

Porfirio Díaz.[74] In this revisionist narrative, the increasing dependence of Mexico (and Latin America) vis-à-vis the United States was the result of a complicity between liberalism and socialism to extirpate religion from society and impose their values at a global scale. This clear-cut reading of Mexican modern history as the result of the machinations of Jewish capital, Masonic secret societies, and communist infiltrators was closely linked to Borrego's own understanding of the fall of Nazism as a lost opportunity to defeat communism, the historical incarnation of Christianity's evil and mortal enemy. Borrego's revisionism stemmed from a sense of defeat and betrayal in national history, running from Benito Juárez's nineteenth century anticlerical liberalism to the "Jacobin" constitution of 1917, and the Cristero War.

More broadly, however, Borrego understood this historical trajectory as part of a global struggle between opposing metahistorical forces – Christianity vs. its enemies; civilization vs. anti-civilization – a notion that he assimilated from and shared with two sources of intellectual and political inspiration, who he explicitly acknowledged in his writings: the anti-Semitic writings of Romanian exile Traian Romanescu; and Fr. Julio Meinvielle, Argentina's renowned clerico-fascist and anti-Semitic author. While Romanescu's own biography remains for the most part a mystery, and there are no known studies about the impact of his work in Latin America or elsewhere, one telling fact is that, by 1961, three of his books – *The Great Jewish Conspiracy*; *The West Betrayed*; and *International Subversion* – had Mexican editions[75] printed by Jus, the emblematic nationalist-Catholic editorial house created in 1933 by PAN founder Manuel Gómez Morín and led, until 1972, by the long-time leader of *sinarquismo*, Salvador Abascal. In 1960 alone Jus published its own edition of Borrego's Worldwide Defeat, along with a number of pro-Catholic and anti-Cuba materials.

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[74] See, for instance, René Capistrán Garza, Porfirio Díaz, su Obra y sus Consecuencias (Mexico: Herrerias, 1940); and Capistrán Garza, La Iglesia Católica y la Revolución Mexicana.

[75] Romanescu's works were published in Argentina only until the early 1980s perhaps an indication that his writings became known in Latin America through its Mexican editions. See, for instance, Traian Romanescu, Traición a Occidente (Buenos Aires: Nuevo Orden, 1982).

Like the erudite reactionary *hispanófilo* Jesús Guisa, or the Catholic prose of René Capistrán, Borrego partook in the generation of public intellectuals that sought to cultivate the legacies of Vasconcelos' cultural/mystical nationalism. His place in the editorial and journalistic world, his covert connections to businessmen, and his role as an ideologue and a political operator amongst groups the extreme right made him a tremendously influential public figure, and, to this day, Mexico's best-selling author of the extreme right.

Fanatics of the truth: MURO's anticommunist crusade

One of the manifestations of the growing impact of anticommunism in Mexican society was the emergence of right wing student organizations that inserted themselves in the rebellious spirit of the 1960s to propose and lead the radicalization of the anticommunist movement. With this purpose, Ramón Plata Moreno, one of the founders of the FUA in Puebla, created the University Movement for a Renovating Orientation (MURO, or "wall") in 1961. Like FUA, MURO was meant to be an instrument of anticommunist struggle in the sphere of student politics, particularly against the allegedly "pro-communist" policies of the rector of the National University, Ignacio Chávez. According to government sources, Plata Moreno cultivated links with two "natural" allies within the University. The first was a Catholic organization called The University Parish

(Parroquia Universitaria), led by David Mayagoitia. Author of a widely-known pamphlet titled ¡Definámonos! O católico, o comunista (1961), Mayagoitia was a Jesuit priest who, as the head of the Corporation of Mexican Students (CEM), pioneered Catholic anticommunist mobilization at the university, and gave support to right wing student groups to compete for the control of student associations at several of the University's faculties.[76]

Using Mayagoitia's political resources, Plata formed an alliance with the *priísta* organization FCMAR for his anticommunist project. Plata Moreno's contacts in FCMAR were Alfredo Medina Vidiella, a lumber mogul from the southern state of Yucatán; and Melchor Ortega, a close associate to former president Miguel Alemán, and one of the main political operators for the FCMAR. Through FCMAR, MURO received funds to unify all right-wing student groups, promote its candidates in student associations, and put these under the control of the FCMAR. In exchange, Ortega and Medina endorsed the expansion of MURO, and created MURO committees in Mérida and Campeche, not coincidentally two of the places where US diplomats had reported activity by Neo-Nazis and anticommunist civic organizations recruiting and training students as shock brigades.[77]

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[76] Founded in 1947 with the backing of the Mexican Episcopate, the CEM embraced a Catholic "Third Way" critique of both capitalism and communism, of secularization, and of the absence of civic culture amongst the youth, while also rejecting ultra-conservative positions. On the CEM as a leading organization amongst Catholic students in the 1950s, see Jaime M. Pensado, "A 'Third Way' in Christ: The project of the corporation of Mexican students (CEM) in Cold War Mexico," in Stephen C. Andes and Julia G. Young, Local Church, Global Church: Catholic Activism in Latin America from Rerum Novarum to Vatican II (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 165-184.

[77] "Movimiento Universitario de Renovadora Orientación," 12 March 1964. Caja 2851, exp 3, f. 44-45, IPS, AGN-MEX.

Treated as an enigmatic figure by both detractors and state security agents, Plata Moreno was also the creator of the Nationalist University League (LUN, also known as *La Organización*, and later as *El Yunque*), an umbrella organization that served as a meeting point for radical anticommunists from Guadalajara (Los Tecos), Puebla, and Mexico City (MURO and FUA), with the financial and political backing of the FCMAR, the Lasallists, and entrepreneurs from Monterrey.[78] This structure of ideological and organizational alliances would ultimately allow MURO to quickly become the public "youthful" face of this radical anticommunist coalition.

MURO made its notorious public debut in 1961 after two students, Luis Felipe Coello and Guillermo Vélez, were expelled from UNAM for violent acts during an anti-Castro demonstration in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs invasion. This prompted the creation of a movement that, using the banner of academic freedom, gathered thousands of signatures in support of Coello and Vélez. After their acquittal, an editorial in *Excélsior* celebrated the verdict as a "triumph of public opinion," and rejoiced for the "support of the country" in favor of the "civic courage of the students, their brave determination for confronting the apostles of hatred and social dissolution."[79] Days later national dailies published a paid insertion in which MURO warned that "the danger of Red factionalism is not over, for it will attempt to regain the lost prestige, treacherously lurking to achieve total control of the University […] This committee declares itself in a state of permanent struggle to uncover the activities of the enemies of public peace, liberty and democracy."[80] In March of 1962, the first issue of MURO's "informative" pamphlet *Puño* began circulating at the National University. The publication was received with enthusiasm by the FPAM's newspaper *Atisbos*, which in an interview with MURO leader Luis Felipe Coello, praised the groups "virile and open battle" against subversion in the university.[81]

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[78] "La UNAM víctima de la agitación promovida por MURO," 4 April 1968, Caja 1448B, exp 42, IPS, AGN-MEX.

[79] "Triunfo de la opinión pública," Excélsior, 29 November 1961.

MURO's demands focused mainly on the usual concerns about academic autonomy vis-à-vis "socialist" state education, and on the problem of communist agitation in higher education institutions. The group's political rhetoric, on the other hand, displayed a resolute militant nationalism fueled by the struggle against communists as "mercenaries of hatred," and as a threat to the Fatherland and to "mankind's highest values." From this purview, MURO called for the "nationalist youth" to fulfill its "sacred obligation" to defend these values, and to serve as guides of society based on Christian principles. MURO conceived its struggle in both political and religious terms, with communism appearing as the negation of national self-determination, tradition, and Catholicism, and as the harbinger of "Soviet totalitarianism." For them, their struggle could only succeed through an open and explicit embracement of a radical fanaticism: "The only accusation we accept is that of being fanatics; yes, we are fanatics, of freedom and human dignity; fanatics of the only thing that one can be radically fanatic about: the Truth."[82]

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[80] "Derrota comunista en la universidad. Mensaje a la opinión pública nacional y a nuestros compañeros universitarios," Excélsior, 12 December 1961.

[81] "Entrevista: luchar contra el comunismo universitario es la misión del MURO," Atisbos, 9 April 1962.

[82] "Presentación," Puño 1 (March 1962), 2.

MURO's recruitment activities amongst students from private religious high-schools became a problem for the Catholic hierarchy. In 1963, in clear reference to MURO and FUA, the Archbishop of Mexico, Darío Miranda, publicly warned "the Catholic youth" of the dangers of organizations that operated as secret societies, which were long-banned by the Vatican.[83] MURO promptly deflected these accusations towards "communist infiltrators" in "Catholic disguise,"[84] a common charge against the progressive sectors of Catholicism that MURO and other radical anticommunist fellow travelers had vowed to combat, deeming them as agents of "Masonic secret societies."

The worldview, internal hierarchical structure, and recruitment practices of MURO were largely inherited from Los Tecos. Added to MURO's recorded propensity to violence, this connection was deeply troubling for the regime's intelligence apparatus, as attested by extensive reports and briefings by DFS agents paying special attention to secrecy as a key instrument for the historical continuity of what they referred to as "the extreme right." Referring to Los Tecos as the forerunners of the clandestine extreme right, DFS documents describe the existence of two parallel structures: the Fraternal Association of Jalisco (AFEJ), created in 1940 by Los Tecos' leader Carlos Cuesta and a group of former Cristero activists; and an umbrella organization, the Unifying Nationalist League (LUN), which by the 1960s was led by FUA and MURO founder Ramón Plata Moreno. This League encompassed MURO, FUA, and at least three other smaller organizations - the Mexican Patriotic Front, the Integrist Youth, and the Society of Friends of Peoples Subjugated by Communism.[85]

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[83] González Ruiz, MURO, 240.

[84] "Aplauden el llamado de Mons. Mirada contra rojos ocultos; los hay hasta con disfraz católico y trabajan para fines secretos," Excélsior, 15 October 1963.

Throughout the 1960s, DFS reports made constant reference to the strategies used by this network of the extreme right for the recruitment of young students, from high schools and universities, both public and private. Recruits underwent a thorough background check, including an investigation of ancestry to rule out any trace of Jewish descent. Once accepted, they stood before a crucifix and a skull, pledged an oath of allegiance to God and to the supreme council of the organization, and had a celebratory toast with liquor. Based at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, this supreme council had two known leaders, the enigmatic Carlos Cuesta and Antonio Leaño (a businessman and rector of the university). The supreme council also encompassed the University's entire academic structure: the University Council, the Deans, the leaders of the Student Federation, and student's and teachers' associations. Membership to the supreme council was by invitation only, requiring additional background and family history checks. In addition, prospective members were expected to pass an exam on Los Tecos' canonical texts, which they shared with the likes of FUA, MURO, and the Argentine Tacuara: Henry Ford's *The International Jew*; Leon de Poncin's *Judaism and Freemasonry: Secret Powers Behind Revolution*; *Oro y Kahal*, by the Argentine fascist novelist Hugo Wast; and The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. [86]

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[85] "Para información del C. Gral de División," February 1967, Exp. 15-3 L-9, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[86] "Asunto: Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara – Tecos," 10 August 1970, exp. 100-12 L-1, DFS, AGN-MEX.

