SHINING PATH OF PERU: A PRODUCT OF LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RADICALISM?*

Peru'nun 'Aydınlık Yol' Örgütü: Latin Amerika Üniversite Radikalliğinin Bir Ürünü Mü?

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Abstract

This paper provides a perspective on university radicalization in Latin America and the emergence of a far-left Maoist guerrilla organization in Peru. In comparison with the radicalization process which has inflamed much of the Middle East in recent years, Peru's experience may not appear to be particularly relevant, given such differences in historical, cultural, and political realities. It is clearly the case that lessons learned from experiences in one part of the world do not necessarily translate well into other historical, cultural, religious, and political contexts. In fact, however, this case study of the rise and fall of the most extreme ideologically-driven terrorist organization in Latin American history provides a significant number of insights into why such movements succeed – and why they fail. The ability of a radical organization like Shining Path to emerge in a university under the leadership of a single professor over well more than a decade should offer an object lesson in how an institutional context specifically designed for learning and contributing to national progress can be grossly manipulated and abused.

Keywords:Shining Path, University, Radicalization, Abimael Guzmán, Peru, Latin America

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Öz

Bu makale Latin America'da üniversite radikalleşmesine dair bir perspektif sunmakta ve Peru'da aşırı-sol Maocu bir gerilla örgütünün ortaya çıkışını tartışmaktadır. Günümüzde Ortadoğu'yu içine alan radikalleşme süreçleriyle karşılaştırıldığında, Peru tecrübesi, özellikle tarihsel, kültürel ve siyasal gerçeklikler göz önüne alındığında alakasız durabilir. Gerçekten de dünyanın bir köşesindeki olaya dair detaylar dünyanın geri kalanında farklı tarihsel ve siyasal tecrübelere ve durumlara denk düşmeyebilir. Ancak Latin Amerika tarihinin en ideolojik temeli aşırılıkçı terör örgütünün yükselişi ve düşüşünün ele alındığı bu makale bu tür akımların neden başarılı olduğu ve nasıl düşüşe geçtiğine dair kıymetli ipuçları sunabilir. Aydınlık Yol örgütü gibi tek bir profesörün liderliğinde, üniversite ortamında, on yıldan fazla bir sürede ortaya çıkan radikal bir örgüt öğrenim ve ulusal kalkınma için tasarlanmış, varlık amaçları bunlar olan bir kurumsal ortamın (üniversitenin) nasıl manüpüle ve istismar edilebileceğine dair ders niteliğinde bilgiler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aydınlık Yol, Radikalleşme, Abimael Guzmán, Peru Latin America

Introduction

This paper provides a perspective on university radicalization in Latin America and the emergence of a far-left Maoist guerrilla organization in Peru. What became known as Shining Path germinated and gestated over an extended period in the 1960s and 1970s at a recently reopened university in a small provincial city in the country's isolated rural highlands, or sierra. After years of quiet organization in the university and the surrounding countryside, the group's leader, who had also been a professor there between 1962 and 1974, declared a "people's war" in 1980. The stated goal was to overthrow the state and establish a Maoist-inspired "New Democracy."

Over the course of the next twelve years, Shining Path came to terrorize much of Peru's rural, largely indigenous highlands and then the capital city of Lima as well. In comparison with the radicalization process which has inflamed much of the Middle East in recent years, Peru's experience may not appear to be particularly relevant, given such differences in historical, cultural, and political realities. In fact, however, this case study of the rise and fall of the most extreme ideologically-driven terrorist organization in Latin American history provides a significant number of insights into why

such movements succeed – and why they fail. In so doing, the Peruvian experience with Shining Path offers a valuable example to consider as part of a broader comparative analysis of an existential threat in the Middle East and in other parts of today's world as well.

One way to frame such an analysis is to consider what appear to be the key factors that contributed to the rise and spread of Shining Path in Peru. Among the most important are the following:

1. The potential of educational institutions to serve as incubators of radical protest against the status quo.

2. The capacity of a single leader to inspire followers to pursue extreme courses of action through charisma and rhetoric.

3. The use of isolated or remote areas to build an anti-regime organization over a period of time, largely outside the purview of central government authorities.

4. The presence of an external radicalizing actor in a position to serve as a model and to offer training in recruitment approaches and guerrilla operations, as well as command and control techniques over populations and territory.

5. Also significant in advancing the radical agenda are actions which provoke the state's forces of order into repressive responses which serve to legitimate the rebel cause and to gain popular support.

6. Finally, the inability of the government to maintain economic and political stability, preferably under democratic auspices, weakens its legitimacy as well as its ability to have the human and financial resources necessary to overcome the threat.

