



October 3, 1968	November 4, 1970	September 11, 1973	March 24, 1976	April 30, 1977	July 17, 1979
Juan Velasco overthrows government of Peru, institutes leftist reforms	Socialist Salvador Allende becomes president of Chile	Allende is overthrown in a military coup led by Augusto Pinochet	Argentine military overthrows Isabel Peron, begins Dirty War	Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo begin marching in protest of missing children	Somoza regime overthrown in Nicaragua, leftist Sandinistas come to power

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June 19, 1990	April 5, 1992	September 12, 1992	October 16, 1998	November 2000	April 19, 2005	April 7, 2009
Alberto Fujimori elected president of Peru	In self-coup, Fujimori shuts down congress and judiciary, and suspends the constitution	Sendero leader Abimael Guzmán captured	Augusto Pinochet arrested in London on charges brought by Spanish Judge Baltazar Garón, although eventually released due to poor health	Fujimori flees country after re-election because of corruption scandals	Adolfo Scilingo, only Argentine Dirty Warrior to ever confess, is sentenced to 640 years in prison for crimes against humanity by a Spanish court	A Peruvian court finds Fujimori responsible for the deaths of twenty-five Peruvians and sentences him to twenty-five years in prison



The Terror

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May 17, 1980	May 17, 1980	December 10, 1983	January 26, 1983	1987	October 5, 1988
Peru holds its first elections since military took power	Sendero Luminoso launches rebellion in Andean highlands of Peru	Raul Alfonsin becomes Argentine president, ending military rule	Peasants in Uchuraccay, Peru, kill eight journalists, who had gone to the village to investigate the murder of seven senderista guerrillas	Raul Alfonsin passes a Full Stop Law, calling for no more prosecutions of Dirty Warriors after attempted Coup	Plebiscite in Chile rejects continuation of military rule

Peruvians awoke on April 5, 1992, to the news that their president had overthrown his own government. Some were outraged, others cheered. Few were particularly surprised. At the time, in various parts of the country, at least three guerrilla armies were blowing up power stations and murdering their enemies (including feminists, human rights activists, and anyone insufficiently doctrinaire). Dogs hung from trees in the countryside, the symbolic victims of Maoist¹ trials. Except for the cocaine business, the economy was a shambles. Guerrillas, army officers, and corrupt government officials were growing rich from cocaine while Peru fell apart.

Alberto Fujumori's autogolpe,² the war against the guerrillas that followed, his brief tenure as the nation's savior, and his ultimate reckoning for corruption and human rights violations, are stories that have corollaries across Latin America in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the region went through one of the bloodiest periods since independence. Military and other authoritarian governments unleashed unprecedented levels of violence against what they represented as a communist threat. The statistics are staggering. Most governments in the region have never fully

accounted for the dead, but truth commissions in Chile (the Rettig Commission) and Argentina (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, CONADEP) concluded that right-wing military dictatorships in those two countries murdered at least 2,279 and 8,961 persons respectively (both commissions acknowledged that the actual numbers were far higher).³ In Guatemala, a civil war during these years took nearly 300,000 lives. In El Salvador, 75,000 lost their lives in a civil war. Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that 69,280 people died or disappeared between 1980 and 2000 as a result of that country's armed conflict. In all cases, these numbers do not include those who were arbitrarily imprisoned, tortured, and or forced into exile, numbers that reach into the tens of millions for the region as a whole.

This period in Latin America's past is deceptively difficult to narrate. Sometimes called **civil** wars, sometimes called guerrilla wars, sometimes labeled as "terrors" (terrorists vs. terror states), the stories of these conflicts must negotiate a series of traps. Told as tragedy, we risk becoming disturbingly caught up in the gruesome details of torture and murder, turned into voyeurs who symbolically re-enact these acts on their victims through our lurid fascination with the violence. Latin Americans become a shadowy people, unable to live by the rules of modern civility. Alternatively, we can transform certain victims (Salvador Allende's Popular Unity in Chile, Che Guevara's guerrillas in Bolivia, Mexican student protestors in 1968 and 1971, and even Peru's *Sendero Luminoso* [Shining Path]) into romantic figures, idealists who were crushed by right-wing violence. This may allow us to tell stories with definitive heroes and villains, to satisfy our desire for moral clarity. What we risks is gaining that clarity at the expense of understanding the past for all its ambiguity.

Courts of law assign guilt punish those convicted of crimes, and it is extraordinarily tempting to throw around terms like "crimes against humanity" when describing the dirty wars. It is also appropriate in many cases. Still, if we view these events simply as horrible crimes committed by evil men, we capture only a small part of this history. The twentieth century, and in Latin America's case, the late twentieth century, was an era of holocausts, acts of violence made all the more dramatic by modern technologies of death. And authoritarian governments and men in uniform had no monopoly on the bloodlust. It could often be found on every side in every conflict. The question is: why?

First, we might start with terminology. Labels like "dirty war," "war on terror," and "war on subversives" describe conflicts that defy clean categorizations. As a whole, they speak to unconventional forms of warfare where the enemy is within, and rarely in uniform. Conventional wars, even some civil wars, play out around discrete territorial boundaries. Competing factions control specific zones, and dress in uniform fashion so as to distinguish themselves from the enemy. Dirty wars, which while newly acknowledged are nothing new, cast suspicion on a vast civilian population. States undertaking dirty wars use specific optics to divide that population into friendly and subversive, fearing enemies everywhere. In some instances, especially societies with large impoverished indigenous and African populations, it is the color of one's skin that raises the specter of the threat. Elsewhere it is the place of origin, occupation, age, and ideology. Whatever the reason to distrust them, dirty warriors tend to see anyone who is anything but assertively loyal to the regime as a threat to be controlled and perhaps eliminated. This is the problem with paranoia; when you cannot identify the enemy by the uniform they wear, you see the enemy everywhere.

In the most violent instances, these dirty overlay actual civil wars. In Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, and Mexico, guerrillas never threatened to topple the existing regimes. In some cases, like Argentina, the threat posed by the guerrillas was difficult to quantify. In still others, including Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru, guerrilla insurgencies took over significant portions of the national territory during their civil wars. These were also the countries in which racism weighed most heavily on the conflicts, and where the losses of life were the greatest.

Where to Begin, Which Story to Tell?

Were the dirty wars the product of a specific context, a late twentieth-century crisis that needs to be explained with very close attention to specific circumstances—the cold war, U.S. Imperialism, and local conflicts—or were they the product of some essential, unchanging quality of life in the region? Those who prefer the latter explanation sometimes start this story with the sixteenth-century conquest of the Americas, establishing an unbroken chain of violence dating to the original sin.⁴ Histories of torture, of extrajudicial killings take us deep into the Latin American past, and one could argue that the only thing new here is the fact that these acts are increasingly exposed. Latin America becomes a region of failed states, never quite modern, and forever destined to be second-class, unable to solve its own problems because they run so deeply through the “open veins” of the region.⁵

Those who object to this way of narrating the terror that engulfed the region between the 1960s and the 1980s point out that Latin America in 1960 was profoundly different from Latin America even a century earlier. In 1960 civilian governments ruled most countries in the region. Even if those governments had imperfect records of respecting democratic processes and human rights, most did rule with some sort of democratic mandate. The phenomena we typically associate with democratic societies, a relatively free press, opposition political parties, an independent judiciary, could be found in many countries in the region. At the very least, it did not seem in 1960 that the region as a whole was destined for a dark period of conflict and authoritarian rule. And then, in the years following the Cuban **revolution**, civilian rule collapsed in country after country. By 1980 almost no government in Latin America had come to power through the ballot box. The scale of violence that accompanied this change was unprecedented.

Certain macro-level explanations for Latin America’s distinct path may be in order. Economies across the region faced significant challenges during the 1960s, problems that only grew worse as time wore on. Import substitution industrialization (ISI),⁶ which provided steady economic growth in the region from the 1930s to the 1950s, had also produced some serious distortions, and, by the late 1960s, these were growing increasingly difficult to ignore. ISI depended on the state’s ability to support industry and fund a broad array of educational, health, and welfare programs (including transportation, housing, and food subsidies), but as GDP growth slowed during the 1960s, most governments in the region found themselves pressed by expanding debt, high rates of inflation, increased unemployment, and social unrest. They had to borrow from abroad simply to maintain their current levels of spending. Much of the money they borrowed went to propping up inefficient industries that could not compete against foreign, higher quality and lower cost imports. As the debt began to grow, it became clear that the status quo could not be sustained.

Critics used terms like *crony capitalism* (a capitalist system where the state works mainly in the interest of big business) or *clientelism* (a state where the government functions principally by doling out favors and patronage to its supporters) to describe the logics that ruled Latin American economic and political systems. When the system was capable of delivering material benefits in spite of self-dealing, the poor and relatively marginalized played along. In moments of crisis, when the state could no longer deliver the goods, many turned to violence to press their interests.

Latin Americans were also burdened by another problem. Their nations were among the central sites for the proxy battles of the cold war. Leaving aside the motives of both the United States and the Soviet Union, both superpowers intensified the volatility of already polarized nations through their struggles for hegemony in the region. American soldiers and arms flowed freely into Latin America during the cold war, accompanied (though hardly equaled) by an influx of Soviet AK-47s, munitions, and at least in one case, intercontinental ballistic missiles. Guerrilla armies could count on aid, training from Moscow, and safe haven in Cuba should their struggles fail. Their enemies could count on millions in military and economic aid from Washington.

Only rarely did the U.S. government opt for direct military intervention. American officials found it much more cost effective to cultivate, arm and train their allies in the region. Conservative and elite groups who, like their American friends, increasingly identified all political opposition with an insidious Soviet threat, were often more than willing to undertake the battle themselves. While some no doubt believed that their enemies were communist revolutionaries (and some no doubt were), in identifying the political opposition as communist they were able to justify extreme measures, and ensure a steady supply of military aid and advice from the U.S. government. Measured in constant 2010 dollars, U.S. military aid to Latin America rose from almost nothing in 1952 to nearly a billion dollars annually in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution.

The U.S. Army School of the Americas, which was established in Panama in 1945 and trained several generations of junior military officers from across the region, was a central component of this endeavor. Already focused more on internal threats than external ones, trainees were encouraged to believe that a new revolutionary threat, concocted in Moscow but carried out by their own citizens, imperiled their nations. Students at the School of the Americas learned new tactics in counter-insurgency and the latest torture techniques. They forged relationships with American counterparts who could ensure the flow of weapons and aid. And they had any pre-existing anxieties about communism firmly reinforced.

The unrest they faced could be attributed to both local and global patterns—dimming economic prospects combined with youth culture, idealism unleashed by the Cuban revolution, and cold war politics. Most of the Western democracies saw periodic outbursts of violence between the 1960s and the 1980s. Student radicals disrupted campuses and challenged conservative traditions from Paris to Berkeley. Radical movements kidnapped people from Quebec to Italy, robbed banks, set off bombs, and preached the demise of capitalism even in some of the most exclusive neighborhoods in the world. In response, governments across the West armed themselves heavily and used their repressive capacities against their perceived enemies. Incidents like the massacre at Kent State University in May 1970, in which National Guardsmen opened fire on anti-war protesters, killing four and wounding nine, were emblematic of an era in which the United States government

in particular spied on, harassed, and imprisoned its own citizens without the due process of law.

Latin Americans brought their own particular traditions to these conflicts. When young idealists attacked the government, they took on political systems with dubious reputations. Latin Americans typically believed their governments were exceptionally corrupt. Their politicians were known for using their offices for illicit gains, for doling out favors to well-connected supporters, and for being relatively unresponsive to the popular will. They maintained the social peace by delivering the goods (education, healthcare, and other programs), but few people in Latin America really believed that their governments governed in the people's interest.⁷

By the mid-1960s the leftists who had long offered these critiques were increasingly joined by young people, a generation that questioned the values of their parents in novel ways. Like the counter culture in the United States (and in fact influenced by it), Latin America's counter-cultural generation combined the alienated children of a prosperous middle class with the offspring of a newly ascendant urban working class in a series of protest movements. Some young Latin Americans were motivated by what seemed to be a closing off of economic mobility as societies that had once prospered under ISI increasingly struggled to provide upward mobility to their youth. Others were drawn to radically democratic ideas, straining against both the authoritarianism of the state and the authoritarian tendencies of their own parents. Sex, drugs, and rock and roll were certainly involved, lubricants for a generation that strained at their parents' conservatism.

Latin America's counter-culture consolidated within the high schools and universities of the region, where foreign icons like the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Elvis were supplemented with local heroes, figures like Che Guevara—now a martyr to most young radicals—and the Chilean folk singer Victor Jara. Che signaled the possibilities of social revolution, the need for militant struggle. Jara provided a melancholy soundtrack that reminded listeners of the everyday struggles of poor people, and of the need to make a more egalitarian future. Student protests rocked much of the region during 1968, the most notable case being the protests in Mexico that culminated in the October 2 massacre at Tlatelolco, where several hundred students were gunned down by government snipers. The most radical students in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina committed themselves to the violent overthrow of the system, forming rural and urban guerrilla groups that would use kidnappings, assassinations, and bombing campaigns in their attempts to foment revolution.