An anonymous testimony by a former member of MURO and made public by journalist Manuel Buendía in 1964, accounts for the parallel practices of Los Tecos and MURO, as well as some of the international links of these organizations, suggested also by DFS reports. According to this testimony, MURO was a façade created to attract students of anticommunist leanings into two secret societies (the Legion of the Christian Youth; and the Legion Joan of Arc), requiring the same check for Jewish background, and reproducing, word by word, the oath of Los Tecos' supreme council. MURO's textbooks were noticeably more wide-ranging than Los Tecos': from Hitler's *Mein Kampf,* to Traian Romanescu's anti-Semitic *Betrayal of the West*; to Salvador Borrego's pro-Nazi *Worldwide Defeat*, to Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare,* and some Maoist texts.[87]

A key aspect in the development of MURO was its twofold function as a clandestine structure of right wing indoctrination, and as an enthusiastic collaborator with state and non-state initiatives of anticommunist counter-mobilization. As it appears in DFS documents, the group gained notoriety for its significant presence in student associations, from which it worked, like Jorge Siegrist's *falanges*, as proxies for the FCMAR and Catholic groups who were invested in pushing against leftist influence in the universities for ideological reasons, but also, in the process, to get a hold of student organizations as clienteles. More importantly, given this presence and influence, MURO's espionage and information network became an asset for vested interests, whether those of the FCMAR or those of the Anticommunist Front, to which MURO reportedly communicated the activities of all leftist groups at the National University.[88]

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[87] Manuel Buendía, "Documento demoledor sobre las sociedades secretas, falsamente católicas, a las que combate la Iglesia," Crucero 26 (1 November 1964): 4.

Between 1963 and 1966, Plata created chapters of MURO, independent from Los Tecos, in universities in Sonora and Chihuahua to take over their student federations. Acting as the Anticommunist Patriotic Organization, MURO's Sonoran chapter created the Africa Korps, a shock brigade that, boasting Nazi symbology (including the anthem "Deutschland Über Alles"), received training in close combat and the handling of weapons. The group partook in copious episodes of gang-like street violence against leftists, political opponents and defectors, drawing attention from law enforcement and prompting police raids on their headquarters.[89]

MURO combined the ideological and the pragmatic by endowing its violent actions within and outside campuses with the aura of a youthful, heroic struggle against the enemies of Christianity, and yet always focused on very concrete, micro-level grievances (e.g. smearing the authorities, battling for spaces in campuses). Their skirmishes with Leftist students, their street fights, their campaigns of "virilization" against "long-haired hippies," and their displays of self-importance in the press were part of a performative repertoire that was central to their identification as nationalist-Catholic anticommunist crusaders, and complementary to their role as the eyes and ears of the anticommunist movement in the universities.

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[88] Memorandum, "Frente Popular Anti-Comunista de México," 5 April 1965, Caja 203, GDO, AP, AGN-MEX.

[89] "Movimiento Mexicanista de Integración Cristiana," 1 April 1970, exp. 15-11 L.1, f. 9-14, DFS, AGN-MEX.

Espionage and street brawling were not the end-all of MURO, nor did they see themselves as instruments of the state. According to the testimony mentioned above, MURO members fully believed that the government was implicated in the anti-Christian Jewish conspiracy, and their goal was to create "a popular militia […] for which male recruits are trained in judo and karate and the fabrication of bombs, while the females specialize in espionage."[90] Similar to Tacuara in Argentina, MURO's adoption of the mystique and tactics of guerrilla warfare through their reading of Guevara and Mao was, clearly, not a turn to the Left, but the result of a generational and even ideological break fostered by the relative autonomy and secrecy of the cell-like structure passed down from Los Tecos.

In contrast to the widespread propagandistic use of communist textbooks for public denunciation, the study of this leftist literature was a means to understand the enemy's worldview and to assimilate it as a method of militant political struggle. In this sense, like the Argentine Tacuara, the development of MURO within LUN's larger compound became a breaking point for the right wing student movement. MURO's ideological "promiscuity" would have been, in principle, unthinkable for the old guard of Los Tecos, although its purpose of creating these anticommunist militias, was, in fact, coherent with a history of radical right wing thought that embraced violence as an effective weapon against the enemies of Catholicism.

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[90] Buendía, "Documento demoledor," 4.

The "spurious Right" and the threat of progresismo

One of MURO's original ideological mentors and perhaps the most radical and vocal activist against "progressives" within the Church was Fr. Joaquín Sáenz Arriaga. A Jesuit educated at the Loyola seminary in Barcelona, in the 1930s Sáenz took part in the group of clerics that advised the creation of the National Union of Catholic Students and the Student Federation of Jalisco, the home of the original Tecos. Later, as head of the National Confederation of Marian Congregations, and as a teacher at the *Oriente* Military Institute, he joined Fathers Jorge Vértiz and Manuel Figueroa in a project for the attraction and indoctrination of the Catholic youth in Puebla and Guadalajara, where he was also an advisor to the emerging FUA.[91]

Alienated from the FUA leadership for its flair for violent action at the University of Puebla, Sáenz chastised the founding of MURO in Mexico City as an action by *las falsas derechas* (the spurious Rights) that, according to him, were seeking to radicalize university students to lure them onto the side of communism "by the Hebrew hand" of Ramón Plata, the founder of MURO.[92] For Sáenz, MURO had sincere and noble followers, but also an unscrupulous leadership prone to using "immoral methods, proper of the foulest enemies of the Church and the Homeland." For him, Plata's *falsa derecha* was "a betrayal of its origins, a compromise with the enemy; an insidious attack, equal to organized slander and deceit."[93]

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[91] Antonio Rius Facius, ¡Excomulgado! Trayectoria y Pensamiento del Pbro. Dr. Joaquín Sáenz Arriaga, (Mexico: Costa-Amic Editores, 1980), 94-95.

[92] Rius Facius, ¡Excomulgado!, 96.

[93] Joaquín Sáenz Arriaga, ¿Cisma o fe?¿Por qué me excomulgaron? (Mexico: n.d., 1972), 324.

For Sáenz, these *falsas derechas* were not a minor problem. In the grand scheme of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy imagined by Sáenz, *las falsas derechas* "lurk everywhere, seeking to destroy, to deceive those of good faith and paralyze the legitimate defenses of those of us who fight for the preservation of our spiritual patrimony."[94] The *falsas derechas* were not the enemy, but rather a deceitfully ambivalent agent whose existence implied a plurality and heterogeneity within the ideological span of the right, but only as a way of self-affirmation as genuine and orthodox vis-à-vis those who were perceived as deviant, immoral traitors.

Throughout the 1960s, Sáenz remained active in denouncing the forces of *progresismo* and *las falsas derechas*, particularly after the reforms introduced by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the theological rapprochements with respect to ecumenism (the unity of all Christian faiths, including Judaism), and the emphasis on "the social question" featured in the Latin American Episcopal Conference of 1968. Sáenz's political response to Catholic *progresismo* was to look for culprits within the Church, which he found in Giovanni Montini (Paul VI). For Sáenz, Paul VI was an illegitimate pope, an agent of the eternal Judeo-Masonic conspiracy to destroy the Church from within. Sáenz was at the forefront a larger movement of traditionalist priests known as *sedevacantismo*, which declared the Vatican as *sede vacante* ("Vacant See") in light of Paul VI's anti-Catholic and illegitimate papacy and "evidence," given to Sáenz by fellow *sedevacantistas* from Italy, that the pope was in fact, a Jew.[95] Published in 1971, Sáenz's

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[94] Joaquín Sáenz Arriaga, Las Falsas Derechas (Mar del Plata: Editorial Montonera, 1969), 1. Sáenz would extend this notion of *falsa derecha* to other forces of the right, such as the PAN and the *sinarquistas*, who he condemned for clinging to the "communizing socialism" of the revolution (Las Falsas Derechas, 4-5).

[95] Rius Facius, ¡Excomulgado!, 109.

The New Montinian Church argued that the alleged consensus that emerged after Vatican II (the acceptance of religious freedom and plurality, and the "modernization" of Catholic liturgy) was, in reality, a mortal blow by Judeo-Masonic conspirators, led by Paul VI, to hand the Church over to its enemies. From newspaper editorials and even some television appearances, Sáenz used these argument to target the *progresista* elements within the Church in Mexico, more specifically Sergio Méndez Arceo (the so-called "Red Bishop" of Cuernavaca) who was an adherent to the Theology of Liberation and founder, along with Gregorio Lemercier and Iván Illich, of the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca.

Without explicitly endorsing *sedevancatismo,* Los Tecos joined Sáenz in denouncing CIDOC as a center of indoctrination where "Mendez´s Zapatist roarings, Lemercier's Freudian fanfares, and Illich's guerrilla tactics converge" for the promotion of "violent change" inside the Church. According to Los Tecos' propaganda organ *Réplica*, CIDOC was the center of "the Movement" from where the "*Internacional Progresista*" waged fierce attacks against whom it perceived as its enemies: the traditionalist Cardinals Alfredo Ottavianni, Eugène Tisserant, and Franjo Seper; and Fathers Sáenz Arriaga and Julio Menvielle, whom according to *Réplica,* had acquired the reputation of "cultural symbol of Argentine orthodoxy" amongst the Mexican Right.[96]

The response on behalf of the Catholic hierarchy to the publication of *The New Montinian Church* was swift: in December of 1971, the Archbishop of Mexico, Cardinal Rubén D. Miranda, issued an edict of excommunication against Sáenz, and struck down his campaign to gather support against Paul VI and the forces of *progresismo* for promoting a schism within the Church. For Sáenz, however, his was a higher cause with a simple argument: Paul VI was a legal but illegitimate pope whose destructive goals invalidated the principle of infallibility; and the choice between a Church that safeguarded tradition and one that embraced *progresismo* was a choice for Christ or against him.[97]

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[96] Diego Marcos, "Información sobre el progresismo," Réplica 14 (June 1969): 5-10.