Of equal importance for a broader comparative analysis is a review from the Peruvian experience of the factors which contributed to bring about the defeat of the Shining Path guerrilla movement, which occurred in a rather spectacular fashion at the very moment that the movement appeared to be on the verge of victory. Among the most important, which in combination and over time were able to turn the tide, are the following:

1. A complete review by the armed forces of their counterinsurgency policies and the introduction, with unobtrusive outside assistance, of an entirely new approach

2. The creation of a small police unit to track the guerrilla leadership and capture individuals when located

3. The establishment of a rehabilitation program to encourage defections and reincorporation into society, along with an expedited judicial process to try, convict, and jail the most important cadre once captured

4. A major micro-development program directed primarily at the poorest administrative districts in the country, most of them in rural areas where insurgent influence was the greatest

5. An economic recovery program to end rampant hyper-inflation, restore economic growth, and regain access to international financial markets.

We now turn to the case study itself, which includes a summary discussion of the roles of the university and the Cold War in the radicalization process, the dynamics of the conflict itself, a review of why this extremist movement failed, the lessons that were learned, and a concluding comment on possible broader applications.

Latin American University Traditions

The Latin American university has long played a major role in the preparation of generations of political leaders and has served as a center of social protest as well. A tradition going back as far as medieval Spain and Portugal defined the university student as one who is there to be educated to serve his family and society but also to protest against social evils. As a result, institutions of higher education in the Iberian Peninsula as well as its diaspora, most especially Latin America, have long been havens for challenges to the status quo, generally protected by this centuries-old principle of inviolability from interventions by the military or police forces of the state. (Herring, 1955: 40)

As education shifted from control by the Catholic Church to control by the state in Latin America during the latter decades of the 19th century, student opposition to social and political forces gathered momentum. This change from religious to public higher education was part of a larger political process in almost every country of the region that pitted long-standing Conservative traditions originally brought from Spain and, to a lesser degree, Portugal, against more modern Liberal theories from England. The core

differences included the separation of Church and State, as well as equality instead of hierarchy, individualism instead of communitarianism, and free trade instead of mercantilism. Such core differences provoked civil wars in many countries of the region between the 1840s and the 1880s, with Liberalism emerging victorious in almost every case. (Wiarda & Kline, 1990: 33-36)

With Liberal principles taking root in most of Latin America, by the turn of the 20th century public higher education had also been widely established. In addition, since the higher education reforms proposed in 1918 in a meeting of students in Córdoba, Argentina spread throughout the region over the next decade, universities have institutionalized principles of autonomy as well as decision-making power by both students and faculty. These include the right of each sector to elect a third of representatives to central university councils as well as to the individual schools within the institution. (Rock, 1977: Chap. 4)

Through the 1950s, higher education was the province of the sons of the elite, gradually including some daughters as well, who tended to adopt anti-establishment positions during their student years but usually returned to the establishment fold after graduation. However, beginning in the late 1950s and 1960s, higher education in most Latin American countries expanded rapidly to include the youth of middle and lower classes as well, due to quickening social change which brought an ever increasing proportion of the hitherto marginalized population onto the national economic and political scene for the first time. This process was occurring during the same period that left ideologies were becoming more prominent in the wider body politic of the region and beyond. (Levy, 1986)

The Role of the Cold War

Growing ideological consciousness during these years was strengthened by Cold War considerations, in which the Soviet Union played an important role in contributing to Communist Party organizing in national politics, labor unions, and student organizations. To counter such initiatives, the United States pursued an active anti-communist agenda throughout the region in support of alternative student and labor groups, along with a number of interventions to thwart the advance of radicalism. Between the 1950s and the late 1980s, national security considerations dominated U.S. policy toward Latin America and produced growing hostility among nationalists and progressives, especially in such institutions as the public universities. (Balan, 2013: xiv)

The Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro, which overthrew the U.S. supported dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, was a watershed event. It served as an inspiration to generations of students throughout Latin America. The Revolution and its charismatic leader fostered an anti-American and anti-capitalist orientation that mobilized legions of student sympathizers to compete in and often win university elections. Once in control, they could pursue more radical approaches to governance, including greater student control, open admissions, and hiring policies favoring faculty members who shared their ideological views. Such an anti-U.S. perspective became more pronounced after the rupture in diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba in late 1960, and particularly following the failed invasion of Cuba by U.S.-supported anti-Castro Cubans in April 1961. (Domínguez and Prevost, 2008: Chap. 2)