The Mexican essayist Alma Guillermoprieto once described Che Guevara as the "harsh angel" who hovered over all this, convincing a generation of young idealists to hurtle themselves against the barricades in a futile struggle.⁸ Though rejected by those who continue to lionize Che, her words act as a reminder that the revolution he promised to Latin America played out as tragedy for a generation of young idealists who stood little chance against the weapons arrayed against them. Indeed, the most radical of the revolutionaries provoked a response not just from the military, but from social conservatives and the middle class in several Latin American countries that buttressed the extreme forms of violence that followed. Conservatives recoiled at the young men in long hair, young women wearing jeans and sandals. They responded viscerally to rock and roll, drugs, and intimations that the students in the schools and universities were having sex before marriage. These things were destined to produce a backlash.

In the years after Tlatelolco, repression and radicalization became a self-reinforcing cycle across the region, perhaps most pronounced in Argentina, where during the early 1970s the military, police, and the *Alianza Anticomunista Argentina* (Argentine Anticommunist Alliance, AAA) went to war against the guerrillas of the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army, ERP) and the *Movimiento Peronista Montonero* (Montoneros, MPM). The latter was the largest urban guerrilla movement in Latin America during the 1970s. The political right has long claimed that these two groups represented a grave threat, exploding more than 5,000 bombs during the 1970s and kidnapping or killing more than 3,000 people. They point to spectacular incidents that had the capacity to terrorize the civilian population, including repeated bombings of the Sheraton hotel in Buenos Aires, kidnappings of businessmen, bankers, and other "civilians," and the murder of hundreds of soldiers and police. By end of 1975, 137 soldiers had been killed by guerrillas. In the weeks leading up to the 1976 coup, the Montoneros attacked the police academy in Buenos Aires and detonated a bomb next to the army headquarters, breaking windows in the Casa Rosada.

Even if we take these numbers as inflated, the impact of press reports of bombings, murders, and kidnappings (one report in the mid-1980s had the guerillas causing 6,000 casualties⁹) produced a powerful terror effect. Just as crime statistics can prompt calls for police to ignore the civil rights of presumed suspects, these statistics had the capacity to ratchet up support for a radically authoritarian response. Ultimately, the debate as to whether the guerrillas killed 3,000 or fewer than 1,000 (in 1995 the Argentine Government claimed the ERP killed 700 people) is probably less significant than the fact that in the years before and during the dictatorship millions of Argentines believed that their personal safety was endangered by the seemingly random acts of violence that urban terror movements enact. If the Montoneros and ERP could be named as the reason why you were afraid, and in a corollary vein, the victims of the military could be named as the people who had caused that fear (and therefore not randomly chosen, but disappeared because they had done something wrong), then complacency while the regime systematically detained and murdered thousands could be explained as an act of self-preservation. The actual existence of the threat mattered less than the belief that the threat was real.

"Your war is clean," reads the text in the poster in Figure 9.1, an advertisement in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación*, in March 1976, just days before the military overthrew the government of Isabel Perón. It is in part an allusion to the fact that critics condemned the increasing use of torture and illegal detentions by the military as a "dirty" war, somehow beneath civilized people. The advertisement challenges this view, insisting that their actions were not just clean, but cleansing, that this was a just war. Both extreme left and right spoke in ritual ways about these acts, believing that they were somehow engaged in an exercise that would purify society, eliminate a cancer. Whether it was the cancer of bourgeois capitalism or communism, of patriarchy or feminism, of tradition or rebellion, or of terrorism (this accusation was traded throughout these years) did not matter. The enemy was corrupt, impure, foreign. For the nation to survive, the enemy had to be annihilated. Dehumanization was here turned to genocide, and the perpetrators of violence made into victims who sacrificed themselves to save the world.

By the time of the coup in Argentina, the military already had over 5,000 people under detention. During the dictatorship, the military would maintain at least 340 concentration



Figure 9.1 “You are not alone . . . your people are behind you.”

Source: Courtesy of *La Nación*, March 1976; also appears in Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s “Dirty War”* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997)

camps in the country. The government ultimately released 8,600 from detention, sending many into exile (3,000 went to the U.S.). Most of those released spent less than a year in detention, though more than 400 spent between seven and nine years in the camps. Among ~~the dead~~ were 4,000 Montoneros. Other victims included activists, trade unionists, students, people who had uncovered government corruption, and leftists in general. Young, pregnant women were also among those kidnapped. About 500 were held in prison until they gave birth. The newborns were then adopted by couples with ties to the regime, and their parents murdered.

The success of these tactics was even more pronounced in Chile, where a largely unarmed left never undertook anything like the volume of violent acts that Argentines witnessed. In 1970 Chileans narrowly elected Salvador Allende of the *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity, UP) president. Allende was the first committed socialist to be democratically elected in Latin America, though he only won the election with 36.6 percent of the popular vote, and even before taking office ~~faccd~~ ~~Confronted~~ ~~with~~ a Congress dominated by opposition parties, Allende undertook a relatively moderate series of reforms, completing a process begun by his predecessor to nationalize Chilean copper, supporting bottom up efforts to redistribute unused lands and take over factories, and instituting price freezes and wage hikes. The relative merits of these reforms remain in dispute. Those on the right claim his economic policies were foolish, and some of the left insist that he did not have enough time to see them through. What remains undisputable however, is the fact that a broad coalition of enemies, including many middle-class and elite Chileans, the military, and the U.S. government (which placed an embargo on Chile after the nationalization of U.S. assets), came together as early as 1971 in an effort to destabilize the regime. The U.S. blockade hurt, as did coordinated efforts across the economy to withdraw goods and services, along with actual acts of sabotage. Middle-class women marched repeatedly in protests during these years, banging empty pots and claiming that Allende was making it impossible for them to feed their children. Most of these opponents hoped that in the 1973 congressional elections Chileans would return a two-thirds majority ~~to~~ the opposition parties, which could then impeach the president. To their surprise, Allende's UP coalition actually gained votes in the 1973 election, eliminating the legal means to overthrow him. It was then that General Augusto Pinochet decided to act. He led a coup that overthrew the government on September 11, 1973. Allende died in the assault, allegedly by his own hands.

Though there were acts of violence prior to the coup, most of those acts were undertaken by opponents on the right, while Allende resisted arming revolutionary groups like the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Movement of the Revolutionary Left, MIR), which in any event disavowed terrorism as a legitimate means of struggle. The Chilean right was then forced to conjure up a series of chimera, fears of a militant left, fears that the Allende regime would adopt more radical reforms, fears of a fifth column connected to a global communist revolution. Chileans were fully aware of the radical reforms undertaken in communist Cuba, of the capacity of Argentine guerrillas to disrupt their country through violence. They feared youths who seemed to have little regard for traditional values. Right-wing and middle-class support for a surgical strike against the Chilean left was, in this sense, over-determined.

After the coup, the government immediately banned the parties on the left. All political activity was banned. Many in the middle class were initially relieved, and then surprised when the coup was not followed by a relatively quick return to democracy. Instead, in the following weeks up to 30,000 prisoners passed through the National Stadium. Nearly 2,000 of those prisoners were executed within a matter of months, and 1,300 more are missing to this day. At least 663 MIR militants were among the disappeared, as were Victor Jara and Charles Horman, an American working in Chile who was the subject of the film *Missing*. As many as 200,000 Chileans were also driven into exile in the weeks and months after the coup. The Chilean secret Police (the DINA) followed some into exile, murdering enemies in Argentina, the United States, and elsewhere through *Operación Condor* (Operation Condor),

a secret pact between several Southern Cone governments. Some allege that the regime even went so far as to murder Pablo Neruda, then the greatest living Latin American poet, poisoning him in the days following the coup. Described as politicide by Steve J. Stern, Pinochet's project endeavored to eliminate the Chilean left in its entirety.

Elsewhere in Latin America the threat posed by the left was much more substantial. Colombia's *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC) was able to control vast stretches of the countryside during the 1960s and 1970s. Though they lacked the capacity to overthrow the state, they contributed to a general escalation of violence in Colombian society. Together with other guerrilla groups, right wing paramilitaries, and the army, these combatants forced more than five million Colombians to flee their homes. Guatemala's *Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres* (Guerrilla Army of the Poor, EGP), El Salvador's *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, FMLN), and Nicaragua's *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN) were among the guerrilla armies that carried out long-standing rural insurgencies during the 1960s and 1970s. Each insurgency in turn became the pretext for military and paramilitary campaigns that in some cases took a genocidal turn. Entire communities, including tens of thousands of non-combatants, were wiped out by regimes that saw the threats they faced in racial terms. To be dark-skinned, rural, and poor was to be a likely subversive.

In each of these cases, those individuals with the power to mobilize the repressive apparatuses of the state used their authority to enrich themselves and pursue personal vendettas under the cover of civil war. Much of what happened at the higher levels was cynical and indefensible, carried out with impunity under the cover of a crisis. Still, the violence was as widespread as it was, and the general public as complacent as they were, because it was more than mere self-interest that was on display in these incidents. The critical question is: Why did so many people who were otherwise not well served by authoritarian and corrupt regimes side with the military during this era? Why did the call to socialist revolution not gain more adherents in one of the most unequal parts of the world?

The answer, at least for some people, was fear. They feared reprisals from the regime and paramilitaries to be sure, but their fear was stoked by the very actions of the revolutionary left. A bomb might explode in a hotel. You might get caught in the crossfire of a bank robbery, or be in a public setting when some other attack occurred. Attacks by the Montoneros and others were splashed across the pages of the major dailies throughout Latin America, reminding everyone to be afraid. Beyond this, there was the fear that, should the left take power, they might confiscate your property, attack your values (many Catholics feared that atheist Marxists would destroy the Church), forcibly indoctrinate your children into their revolutionary ideology, and take away what little freedom you enjoyed. It seemed that only a strong state, which targeted specific subversives with legitimate and lethal force, stood between a vulnerable population and their demise.

This is the way that many regimes across the region maintained a modicum of legitimacy during the 1970s even as they undertook horrific acts of violence. And this too is why the only regime to fall to a guerrilla insurgency during these years was the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua. Reviled as one of the most corrupt dictators the region had ever seen (Anastasio Somoza's family controlled upwards of 40 percent of the wealth in the country in 1979), and broadly believed to have murdered the widely respected journalist *Pedro Joaquín*

Chamorro,¹⁰ by 1979 the number of people in the country who would defend Somoza had dwindled to a tiny number of close associates, themselves beneficiaries of corruption. As was the case with Batista in Cuba twenty years earlier, Somoza was forced to flee because the vast majority of Nicaraguans disdained him even more than they feared the Sandinistas. He died a year later in Buenos Aires, at the hands of a hit squad that included members of the ERP.

And then there was Peru. Peru's dirty war began during the cold war, and was characterized by a struggle between a Marxist left and a free-market right in ways that were similar to struggles elsewhere in the region. Like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Colombia, the conflict in Peru also had qualities of a true civil war in which a rural insurgency took over a significant part of the national territory while demonstrating a capacity to disrupt daily life everywhere. The Peruvian state also responded in ways that were similar to states elsewhere in the region, covering egregious human rights violations and self-dealing under the mantle of a war on terror, a war in which unflinching loyalty to the state was the price to be paid for the return of peace.

Where Peru differs from most other countries in the region is in the nature of the insurgency. Unlike Chile, where the left was relatively unarmed, and Argentina, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala, where the atrocities committed by the guerrillas paled next to the atrocities committed by the state, in Peru there is reason to believe that the guerrillas, and especially *Sendero Luminoso*, surpassed the state in the intensity of their violence (Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that only about one-third of those who died in the war were killed by government forces). The insurgents here were just as enamored of violence as their enemies, and were perhaps even more doctrinaire than the right. Fueled by money from the cocaine trade, Peru's insurgents were also better able to arm themselves and sustain a war against a well-armed Peruvian state than their counterparts elsewhere in Latin America. Whereas Che's guerrilla army in Bolivia, and others in Mexico, Venezuela, and elsewhere failed in part because the insurgents could not count on the support of their erstwhile peasant allies, Peru's revolutionaries could draw enough revenue from the drug trade to fund their war without much rural support. Peru's dirty war was thus both another cold-war conflict and something entirely new: an apocalyptic orgy of violence fueled by the insurgency's capacity to sustain itself through autonomous revenue streams.

These aspects of the conflict make it difficult to draw clear moral lines in Peru. This in turn offers the opportunity to focus our attention on the larger phenomenon of violence in Latin America during these years instead of getting caught up in long-standing and unresolvable debates over heroes and villains. Moving into the murk, we have the opportunity to understand just how certain forms of fear, and certain imaginings of terror and the terrorist, metastasized in the latter decades of the twentieth century. We live with those developments in our own age of terror.