The decision to excommunicate Sáenz divided the Catholic hierarchy, both in Mexico and abroad, as well as church-goers throughout the country, and set Fr. Sáenz on a louder campaign against Paul VI, whom he kept denouncing internationally as a descendant of Jews and an accomplice to communism and Freemasonry.[98] His last publication *Vacant See* (1973) appeared in a particularly difficult national and regional juncture: the radicalization of the urban and rural Left in Mexico; the election of Salvador Allende in Chile; and the increasing visibility of Liberation theologians throughout the continent, all of which Sáenz attributed to Paul VI's encyclical Populorum Progressio (1967) and its endorsement of anti-colonialism, religious pluralism, materialism, and the overall destruction of Catholic orthodoxy and tradition.[99] Sáenz's condemnation of Paul VI's reformism trumped the Church's official rebuttal of "secret societies," a structure long fostered by Los Tecos and MURO given its alleged effectiveness in preventing infiltration by the "enemies" and in fostering networks of collaboration across different sectors of Mexican society.

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[97] Sáenz Arriaga, ¿Cisma o fé?, 129-130.

[98] Rius Facius, ¡Excomulgado!, 136-37.

[99] Sáenz reaffirmed the accusation against Montini's papacy as the actual absence of a true Vicar of Christ in the Holy See and continued to denounce the "great conspiracy" of Jesuit, Jewish, and Communist infiltrators in the Church to bring it towards its "self-demolition." Joaquín Sáenz Arriaga, Sede Vacante: Paulo VI no es Legítimo Papa (Mexico: Editores Asociados, 1973), 1-5; 309-33.

A "terrorist plot": MURO, anticommunist violence and the transnational Right

As shown in my analysis of the Argentine Tacuara, in Latin American and global terms MURO's experience of right wing radicalization was not a unique. Both groups shared an ideological core that followed the teachings of figures like Julio Meinvielle or Sáenz Arriaga, and a platform for the indoctrination of young "true nationalists" for violent action against the enemies of Catholicism and the nation. Besides their ideological proximity, both MURO and Tacuara fact had in fact a number of important connections with fellow travelers throughout the continent and beyond. These connections had important implications for the development of wider, parallel networks of anticommunist violence.

On July 7th 1965, Mexico City police detained Henry Agüeros, a US citizen of Cuban descent accused of perpetrating a grenade attack against the headquarters of the Mexican daily *El Día*. A US Navy-trained radar operator, a veteran of Brigade 2506 (the paramilitary force that landed on the Bay of Pigs), and a member of the Cuban exile organization Nationalist Christian Movement (MNC), Agüeros was also the main suspect behind a prior attack against the Mexican-Russian Institute for Cultural Relations on May 21st. The national press provided detailed coverage of the investigations by the police, giving the story a sensationalist twist by reporting on a "vast terrorist conspiracy"[100] carried out by "the terrorist *gusano*" (a reference to Agüeros' anti-Castroism) and by "the traitors to Mexico who are fixated on dragging the country into violence to serve the interests of the United States."[101] Several news sources, including *El Universal*, *El Día*, and the more conservative *Novedades*, labeled Agüeros as "an American terrorist" and "the bomber from Miami," and emphasized his connections to groups in Mexico that, while not seen as "terrorists", had already become object of constant state surveillance due to their extreme right ideology. Portrayed as a dangerous international terrorist, Agüeros was charged with destruction of property, arson and damage to communications infrastructure, but not with crimes against national security, as it had been rumored in the press. Agüeros was sentenced of eight years in the notorious Lecumberri prison, placed in a special wing for political prisoners, and subjected to the same inhumane treatments that made for the prison's infamous reputation.[102]

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[100] "Capturaron a otros 2 comprometidos en el cobarde atentado dinamitero," El Universal, 9 July 1965, 16.

Agüeros' Mexican accomplices were Manuel de la Isla, Daniel Ituarte, and Manuel Hernández, all members of MURO. This connection startled the Mexican intelligence services, and DFS agents took particular interest in Manuel de la Isla, whose DFS file revealed a history of right wing dissidence and radicalization. In his hometown of Celaya, Guanajuato, De la Isla had been the Secretary of Press and Propaganda for PAN's youth section, until a conflict with the party's new national leader, Adolfo Christlieb, prompted him and other youth leaders to part ways and create a dissident group affiliated to MURO. According to DFS documents, De la Isla's movement was the Mexican Patriotic Front, which printed the newspaper *Renovación* and the magazine

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[101] Newspaper clipping. July 1965. Exp. 11-152 L-1, Henry Agueros Garcés (versión pública), f. 9, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[102] This prompted a campaign by the MNC amongst other Mexico-based Cuban exiles to denounce Agüeros' mistreatment by the Mexican government and the harassment by "communist gangs" inside prison. "Movimiento Nacionalista Cristiano Joven América," 12 January 1966, Henry Agüeros Garcés (versión pública), legajo único, f. 12-13, DFS, AGN-MEX.

Mundo Mejor. Both waged strong attacks against Christlieb's leadership and carried clear anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi messages, for which de la Isla earned the nickname of "El Fuehrer" amongst *panista* youth circles.[103]

After his arrest in connection to the attacks against El Día, De la Isla stated that his activities as a journalist had put him in touch with various Cuban exile organizations, including Agüeros' MNC and the Mexico branch of the Student Revolutionary Directorate, one of the most active anti-Castro groups in the early years of the revolution.[104] He also admitted that Aldo Rosado, the leader of Agüeros's cell in the MNC, had directly asked for his support in providing the explosives for the attacks.[105] In an interview for *El Día* that was later reprinted in several national newspapers, Rosado and other members of the MNC vindicated the attacks, revealing important aspects of their political project and anticommunist mission. "Our ideology is purely fascist," they stated, but denied the MNC was fascist "because fascism is Italian and we don't speak Italian." Instead, defining themselves as national-revolutionaries, they claimed to be inspired by the "mystique" of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish Falange.

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[103] "Situación que priva dentro del Partido Acción Nacional." 3 April 1963. Manuel de la Isla Paulín (versión pública), legajo único, f. 28-33, DFS, AGN-MEX. A factoid that adds to De la Isla's neo-fascist credentials is his translation into Spanish of The Nest Leader's Manual (1933), the most famous work by the head of the Romanian Iron Guard, Corneliu Codreanu. See Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Manual del Jefe: hacia una Aristocracia de la Virtud (Barcelona: Nothung, 1984).

[104] For an overview of the very active universe of anti-Castro Cuban exile organizations, see Jonathan Brown, "Counterrevolution in the Caribbean: The CIA and Cuban Commandos in the 1960s," in Virgina Garrard-Burnett, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Julio E. Moreno (eds.), Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of the Cold War in Latin America (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 103-28.

[105] Memorandum. 10 July 1965, Exp. 11-15 L-1, f. 2, DFS, AGN-MEX.

Through these mimetic gestures, the MNC sought to articulate a form of Cuban revolutionary nationalism that was at the same time a platform for "national liberation" and a bond of solidarity to other nationalist and anticommunist crusaders. Theirs was, in their own words, a "permanent, universal and total struggle," a "non-conventional revolutionary war" against Castro through which they sought to preach and practice "the terror of the crusades" and create a nationalist totalitarian state in Cuba.[106] The MNC shared its anti-Castroist mission with a constellation of Cuban exile organizations who swore to wage what they called *la guerra por los caminos del mundo*, "a war through the paths of the world," against Cuban interests and personnel outside of the United States.[107] The Mexico City attacks were indeed part of "Operation Punishment," the MNC's contribution to this "war" via a terrorist plan to strike against the advocates and "accomplices" of Castro-communism throughout Latin America.[108]

Rosado also stated that both MURO and the MNC were part of Joven América, a confederation of Latin American "Third Position" movements linked to the pan-

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[106] "Nuestra ideología es netamente fascista, declaran los jefes terroristas de Miami," El Día, 14 July 1965, 3.

[107] The MNC was in fact a clandestine arm of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, a "Third Position" right-wing exile group, whose leaders Felipe Rivero Díaz and Ignacio Novo Sompol pioneered the idea for this "war through the paths of the world." The project was undertaken by a myriad of exile organizations, based mostly in Miami, New York, New Jersey, and New Orleans. Most of these groups were created by veterans of Brigade 2506, which participated as a paramilitary force in the failed invasion to the Bay of Pigs; and by former fighters of the counterrevolutionary Escambray guerrillas, which operated inside Cuba up until 1965. On the importance of Bay of Pigs and the Escambray guerrilla experience in the formation of some of these groups, see Brown, "Counterrevolution in Caribbean," 106-114. Also see Jesús Arboleya, The Cuban Counterrevolution (Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 2000). On the activities of these exile organizations in the US, see Yolanda Prieto, The Cubans of Union City: Immigrants and Exiles in a New Jersey Community (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 113-140.

[108] In November of 1965, an MNC commando attacked the Soviet embassy in Buenos Aires as part of Operation Punishment, causing a diplomatic protest by Moscow. In a letter to Rosado intercepted by DFS, Agüeros would boast about the global impact of the operation, claiming the MNC to be "the only Cuban exile movement to be known by name at the Kremlin." Letter, Agüeros to Rosado, 21 December 1965, exp. 12-9 L-16, f. 212-214, DFS, AGN-MEX.

Europeanist organization Jeune Europe.[109] In rejecting "narrow and petty nationalisms," Joven América advocated a "unitarian Iberoamerica" defined by "the unity of language, religion, customs and way of life" in opposition to the imperialism of the two "materialist superpowers."[110] For those gathered around Joven América, this struggle would be rooted in the cult of youth and virility, the mystique of the crusader-warrior, and the vision of a pan-nationalist future that, through counterrevolutionary violence,[111] would do away with what they saw as the false choice between capitalist plutocracy and Marxist materialism. Joven America's "Third Position" politics was thus the reflection of a critical juncuture in the global Cold War, in which groups on the Latin American (and global) extreme right sought to refashion anticommunism as a series of subversive, violent struggles for national liberation and continental unity, in solidarity with other nationalists, and particularly for Latin Americans, with the Cubans.

Revelations about the extreme right ideology of the intricate network of self-described "counterrevolutionaries" behind the Mexico City attacks prompted an intense exchange of information between the FBI, the US Embassy in Mexico, and Mexican police forces, dwelling mostly on the violent nature of the MNC[112] and its links with Mexican and Argentine organizations. FBI sources note, for instance, that the MNC's newspaper *Acción* was printed on a monthly basis in a small shop in the city of Celaya, Guanajuato (the base of operations of De la Isla's Patriotic Front), showing that the connections between MURO and the MNC went beyond a circumstantial collaboration.[113] Also, according to an MNC member who posed as an FBI informant, Joven America's clandestine activities forced it to continually change the location of its central command, which by 1964 was stationed in Buenos Aires. The same anonymous source revealed the names and locations of Joven América across Latin America: Joven Argentina; Unión Nacional and Alianza Nacionalista (Chile); Colombia Joven; Comando Juvenil Anticomunista (Dominican Republic); Brigada Abdon Calderón (Ecuador); Movimiento Nacionalista Uruguayo; Comando Unido Centroamericano; and MURO / Frente Patriótico in Mexico.[114]

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[109] Jeune Europe was created in the early 1960s as a conglomerate of self-described "true Right" movements from Italy, France, Spain and Belgium that revered the experience of the Organisation Armée Secrete (OAS) in French Algeria for its subversive nationalism. Jeune Europe was neo-fascist and yet it progressively moved towards what was considered a "Nazi-Maoist" current within the European extreme Right. See Andrea Mammone, Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), especially chapters 2 and 3.