Even though President John Fitzgerald Kennedy generated a great deal of enthusiasm among Latin Americans from all walks of life due to his charisma, Catholic religion, and policy initiatives like the Alliance for Progress economic assistance program and the Peace Corps, Fidel Castro and his revolutionary partner Ché Guevara became equally prominent as icons of the left. In the face of the implacable hostility of the United States, the Cuban regime turned to Marxism as its guiding ideology and allied with the Soviet Union as both a model and an economic lifeline, and very soon began to expand its efforts to foster other revolutionary movements throughout Latin America. (Hudson, 1988)

Such efforts included invitations to selected Latin American university students to come to Cuba to observe the Revolution first hand and participate in short-term seminars on Marxism, which served to further expand political radicalism within their home institutions upon their return. Furthermore, for most of the 1960s and 1970s Cuba actively trained and supported guerrilla movements of national liberation in several Central and South American countries, the largest portion of whose members came from the ranks of university students and professors. Although the communist guerrilla groups which emerged in Uruguay (the Tupamaros), Colombia (the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces – FARC), and Argentina (the Montoneros) were home grown, all were inspired by the example of Cuba. However, most of the others (as in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Brazil, and briefly in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia) were trained as well as inspired by Cuba. (Hudson, 1988)

The major exception was the case we are considering, the particularly virulent Shining Path of Peru, which turned to Maoism after the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s. Members of Shining Path's Central Committee

made multiple trips to China for their training, which happened to coincide with that country's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The party's maximum leader, university professor Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, found the Chinese Cultural Revolution's more radical forces, led by Mao and then Madame Mao, to be more compatible with his extreme Marxist views. Until the split, Guzmán had been a fervent Stalinist within the Moscow-oriented Communist Party of Peru – PCP – and had helped to revitalize the local branch once he moved to Ayacucho. (Gorriti, 1994: 154-55)

After Madame Mao's faction lost out in 1976 to the so-called "moderates," in which Deng Chao Peng emerged as leader, Guzmán and Shining Path were cut adrift. Instead of fading away after losing their foreign mentor and sponsor, however, they continued to prepare on their own for a radical Maoist revolution in Peru, which they launched as a "Peoples War" in May 1980. Their origins and evolution represent a significant example of how a small, isolated, provincial public university served as the incubator of radical revolutionary fervor and a guerrilla war that soon convulsed the Peruvian countryside and came alarmingly close to overthrowing the government within a decade. (Gorriti Ellenbogen, 1990)

The University which Gave Rise to Shining Path

The University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga, where Abimael Guzmán taught for 12 years, starting in 1962, is located in what was then a remote capital, Ayacucho, connected to the outside world by a one-lane road in the indigenous heartland of the Peruvian sierra. For a number of reasons, this university would have appeared to be a very unlikely place for preparing what was to become the most violent guerrilla war in the history of the Peruvian republic.

Founded in 1679, the country's second oldest institution of higher learning, it functioned for some 200 years to serve the local elite before being shut down in 1880 due to Peru's economic collapse after the War of the Pacific (1879-1883). But in 1959, through the efforts of Ayacucho's congressional delegation, the university was relaunched with a totally new purpose, unique in South America at the time. The goal was to establish an institution that would reach out to serve the needs of the population of the highland region in which it was located; Peru's poorest and most isolated. (Romero, 1961)

Instead of being organized around traditional fields of study, such as law, medicine, engineering, and literature and the arts, the University of Huamanga set up programs attuned to preparing students from the area for pro-

fessions closely related to its most pressing deficiencies. These included education, rural engineering, nursing and obstetrics, applied anthropology, and mining engineering, to be chosen after two years of broadly based required foundational courses. In addition, students and their faculty mentors would engage in a variety of service activities in field work among the area's indigenous communities and marginal settlements within the small city of Ayacucho, with a population of less than 20,000 in 1960 (Palmer, 1966: 244-247)

The faculty recruited to fill positions included some of Peru's most distinguished academics, many of whom came because they shared the vision of an institution dedicated to improving the condition of the local population, with the added benefit of enjoying salaries based on full-time employment, a rarity in the country at the time. Political orientation was not a consideration initially, as the first generation of professors included a wide range of views, representing virtually every political party as well as such international entities as Fulbright, a Danish government ceramics program, the missionary organization Summer Institute of Linguistics, and the U.S. Peace Corps. The university was quite small during the first years after its refounding, with a total of about 40 faculty members and 400 students, and functioned in a very small city with few amenities. As a result, everyone knew each other, socialized together, and shared the view that they were part of a significant innovation in Peruvian higher education. (Palmer, 1966: 249-253)