Sendero's War

Peruvians were introduced to *Sendero Luminoso* on May 17, 1980, when members of the movement burned the ballot boxes for Peru's first democratic elections in more than a

decade in the southern highland town of Chuschi, Ayacucho.¹¹ Although *Sendero's* decision to condemn the return of democratic rule seemed odd to many foreign observers, and even to many Limeños, it made complete sense to many in the highlands. Democracy did not promise much to the poor and rural peoples of Ayacucho, who held a generally dim view of all power emanating from Lima. Neither did it appeal to Peru's extreme left, which viewed democracy as simply another bourgeois tool to oppress the masses and protect capitalism.

The particular constellation of events that explain *Sendero's* rise from a quirky movement led by a provincial philosopher into a guerrilla army that almost toppled the Peruvian state may be best explained by beginning with another moment, twelve years earlier, when the military overthrew the civilian government of Fernando Belaúnde Terry. Belaúnde's fall was not the common story of conservative U.S.-backed soldiers toppling a left-leaning president. In fact, it was the reverse. The officers who took power in 1968 did so precisely to ensure that the state deliver on social reforms Belaúnde had promised. Elected in 1963 on the promise to ameliorate rural poverty, Belaúnde had done the opposite, resorting to the violent repression of both peasants and his critics on the left to stay in power. In the end, it was the men who were charged with carrying out his repressive policies who removed him. General Juan Velasco's regime nationalized many of the large firms that dominated the economy, and launched a major land reform, creating agricultural cooperatives out of the old estates in much of the highlands.

Some peasants benefited, but these reforms were limited in scale, and left millions bitter for having been excluded.¹² Velasco's nationalization program was also burdened by bureaucratic incompetence and mismanagement, and in the early 1970s the economy went into a tailspin. He was overthrown in a coup within the coup in 1976, and his successors did their best to undo his left-leaning policies, with few positive results. Having seen failure heaped upon failure, the military had little prestige left when it gave up power in 1980. Still, very few people outside of Lima were pleased that Belaúnde, whose heavy-handed policies in the highlands left lasting anger, won the 1980 election.

Belaúnde imposed severe austerity measures in an effort to promote exports and stem capital flight. His opponents on the left responded with a general strike in January 1981, which further crippled the already weak economy. By the end of 1982, inflation was running at 70 percent, and the foreign debt had ballooned to \$11 billion. The national currency (the sol) lost 80 percent of its value during the year. It is unsurprising that in these circumstances radical solutions to Peru's problems would have found a constituency. Believing that free-market capitalism was the only solution to Peru's problems, the far right pushed to dismantle any remaining remnants of ISI, through force if necessary. The far left, dominated by *Sendero*, preached the end of bourgeois capitalism.

In Ayacucho the economic crisis simply added one more set of problems to a region already at the breaking point by the late 1970s. Peasants here benefited relatively little from Velasco's land reforms, and had no cushion to fall back on as the national economy deteriorated. Students at the *Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Huamanga* in the city of Ayacucho were similarly discontented, as the path that has once signaled upward mobility—a university education—seemed less and less likely to provide them with what they desired. Always pulled towards the left, university students here and elsewhere in Peru grew more and more radical.

Taking a cue from Chairman Mao, during the 1970s radical students in Ayacucho increasingly idealized the image of the disciplined, communal, and revolutionary peasant. They imagined that they would lead this peasant in a revolution that would swarm the cities, besiege hated Lima (hated both for its wealth and for their exclusion from that wealth), and destroy the capitalist state. Many were drawn to Abimael Guzmán, a professor of Philosophy and Mathematics at the university, and at his bidding left the city of Ayacucho for the surrounding countryside after graduating, where they worked for years as teachers, preparing the peasants to accept the revolution that *Sendero* promised to launch. Guzmán would lead the revolution under the nom de guerre *Presidente Gonzalo*.

After announcing itself to the world in 1980, *Sendero* won some striking victories. Their teachers-cum-revolutionaries parleyed their moral authority into swift and summary justice, gaining enormous sympathy in the countryside. Peasant women saw female *senderistas* punishing drunken husbands and wife beaters, and lent their support. What better image could there be of moral rejuvenation at a time of crisis than the image of a man punished by a woman's hand? The same could be said of *Sendero* justice against other widely hated targets. Corrupt government officials, landlords, and cattle thieves met ugly fates at the hands of *Sendero*'s cadres in the early 1980s. So too did the agrarian cooperatives, Velasco's panacea for rural poverty that in practice had become hated symbols of the ways that reform had helped some peasants but excluded others. Landless *Sendero* supporters were encouraged to invade and occupy the cooperatives, effecting a bottom-up termination of state-directed agrarian reform.

In these early years the revolution expanded rapidly through the countryside. Belaúnde indirectly contributed to its growth by first failing to take *Sendero* seriously, and then by sending in the Marines, a branch of the military mostly recruited from the coast, which had little knowledge of the culture or politics of the highlands. Baffled by the differences they encountered and fearing terrorists around every corner, the Marines adopted a scorched earth policy in Ayacucho.

Indiscriminate killings simply made their position more vulnerable, turning more and more communities against the government and pushing many directly into *Sendero*'s camp. The presence of so many violent outsiders also produced a kind of hysteria in the highlands, a sense that the world really was coming to an end. In the midst of the crisis some highlanders turned to religion (evangelical Protestantism expanded significantly during these years), seeking spiritual rescue from the carnage. Others spread rumors that linked the Marines to apocalyptic fears. They were Argentine mercenaries sent to kill all rural folk. They were *pishtacos*, ravenous whites who murdered Indians for their fat, using it to make church bells and expensive soaps that were sold to Europeans.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances *Sendero* was able to expand its influence in rural areas beyond Ayacucho. The guerrillas were particularly successful in the coca-rich upper Huallaga valley, where by the mid-1980s *Sendero* had implemented a protection racket in which growers paid *Sendero* to leave them alone and protect them from the state. This in turn fueled further expansion of the war and the purchase of a growing military arsenal. As the highlands slipped from government control, bombings, blackouts, murders and kidnappings grew more frequent across the country, and especially in Lima. By the late 1980s *Sendero* controlled the poor barrios that ringed Lima, and the government seemed incapable of stemming its spread.

Sendero never could have expanded in this fashion without a significant level of rural support, but that support was far from complete. Peasant sympathizers often saw *Sendero* as an opportunity to form a strategic alliance, and would just as easily turn on the revolutionaries when circumstances dictated. Indeed, the ties between peasant and *senderista* were always tenuous. Though *senderistas* represented themselves as participants in an organic peasant war, their revolution was shaped by the goals of university educated guerrillas. *Senderistas* considered themselves Gang of Four Maoists, painting the slogan “Death to the Traitor Deng Xiaopeng” on the walls of Andean communities, seemingly fighting simultaneous battles against the Chinese government, the Peruvian state, and civil society.

As the war drew on, *senderistas* increasingly treated peasants as if they were ignorant tools of revolution, to be called to arms when useful and destroyed when recalcitrant. In contrast to the early years of the struggle, when their successes had in part been linked to their capacity to understand the desires and values of their erstwhile supporters, over time *senderistas* demonstrated less and less tolerance for local customs, local values, local age-based hierarchies, and increasingly viewed indigenous cultures with contempt. In their blindness to local life-ways, they also failed to understand the extent to which a long history of violent conflicts with outsiders had fortified highland communities with a capacity for self-defense.

Communities that might have thrown their support behind *Sendero* for killing a corrupt government official often turned just as quickly against the movement when doctrinaire *senderistas* made demands they viewed as unfair. Others never had any sympathy for the guerrillas, and fought them without prompting. Just such an incident happened when seven *senderistas* were killed by *comuneros* (peasant rebels) in the village of Huaychao, Ayacucho in January 1983. Limeños, who considered this a sign of peasant loyalty to the government, generally celebrated the incident. Their jubilation faded though, when a group of eight journalists on their way to Huaychao to write about the incident were murdered while passing through the village of Uchuraccay. This incident is the subject of Document 9.1 in this chapter.

Few of the movement’s actual militants were peasants. In fact, most *senderistas* were current or former university students, drawn to the bloody path plotted by Guzmán. And it was not just students from Ayacucho, but from Lima and other cities who organized *senderista* and other revolutionary cells on their campuses during the 1980s as they prepared for the final battle against capitalism. Often drawn into the movement out of youthful idealism and a sense that Peru was facing an existential economic and political crisis, their views hardened into revolutionary anger and rage once the government subjected them to torture and long imprisonments (Figure 9.2). Indeed, most of the *senderistas* who ever made it to a jail cell were urban, middle-class students. Their rural comrades and sympathizers met more violent ends.

The very fact that these students initially decided to attend a rally or meeting of revolutionaries spoke to a cascading effect, the result of one crisis after another discrediting all forms of constituted authority. Aside from the human toll, one of most significant losses in all this was Peruvians’ faith that moderate solutions might solve their problems. Both the extreme left and the extreme right obliterated all middle ground. Arbitrary arrests, detentions, and torture by the military no doubt had this effect. So too did *Sendero*’s acts. Anyone who was within *Sendero*’s reach could be singled out for spectacular executions for seemingly insignificant slights.



Figure 9.2 December 16, 1986: Peruvian police arrest a student from the state university of San Marcos during the protest organized by students and teachers of the state universities in Lima. Thousands of teachers and students marched through the streets of the capital and submitted a set of economic demands to the Economics Ministry.

Source: AP Photo/LEP

Over time, violence served as an end in and of itself. In the highlands, where their enthusiasm for blood-letting disturbed many peasants, *senderistas* came to be known as monsters (*ñakaq*, or destroyers of life). Government soldiers, known for their own orgies of violence, were viewed with similar trepidation. Caught in the middle of two armies, peasants were forced to live double lives, always hiding their true affiliations and beliefs in order to survive the depredations of murderous outsiders. Some even organized self-defense forces, known

as *rondas-campesinas*. Though officially at war with *Sendero*, *ronda* members generally took a dim view of all outsiders (Figure 9.3).

Throughout the 1980s the Peruvian state proved unable to stem the escalating violence. Alan García was elected president in 1985 on the promise that he would restore respect for human rights and fix the economy. He did neither. In June 1986 he sent troops into three prisons in Lima and Callao in an effort regain control of the institutions from rioting



Figure 9.3 An unidentified young woman holds a home-made shotgun as she forms up with other members of a government-sponsored civil defense group near Ayacucho.

Source: AP Photo

Sendero inmates, killing 267. Under his administration, Peru's foreign debt grew to nearly \$20 billion (U.S.), and by 1989 the inflation rate was nearing 10,000 percent. Between 1988 and 1990, per capita GDP declined by 20 percent.

These were the issues that framed the 1990 presidential elections, in which the relatively unknown Alberto Fujimori was elevated to the nation's highest office. Systemic crises often favor candidates who can claim to be political outsiders, and Fujimori seized this role by trading on the fact that he was an ethnic outsider to Peru's elite community. He cast himself as a representative of Peru's poor and disenfranchised indigenous masses. He adorned himself in local costumes as he traversed the highlands in search of votes, and promised aid to those most affected by the economic and political chaos.

It must have seemed a little like a betrayal then, when Fujimori did an almost immediate about-face once assuming the presidency. In a practice that was distressingly common during these years, he immediately adopted the free-market economic policies he had attacked during the campaign. Within months of taking office he imposed a series of austerity measures (fujishocks), drastically reducing government spending, food subsidies, and price controls. Peruvians were further put at the mercy of international markets when he significantly reduced tariff barriers, opening the economy to cheap foreign imports and further weakening domestic manufacturers.

Fujimori also took on *Sendero* (and those he defined as terrorists more generally) in dramatic fashion. He legalized the *rondas campesinas*, providing them with arms and training. He stepped up the military presence in Ayacucho and relentlessly persecuted communities suspected of supporting *Sendero*. He expanded the role of the *Servicio Nacional de Inteligencia* (National Intelligence Service, SIN) in the war, creating a secret force called the *Grupo Colina* (Colina Group) to go after the terrorists. This category itself was expanded to include not just *Sendero*, but protesters, political opponents, journalists, and the occasional bystander.

The new president was fortunate that by 1990 his predecessors had already done much of the groundwork needed to defeat *Sendero*. Alienated by the brutality and dogmatism of the *senderistas*, peasant support for the rebels had been on the wane since at least 1982. Moreover, after 1984 the government shifted the focus of its counter-insurgency program from the Marines to the Army, bringing an end to many of the most problematic aspects of the government's efforts to combat *Sendero*. Army officers often came from the highlands, spoke Quechua, and were more sensitive to community needs and interests than their Marine counterparts. They built roads, provided telephone service, and offered much needed supplies. They replaced indiscriminate killings with a more strategic approach to rooting out *Sendero* and winning popular support. "Civic Action" became a watchword for military officials aiming to win the hearts and minds of the nation's poor.