[110] "Nacionalismo iberoamericano," Joven América 2 (Jul-Ago 1968): 1.

[111] "Woe to us if we fail on the historical mission of our young generation! We shall dig into and remove the crust of filth that conceals the gleam of the authentic *Patria Hispano Americana*. We shall dig and dig, until our hands bleed, until the Homeland bleeds… This is a task for the youth, a task for heroes, but also for martyrs… The Hispanoamerican mystique is combative, everything in it calls for the struggle, Hispanoamerica does not call for peace or softness, nor for refined and effeminate *señoritos*. It calls for strong soldiers, patriotic men, for an offering of life and sacrifice." José Antonio Bravo, "Hispano América combatiente," Joven América 2 (Jul-Ago 1968): 2.

Back in Mexico, De la Isla's arrest and imprisonment had significantly changed the stakes for the activities of MURO. A few days after the events, the group's acting leader Fernando Baños made a public statement distancing MURO from any terrorist action and denied their participation in any national or international political initiative.[115]

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[112] The FBI considered the MNC to fall in the category of "subversives, ultra-rightists, racists and fascists" with "evidence of emotional instability," "expressions of strong or violent anti-US sentiment," and "prior acts […] indicating a propensity for violence." Memorandum. John Edgar Hoover To Chief, United States Secret Service, 18 May 1965. File no. 157-824. FBI Headquarters File 105-HQ-140309-Volume 1.

[113] Memorandum, "Re: Movimiento Nacionalista Cristiano," From Director FBI To SAC Miami. 10 May 1965, File no. MM105-9958, FBI Headquarters File 105-HQ-140309-Volume 1.

[114] "Re: Movimiento Nacionalista Cristiano," FBI to SAC Miami, 10 May 1965.

[115] "El MURO negó rotundamente ser terrorista," El Universal, 10 July 1965.

Still, MURO reiterated its commitment to lead the anticommunist struggle from the trenches of civil society, "because it is not the government nor the Army who should fight communist infiltration. This is a duty of all Catholic citizens […] Communism will only succeed if The People abandon all spheres of action, particularly the universities […] That is where the first total battle against communism will take place."[116]

The government's reaction to the threat of extremist violence was clear: the Secretariat of Government stated that it would not permit the entry of "foreigners with links to terrorist organizations" and that Agüeros would be expelled from the country after serving his sentence. Ernesto Uruchurtu, regent of Mexico City, was even more emphatic, stating that "we will not tolerate attacks of a terrorist or anarchist nature," directing his warning to both Left and Right.[117] For the DFS, the attacks were a sign of a broader problem, as indicated by a 1965 report linking them to the Traditionalist Civic Movement, "a new *falange* of Catholics" of "extreme McCarthyist and reactionary tendencies" backed by the daily *El Sol de México*, "a haven for the extremists that until very recently were part of Revista Nacional and produced pamphlets in favor of Nazism."[118] This same document warned (or rather, speculated) about the possibility of further extreme right wing violence, like that perpetrated by Agüeros, against government officials.

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[116] Memorandum, "Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México," 16 July 1965, Caja 204, GDO, AP, AGN-MEX.

[117] "No toleraremos atentados terroristas: Uruchurtu," El Universal, 13 July 1965, 1.

[118] Memorandum, "Movimiento Cívico Tradicionalista," 21 September 1965, Caja 204, GDO, AP, AGN-MEX.

Later DFS documents coincide with FBI reports on MURO and the MNC, noting that MURO founders Ramón Plata and Luis Felipe Coello had traveled repeatedly to Miami to establish contacts with Aldo Rosado. Tellingly, these documents also refer to Plata and Coello as "sincere Catholics and anticommunists that later became fanatics and acted with true phobia against the regime of President Díaz Ordaz."[119] Similar to the Argentine state's perceptions of the neofascist Tacuara, these contradictory assessments – between suspicion and acceptance – show the differentiated and even fragmented understanding that the state apparatus had about the extreme right's anticommunism. In Mexico, MURO's anticommunism was potentially "subversive," yet legitimate and even encouraged, but only within the limits historically set by the regime's strained relation to what it perceived to be the extreme right.

In this regard, the later trajectory of Agüeros's accomplices is telling. Daniel Ituarte and Manuel Hernández were both reporters for *El Sol de México*, and after their release, they were promoted thanks to the intercession of Salvador Borrego, who was Hernández's uncle and an influential figure in the García Valseca newspaper conglomerate, which owned *El Sol de México*.[120] Both remained members of MURO and of its later offshoot, Nueva Guardia, also known as Guardia Unificadora Iberoamericana, which followed the Ibero-Americanist and neo-falangista ideology of Joven América. De la Isla's story is a bit more perplexing, as he reappears in DFS reports from 1968 as a collaborator for the magazine *Por Qué?*, ran by avowed leftist journalist Mario Menéndez, and with whom De la Isla seemed to have a very close friendship. De la Isla remained a member of MURO and Nueva Guardia, and according to a 1975 DFS report, was later linked to the National Liberation Front of Cuba, and to the Latin American Anticommunist Army, a clandestine group with members throughout the Caribbean Basin that was deemed by DFS as a potential source of "terrorist acts by the radical, fascist extreme Right" in Mexico.[121]

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[119] "Liga Universitaria Nacionalista," Caja 1448B, Exp. 43, f. 1-4, IPS, AGN-MEX.

[120] Untitled memorandum. 5 January 1967, Caja 207, GDO, AP, AGN-MEX.

Intelligence reports also placed MURO in a constellation of secret societies known as "La Organización." Later known as El Yunque, this larger entity was, in fact, Plata Moreno's attempt to replicate the tiered, clandestine structure learned from Los Tecos and challenge their dominance. DFS made the doubtful claim that La Organización was actually funded by the CIA "to cause disorder and pressure the government into aligning with American interests," referring to its contacts with Latin American neofascists and the John Birch Society in the US as a form of "Nazi Trotskyism" that pretended to be more revolutionary than the communists only to divide Castroist guerrillas.[122]

Without taking these reports at face value, it is clear that, besides concerns for Leftist agitation, the existence of these groups into the late 1960s represented a peculiar challenge for the regime. Like those on the Left, right wing organizations were extending their foreign links and attempting to overcome the limits of working in collaboration with state agents for the control and repression of communism. Groups like MURO and its later offshoots were successful in inserting themselves in these transnational networks of right wing terrorism. And yet, their former allies and avowed competitors, Los Tecos were equally effective in creating the image of a unified national anticommunist movement with alliances with fellow travelers abroad.

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[121] "Frente de Liberacion Nacional de Cuba" 25 February 1975, exp. 76-3 L-6 H-58, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[122] "Para el C. Gral de División," 23 June 1967, exp. 15-3 Leg. 9 f. 68-72, DFS, AGN-MEX.

The Mexican Anticommunist Federation

Building on the legacy of the Anticommunist Front and under the reins of Los Tecos, the Mexican anticommunist movement attained its most remarkable organizational achievement with the creation of the Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente (FEMACO) in 1967. FEMACO was the broadest and most structured coalition of anticommunist organizations in the history of the movement, with twenty four affiliated entities from Aguascalientes, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, and Nayarit. At the top of FEMACO's leadership were UAG professors Raimundo Guerrero and Rafael Rodríguez, both loyal members of Los Tecos, along with the elderly Jorge Prieto as "honorary president." A combative anti-communist activist prone to violence,[123] Guerrero was a usual guest at the meetings of the *priísta* FCMAR, which since its appearance in 1961 had become a solid mediator for a number of entities with a shared contempt for communism and *cardenismo*.[124] Rodríguez was Guerrero's right-hand man, and one of Los Tecos' most active national and international political operatives since the 1950s.[125]

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[123] A government intelligence report from 1960 points out Guerrero's readiness to mobilize two thousand UAG students to storm the penitentiary and "liberate" nineteen UAG students arrested after a clash with a rival organization. Raimundo Guerrero Guerrero (versión pública), exp. 100-12-1-60, legajo único, f. 5, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[124] Raimundo Guerrero Guerrero (versión pública), exp. 48-59-62, legajo único, f. 7-8, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[125] In the mid-fifties, Rodríguez led a small anticommunist group called The Anti-Marx Athenaeum. In 1961 he was a representative for Los Tecos in meetings with the Cuban Revolutionary Democratic Front,

FEMACO's founding epitomized both the final amalgamation of different generations and factions within the anticommunist movement, each with its particular views on how to approach the question of communism, both nationally and globally. From his usual conservative-democratic position, Prieto Laurens, for instance, reiterated his accusations against Mexican communists of cynically attempting to "abuse our democratic freedoms" for their "criminal" and "anti-patriotic" intentions.[126] *Teco* leader Rafael Rodríguez stressed the ideological and psychological aspects of "Communist aggression," which lay in communism's immoral rejection of Christianity and its infiltration of the educational system, the media and the arts. He also drew on the history of *Los Tecos* as a heroic reaction to the secularization of public education in the 1930s. Rodríguez recalled the founding of UAG as a battle against Marxism, and referred to the creation of Los Tecos as a clandestine organization that "gathered and acted in the shadows" but later earned the support of "the masses of the people of Guadalajara and surrounding areas." UAG was, in his view, a "martyr university" that had been threatened by "the communist regime of Lázaro Cárdenas," and constantly hounded by slander and the plots of "the Reds."[127] Other speakers denounced communist agitation in the countryside in the form of guerrillas, while pleading a strategic loyalty to the regime by denouncing the communist's "sabotage against the ideas of President Díaz Ordaz";[128]

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and, along with Guerrero, amongst the first Tecos to become part of Prieto Laurens' Anticommunist Front, and give birth to FEMACO.

[126] Jorge Prieto Laurens, "El complot comunista en México. Segunda parte," Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente: su Fundación, sus Actividades Iniciales (Guadalajara: FEMACO, 1967), 46.

[127] Rafael Rodríguez López, "Estrategia de la agresión ideológica del comunismo," Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente, 57-60.