About 70 percent of the students came from the most humble of backgrounds. In a region in which some 90 percent of the population of approximately 500,000 was rural and Quechua speaking, for the majority Spanish was their second language. The fact that they had gained entrance to the university at all meant that most had overcome a daunting set of obstacles to achieve this objective. These included deficient primary schools in their communities, the need to move to a provincial capital for their secondary school education, and poor parents who made enormous sacrifices to help them stay in school. After succeeding where most of their peers had not, they viewed the University of Huamanga and its mission as the opportunity for them to gain the tools they needed to give back to the communities from which they had come. (Degregori, 1990, 41-47)

Explaining University Radicalization and Shining Path

In spite of such a promising beginning, this university could not isolate itself from what was happening in the world around it. Enthusiasm for the Cuban Revolution and the figure of Fidel Castro made its presence felt.

Some of the most able students were invited to Cuba and returned with a more ideological orientation. The Cuban missile crisis brought home the challenge of the Cold War and sensitized many at the university to the need to take sides. Within Peru, the election of a more reformist administration after a military intervention and decades of conservative governments, both civilian and military, generated a more open political climate and an expansion in party activity, especially on the left. (McClintock, 1994: 234-235) In addition, in the 1960s and 1970s, Peruvian students in secondary and higher education expanded rapidly, from 17 to 52 percent. (Degregori, 1994: 60)

Given such developments, it was not surprising that even the University of Huamanga would be affected by them. One manifestation was the increasing politicization of elections for student organizations and university governing bodies among the members of this community. Ideological orientation began to compete with perceived competence for support, fostered by a growing presence of Peru's Communist Party (PCP) and its financial support of the Revolutionary Student Federation (FER). Although still a minority within the university in 1963, it nevertheless was able to wage a successful campaign to force a reluctant administration to request the departure of the Peace Corps professors. (Palmer, 1966: 255-261) Years later, this FER faculty advisor, none other than Professor Guzmán himself, was to declare the action against the Peace Corps presence in the University of Huamanga as "the first blow against international imperialism in Peru." (Guzmán, 1993: np)

The leadership exercised by a single individual over more than a decade as a professor of education proved to be the most important factor in turning this university from a force for local development into an incubator for guerrilla war. Abimael Guzmán Reynoso arrived in Ayacucho in 1962 as a dedicated member of the Communist Party who identified with its Stalinist wing as the result of mentoring during his undergraduate years by two hard line Communists at his university in Arequipa, Peru's second-largest city. He was successful in reviving the then moribund Communist Party in Ayacucho as he began to use his classes and "study groups" to proselytize among the students. Some of these were instrumental in agitating for the removal of Peace Corps faculty. (Degregori, 1994: 52-53)

After his appointment as the first director of the university's teacher training school, Guzmán was able to use his position to influence a generation of students in the most popular academic program (about one-quarter of the students at the time). Upon graduation, a large number of these returned as teachers to the indigenous communities from which they had come. Here,

as respected members, they frequently used their positions to propagandize for radical political approaches. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, these teachers became a significant support network for the Communist Party in scores of rural communities throughout Ayacucho. (Palmer, 1986)

As one born on the coast and educated in the cosmopolitan southern Peru city of Arequipa, Professor Guzmán was very much affected by the very different reality he found in the much poorer rural indigenous sierra of Ayacucho where subsistence agriculture predominated. As a result, after China's split with the Soviet Union in 1963-64, he found the Maoist ideological principles of peasant revolution more compatible with the reality he was then observing, and soon shifted his political allegiance and the source of his financial support accordingly. (Gorriti Ellenbogen, 1990)

Over the course of the next decade, he made several extended trips to China, where he and most of the leading members of his followers received training in party organization and guerrilla war techniques. Given his ideological formation at the radical fringes of Communism, he was attracted to the more extreme tenets of permanent revolution advocated by Mao and his wife during the Cultural Revolution in China, which was taking place during the years he was traveling there. (Gorriti, 1994: 173-176)

Back at the University of Huamanga, the ideological ground work Professor Guzmán had been carrying out produced results in the 1968 university elections, which his supporters won. During the 1968-1972 period of university control by his now Maoist group, the last vestiges of the original principles of the institution were abandoned. Guzmán was named Secretary General, a position which enabled him to name his supporters to key positions and open the university to all, which produced a chaotic mix of Maoist ideological orthodoxy and facilities overwhelmed by underprepared students. (Degregori, 1990)

Although eventually defeated in subsequent elections, the legacy of a politicized institution in which ideological criteria overrode quality education remained. Many of the original members of Guzmán's central committee leading his now fully Maoist party, by now known as the Communist Party of Peru – Shining Path (PCP-SL), came from the faculty and students of the University of Huamanga. Guzmán himself left the university in 1974 and went underground, where he continued to prepare his organization for a future guerrilla war.