These actions were critical, but may have been less important than the simple fact that a growing number of highland communities had grown weary of *Sendero*'s violence and bloodlust, and were willing to cooperate with government efforts to defeat the revolution. After 1984 it was *Sendero*, not the Army, which was more often accused of perpetrating indiscriminate killings and showing a complete disregard for the interests of Andean peasants. In the end *Sendero* was in a war as much against the peasants and urban poor as against the state.

By 1990 *Sendero* could be found actively terrorizing not just peasants, but their rivals on the political left. The 1992 murder of community activist María Elena Moyano was a

particularly powerful example of this development. Machine-gunned to death and then blown up with dynamite in front of her own children, Moyano was one of a number of urban leaders from the Lima slums who *Sendero* eliminated because they were insufficiently revolutionary (feminists were particular targets). Her death produced outrage, though it did not spark significant mobilization in the slums against the rebels. By this time those individuals who had to face *Sendero* on a daily basis in the cities mostly ducked their heads to stay out of the line of fire, and hoped the nightmare would soon come to an end. They needed a sign from the government that it was winning the war before they did anything that might put them at risk.

They received such a sign on September 12, 1992, when Fujimori announced that he had captured Presidente Gonzalo, who had been hiding in an apartment above a dance studio in Lima (he was betrayed by his psoriasis medication, which was found in the trash). With the capture of Guzmán, the tide rapidly turned against the rebels across the country, and Fujimori reached the height of his popularity. In the slums as well as the wealthy neighborhoods, he was widely admired for saving the country from chaos. For his part Fujimori claimed, with some legitimacy, that by centralizing power in the hands of the executive and clearing away of all dissent from congress and the judiciary, the autogolpe had allowed him to fight his war on the terrorists. Most seem to have agreed that the death of a few innocents was the price Peruvians had to pay to put an end to the scourge that was *Sendero*.

In succeeding years Fujimori would grow more certain that Peruvians needed his strong hand to guide them through their remaining economic and political troubles. He wrote a new constitution that allowed him to be re-elected in 1995, and then did an end-run around that constitution to have himself re-elected in 2000. By then though, Peruvians were increasingly weary of his dubious strategies for holding onto power. Caught up in a vote buying scandal in the aftermath of the election, he fled the country for exile in Japan in November 2000.

Peruvians then took a deep breath, and then began to examine their recent past. Alejandro Toledo, who assumed the presidency in 2001, named a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which began to look into *Sendero's* war. They concluded that around half of the nearly 70,000 people who died in the conflict were killed by *Sendero*, the rest being the responsibility of the state, the *rondas*, and other private groups. In 2002, at the closure of the public hearings of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Chairman Salomón Lerner Febres summed up his experience.

The stories we have attentively heard, feeling sorrow and respect, create in us Peruvians the obligation of wondering what happened to us, how we arrived to those extremes of degradation that the victims have courageously and generously shown us with their narratives. I said degradation, and although this word may sound excessive, it is actually only a pale reflection of the acts we have been hearing about these days. We have spoken about crimes committed from an absolute position of power against unarmed and inadvertent victims. And if this had not been sufficient for the executioner, they were crimes committed under the cover of darkness and with malice aforethought, as the witnesses in these Hearings have told us repeatedly. Was not that already excessive?

Apparently not. The violations had to be committed, besides, with rage and mercilessness as if the others' suffering had become the main goal, a sick enjoyment motive for those executing these crimes, and for those who ordered them from comfortable and safe shelters or offices. The testimonies that have been presented to us coincide in pointing out this relish for cruelty, this desire to destroy the victims' dignity, starting with the use of language. The recurrence of insults, as if physical force were not sufficient, also reveals a disdain based on considerations of race, culture or poverty, and patently shows the devaluation of women. This vulgar language of executioners against unarmed victims reflects, in brief, the patterns of social alienation that, as we know, are still embedded in our country, and which are perhaps the greatest obstacles to achieving a fair and democratic society.¹³

Fujimori remained untouched by the findings of the commission until he attempted to return to Peru in 2006 in order to run, once more, for the presidency. Arrested in Chile and then extradited to Peru, during the following two years he faced trials for corruption, abuses of power, and for his role in the deaths of more than two dozen people killed by the Grupo Colina. He was convicted on several charges, and is currently serving a twenty-five-year prison sentence.

The Documents: Scenes from the War

How does one tell the stories of the bloodbaths that engulfed so many Latin American societies between the 1960s and 1980s? For those given to Manichean visions of the world—the easy juxtapositions of good versus evil—it seems easy. You choose the good (usually an innocent victim, a student, an indigenous person, often a woman), and the evil (often some faceless but monstrous military figure), and tell how, without provocation the latter brutalized, tortured, and perhaps killed the former. It is a powerful story, and the audience is generally left silent, moved by the story, horrified and indignant.

During the 1980s a genre of Latin American writing called *testimonio* grew increasingly popular as a means of relating these experiences. Rigoberta Menchú shocked audiences with the tales of her life, moving readers deeply while relating the terrible fates suffered by her father, mother, and several brothers. Alicia Partnoy moved readers with her account of surviving torture by the Argentine military. Even Adolfo Scilingo, a member of the Argentine Navy and a torturer himself, managed to evoke a certain amount of sympathy by speaking truth to power. These texts evoke strong emotions. They are tragedies with sympathetic victims and monstrous perpetrators.¹⁴

There are, of course, problems to this approach. Beyond the troubling questions raised by the voyeuristic quality of these texts,¹⁵ the simple notions of good and evil they convey offer few explanations of how otherwise normal people (people who today wander the streets of any number of Latin American cities) engaged in the inhuman acts these texts describe. This practice also tends to obscure other, very real things, such as the fact that some of the victims (many of whom also walk the streets today) threw bombs, robbed banks, and kidnapped their erstwhile enemies. These are, to borrow a term from Christopher Browning, “ordinary people.”¹⁶ Even more, the Manichean nature of these texts can

serve to reinforce a series of Northern stereotypes about the South (women as passive, indigenous peoples as mystical, non-political, Latin American men as violent machos).

Testimonios did help discredit the dictatorships, and as such constitute an important part of the Latin American past. That said, as military rule fades into the past, we may be well served by telling a more complex story of the era. One way to begin this task involves an effort to understand just how the political and other differences that characterized these societies metastasized into a tendency to dehumanize one's adversaries. In Peru, where the animus and cognitive failures were so widely shared, we have an exceptionally good window onto these tendencies. We have an enormous amount of evidence of the sympathies and sentiments that divided Peruvian society. These divisions were clearly rooted in the historical conflicts between coast and highlands and all the attendant cognitive failures (Limeños and Andean villagers each failed to see the other clearly). As with other countries, Peru was also riven by conflicts between left and right, and conflicts within the left. Each of these struggles seemed all the more urgent in the midst of an economic catastrophe.

We begin with an early and revealing example of the cognitive failures and deep anxieties that framed this epoch in Peruvian history. Document 9.1 is an excerpt from an essay published by the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa in the *New York Times Magazine* in July 1983 (the entire essay can be found on the book's website, www.routledge.com/textbooks/dawson). Vargas Llosa was improbably named as the head of a commission sent to investigate the murder of eight journalists in the village of Uchuraccay in the southern Peruvian Highlands in early 1983. This essay was based on the commission's findings. He reveals some troubling assumptions about Andean peasants, rendering them as fundamentally primitive, unaware that they lived in a modern nation and thus unaccountable for their actions.

Vargas Llosa's observations were roundly criticized in Peru, in part because they were factually incorrect. Many peasants from the region had a great deal of experience living in coastal regions, and understood full well that Peruvian law did not allow them to execute outsiders. Later investigators would raise other questions about the massacre, insinuating that the military had been complicit in the murders, suggesting that the peasants were led to believe that the journalists were *senderistas*. Their neighbors had, after all, just killed a number of *senderistas*, and they no doubt were particularly anxious at that moment. Some even suggested that the locals may have thought the journalists were *pishtacos*. In any event, at this point the *comuneros* had good reason to fear outsiders. *Senderistas* returned to the region repeatedly in the following years to carry out murderous reprisals, and during much of the decade both Uchuraccay and Huaychao (where the original murders took place) would be left deserted.

Document 9.2 is an excerpt from President Gonzalo's "Interview of the Century," given to the *senderista* paper *El Diario* in 1988 (the entire interview can be found on the book's website). If Vargas Llosa inflicted rhetorical violence on the peasants, and perhaps justified other forms of violence indirectly, Gonzalo celebrated actual violence—a war of annihilation. The text is quite chilling to read, More chilling is the fact that his sentiments resonated so deeply with a certain segment of the Peruvian left. We must wonder what it was (or is) that underpinned such millenarian thinking, why it was that middle-class university students and leftists (but by this point, relatively few peasants) would find this so appealing, why violence was so romanticized? We should also note that Gonzalo's love of violence is remarkably similar to the sentiments expressed by the torturers in Chile, Argentina, and elsewhere. They too described it as cleansing, as ritual. The nation is reborn in the bloodbath.

One of the curious things we see in juxtaposing Documents 9.1 and 9.2 is that both Vargas Llosa and Presidente Gonzalo had a superficial view of peasant and indigenous cultures. Both imagined that rural cultures needed to be remade, that in their present form they were either useless or dangerous. Both then, ultimately make peasants into components of a larger scheme, a larger war. Neither was destined to mourn too many peasant deaths, as their lives, as they were, offered little to the cause.

We see in Document 9.3 Fujimori's rationale for dismantling the Peruvian state on April 5, 1992. Some Peruvians note that his rhetoric in 1992 had a long history, and was not so unlike that of earlier coups d'état. It was certainly similar in tone and explanation to the Argentine and Chilean cases of the recent past. Something needs to be destroyed. The state and civil society are rotten to the core. A powerful, visionary figure will save the country, but he can only do so if freed from a bankrupt series of processes. Fujimori declared that he was not overthrowing a democratic system. He claimed he was paving the way for the establishment of a democratic state.

Document 9.4 leaves us with a cautionary tale about the extremes that Fujimori went to in his war against *Sendero*. When Fujimori was ultimately held to account for his response to *Sendero*, aside from charges of abuse of authority and the misappropriation of funds, he was charged with responsibility for four specific cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the Grupo Colina. Those incidents included the kidnappings of journalist Gustavo Gorriti and businessman Samuel Dyer after the 1992 autogolpe. A third case involved the killings of fifteen people in the Lima neighborhood of Barrios Altos in 1991. The document included below concerns the fourth incident, the massacre at Valle Nacional (Cantuta) University on July 18, 1992 (Figure 9.4).



Figure 9.4 Family members of victims in the Cantuta massacre.

Source: Reuters/Mariana Bazo.

In the early morning hours of that day, hooded security officials entered the homes of several students and professors. The students were taken out of their dormitories and forced into the fetal position, their faces pushed to the ground. One by one, soldiers pulled their faces up by the hair, identifying students individually, and eventually separating nine from the group. They, along with one professor, were taken away, murdered, and secretly buried in mass graves on the property of the Lima water utility. Fujimori denies knowing about the killings. He denies knowing even that the Grupo Colina existed. He was nonetheless found guilty at trial for his role in the killings.

Document 9.1 Mario Vargas Llosa, "The Massacre," excerpt from "Inquest in the Andes: A Latin American Writer Explores the Political Lessons of a Peruvian Massacre," *New York Times Magazine*, July 31, 1983

Source: "Inquest in the Andes," published in the *New York Times Magazine*, July 31, 1983. Copyright © Mario Vargas Llosa, 1983.

The Massacre

How did the murder of the reporters take place? The Uchuraccayans refused to give us the details. We assumed the Indians came down the mountainsides that encircle the village and attacked suddenly, as the reporters approached, before anyone could speak. We supposed that they used sling-shots, which shoot stones so fast that they can hit a viscacha, the large, burrowing rodent of the pampas, running at full speed. (Proudly, they demonstrated that for us.) We were inclined to believe that there had been no dialogue—first, because the Iquichanos thought that the strangers were armed, and, second, because three of the journalists, Octavio Infante, Amador García and Félix Gavilán, spoke Quechua and could have tempered the hostility of their attackers.

But the facts turned out to be colder and crueler. They came to light two months later, when a patrol escorting the judge in charge of the separate judicial investigation, which is still going on, found a camera in a cave near Uchuraccay. Apparently, it had been uncovered by viscachas digging in the earth where the villagers had hidden it. It was a Minolta, serial number 4202368, that had belonged to the young photographer from *El Observador*, Willy Retto, and it contained film which, when developed, provided a horrifying document.