[128] Carlos Vizcaíno Velasco, "La agitación comunista en el campo. Segunda parte," Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente, 91.

and the abandonment of Christianity due to “five centuries of naturalism, deism, liberalism, and atheism.”[129]

In its Declaration of Principles, which condensed the militant and decidedly belligerent spirit of the new organization’s anticommunist mission, FEMACO defined its struggle as a defense of the rights of Man over those of the state and for the protection of private property and economic independence from communism, the irrational, imperialistic, militaristic “the enemy of all peoples.” Given the international character of the enemy, FEMACO proposed that this defense take the form of a worldwide coordinated offensive effort, based on the creation of “specialized cells for ideological, propagandistic, psychological, political, and social struggle at all levels, and in the most varied forms and structures […] The fight for law and freedom and against communism must be universal and indivisible, as the enemy is one and global.”[130] According to state intelligence documents, FEMACO was planning to implement this strategy by launching the “Independent Anticommunist Commandos,” constituted by MURO militants trained to “neutralize communist agitation” and guided by Father David Mayagoitia of the University Parish. [131] Ostensibly a result of FEMACO’s participation in the first meeting of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) in September of 1967, this plan for the systematic creation of anticommunist bands was feasible due to the accumulated experience of MURO's recruiting practices and the tightly knit collaboration of the network consolidated by FEMACO.

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[129] Manuel Salazar Arce, “El comunismo y los intelectuales,” Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente, 79.

[130] “Declaración de principios de la Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente,” Federación Mexicana Anticomunista de Occidente, 12.

[131] Memorandum. “Jorge Prieto Laurens, Presidente del Frente Popular Anticomunista organiza los ‘comandos independientes contra el comunismo.’” 1 November 1967, caja 1616B, exp. 6, f. 24-25, IPS, AGN-MEX.

The printing and distribution of *Réplica*, FEMACO's monthly publication, was also of importance to the organization's attempt to disseminate its platform throughout the newly formed federtion. Edited uninterruptedly until 1982, *Réplica* outlived other anticommunist publications like MURO's *Puño* and *Brecha Universitaria*, and achieved a level of ideological consistency provided by its plain propagandistic tone and its ability to amalgamate a staunch anticommunism with a radical defense of traditional morality and national values and a harsh condemnation of youth counterculture, including rock music, the hippies, and sexual liberation. Without fully endorsing state repression, *Réplica*'s most vehement attacks were directed towards the increasing mobilization of university students and against the "false prophets of progressivism" within the Catholic Church and in higher education. As promoted by Fr. Sáenz Arriaga, one of FEMACO's leading ideologues, *progresismo* was seen by Réplica as a fundamental attack by "modernist-Marxists" against the Church. According to Rafael Rodríguez, "the enemies of the Lord are atacking again with more energy and more nerve than ever" by promoting the modernization of liturgy and the undermining of ecclesiastical authority. *Progresistas*, wrote Rodríguez, turned the holy sacrifice of the Mass into "modern music festivals," disdained all the sacraments, limited shows of devotion to the Virgin, and impeded Catholics from defending themselves from "those who carry anti-Christian ideas."[132] Student mobilization particularly after the ninth anniversary of the Cuban revolution was perceived by the editors of *Réplica* as the preparation for "terrorism," the next phase of communist agitation, inspired by Marx, Lenin, Freud and Marcuse, the "philosophers of destruction" and "social dissolution." *Réplica*'s growing concern for the Latin American scope of the anticommunist struggle – evident in its reports on Argentine, Colombian, Cuban and Chilean politics – also reflected the increasing desire of the FEMACO leadership to strengthen the international ties cultivated since 1954 by Prieto Laurens' Anticommunist Front, and which gave Mexico a prominent place in the nascent World Anti-Communist League.

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[132] Rafael Rodríguez López, "Progresismo: Deicidio en el siglo XX," Réplica 7 (August 1968): 21-23.

Despite the appearance of a strong anticommunist consensus that had translated into the creation of FEMACO as a unified instrument of political struggle, the anticommunist movement was unable to overcome the fundamental original tension created by the extreme *sedevacantista* position of Los Tecos, who were by far the dominant group in FEMACO, and the national and international political ambitions of MURO leader Ramón Plata.[133] However, this did not prevent the consolidation of FEMACO, which came at a time of intense social protest, prompted by alliances between students and independent workers' organizations, the New Left's rejection of a politics of moderate opposition, and the increasingly authoritarian responses by the regime against these challenges.

These developments were read by the anticommunist movement as unequivocal signs that the decisive battle in their struggle was near. Particularly in the months before and after the violent repression of students in Mexico City (October 2nd,1968), FEMACO's anticommunism became more in favor of repression (although not necessarily pro-government), more hostile, and more internationally pro-active. For instance, in May of 1968, FEMACO hosted a series of meetings in Guadalajara, with guests from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panamá, and Costa Rica who discussed anticommunism's scope of action throughout the continent. In one of these meetings, Rafael Rodríguez portrayed Mexico as the center for the dissemination of communist propaganda in Latin America, and, like all of his anticommunist forefathers, attributed this situation to the presence of communists in high spheres of government.[134] As the student movement became more vocal and the government more impatient and more repressive, FEMACO's *Réplica* increased its denunciations of the "Marcusian" character of the student protests and the complicity of the rector of the National University for giving protection to known communists,[135] and applauded the use of the Army as "guardians of Homeland and Liberty" against student agitation.

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[133] "El clero y sus organizaciones eclesiásticas y seglares," 3 June 1970, exp. 15-3, L-10, DFS, AGN-MEX. As MURO extended its influence in university campuses and grew more autonomous from Los Tecos, Plata sought alternative political alliances, which he found in Tradiçao, Familia e Propriedade, a rabidly anticommunist and traditionalist organization based in Brazil, and led by the self-proclaimed counterrevolutionary Plinio Correa de Oliveira. By 1970, MURO had become increasingly estranged from the orbit of Los Tecos, who deemed them as traitors and as servants to "Christian democracy" and the foreign interests of Plinio Correa. Deslices de la TFP y Contubernio FUA-MURO-GUIA (Mexico: Juventudes Nacionalistas de México, 1975), 3-4, 8-9.

Despite the potency of its rhetoric, its historical capacity to jump on the bandwagon of official anticommunism, and the impetus gained during the years of heightened political mobilization by workers and students, the anticommunist movement of the extreme right never aspired to become a mass political movement, and, aside from its influence in cities like Guadalajara, Puebla, or Monterrey, it largely placed itself at the margins of the broader political landscape. Refusing to organize electorally and opposed to the pseudo-Leftist, Third World-ist turn of the regime during the presidency of Luis

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[134] "Asunto: Estado de Jalisco," 2 May 1968, exp. 100-12 L-15, DFS, AGN-MEX.

[135] Arturo Martínez Ortega, "Los de la bandera roja empezaron a correr," Réplica 8 (1968): 4-9.

Echeverría (who condemned both the extreme right and the extreme left as "fascist")[136] FEMACO remained under tight control of Los Tecos throughout the 1970s. This more radical iteration of the anticommunist movement consolidated its strong ties with both traditionalist Catholics and the economic and political interests of idelogically committed businessmen, and extended its international alliances beyond the sphere of mere ideological empathy and into the realm of counter-mobilization and political action.

The White Guerrillas: Mexico, Latin America and the World Anti-Communist League

One of the least studied aspects of the organizations that partook in Mexico's anticommunist movement pertains to their regional and global connections. From the conservative nationalists of the 1930s and 40s, to Prieto Laurens' Anticommunist Front, to Catholic traditionalists, to the neofascists in MURO, Mexican anticommunists were linked through ideologies, practices, and forms of mobilization with fellow travelers abroad. Building on the relations built by Prieto Laurens through the FPAM and the CIDC since the 1950s, the key moment for the transnational projection of the Mexican anticommunist movement came with the successful insertion of FEMACO (itself the product of the historical convergence of many of these currents) in the creation and dissemination of the project proposed by the World Anti-Communist League (WACL).

Founded in Taipei in 1967, the WACL described itself as an "anticommunist international united front," a long-standing aspiration of anticommunist governments and organizations that since the mid 1950s had built regional alliances to bolster their efforts in fighting against Soviet and Chinese influence. In its own historical narrative, the League's acknowledged the pioneering role of the Asian People's Anticommunist League (APACL), founded in 1954 as a collective of intellectuals, political activists, and heads of state from East and South East Asia that sought to take initiative against what they saw as the "expansion of the Iron Curtain to Asia," embodied by the partition of Vietnam and Korea, and the triumph of Maoism in China. In a trajectory analogous to that of Prieto Laurens' CIDC, the APACL held twelve conferences that served as the platform to solidify the ties between state and non-state actors from Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan and the Philippines, with the participation of observers from Eastern Europe, the US, and Latin America.

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[136] "The people will not fall for the language of the terrorists. They know terrorists seek to undermine the unity of all Mexicans and to force the authorities to toughen their position […] Terrorism is reactionary [and] fascist […] It is an expression of the lack of popular support, of the fear of intelligence; it hides clandestinely, threatening human existence". Informes Presidenciales. Luis Echeverría Álvarez (Mexico: Cámara de Diputados, 2006), 348-349.

With the presence of non-East Asian delegates that far exceeded its regional scope, the 1966 APACL congress in Seoul drafted the charter for the creation of the World Anti-Communist League and projected to hold the League's first meeting in Taipei the following year. In the words of Korean President Park Chung Hee, the mission of the nascent organization was to expand "the free people's anticommunist front to the whole world."[137] Taiwanese nationalist Chiang Kai Shek became the first president of the WACL, marking a continuity with the APACL's historical emphasis on Taiwan as the symbolic center of their regional anticommunist struggle. For Chiang, however, their nationalist battle against communism had a universal meaning. Anticommunism was, for him, "not a task for any one nation or region alone. It is a common mission of the entire world and of all mankind. We must adopt a consistent strategy and take concerted actions."[138]

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[137] World Anticommunist League, Achievements and Influences of the First WACL Conference (Taipei: World Anticommunist League, 1968), 10.