It seems that Willy Retto had the presence of mind to take pictures during the moments just before the massacre, perhaps when the lives of some of his friends had already been taken. There were nine photographs; all were confiscated by the investigating judge. Somehow, three of the pictures found their way onto the pages of *Ultima Hora*; they were promptly reproduced by other papers. In one of these pictures, the hulking Jorge Sedano is on his knees next to the bags and cameras that someone, possibly Octavio Infante, has placed on the ground. In another picture, Felix Gavilán, the local correspondent with his radio program for the Indian peasants, has his arms raised. In the third picture, 22-year-old Jorge Luis Mendivil, with his teen-ager's face,

is gesturing, as if asking everybody to calm down. From a reliable informant, I have learned that three other pictures—the last three pictures on the roll of film—show an Iquichano advancing threateningly on Willy Retto. The pictures prove that some words had been spoken but that talk did no good—that, although the Iquichanos saw the strangers were unarmed, they attacked them anyhow, convinced they were their enemies.

The massacre had magical and religious overtones, as well as political and social implications. The hideous wounds on the corpses were ritualistic. The eight bodies were buried in pairs, face down, the form of burial used for people the Iquichanos consider “devils”—people like the dancers of the *tijeras*, a folk dance, who are believed to make pacts with the Devil. They were buried outside the community limits to emphasize that they were strangers. (In the Andes, the Devil merges with the image of the stranger.) The bodies were especially mutilated around the mouth and eyes, in the belief that the victim should be deprived of his sight, so he cannot recognize his killers, and of his tongue, so he cannot denounce them. Their ankles were broken, so they could not come back for revenge. The villagers stripped the bodies; they washed the clothes and burned them in a purification ceremony known as *pichja*.

Knowing the circumstances does not excuse the crime, but it makes what happened more comprehensible. The violence stuns us because it is an anomaly in our ordinary lives. For the Iquichanos, that violence is the atmosphere they live in from the time they are born until the time they die. After our return from Uchuraccay, new tragedies confirmed that the Iquichanos’ fear of reprisals by Sendero Luminoso was justified.

On April 3, four Senderista detachments, augmented by hundreds of peasants from a rival community, attacked Lucanamarca, 120 miles from Uchuraccay, and murdered 77 people in the village square, most of them with axes, machetes and stones. There were four children among the decapitated, mutilated bodies. On July 18, the guerrillas attacked Uchuraccay at dawn, in reprisal for the slaying of the five Senderistas there on Jan. 22. General Noel’s office in Ayacucho said at least eight peasants were slaughtered—again in the village square—with bullets and axes. All indications were that the war in the Andes was continuing.

When our commission’s hearing in Uchuraccay was over, and, overwhelmed by what we had seen and heard—the graves of the reporters were still open—we were getting ready to return to Ayacucho, a tiny woman from the community suddenly began to dance. She was quietly singing a song whose words we could not understand. She was an Indian as tiny as a child, but she had the wrinkled face of a very old woman, and the scarred cheeks and swollen lips of those who live exposed to the cold of the uplands. She was barefoot, and wore several brightly colored skirts and a hat with ribbons, and as she sang and danced she tapped us gently on the legs with brambles. Was she saying goodbye to us in an ancient ritual? Was she cursing us because we belonged to the strangers—Senderistas, “reporters,” *sinchis*—who had brought new reasons for anguish and fear to their lives? Was she exorcising us?

For several weeks, I had been living in a state of extraordinary tension as I interviewed soldiers, politicians, policemen, peasants and reporters and reviewed dispatches, evidence and legal testimony, trying to establish what had happened. At night, I would often stay awake, attempting to determine the truth of the testimony

and the hypotheses, or I had nightmares in which the certainties of the day became enigmas again. And as the story of the eight journalists unfolded—I had known two of them, and had been with Amador García just two days before his trip to Ayacucho—it seemed that another, even more terrible story about my own country was being revealed. But at no time had I felt as much sorrow as in Uchuraccay on that late afternoon, with its threatening clouds, watching the tiny woman who danced and tapped us with brambles, and who seemed to come from a Peru different from the one I live in, an ancient, archaic Peru that has survived in these sacred mountains despite centuries of isolation and adversity.

That frail, tiny woman had undoubtedly been one of the mob who threw rocks and swung sticks, for the Iquichano women are famous for being as warlike as the men. In the photographs from Willy Retto's camera, you can see them at the front of the crowd. It wasn't difficult to imagine the community of Uchuraccay transformed by fear and rage. We had a presentiment of it at the hearing, when, after too many uncomfortable questions, the passive assembly, led by the women, suddenly began to roar "Challa, challa!" ("Enough, enough!") and the air was filled with evil omens.

If the essential facts of the journalists' death have been clarified—who killed them, how and why—there are others that remain hidden in obscurity. What happened to Juan Argumedo? Why won't the Iquichanos take responsibility for his death? It may be that, in their minds, Juan Argumedo was a "neighbor"—someone from a rival area, but an area they had to coexist with for reasons of trade and travel—and a confession that they had killed him would be tantamount to a declaration of war on the valley farmers. If so, this precaution has failed: There have been several bloody confrontations between the Indians of Uchuraccay and the peasants of Chacabamba and another valley village.

Another unresolved question is the red flag. General Noel said the reporters were murdered because they walked into Uchuraccay with a Communist flag, and the villagers made the same statement to our commission. Willy Retto's photographs show no such flag. And why would the reporters carry a flag that could only mean danger for them? In all probability, the villagers, in realizing their mistake, invented the story to give greater credibility to their claim that they thought the strangers were Senderistas. The red flag they turned over to Lieutenant Bravo Reid of the Tambo patrol was, in all likelihood, the one they alleged had been flown over Iquicha by the Government representative at that village—the flag the Indians tied around his neck after bringing him to Uchuraccay.

Even more dramatic than the blood that flows through this story is the lack of understanding that made the blood flow. The reporters believed that, in the earlier incident at Huaychao, the Senderistas had been murdered by the *sinchis* and not the peasants. In Uchuraccay, the peasants killed some strangers because they thought the strangers were coming to kill them. It is possible that the journalists never knew why they were attacked. A wall of disinformation, prejudice and ideology separated one group from the other and made communication impossible.

Perhaps this story helps to clarify the reason for the mind-shattering violence that characterizes guerrilla warfare in Latin America. These guerrilla movements are not "peasant movements." They are born in the cities, among intellectuals and middle-class

militants who, with their dogmatism and their rhetoric, are often as foreign and incomprehensible to the peasant masses as Sendero Luminoso is to the men and women of Uchuraccay. The outrages committed by those other strangers—the Government forces of counterinsurgency—tend to win peasant support for the guerrillas.

Put simply, the peasants are coerced by those who think they are the masters of history and absolute truth. The fact is that the struggle between the guerrillas and the armed forces is really a settling of accounts between privileged sectors of society, and the peasant masses are used cynically and brutally by those who say they want to “liberate” them. The peasants always suffer the greatest number of victims: At least 750 of them have been killed in Peru since the beginning of 1983.

The story of the eight journalists reveals how vulnerable democracy is in Latin America and how easily it dies under military or Marxist–Leninist dictatorship. It is difficult for people to defend a free press, elections and representative institutions when their circumstances do not allow them to understand, much less to benefit from, the achievements of democracy. Democracy will never be strong in our Latin American countries as long as it is the privilege of one sector of society and an incomprehensible abstraction for all the others. The double threat—the model of Gen. Augusto Pinochet in Chile and the model of Fidel Castro in Cuba—will continue to haunt democratic government as long as people in our countries kill for the reasons that the peasants of Uchuraccay killed.

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Document 9.2 The Interview of the Century, 1988 (Excerpt)

Source: http://www.blythe.org/peru-pcp/docs_en/interv.htm#BM4.

El Diario: Chairman, let's talk about the people's war now. What does violence mean to you, Chairman Gonzalo?

Chairman Gonzalo: With regard to violence we start from the principle established by Chairman Mao Tsetung: violence, that is the need for revolutionary violence, is a universal law with no exception. Revolutionary violence is what allows us to resolve fundamental contradictions by means of an army, through people's war. Why do we start from Chairman Mao's thesis? Because we believe Mao reaffirmed Marxism on this question, establishing that there are no exceptions whatsoever to this law. What Marx held, that violence is the midwife of history, continues to be a totally valid and monumental contribution. Lenin expounded upon violence and spoke about Engels' panegyric praise of revolutionary violence, but it was the Chairman who told us that it was a universal law, without any exception. That's why we take his thesis as our starting point. This is an essential question of Marxism, because without revolutionary violence one class cannot replace another, an old order cannot be overthrown to create a new one—today a new order led by the proletariat through Communist Parties.

The problem of revolutionary violence is an issue that is more and more being put on the table for discussion, and therefore we communists and revolutionaries must reaffirm our principles. The problem of revolutionary violence is how to actually carry it out with people's war. The way we see this question is that when Chairman Mao

Tsetung established the theory of people's war and put it into practice, he provided the proletariat with its military line, with a military theory and practice that is universally valid and therefore applicable everywhere in accordance with the concrete conditions.

We see the problem of war this way: war has two aspects, destructive and constructive. Construction is the principal aspect. Not to see it this way undermines the revolution—weakens it. On the other hand, from the moment the people take up arms to overthrow the old order, from that moment, the reaction seeks to crush, destroy and annihilate the struggle, and it uses all the means at its disposal, including genocide. We have seen this in our country; we are seeing it now, and will continue to see it even more until the outmoded Peruvian State is demolished.

As for the so-called dirty war, I would like to simply point out that they claim that the reactionary armed forces learned this dirty war from us. This accusation clearly expresses a lack of understanding of revolution, and of what a people's war is. The reaction, through its armed forces and other repressive forces, seeks to carry out their objective of sweeping us away, of eliminating us. Why? Because we want to do the same to them—sweep them away and eliminate them as a class. Mariátegui said that only by destroying, demolishing the old order could a new social order be brought into being. In the final analysis, we judge these problems in light of the basic principle of war established by Chairman Mao: the principle of annihilating the enemy's forces and preserving one's own forces. We know very well that the reaction has used, is using, and will continue to use genocide. On this we are absolutely clear. And consequently this raises the problem of the price we have to pay: in order to annihilate the enemy and to preserve, and even more to develop our own forces, we have to pay a price in war, a price in blood, the need to sacrifice a part for the triumph of the people's war.

As for terrorism, they claim we're terrorists. I would like to give the following answer so that everyone can think about it: has it or has it not been Yankee imperialism and particularly Reagan who has branded all revolutionary movements as terrorists, yes or no? This is how they attempt to discredit and isolate us in order to crush us. That is their dream. And it's not only Yankee imperialism and the other imperialist powers that combat so-called terrorism. So does social-imperialism and revisionism, and today Gorbachev himself proposes to unite with the struggle against terrorism. And it isn't by chance that at the VIIIth Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania Ramiz Alia dedicated himself to combatting terrorism as well with the pioneers of the people's revolutionary army! It is no longer a plot against some detested individual, no act of vengeance or desperation, no mere "intimidation"—no, it was a well thought-out and well prepared commencement of operations by a contingent of the revolutionary army. Fortunately, the time has passed when revolution was "made" by individual terrorists, because people were not revolutionary. The bomb has ceased to be the weapon of the solitary "bomb thrower," and is becoming an essential weapon of the people.

Lenin taught us that the times had changed, that the bomb had become a weapon of combat for our class, for the people, that what we're talking about is no longer a conspiracy, an isolated individual act, but the actions of a Party, with a plan, with a system, with an army. So, where is the imputed terrorism? It's pure slander.

Finally, we always have to remember that, especially in present-day war, it is precisely the reactionaries who use terrorism as one of their means of struggle, and it is, as has been proven repeatedly, one of the forms used on a daily basis by the armed forces of the Peruvian State. Considering all this, we can conclude that those whose reasoning is colored by desperation because the earth is trembling beneath their feet wish to charge us with terrorism in order to hide the people's war. But this people's war is so earth shaking that they themselves admit that it is of national dimensions and that it has become the principal problem facing the Peruvian State. What terrorism could do that? None. And moreover, they can no longer deny that a Communist Party is leading the people's war. And at this time some of them are beginning to reconsider; we shouldn't be too hasty in writing anyone off. There are those who could come forward. Others, like Del Prado. . .

At the end of 1982, the armed forces came in. The CC had anticipated this for more than a year. It had studied the involvement of the armed forces, and concluded that it would increase until the army had substituted for the police, who would then assume a secondary role. This is how it has been, and given the situation it could not have been otherwise. We had prepared ourselves, but nevertheless, we had a second problem. The introduction of the armed forces had its consequences. They came in applying a policy of genocide from the beginning. They formed armed groups, called mesnadas, forcing the masses to join and putting them in front, using them as shields. This must be said clearly: here we see not only the policy of using masses against masses, an old reactionary policy already seen by Marx, but also a cowardly use of the masses, putting the masses in front of them. The armed forces have nothing to boast about—with good reason we have called them experts at defeat, and skilled at attacking the unarmed masses. These are the armed forces of Peru. Faced with this we convened an expanded session of the CC. It was a large meeting and it lasted a long time. It was one of the longest sessions we've ever had. That's when we established the Plan to Conquer Base Areas, and the People's Guerrilla Army was created to respond to a force that was obviously of a higher level than the police. It was there that we also raised, among other things, the problem of Front-State.

Thus arose the second problem, the problem of confronting the genocide, the genocide of 1983 and 1984. It is in the Party documents. It's not necessary to go into it a lot, but we do want to stress the fact that it was a vicious and merciless genocide. They thought that with this genocide "they would wipe us off the map." How real this was is shown by the fact that, by the end of 1984, they began to circulate among their officers documents concerning our annihilation. The struggle was intense, hard, those were complex and difficult times.

In the face of reactionary military actions and the use of mesnadas, we responded with a devastating action: Lucanamarca. Neither they nor we have forgotten it, to be sure, because they got an answer that they didn't imagine possible. More than 80 were annihilated, that is the truth. And we say openly that there were excesses, as was analyzed in 1983. But everything in life has two aspects. Our task was to deal a devastating blow in order to put them in check, to make them understand that it was not going to be so easy. On some occasions, like that one, it was the Central Leadership itself that planned the action and gave instructions. That's how it was. In that case, the principal

thing is that we dealt them a devastating blow, and we checked them and they understood that they were dealing with a different kind of people's fighters, that we weren't the same as those they had fought before. This is what they understood. The excesses are the negative aspect. Understanding war, and basing ourselves on what Lenin said, taking Clausewitz into account, in war, the masses engaged in combat can go too far and express all their hatred, the deep feelings of class hatred, repudiation and condemnation that they have—that was the root of it. This has been explained by Lenin very clearly. Excesses can be committed. The problem is to go to a certain point and not beyond it, because if you go past that point you go off course. It's like an angle; it can be opened up to a certain point and no further. If we were to give the masses a lot of restrictions, requirements and prohibitions, it would mean that deep down we didn't want the waters to overflow. And what we needed was for the waters to overflow, to let the flood rage, because we know that when a river floods its banks it causes devastation, but then it returns to its riverbed. I repeat, this was explained clearly by Lenin, and this is how we understand those excesses. But, I insist, the main point was to make them understand that we were a hard nut to crack, and that we were ready for anything, anything.

Marx taught us: one does not play at insurrection, one does not play at revolution. But when one raises the banner of insurrection, when one takes up arms, there's no taking down the banner, it must be held high and never lowered until victory. This is what he taught us, no matter how much it costs us! Marx has armed us then, as Lenin has, and, principally Chairman Mao Tsetung taught us about the price we have to pay—what it means to annihilate in order to preserve, what it means to hold high the banner, come what may. And we say that in this way, with this determination, we overcame the sinister, vile, cowardly and vicious genocide. And we say this because someone—he who calls himself president—makes insinuations about barbarism, without blushing, when he is an aspiring Attila the Hun playing with other people's blood.

Have we gone through difficult times? Yes. But what has reality shown us? That if we persist, keep politics in command, follow our political strategy, follow our military strategy, if we have a clear and defined plan, then we will advance, and we are capable of facing any bloodbath. (We began to prepare for the bloodbath in 1981 because it had to come. Thus we were already prepared ideologically, that is principal.) All this brought about an increase in our forces, they multiplied. This was the result. It turned out as the Chairman had said: the reaction is dreaming when it tries to drown the revolution in blood. They should know they are nourishing it, and this is an inexorable law. So this reaffirms for us that we have to be more and more dedicated, firm, and resolute in our principles, and always have unwavering faith in the masses.

Thus we came out of it strengthened, with a larger Army, more People's Committees and Base Areas, and a larger Party, exactly the opposite of what they had imagined. We have already talked, I believe, of the bloody dreams of the reaction. They are nothing but that, bloody dreams that, in the final analysis, end up being nightmares. But I insist: by persisting in our principles and fighting with the support of the masses, mainly the poor peasants, we've been able to confront this situation. It is here that the heroism of which I have already spoken, the heroism of the masses, has been expressed.

Document 9.3 Fujimori's 1992 Declaration of the Autogolpe

Source: www.congreso.gob.pe/museo/mensajes/Mensaje-1992-1.pdf. Translated by Robert Forstag and Patricia Rosas.

A Message to the Nation from the President of Peru, Alberto Fujimori, Engineer
April 5, 1992

My fellow Peruvians:

For the past 20 months, my government has proposed building a genuine democracy, a democracy that would effectively guarantee equal participation for all citizens. One in which there would be no place for special privileges or sinecures and one that would truly allow us to conquer, in the medium term, the problems of underdevelopment, extreme poverty, lack of opportunity, corruption, and violence.

Like many Peruvians, I thought that this might be the last chance for Peru to fulfill its destiny. The initial phase of my administration has seen some undeniable progress, which is a result of the discipline and order with which the nation's affairs have been managed and of the Peruvian people's responsible and self-sacrificial attitude. We can thus point to the reinsertion of our country into the international financial structure, the gradual reining in of hyperinflation, and a climate of increasing confidence and stability.

But today we can sense that something is impeding our continued march toward national reconstruction and progress. And the Peruvian people know what is holding us back.

They know that it is nothing other than the rotting of our government institutions. Chaos and corruption and a failure to identify with the most vital national interests on the part of some of our most important institutions, like the legislative and judicial branches, are tying the hands of the government when it comes to achieving our goals of national reconstruction and development. To the ineffectiveness of Congress and the corruption of the judiciary, we can add the obvious obstructionism and covert scheming of the political parties' top leaders as they try to undermine the efforts of the government and its citizens. Those leaders, an expression of traditional shady political machinations, are interested solely in blocking the economic measures that could lead to a recovery from our nation's bankruptcy, which they themselves have brought upon us.

Similarly, there are groups that are interested in seeing the Pacification Strategy fail because they do not have the courage to take a clear stand against terrorism. With utter disregard for the future of our nation, people who only yesterday were the bitterest of political rivals are now joining forces for the purpose of preventing the successful functioning of the government. The reason behind this unholy alliance is a shared interest in regaining lost political ground. In the struggle against drug trafficking, the Congress has shown itself to be weak and inconsistent. This is clearly seen in its position on legislation proposed by the Executive aimed at imposing sanctions on money laundering, abolishing banking secrecy, punishing the trafficking of goods obtained as a result of the illegal drug trade, and punishing public servants and officials engaged in

the concealment of drug-trafficking activities. All of these measures, proposed by the government in Legislative Decree No. 736, were repealed by Congress with no explanation whatsoever and without considering that such action would leave the country powerless to impose the kinds of tough penalties necessary against those involved in the illegal drug trade.

The irresponsible and negative attitude displayed by legislators also shows a disdain for constitutional mandates, which are knowingly violated. This is the case with the enactment of Law No. 25397, the Law on Legislative Control of the President of the Republic's Regulatory Actions, which attempts to tie the president's hands, depriving him of powers essential for governing. This affects such important matters as economic policy and the fight against terrorism, by denying the President the authority to designate which areas are in states of emergency.

Without the least regard for the powers vested in the president by our Constitution, attempts have even been made to deny him the possibility of fully or partially complying with the Annual Budget Law. This demagogic and obstructionist excess has resulted in a very significant deficit in the budget, which may result in the reoccurrence of hyperinflation if urgent corrective measures are not taken. In an act that constitutes an affront to a country that is suffering severe economic hardship, Congress has grossly expanded its budget and improperly provided an extension of the *cédulas vivas*¹⁷ to former congressional representatives. This action shows lawmakers' complete disregard for the complaints asking for austerity, efficiency, and seriousness in legislative matters—a complaint repeated on numerous occasions by ordinary citizens. Numerous times, congressional sessions could not proceed due to the chamber's lack of a quorum.

The irresponsibility, carelessness, and sloth of the so-called "Fathers of the Nation" have resulted in the tabling of many bills that were critical for the functioning of this country.

The people of Peru, the vast majority, have called for efficiently run institutions, committed to our nation's supreme interest, that would channel, focus, and harness the country's energies. Consequently, they have consistently rejected their Congressional representatives' irresponsible, unfruitful, anti-historical, and anti-national conduct, which lets the agenda of groups and party leaders prevail over those of Peru. The country wants a congress that addresses our major national challenges, free from the vices of political *caciquismo* and *clientelismo*.

A justice system overcome by political sectarianism, venality, and complicit irresponsibility is a scandal that irreparably discredits democracy and the rule of law. The nation has grown weary of this state of affairs and wants solutions. It desires an effective and modern justice system, which would constitute a full guarantee for civic life. It does not want to see any more corrupt fiefdoms in places where irreproachable morality should be the order of the day.

Among other examples of how justice operates in this country, let it suffice to mention the inexplicable release of drug traffickers, or the egregiously partial treatment accorded to them, or the mass release of terrorists who not only have been convicted but who have confessed to their crimes. All are a misapplication of the standard of fairness. We must contrast that with the dubious slowness that characterizes proceedings

against citizens with limited resources and the unusual degree of diligence in cases involving persons with power and influence. All of this makes a mockery of justice.

Corruption and political infiltration have permeated every level and every court in the judiciary. In Peru, justice has always been a commodity sold to the highest bidder. We are not denying that there are honest and upright judges and prosecutors. We need to rescue them by once and for all removing their corrupt colleagues. Regionalization represented a great hope for the peoples of Peru, but it was infected from the very beginning by the evils of the traditional political system. Thus, instead of representing a solution, regionalism is a problem with multiple facets because it has created regional "microcentralisms" and a new source of national frustration. Bloated bureaucracies, hungry for power and for government funds, have been installed in most of the regional governments, and each mirrors all of the vices and defects of the capital's old centralism.

There is nothing new in their ideas about how to spend the treasure of the nation and its people. Instead of privileging spending on necessary public works, they give priority to profligate spending that has no constructive purpose. We cannot allow this to continue.

Nobody believes that Peru can indefinitely postpone fundamental socioeconomic changes. Thus, now more than ever, the nation needs a profound transformation, not just a band-aid of partial reform. Peru cannot continue to let terrorism, drug trafficking, and corruption weaken it. We need to strengthen our resolve by radically altering the structures of our nation's institutions. We cannot wait three more years for citizens, committed to acting in the best interests of the people, to enter the congress. We also cannot wait even one more day to completely overhaul the nation's judiciary. The fate of our nation has hung in the balance during the past twenty months, and it will continue to hang in the balance in the future, for we have only just begun the task of rebuilding. The government is aware of the historic necessity of eliminating all obstacles that stand in the way of this process of reconstruction.

If the nation does not rebuild now—if it does not lay the foundations for national development—then there is no possible guarantee for the welfare of Peruvians as a civilized collectivity, as a Nation-State.

After rebuilding, our objective is to achieve a prosperous and democratic society. The current democratic formality is deceptive and false, and its institutions often serve the interests of the privileged groups.

It is true that the Constitution contemplates mechanisms for its own modification. But it is also true that, for this to happen, two consecutive first-session ordinary legislative sessions must convene, and this would mean that we would have to wait until nearly the end of the present presidential term to have the legal instruments needed for Peru's general rebuilding.¹⁸ And this would happen only if Congress decides to approve the necessary modifications, including those that are contrary to its members' own interests, such as, for example, a reduction in pay compensation and a no-reelection rule.

What institution or mechanism will let us undertake all the profound changes that, in turn, will propel the nation forward? There can be no doubt that neither Congress nor the judiciary are agents of change. Instead, they are standing in the way of transformation and progress.

As President of the Republic, I have directly witnessed these irregularities, and I have felt that it is my responsibility to take emergency actions in the interest of hastening the process of national reconstruction. It is for this reason that I have decided to take the following extraordinary measures:

1. Temporary disbanding of the Congress of the Republic until the approval of a new organic structure for the nation's legislative branch, which a national referendum will approve.
2. Comprehensive reorganization of the judiciary, the National Council of the Judiciary, the Court of Constitutional Guarantees, and the Public Prosecutor's Office to ensure the honest and efficient administration of justice.
3. Restructuring of the Office of the General Comptroller of the Republic to ensure proper and timely oversight of the government, which will lead to imposing drastic sanctions on those responsible for the misappropriation of the State's resources.

As a citizen elected by a large majority of our nation's voters, I reaffirm that my only motive is my desire to have the Peruvian nation achieve prosperity and greatness. This will only be possible through a profound transformation of the State and its institutions, so that the latter become true engines for development and social justice.

Therefore, governmental continuity will temporarily occur through an Emergency and National Reconstruction Government, whose principal objectives are:

- a. Modification of the current Constitution in order to reflect the creation of a new structure for both Congress and the judiciary, for the purpose of converting these branches of government into effective instruments for order and development. The former is to be transformed into a modern legislature, one which reflects the interests of the nation and which is subject to periodic renewal.
- b. Radically inculcate morality in the judiciary and its affiliated institutions.
- c. Modernize the government administration to adapt it for purposes of development and the best and most rationalized utilization of resources.
- d. Pacify the country within a legal framework that imposes severe penalties on terrorists and drug traffickers. Doing this will guarantee a climate of peace and tranquility to make national and foreign investment possible.
- e. Confront drug trafficking and associated illegal activities head on, and successfully eliminate isolated instances of immorality and corruption in law enforcement agencies and other institutions.
- f. Admonitory punishment of all cases of immorality and corruption that involve government officials.
- g. Promote a market economy within a legal framework that provides security and encourages efficiency and competitiveness in those participating in the economy.
- h. Reorganize the educational system and adapt it to our development needs, foster a patriotic consciousness, and encourage the mass construction of schools. Doing this will generate employment at the same time.