The WACL adopted a Common Program of Action that markedly appealed to liberal-democratic values to undermine leftist arguments for pacifism, diplomacy and non-aggression, and to justify a notion of defensive anticommunist collective action. The Program held, for instance, "the firm belief that freedom is indivisible and that freedom and slavery cannot coexist," while rejecting a "humiliating peace" and the "uncertain spell of false security" implicit in the concept of non-aggression, and advocating the transformation of anticommunist "people-to-people solidarity into a government-to-government cooperation."[139] Given its global scope, the WACL noticeably relinquished the use of overt references to religion as a basis for the anticommunist struggle. Instead, in an effort to seize the banners of the revolutionary Left and promote a sense of nationalist/anticommunist solidarity at a global scale, it adopted a rhetorical arsenal, unusual for anticommunist organizations at the time, which appealed to "national independence, racial equality and international mutual help" as guiding principles in the fight against communism.[140]

Following these premises, the attendees to the congress in Taipei discussed and adopted a number of resolutions, largely focused on condemning communist oppression in Korea, Vietnam, and "the Soviet-Russian sphere of power." Historically, Latin American issues had been subordinated to the anti-Maoist agenda of the APACL, particularly as China grew closer to revolutionary Cuba in the early 1960s and the region at large was seen as threatened by Chinese cultural and political infiltration.[141] The Latin American delegates in Taipei capitalized on these concerns and successfully pushed for a resolution to "help the Cuban people recover freedom and liberty" and for "expediting the establishment of regional organizations of the League."[142] Undoubtedly, the resolution on Cuba had been the result of an active and well-organized Latin American presence in the earlier APACL meetings, represented by the Inter-American Committee for the Defense of the Continent. Its leaders, Jorge Prieto Laurens and Carlos Penna Botto had been loyal attendees to the APACL, where they expressed solidarity with the APACL but also promoted the strategic importance of Latin America in their shared global struggle. Ultimately, the rift between Cuba and China in the mid-1960s[143] effectively placed the fear of a Maoist Cuba outside of the scope of the APACL, and lent legitimacy for the Latin Americans' push to create a regional chapter and counter the WACL's East Asia-centered narrative, which downplayed the hard-fought battles that anticommunists like Prieto Laurens had been waging back in the American continent since the early 1950s.

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[138] World Anticommunist League, Achievements, 13.

[139] World Anticommunist League, Achievements, 25-26.

[140] World Anticommunist League, Achievements, 23.

Aside from Prieto Laurens' as a historical figure of the Mexican anticommunist movement, the participation of Mexicans in this first WACL meeting was notable. For instance, Agustín Navarro Vázquez, the director of the anticommunist Institute for Economic and Social Research and of the journal *Temas Contemporáneos,* was one of the strongest proponents that the League adopt a platform in favor of the freedom of enterprise and against state intervention in the economy. Alfredo Medina, the financial benefactor for FCMAR and MURO, also attended the conference, to speak about the insufficient efforts of the Mexican government to curtail the infiltration of communists, and to bemoan the state of anticommunism in Mexico caused by the lack of economic and moral support.[144] One of the most important resolutions of the Conference revolved around the creation of "a center for the technical and philosophical education of anticommunist fighters… so they can confront socialist demagoguery, unmask the deceit of communist politicians and disseminate ideas of freedom, national independence and democratic government." In this regard, Anacleto González Flores (a member of FEMACO and son of a Cristero "martyr") made a proposal to use the League's existing "Pro-Liberation" center in Seoul to centralize the worldwide anticommunist propaganda campaign, an idea that was approved by the Executive Committee. However, despite the efforts by Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans to gain traction at the WACL, the global anticommunist movement remained overdetermined by the East Asians' desire to unite and lead the anticommunist movement against Chinese communism, which they considered, according to a conversation between Chiang and Prieto Laurens, as "the most diabolical and perverse enemy […] a great danger that threatens to annihilate all of us."[145]

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[141] See Asian People's Anticommunist League, Latin America's Red Peril: A Factual Account of Chinese Communist Parties in Central and South America (Taipei: APACL, 1961). On the influence of Maoism in Latin America, see Matthew D. Rothwell, Transpacific Revolutionaries: the Chinese Revolution in Latin America (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[142] World Anticommunist League, Achievements, 18.

[143] For a synthetic account of the short-lived ties between the two regimes, see Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban relations during the early years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," Journal of Cold War Studies 9, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 78-114.

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[144] Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años, 375-376.

[145] Prieto Laurens, Cincuenta Años, 365.

After limiting its annual meetings to East Asian venues (Saigon, Bangkok, Tokyo, and Manila), the APACL/WACL saw President Chiang fall under tremendous pressure following a 1971 UN vote that recognized China as a member and expelled Taiwan from the organization. The Mexican anticommunists represented by FEMACO took advantage and requested the opportunity to organize the 1972 meeting in Mexico City, a move that has been interpreted as responding to a direct request by the APACL to show solidarity with an isolated Taiwan.[146] In more practical terms, the request also sought to redirect attention away from the hegemonic APACL group, to strengthen the ties of collaboration between Taiwan and Latin America, and to provide a platform to launch FEMACO's Latin Americanist project: the Latin American Anticommunist Confederation (CAL). With the participation of anticommunist leaders from all over Latin America, the founding of the CAL in 1971 was the first step in preparing for the WACL conference in Mexico City the following year.[147]

The League's ties to Latin American anticommunists were built from its very inception. Jorge Prieto Laurens, for instance, attended the foundational 1967 meeting as a long-time observer in the APACL congresses, and as one of the WACL's most fervent advocates, as attested by his key role in promoting the 1958 preparatory conference in

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[146] Mónica López Macedonio, "Una visita desesperada. La Liga Mundial Anticomunista en México. Notas para reconstruir la historia del movimiento civil anticomunista mexicano," Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies 12, no. 2 (2006): 110-111; Mónica López Macedonio, "Historia de una colaboración anticomunista transnacional: Los Tecos de la Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara y el gobierno de Chiang Kai-Shek a principios de los años setenta." Contemporánea. Historia y Problemas del Siglo XX 1, no. 1 (2010): 147-50. López's are the only attempts for a historical reconstruction of the ties between the Mexican anticommunist movement (which she calls "civil movement" to distinguish it from state-led anticommunist initiatives) and its Asian, American, and European counterparts. López ascribes a key role to Mexican anticommunists in building and sustaining Latin America's transnational ideological and financial connections to the WACL.

[147] "Liga Mundial Anticomunista," 19 July 1972. Caja 1616B, exp. 6, f. 102-104, IPS, AGN-MEX.

Mexico City that set the groundwork for the WACL. After 1967, the sustained participation of Latin American delegates in anticommunist venues in Asia and Europe, and the creation of FEMACO as the leading Mexican and Latin American anticommunist entity constituted the most important steps towards a Latin Americanization of the anticommunist crusade.

The CAL was, in fact, a reincarnation and revision of Prieto Laurens' CIDC, now bolstered by FEMACO's flourishing connections with the Taiwanese nationalists, with European neofascist networks, such as the Spanish Circle of Friends of Europe (CEDADE) and the neofascist terrorists at Aginter Press, in Lisboa; and with Reverend Sun-Myung Moon's Unification Church in Korea. From this global perspective, the choice of Mexico City as the venue for the debut of the CAL should be understood in terms of a changing international environment that allowed FEMACO to capitalize on the urgency of APACL to seek non-US support, and steer the WACL in a different direction: the projection of Latin America as the crucial frontline against communism, and the radicalization of the global anticommunist movement by increasing its forms of covert transnational collaboration.

In the opening day of the 1972 Mexico City conference, the WACL made an emphatic call, publicized in the Mexican press, for a global "politics of aggression of an ideological as well as a military nature,"[148] an idea that surely resonated with the anticommunist and even extremist credentials of many of the delegates, which included the Ukrainian ultra-nationalist Jaroslav Stetsko, of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations; former socialist Ivan Matteo Lombardo, of the Italian branch of the WACL; Argentine anticommunists Apeles Márquez and Luis Ángel Dragani; Mario Sandoval Alarcón, Chairman of Guatemala's Congress; Diego Medina, of the Cuban exile terrorist organization Alpha 66; and other delegates from Canada, Norway, Sweden, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Venezuela.[149]

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[148] "Exigirá una política de agresión la Liga Mundial Anticomunista," El Universal, 28 August 1972.

In contrast to the past predominance of East Asian political figures, the keynote speakers invited by the organizers reflected the latter's intention to give the WACL a more global scope: George L. Paik, long-time WACL intellectual from Korea; Walter H. Judd, head of the American Council of World Freedom; and Fr. Julio Meinvielle, the leading ideologue of the extreme Right in Argentina, and ostensibly a critical influence for the anticommunist movement in Mexico and throughout Latin America. Meinvielle's speech, titled "Christian civilization against Communism," was a condensed rendering of his political philosophy, depicting Liberalism, Marxism, and capitalism as enemies of civilization and incarnations of the timeless Judeo-Masonic conspiracy.[150] In that sense, Meinvielle's intervention was not a novel contribution to the WACL's anticommunist crusade, and yet it certainly drew from a parallel genealogy, one that vindicated Latin America's centrality as a longstanding beacon of anticommunist intellectual and political activity. Moreover, Meinvielle's presence was plainly an acknowledgment of his status as one of the most important thinkers, promoters, and practitioners of the Latin American counterrevolution. In that regard, Meinvielle's speech was likely a gesture of CAL's embrace of the Argentine priest's politico-theological view of a Christian counterrevolution as the moral and political foundation for anticommunist "unconventional warfare." Indeed, the 1972 WACL conference was, for the Latin American delegates, a critical juncture in the hemispheric and global dimension of their various projects, one that ostensibly foreshadowed the radicalization of the joint anticommunist crusade and of the potential to turn it into increasingly transnational and violent enterprise.

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[149] "Liga Mundial Anticomunista" 19 July 1972, Caja 1616B, exp. 6, f. 139-157, IPS, AGN-MEX.

[150] "La civilización cristiana contra el comunismo" (1972) in Julio Meinvielle, El Comunismo en la Revolución Anticristiana (Buenos Aires: Cruz y Fierro, 1984), 71-81.

As a long time protagonist of initiatives to denounce communism in Mexico and abroad, Jorge Prieto Laurens' intervention in the conference was telling of this historical and discursive shift towards the enactment of anticommunist violence. Reprinted in its entirety by El Sol de México, Prieto's speech reflected on the crucial importance of "not only knowing Communism" but also the "techniques of the struggle against it." Since communism is materialistic, he said, the only way to fight it would be with "an exalted spiritualism," in which "religious affirmation" and the promotion of an "authentic nationalism" would play a central role in the creation of a network of anticommunist denunciation, civic education and indoctrination in "tactics and procedures for the struggle."[151]

Also significant in historical and political terms was the presence and the intervention by Luis Ángel Dragani, the young delegate from the Argentine anticommunist youth organization FAEDA. As examined in chapter 4, FAEDA represented the convergence of various strands of anticommunist thought and activism in Argentina, including the anticommunist "expertise" of Daniel Alberto Faleroni, who had been an early member of Prieto Laurens' CIDC; the anti-Peronist civic activism of FAEDA's president, the lawyer Apeles Márquez; and the boisterous anti-hippie and red-baiting campaigns waged by Dragani at various Argentine universities.