- i. Decentralize the powers of the Central Government by means of a regionalization process that would reduce both the bureaucracy as well as the number of regional deputies.
- j. In the medium term, substantially increase the standard of living for the population as a whole, creating conditions for the comprehensive development of the human being. As long as this transitional situation lasts, we will suspend those Constitutional articles that are not compatible with these governmental objectives. Thus, congressional functions will be assumed by a Council of Ministers, which will have the authority to issue decree-laws.

In addition, as quickly as possible, we will create a commission tasked with comprehensively reorganizing the judiciary.

In addition, we will quickly form another commission, consisting of renowned jurists, to draft a constitutional reform bill for the previously indicated reason: to ensure that our Magna Carta meets our needs for development, modernization, and pacification of the nation. In due course, a national referendum will be held to pass that constitutional reform. Any real social change must revolve around the nation's youth, yet these young people must be imbued with a national spirit. We are a country of young people, and it will be the nation's youth who will determine our future. Young people are the most sensitive, idealistic, and honest component of our population. We must ensure that they do not fall prey to drugs, fanaticism, or frustration. Their energy will serve as the catalyzing agent for our nation's transformation.

The youth will understand that it is a matter of planting the seeds of a new nation and leaving behind the fetid ruins of the old order of corrupt politicians, judges, and officials who stand in the way of true democracy. Doing this will let the true interests of the nation guide the destiny of the Republic, rather than the pseudo-democratic formalities that do nothing but hinder our progress.

For Peru, there is only one path forward: national reconstruction. Nothing will change unless we ensure that this rebuilding happens and that the Peruvian people's will for transformation and quest for self-renewal not be undermined by sterile legislative debates or corrupt judges and government officials.

It is essential that the nation understand that the temporary and partial suspension of the present legal system does not constitute the negation of true democracy. On the contrary, this action constitutes the beginning of a search for a genuine transformation that will guarantee a legitimate and effective democracy and that will allow all Peruvians to become the builders of a Peru that is more just, more developed, and better respected within the family of nations.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the National Police, I have undertaken to ensure that these institutions immediately take the steps required to guarantee compliance with these announced measures and to safeguard civil order and citizens' safety.

Goodnight

**Document 9.4 A Day in the Trial of the Century, by Carolina Huamán Oyague
(Family Member of La Cantuta Victim)**

Source: www.fujimoriontrial.org/?page_id=98.

It's difficult to describe the mix of feelings that overcome me today; almost 15 years and five months have passed since that morning when a premonition abruptly woke me and drove me to my sister's room. I looked for her, desperate and full of anxiety. I had never imagined all the horror that would come after. For me, the pain still feels like it is July 18, 1992. So many years have passed and today, finally, Fujimori is seated in the defendant's chair. Today, finally, the light at the end of the tunnel is no longer so faint; though hazy, I can read Justice. Some would hope that it is only a word, but it embodies a combination of actions and compromises that we decide to make.

Seated in this court room, I see the person who was principally responsible for the kidnapping, torture and murder of my sister. Today he is before a court, the time has come for him to be accountable and face justice. His mocking smile is no longer spontaneous, but feigned, in order to maintain his circus; his clowns try a thousand different scripts, but the show does not work anymore. The absence of his popular stage becomes more evident. Before the lack of arguments, the clowns remove their masks and act, like those who lack valid reasoning; they make themselves up and show themselves as they are, as they always were behind cameras ensnared by corruption. They are no longer accompanied by that false power with which, over all these years, they tried to bend us, incapable of understanding that power is not made by exercising force over others. Real power is internal; is able to create, to convert ideals into reality, and permits us to leave our Utopia because we are reality. The executioners could not destroy our ideals, despite such infamy. Even with the extreme to which they took us, we did not lose our capacity to bear fruit, to grow in the spirit. It has been our perseverance, and above all our immense love for our loved ones, that kept us from being defeated.

Day after day I listen attentively to the declarations of the defendant Fujimori, while multiple events come to my mind. With each answer, a train of images charges my memory. Today he wants us to believe that he was a neophyte, a victim of discrimination, a gift, a defender of human rights; saying that his information channels gave him mistaken facts. It sounds humorous, considering the control he exercised, that today he tries to erase our memory, but we remember the militia support for the coup d'état. We remember his famous, celebrated phrase "dissolve." We remember the climate of impunity that he incited, giving orders and promoting laws that would impede us from reaching justice. So many times I was at my mother's side before some government institution, demanding justice, but they never heard our cries, much less stopped to see our tears. I remember their response to the horror that he called only "a simple excess . . . what sister are you talking about, that person does not exist, she fled with her boyfriend." Their tanks at the head of their victorious general to intimidate Congress, their accomplices closing the path to our mothers dressed in black, the delivery

my sister's remains in a cardboard box, their forbidding her to be buried, the fraudulent sentences from the military, their midnight laws, the Cantuta Law, the threats my family received, the harassment and stigmatizing by their purchased press. I remember how he discredited the Armed Forces because in his government, there were no friendly soldiers, only fear of everyone in a uniform. He never thought about the human rights of Peruvians when he sent our soldiers to fight a futile war while he trafficked arms to the enemy with his partner, Montesinos.

The defendant Fujimori tries futilely to play dumb when they remind him of statistics, names, acts of horror, the halo of barbarity that his death squadron left; and five minutes later his egocentrism betrays him. Then he reminds us that he was in everything; in every village, in every activity that determined the events, reminding us that he was omnipresent and omnipotent. It is impossible for him to conceal his pride, but history teaches us that it is this ill-fated attitude that prints black pages in the memory of humanity and carries all those self-proclaimed saviors to failure.

So many sentiments converge within me during these times; sadness and impotence left by the malevolence of mankind, the absence of that which will never be filled. But there is also happiness and solidarity found in the gestures and expressions of beings who are incapable of being indifferent with their neighbors, who could not help but feel indignant, who were in that way our strength and a sign to keep going forward in the fight for justice, no longer just for our family members, but for all of the Cantutas that today are represented in this one trial.

The visualization of Alberto Kenya Fujimori and all that he represents converts everything in a whirlpool of emotions, images, memories, affronts without a mea culpa or even a simple apology. That's how my smile comes out easily upon the ludicrousness of his arguments. I wish tears did not run down my cheeks, but sometimes they come and it is impossible to stop them; they arrive along with all the vividness and with the hurt of seeing human beings like the former dictator Fujimori, capable of restoring human misery, incapable of seeing the magnitude of their mistaken acts, of the negative impact of their acts on others, self-involved and blinded by the pure ambition for power and money.

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At A Glance: Environment

- E.1) Map: Topographical map of Latin America
- E.2) Map: Climate zones in Latin America
- E.3) Map: Deforestation in the Amazon

Environmental factors, topography, and biodiversity have long played a role in setting the conditions for life across Latin America, yet historians struggle with the question of how we might factor the role of the environment into the Latin American past. Environmental determinism of the likes of Alfred Crosby and Jared Diamond,¹ which focuses on the ways that heat, pathogens, minerals, and something as seemingly insignificant as the wind have had a significant influence on human history, offers an attractive alternative to histories in which great men shape events to their likings. Still, environmental history sometimes leaves relatively little room for human agency or the complexities of the relationships between humans and their environments. More satisfying are the approaches taken by those scholars of Latin American environmental history who consider the ways in which environmental factors are a part of a larger set of influences on historical change in the region.²

In any event, we are well served by understanding the critical physical features of the region, so that we might consider the ways that existing conditions and changing circumstances have impacted and will impact life in the region. In the figures included below, we have the opportunity to consider the ways that altitude, access to water (both fresh and salt-water), and proximity to the Equator have impacted life in the region. We might also consider other factors, including navigable rivers, rainfall, average temperatures, soil conditions, natural resources, and the locations and types of the forests that characterize different zones in Latin America.

Figure E.1 is a standard topographical map of Latin America. Certain elements, such as the Andes mountain range and the Amazon River basin (both of which have long created significant transportation and communications challenges) stand out immediately. Others should also be considered, including the river systems such as the Rio De la Plata and Orinoco, the great plains (*pampas*) of Argentina and Uruguay, the highland plateaus of the Andes (the *altiplano*), and the island chains of the Caribbean. One might also note the combined roles that elevation and proximity to the Equator play in shaping the population patterns of the region. Although much of Latin America is in the tropics, most of the major urban centers are in more temperate zones, due to a combination of altitude and latitude.

Figure E.2 is a climate map. The vast climate variations in the region, which are dependent on altitude, latitude, the nature of the land masses, and global wind and water currents, alert us to the ways that environmental diversity contributed to different histories in the region. Climate, including rainfall, average temperatures, and temperature extremes, intersects with technology to play a significant role in the types of economic activity which are possible in any setting. They also influence patterns of human settlement.

Figure E.3 introduces deforestation, which is a pressing environmental concern in much of Latin America. Human-caused environmental change poses a great number of challenges for people in the region, especially poor people living in fragile ecosystems that are vulnerable to collapse due to rising temperatures or changes in the amount of rainfall. The disappearing forests of the Americas, like the disappearing coral reefs of the Caribbean, threaten the livelihoods of millions of people, and also represent significant challenges for the planet as a

whole. The issue has attracted more attention in the Amazon than in most other regions, in part because the global ecological cost of the destruction of this forest. Amazonian forests produce 20 percent of the world's oxygen. Seventeen percent of the Amazon forest has been lost in the past fifty years, most of it to logging of precious woods, ranching and farming. Millions of people have been displaced in the process, and the planet has suffered an enormous loss in biodiversity.

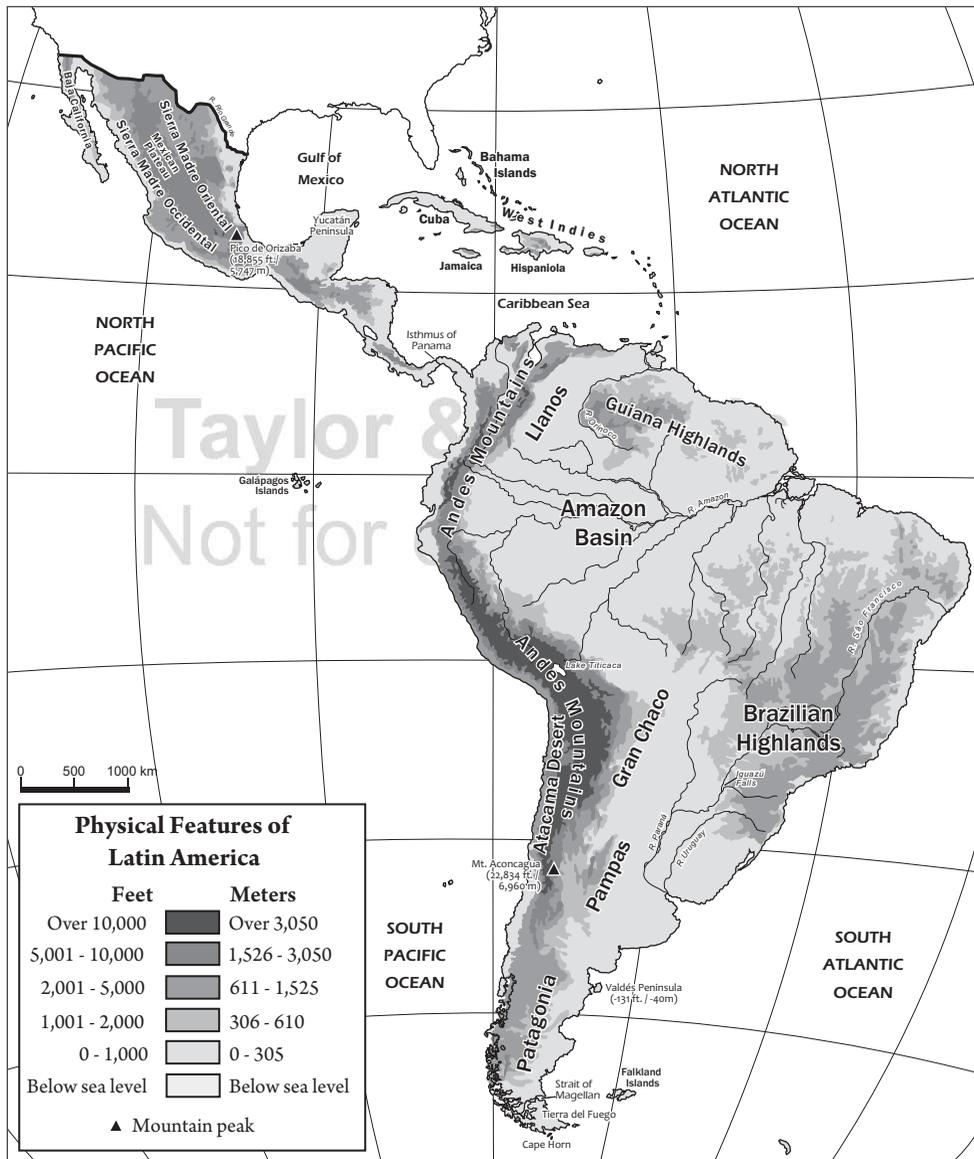


Figure E.1 Topographical Map of Latin America

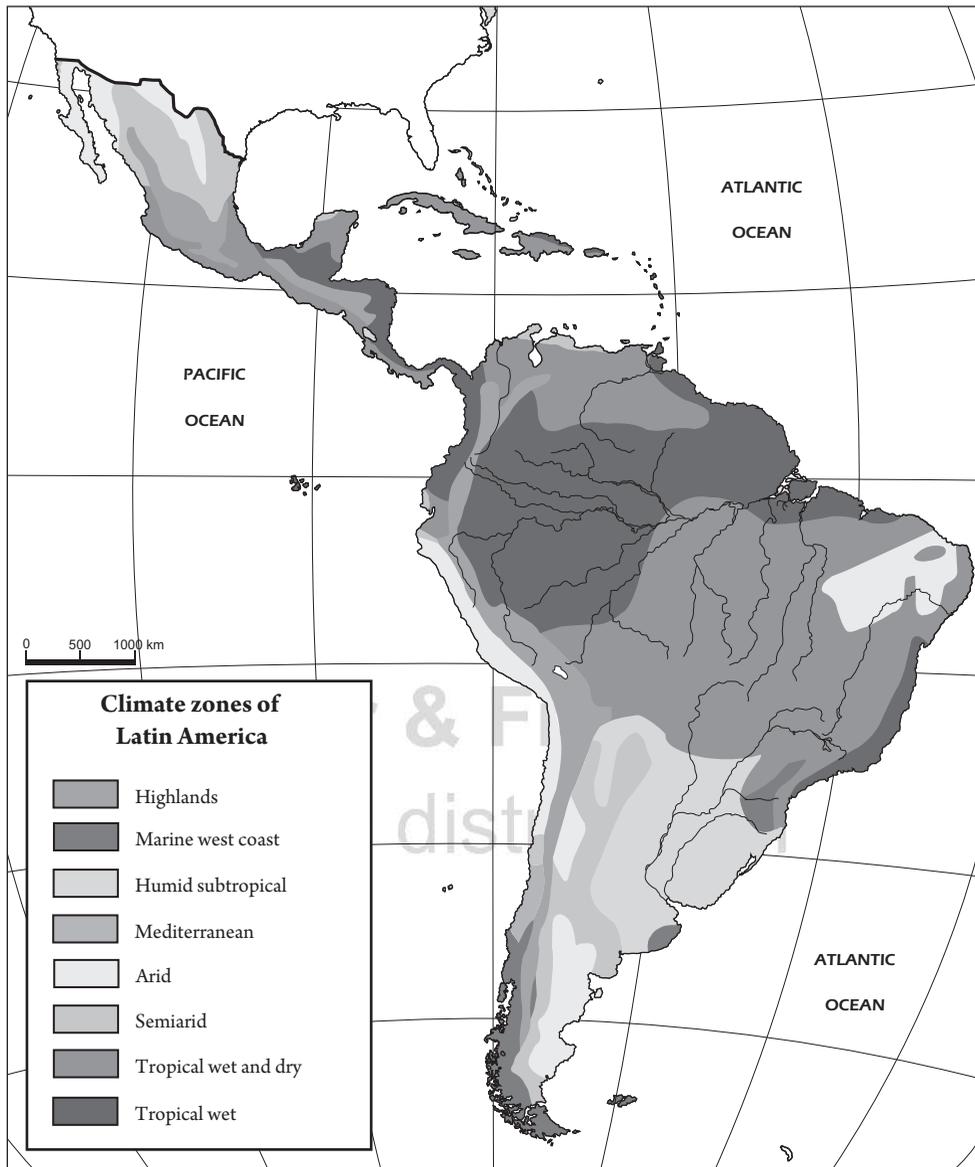


Figure E.2 Climate Zones in Latin America

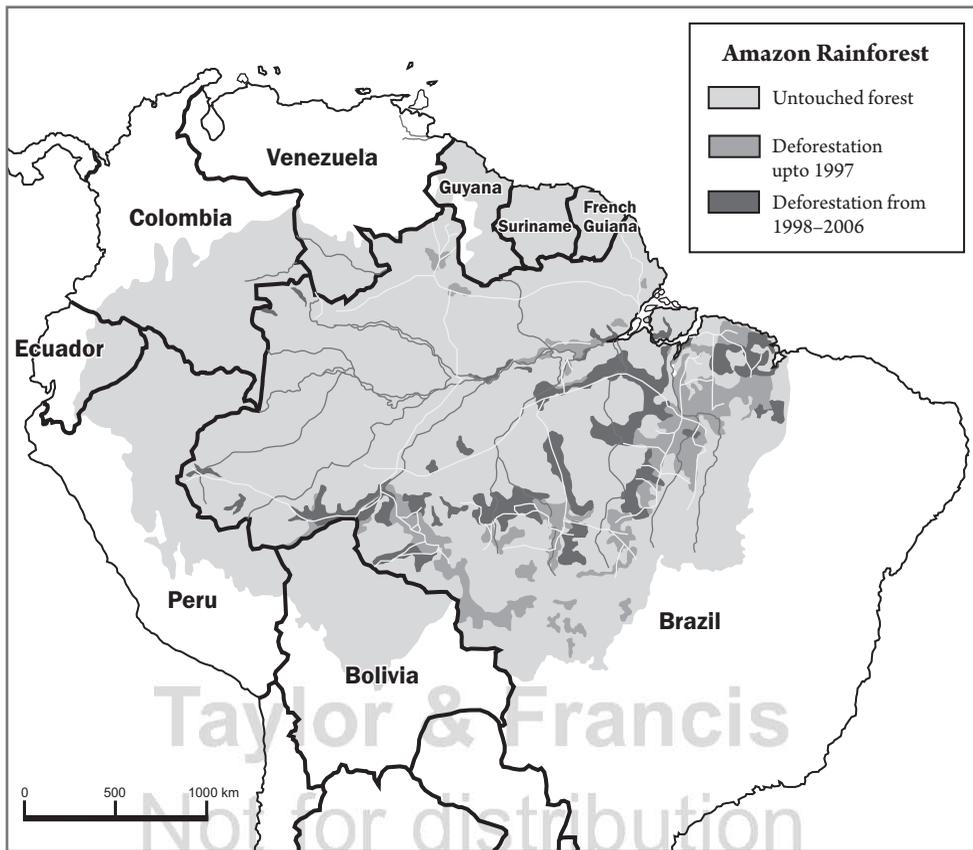


Figure E.3 Deforestation in the Amazon

- 13 Translator's Note: Earlier in the story, Diego related the story of his discovery that he was gay, as a result of an unexpected sexual encounter with a basketball player at the Catholic school that he attended as a boy.
- 14 Translator's Note: The armchair is referred to as the "la butaca de John Donne" in the Spanish original.
- 15 Translator's Note: The story opens with Diego watching David in a performance of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* by a university theatre group of which David is a part, and in which he spectacularly bombs.

9 The Terror

- 1 Maoists are communists who pattern their idea of revolution after the Chinese Revolution and Chairman Mao Zedong. They tend to be exceptionally doctrinaire and vanguardist, and follow a strategy of fomenting a rural revolution among peasants that is intended to surround and ultimately choke off the cities.
- 2 He overthrew himself. The term *golpe de estado* is the Spanish equivalent of the French coup d'état.
- 3 The 1984 report for the Conadep can be found in English at: http://web.archive.org/web/20031004074316/nuncamas.org/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_001.htm. The Rettig commission report can be found at: http://www.usip.org/library/tc/doc/reports/chile/chile_1993_toc.html.
- 4 Look no further than Werner Herzog's 1972 film, *Aguirre: Wrath of God*, to understand how this narrative can explain all types of modern holocausts.
- 5 One version of this narrative can be seen in Eduardo Galeano's *The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (Monthly Review Press, 1997). It was originally published in 1971.
- 6 ISI relied on high tariffs, subsidized inputs to industry (in several countries government monopolies in oil, steel, electricity, and transportation reduced production costs), and a labor force made compliant by a mix of wages and social spending (free education through university, health care, pensions, subsidized transport), along with occasional repression.
- 7 A classic example of this complaint can be seen in Carolina Maria de Jesus' *Child of the Dark* (New York: Penguin, 1962) which is based on diaries she wrote between 1955 and 1960.
- 8 See her book *Looking for History: Dispatches from Latin America* (New York: Vintage, 2002), 73–87.
- 9 *National Geographic*, Volume 170, 1986, p. 247.
- 10 Chamorro had published a story implying that Somoza had taken blood donated by Nicaraguans to help victims of the 1972 Managua earthquake and sold it on the U.S. blood market.
- 11 It was named for a phrase used by José Carlos Mariátegui to describe the prospects of a Marxist revolution.
- 12 Some beneficiaries also chafed under the seemingly arbitrary and overly bureaucratic nature of the government's programs.
- 13 See www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/informacion/discursos/en_apublicas08.php.
- 14 In Scilingo's case, he generated sympathy through his tale of following orders, of remorse, and of unfair treatment at the hands of civilian authorities. See Menchú's I, *Rigoberta Menchú, Partnoy's The Little School*, and Verbitsky's *Confessions of an Argentine Dirty Warrior*.
- 15 Diana Taylor argues this persuasively in *Disappearing Acts*, 1997.
- 16 I draw this concept from Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- 17 Translator's note: Pensions paid to former congressional members at the level of current congressional pay.
- 18 Translator's note: The first session of the Peruvian legislature is between July and December, so the text (*para que ello suceda se necesitan dos primeras legislaturas ordinarias consecutivas*) means that

the reforms would have to be approved during two consecutive July–December sessions, in other words, as much as a year and a half could pass before the reforms would be approved (April 1992 to December 1993).

10 Speaking Truth to Power

- 1 *Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. This is the plaza that faces the Casa Rosada, Argentina's Presidential Palace.
- 2 See David Vidal, "Relatives of Missing Latins Press Drive for Accounting; 30,000 Reported Missing," *New York Times*, January 5, 1979; "Latin America's 'Disappeared' victims," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 1979; "Latin American bishops debating church's role," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 8, 1979. See also "A Voice of 'the Disappeared'," *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1979; "Political Prisoners' Plight in Latin America Told," *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 1979.
- 3 See the link to the 1980 Interamerican Commission Report on Human Rights in Argentina, which details many specific stories of forced disappearances brought to the commission: <http://www.cidh.org/countryrep/Argentina80eng/toc.htm>
- 4 This happened in 1986.
- 5 Today, Mexico City has around 18 million residents. São Paulo has 17.7 million, Buenos Aires 12.4 million, Rio 10.5 million, Lima 7.5 million, and Bogotá 6.8 million.
- 6 Since 1996 Colombia has received \$7,413,585,638 in military and police aid. Mexico has received \$2,409,441,555. During that same period, Mexico has purchased \$4,755,313,431 worth of U.S. arms and equipment, and Colombia \$3,264,534,327.
- 7 See <http://truth-out.org/news/item/13001-calderon-reign-ends-with-six-year-mexican-death-toll-near-120000>.
- 8 See Vladimir Hernández, "Chile: ¿quiénes son los que filman las protestas estudiantiles?" *BBC Mundo a Santiago*, June 14, 2013. http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2013/06/121127_chile_marchas_estudiantes_abogados_defensores_vh.shtml

11 Towards an Uncertain Future

- 1 Albert Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
- 2 The epicenter of the Earthquake lay off the coast of Oaxaca.
- 3 Some believe that number to be as high as 40,000.
- 4 The government claimed 289 dead, but tenants put it at 600.
- 5 A good analysis of the larger causes of the crisis can be found in Jeffrey D. Sachs and John Williamson, "External Debt and Macroeconomic Performance in Latin America and East Asia," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Vol. 1985 (No. 2) 1985, 523–573.
- 6 See http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2013/05/130514_brasil_esclavitud_bolivianos_haitianos_lav.shtml.
- 7 The protests were also informed by a general unease with the amount of government money being spent on sports facilities in anticipation of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Rio Olympics.
- 8 Figures on the decreases in poverty from *Social Panorama of Latin America* United Nations, ECLAC—2011. That nonetheless represents an increase in the numbers of poor and indigent poor, from 136 million poor (and 82 million indigent) in 1980 to 174 million poor and 73 million indigent in 2011.
- 9 Various indigenous rights became law during these years in Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, and Venezuela.