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[151] "Como luchar contra el comunismo. Ponencia del FPAM," Caja 1616B, exp. 3, f. 63-73, IPS, AGN-MEX.

As the representative of FAEDA and the National Anticommunist Youth Movement, Dragani took the conference floor to encourage the audience to "refrain from simply unmasking Marxism and its cruel and inhumane methods, and proceed to fight it with its own weapons." In a symptomatic conflation of the transcendental and material battles heralded by the theorists of the Latin American counterrevolution, Dragani proposed the adoption of "a philosophical mysticism based on our own Western and Christian principles" which would give way to a genuine nationalism as the means to seize the banners of social justice from international communism. In a statement that was reminiscent of the Argentine neofascist notions of counterrevolutionary Catholic guerrillas, Dragani also claimed: "Our forces will adopt the means and tactics that the circumstances demand. Against the Red guerrillas, we will deploy the White guerrillas in coordination with our Armed Forces, who will fulfill their role as guardians of the Fatherland. We will put our efforts and our lives on the line against the attempts to violate our rights."[152]

In the context of the WACL meeting, and the push towards a renewed bureaucratic-authoritarian bloc in the Americas throughout the seventies, Dragani's mention of the "White guerrillas" could be interpreted as a foresight on the type of state-sponsored violence that characterized Latin America's Dirty Wars. The idea of the "White guerrillas" also captured the logic of anticommunism as a symmetrical, transnationally coordinated response, from above and from below, to the violence of the enemy, an irregular form of war of self-defense waged by nationalists against external oppressors and their local agents. The “White guerrillas” exemplify, in other words, the extreme Right’s rationalization and appropriation of Leftist violence for a new stage of the Cold War, characterized by deténte and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement, but also by the radicalization and increasingly transnational scope of violent right-wing groups throughout Europe and the Americas.[153]

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[152] [Ponencia del Lic. Luis Angel Dragani], Caja 1616A, exp 3, f. 75-82, IPS, AGN-MEX.

For FEMACO the 1972 conference represented a significant step in the realization of its anticommunist mission, and the reaffirmation of the prominent role that these Mexican activists believed they deserved to play in the global anticommunist crusade. Paradoxically, and similarly to the CIDC in the 1950s, the international reputation gained by FEMACO’s activism and its ties with radical anticommunist organizations from Europe, Asia and the Americas, did not translate into a more relevant role in the Mexican political landscape, as these ties, added to its history of radical right wing dissidence, continuously rendered the organization as a potentially disruptive force in the eyes of the Mexican security apparatus.

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[153] On right wing and neofascist violence in 1970s Europe see Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy, and the Global Fascist Network (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); and Guido Panvini, Ordine Nero, Guerriglia Rossa: La Violenza Política nell’Italia degli anni Sessanta e Settanta (1966-1975) (Torino: G. Einaudi, 2009).

Conclusion: The Latin American Right and the Long Cold War

When it comes to marching many do not know
That their enemy is marching at their head.
The voice which gives them their orders
Is their enemy's voice and
The man who speaks of the enemy
Is the enemy himself.

Bertolt Brecht, "From a German War Primer" (1937)

Three decades after partaking in the third wave of democratization, Latin America finds itself grappling with the downturn of the so-called "Pink Tide" of progressive governments of the early 2000s, with increasing levels of social and political polarization, and the looming possibility of authoritarian regression. More recently, the political crisis in Venezuela; the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil; the campaign against the peace accords in Colombia; and the demonstrations in defense of "family values" in Mexico, featured apologies of torture, [1] large-scale social mobilizations against two late progenies of the political and cultural Cold War, "castro-chavismo" and "gender ideology"; and a general disdain for social-democratic and progressive agendas for their alleged complicity with internal and external agents of moral corruption.[2]

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[1] An extreme Right legislator for the Social Christian Party, and deemed as "the Donald Trump of Brazil," Jair Bolsonaro dedicated his vote in favor of Roussef's impeachment to Col. Carlos Brilhante Ustra, a military officer known for having tortured Roussef in the 1970s. "Dilma Roussef: Brazilian Congress votes to impeach president," The Guardian, 18 April 2016.

[2] "Colombian opposition to peace deal feeds off gay rights backlash," The New York Times, 8 October 2016, 12; "Uribe en Miami: Colombia abría la puerta al castrochavismo con el acuerdo de paz," El Nuevo Herald, 23 October 2016. "Thousands march in Mexico City to protest gay marriage and gender ideology," The Christian Times, 30 September 2016. "Los interrogantes que suscita la construcción de un nuevo enemigo: la ideología de género," El Espectador, 19 August 2016. "Pope Francis: Gender ideology is 'the annihilation of man as image of God'," The Washington Times, 2 August 2016.

This episodic resurgence of conservative mobilization raises questions about the unrelenting social resonance of the Latin American Right, beyond conventional views that attribute it to an essential Latin American conservative ethos, or to the politics of elite interests and the mobilization of voters.[3] Like in Europe and the United States, the reconfiguration and renewed salience of these right wing discourses and movements needs to be linked to the historical sociocultural conditions that lend traction to intolerance and to authoritarian, law-and-order, iron-fist solutions against ideas, groups, or individuals perceived as threats to the social body. More importantly, critical takes on the history of these ideas and movements shed light on the existence of popular support for platforms that rely on the assurance of protection against such threats. As part of this global historical and cultural milieu, anticommunism was, and continues to be, an unremitting source of rhetorical weaponry, and a form of enemy politics originally and fervently championed by dictators and their extreme Right backers, and often tolerated, when not outright promoted, by liberal constitutional democracies when faced with moments of "necessity."

Anticommunism had remarkable capacity to shape social attitudes and public discourse, and played a central role as the ideological and experiential framework through which many Latin Americans understood their place in different contexts of conflict, polarization, and crisis. The notion of the “internal enemy” was central to anticommunism’s significant continuities and adaptations to the changing conditions of the global Cold War and into the present, as a wide range of social actors construed, debated, and put into practice forms of anticommunist enmity that still are part of the region’s political imaginary and lexicon.

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[3] For paradigmatic examples of essentialist arguments of Latin American political culture as conservative, centralist, and authoritarian, see Howard J. Wiarda, The Soul of Latin America: The Cultural and Political Tradition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); and James M. Malloy, Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977). For perspectives that emphasize the elite dimension of right-wing parties, see Kevin J. Middlebrook (ed.), Conservative Parties, The Right, and Democracy in Latin America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000). For analyses on the ideological, sociological, and structural dimensions of right wing politics in contemporary Latin America (although still from a perspective centered on parties, interests, and elections), see Juan Pablo Luna and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (eds.), The Resilience of the Latin American Right (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

In addition to the dense intellectual history and political salience of the extreme Right, anticommunism’s social traction and historical resilience resides in its intrinsic forms of counterrevolutionary/counterinsurgent subjectivity. These were defined by its radical negation of the enemy, and the idea that the restoration of an order in crisis can only occur through the struggle with, and the defeat of, the enemy. Given this subjective dimension, the apparent uniformity of anticommunism as a discursive formation contrasted with the plurality of its contextual meanings, crisscrossed at the ideological level by cultural and political nationalisms, integrist Catholicism, liberal authoritarianism, and local forms of neofascism. At the level of historical memory and lived experience, anticommunists appropriated and resignified anticommunism, carved different social spaces to deliver their message, and actively partook in the turbulent politics of their own local Cold Wars. Anticommunists thought of themselves as involved in a multidimensional struggle against subversive enemies, often invoking the past, in the form of history, national values, or “tradition.” They found points of commonality with other anticommunist experiences as “lessons” and as examples of heroism, martyrdom, and nationalist valor, which they could project on to their own conception of “the global” in the global Cold War. In that sense, “the Long Cold War” is not only a periodization devised by historians to make sense of the deeper historical roots of the “Cold War proper," but also a category that captures the sense of historical continuity that actors themselves attached to the conflicts and crises of the period, and which they built through experience and by the transmission of collective/transgenerational memory.

While rooted in conservative political philosophies that revered national history and tradition, the constellation of the Latin American *derechas* did not remain static nor fixated with the past. The positing of the Cold War as the possibility of radical confrontations in the absence of open armed hostility allowed some of these actors to actualize the anticommunist imaginary and to devise new means to propel their often ill-defined projects into the future. In other words, the Cold War allowed the most extreme Cold War anticommunists to pose, like their fascist predecessors, new modern iterations of reactionary politics. Some of them, counterintuitively, rejected the anti-egalitarianism of conservatives, while others embraced anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism as a banner of right wing "national revolutionaries," and favored the use of revolutionary violence for reactionary ends. As shown by Tacuara in Argentina, and MURO in Mexico, the extreme Right of the 1960s saw itself pursuing the "true" revolution that was to sweep through the globe as a reaffirmation of genuine national spirits fighting communist imperialism (in its Soviet, Cuban, and Chinese variants) by its own means (ideology, propaganda, irregular warfare). This extreme Right was deeply invested in characterizing "the enemy" as an agent of social, political, and moral disruption, and posed the exertion of violence against this enemy as the only instrument to reaffirm the supremacy of the national-popular will, of Christianity, and of Western civilization.

The local and global meanings that anticommunists themselves attached to their struggle informed their perceptions, assessments, and forms of engaging with and living through the Cold War. From government posts, newspapers, and radio, and inside parishes, classrooms, and factories, anticommunists sought to persuade their respective audiences (citizens, readers/listeners, religious congregations, and fellow students and workers) of the various ways in which the global Cold War was linked to their social worlds, and how the actions and mere presence of communists threatened, in an unprecedented fashion, the integrity and foundations of those social worlds. In such varied spheres, they offered an array of methods to inhibit communism's conditions of possibility (social, political, ideological), and called for implementing legal and illegal means of criminalization, repression, or even physical elimination.

National specificities did not preclude anticommunist from locating their grievances and struggles in broader Latin American and global contexts. The intellectual and historical foundations of the transnational anticommunist imaginary shaped the participation of Latin American state and non-state actors in initiatives that went well beyond the scope of the nation-state. In fact, as attested by the circulation of texts and by the links established by different networks of extreme right wing activism, Latin American anticommunists were increasingly aware of the possibility of finding common political ground with fellow travelers abroad to overcome the limits imposed by strictly national frameworks. In linking, for instance, the deeds of the Spanish Falange and of Francoism, with the struggles of Mexican Catholics, Colombian Conservatives, or Argentine *nacionalistas*, these anticommunists imagined themselves as part of overlapping political communities: the Hispanic Catholic world, and the pan-nationalist reactions against foreign invaders and domestic traitors; and, later, as right wing cold warriors that sought ties with transpacific and transatlantic fellow travelers, building on these histories/memories of victimhood at the hands of communists, Jews, and liberals and other more contextual enemies (Argentine Peronism, Mexican Cardenism, Colombian Liberalism).

This also speaks to the Cold War transformations of Latin American right wing nationalisms, and to their history of transnational making and circulation since at least the advent of the Bolshevik Revolution. Latin American political and social actors on the Right were increasingly aware of the potential of global fascism to become a radical counterrevolutionary solution to the decadence of liberal democracy and the threat of communist disruption in both national and global arenas. In light of the global irradiation of fascism, many intellectual and political figures (such as Laureano Gómez in Colombia, Julio Meinvielle and Jordán Genta in Argentina, or José Vasconcelos and Salvador Borrego in México, amongst others) became local interpreters and enablers of fascist notions of anticommunist enmity in their respective spheres of influence, identifying the conflicts they saw in their own national contexts with the timeless battles waged by true Catholics and nationalist against the enemies of God and the nation, while also serving as points of reference for admirers, followers, and emulators often beyond their countries of origin. Acting in as prominent political figures and/or as known public intellectuals, they exemplify the role of transgenerational anticommunist "brokers" in providing a sense of ideological consistency and historical continuity in the discourses and practices of a wide range of individual and collective actors that, into the 1960s and 70s, conceived of, and indeed practiced, anticommunism as an intense political and spiritual struggle against the global revolutionary Left and its alleged accomplices. This intergenerational anticommunist brokerage was central to the emergence of a new generation of young right wing radicals in the late 1960s, who also were part of the global reverberations of 1968 in cultures of youth rebellion, radicalism, and violence, and of the proliferation and pluralization of local, national, and transnational anticommunist organizations as sites of anticommunist social reproduction.

The histories of Colombian, Argentine, and Mexican anticommunism, and their intersections with other experiences (such as those of their Cuban exile and Brazilian allies) show that the intellectual and political itineraries of the Latin American Right were central to defining the contours of Latin America's Cold War and that these actors understood the Cold War as a convergence of local and global conflicts in which they could effectively partake. The emergence and consolidation of the Latin American Anticommunist Confederation and the rise to prominence of Latin American figures within the World Anticommunist League show the success of Latin American anticommunists in bringing together a project of Latin American unity deeply rooted in the region's political and cultural milieu, and a global initiative meant to overcome the limits of nationally-bounded projects and of dependence on US assistance.

As shown here, anticommunists held ambivalent views with regards to US influence, and often strove to articulate what they deemed as "authentically" nationalist responses to the constraints imposed by US-Soviet competition for global hegemony. Even in more straightforward cases where the transfer of US anticommunist/counterinsurgent knowledge and resources took place, Latin American actors often negotiated the scope of US meddling, made different political calculations about the implications of these exchanges, formulated claims for cooperation in terms of equal responsibility, and reasserted their relative autonomy.

Non-state anticommunist actors faced similar question regarding the autonomy of their agendas. They deemed anticommunist measures to be insufficient, and disparaged governments, the Church, and universities for being too complacent, or even complicit, with communists, a problem that often placed them at odds with the state. This was particularly true for integrist Catholics like Julio Meinvielle, Jordán Genta, and Joaquin Sáenz, and for their young neofascist followers in Argentina and Mexico, for whom the presence of "false anticommunists" in government institutions and even within their ranks precluded local, national, and transnational anticommunist movements to fulfill the project of unified political action.

The idea of the Cold War as a struggle linking local and global histories of conflict between different social forces was the main point of convergence between the extreme Right and the goals of anticommunist state-making. For analysts and commentators of this period, and for theorists of the revolution and counterrevolution alike, the Cold War was a multidimensional contest for global supremacy, characterized by the use of conventional and non-conventional means of struggle, with no defined frontlines, and encompassing all aspects of politics, the economy, and culture. The politics of anticommunist enmity were inextricably linked to the genealogies of the extreme Right, but also to their elective affinity with the liberal-democratic exclusion of "extremisms," and global currents of counterinsurgency that emphasized the congruence between state security functions and social values and norms. In this convergence, the idea of social or civil defense against communism became a key premise of anticommunist state policies and civic movements, and to their efforts to bring the anticommunist struggle to the grassroots level and into the homes, workplaces, places of worship, and schools. As one of the pillars of the theory and practice of Cold War counterinsurgency, the idea of "defending society" from subversion blurred the distinctions between citizens and enemies and sought to fully integrate the body politic into initiatives to maintain public order, quell revolutionary movements, and inhibit their reemergence. The attempt to organically incorporate society into the prophylactic and preventive aspects of national security capitalized on expressions of support for state repression, and sanctioned semi-autonomous initiatives of "social defense" against subversion that expanded the scope of counterinsurgency into the spheres of public morality, popular culture, and gender and sexual norms.[4] While often reflecting unresolved historical tensions between state and society, grassroots anticommunism was central to this sociocultural dimension of counterinsurgency, and, in turn, to the legitimation of anticommunist Cold War state-making.

Practices and structures to suppress dissent became systematized and reinforced as part of the state's attempts to perform its functions and increase its presence throughout national territories. As it happened in Colombia during the National Front, notions of civility and social and political modernization were made compatible with the guidelines of global counterinsurgency doctrines and the local expressions and adaptations of US hemispheric security policies. Different forms of cooperation with the US, and varying degrees of influence by other centers of counterinsurgent put Latin American security forces and intelligence apparatuses in privileged positions as protagonists in eliminating the sources of subversion. As exemplified more clearly by the Colombian case, counterinsurgent state-making was not limited to the creation of a militarized security apparatus to deal with internal enemies. It also encompassed the transfiguration of the judicial system, and of the very ideas of justice and due process, by creating spheres of exceptionality aimed for political criminals; the creation of institutions to gear society into defensive mobilization; and the framing of "civil defense" as a mechanism of self-protection waged by a besieged and increasingly narrow democracy.

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[4] For a recent study on the convergence between counterinsurgency and right wing cultural activism in the regulation of sexual and general social behavior, see Benjamin Cowan, Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016). On popular youth culture as a site of political contestation see Valeria Manzano, The Age of Youth in Argentina: Politics, Culture, and Sexuality from Perón to Videla (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Counterinsurgency was not, however, a purely top-down process of creating institutions to refashion society to the needs of a joint effort against subversion. As examined in this dissertation, the ideas, practices, and institutions aiming for an organic and coordinated defense of society from above and from below had a long history, and took on a variety of forms, with different degrees of success in mobilizing the "hearts and minds" of Colombians, Argentines, and Mexicans, and with different implications for the structuring of state-society relations in each context. With justifications that ranged from the elimination of God's enemies, to the preservation of national values, and the defense of Western democracy, anticommunism prompted the creation or reorganization of state institutions of political intelligence, law enforcement, and internal security. It also bred forms of organized grassroots violence that anticommunists saw as complementing the goals of counterinsurgency, often appropriating preexisting ones (such as rural counterguerrillas or neofascist youth gangs). Latin American experiences with the forms of repressive state violence commonly referred to as "dirty wars" were linked by the ideological convergence between the allure of extreme right's politics of enmity and by practices of surveillance, arbitrary detention, torture, and disappearance. The justifications for these practices resonated with the concerns and anxieties of growing anticommunist publics living through the Cold War, and, notwithstanding the different scales of repression in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, those justifications also shaped their perceptions about the use of public or clandestine violence against punishable/undesirable subjects.

A key dimension of anticommunism's incorporation into the mainstream political imaginary of the Cold War was its intersection with various liberal and social-democratic political platforms throughout the continent, often revealing the tensions between democratization and the exclusion of those considered unfit or "dangerous" for democracy. Paradoxically, the anti-liberal Right (often a proponent of totalitarian remedies to "subversion") aligned with liberal anti-totalitarianism to condemn communism, declare its radical incompatibility with "national aims," Christianity, or "true democracy," and call for its elimination. Under different circumstances, democratically-inclined anticommunists, such as Colombia's Carlos Lleras Restrepo, or Argentina's Arturo Frondizi, embraced notions of economic development and inter-American cooperation as the pillars of Latin American democracy, while publicly drawing very strict lines on the limits of dissent, demonizing left-wing and other detractors, authorizing court martials for political crimes, and using emergency powers to to enforce these boundaries. This "democratic" criminalization of the Left translated into harsher sentencing of "political criminals" as enemies, the endorsement of social suspicion towards expressions of dissidence, and the legitimation of extra-judicial torture and executions as "punishment." Beyond the implementation and longstanding social consequences of anticommunist terror in later stages of the Cold War (from the Chilean coup of 1973, to the "dirty wars" in the Southern Cone, Mexico, and Central America, and the war against "terrorism" in Perú in the 1980s and 90s) anticommunism left palpable legacies in enemy-driven national security apparatuses; in authoritarian forms of legality that allow exceptions to due process when prosecuting "dangerous" subjects; and in the discourses built around these instruments to make them appear as necessary and legitimate means to defend society from its enemies. Thu, besides its implications for the creation of comtemporary securitized states, historically speaking the "democratic intolerance"[5] of Latin American social reformists holds a markedly ambivalent relation with the politics of anticommunist enmity of neofascists, right wing nationalists, and traditionalist Catholics, and this relation needs to be further examined.

In the post-Cold War era, the communist enemy "proper" is not gone from the political landscape. The endurance of Cuba's revolutionary image, the rise and decline of *chavismo* in Venezuela, and, more recently, the negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government, have prompted liberal and illiberal condemnations of these Latin American remnants of "real existing socialism." Like their Cold War predecessors, today's post-cold warriors are building on the sociocultural groundwork laid by anticommunism's politics of enmity to denounce Cuba's new "proxy war" in Venezuela, and the possibility of a "domino effect" throughout the region as the result of Havana's old project to destroy liberty and impose tyrannical puppet regimes.[6] Beyond academic circles and the rhetoric of pundits, the endurance of anticommunism in political imaginaries throughout the continent, its reproduction and dissemination through social networks, and its exploitation by the unapologetic heirs of the Cold War extreme Right, should remind us of anticommunism's power to polarize, and that, given the conditions, it can unleash forms of retributive state and grassroots violence that present themselves as radical means to restore order, administer justice, or protect democracy, even if only to destroy it.

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[5] In his analysis of leftist violence in West Germany and the United States, historian Jeremy Varon refers to the "democratic intolerance" that was central to the anticommunist ethos of the postwar West German state, and that manifested in the exclusion and legal and extra-legal persecution of "radicals." See Jeremy Varon, Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[6] "Marco Rubio on Senate floor: Venezuela is the new Cuba," The Weekly Standard, 25 February 2014. URL: http://www.weeklystandard.com/marco-rubio-on-senate-floor-venezuela-is-the-new-

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