In spite of these developments, which would normally have attracted the attention of central government authorities and quite possibly have led to

steps to restore the educational mission of the University of Huamanga and undermine the PCP-SL, it didn't happen. In part, this was due to the isolated location of the university in Ayacucho, largely out of view of national officials in the coastal capital of Lima. Inaction was also the result of an institutionalized military coup in 1968, which overthrew the elected president and brought to power a self-titled Revolutionary Military Government (GRM) determined to effect change along socialist principles, including nationalization of private and foreign companies, agrarian reform, and worker self-management. (Palmer, 1986)

As a result, the GRM was less interested in stemming the influence of left political parties than with reducing the role of traditional elites. Such a perspective by this military government favored socialist and communist parties and unions, strange as that may seem. Over the course of the 12-years of military rule, then, all of them, including the PCP-SL, continued to function and to grow largely unimpeded. In fact, by the time the military realized that its reformist agenda was much too ambitious given available resources, and moved to turn the political system back over to elected civilian government, the multiple parties of the largely Marxist-Leninist-Maoist left had become Peru's second largest political force. (Klarén, 2000)

With one exception, the Peruvian left political organizations decided to participate in the electoral process, including a constitutional convention that produced the progressive Constitution of 1979 and, in 1980, the country's first national elections based on universal suffrage. Over the course of the 1980s, in fact, most left parties joined forces in the United Left (IU) and retained their number two position in national as well as municipal elections. Only Shining Path chose a different route.

The University of Huamanga was the incubator and facilitator of the PCP-SL under the leadership of Professor Guzmán in the 1960s and early 1970s, and provided the institutional cover for the continuous proselytization of faculty and students. By the mid-1970s, after Shining Path's founder, leader, ideologist, and organizer had gone into hiding, he had succeeded in using his university position to create a regional network of supporters. Over the next several years, this network became the foundation of what was to become his guerrilla organization.

It included not only radicalized UNSCH graduates who returned to their communities but also some who took up positions in other public universities in the highland provinces. Many of these were founded in the 1960s as part of a major government expansion of post-secondary school insti-

tutions and needed to be staffed quickly from what was initially a limited pool of candidates. Even with a very small number of Shining Path militants in their faculty ranks, given the tolerant atmosphere for left ideological perspectives in universities at the time, several soon became producers of radicalized student recruits as well.

The combination of isolation from the center, determined and charismatic leadership, a congenial university environment, the presence of a variety of Communist states in the international arena, Cuba's support of guerrilla movements in Latin America, training in China, and a tolerant military regime in Peru, all contributed to Abimael Guzmán's ability to slowly build a significant political force over a 17-year period. At each critical juncture, he chose the more radical ideological option, from his student days in Arequipa to the Cultural Revolution in China.

When Guzmán's Chinese mentors, Madame Mao and her fellow extremists, lost out to the more pragmatic moderates in 1976, both he and Shining Path were cut off from their financial and ideological support. Instead of fading away, however, he spent the next four years in Peru preparing to launch a guerrilla war based on his own exhaustive study of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology. He concluded that only the proper application of these ideological principles could produce the pure revolutionary state that every other Communist regime had failed to generate once in power.

Shining Path and Peru's "People's War"

The moment Guzmán chose to begin a people's war was May 18, 1980, on the eve of Peru's first national elections in 17 years and the first ever with universal suffrage. Even though the objective conditions for guerrilla war could not have been less favorable at this particular time, he reasoned that if he followed Lenin's voluntarist dictum of violent actions by a guerrilla force to create favorable conditions, he could be successful in the ultimate goal of a violent overthrow of the regime in power. (Palmer, 2015: 252-254)

Although the war itself is not the principal focus of this study, it is instructive to note that his quixotic calculation proved to be correct. By the early 1990s, Guzmán and Shining Path appeared to be about to take power. Why this happened is instructive for our understanding of the factors beyond the capacity of the guerrillas themselves which can contribute to the expansion of the violence rather than to bring it under control.

First of all, the government delayed for more than two years before it began to take Shining Path seriously, in part because it was operating in a remote region of Peru which authorities did not consider to be very important. During this time, the guerrillas were able to move beyond their original university haven to build up their support bases in Ayacucho, arm themselves with weapons and dynamite through attacks on police stations and local private mines, and destroy infrastructure.

Secondly, when the government finally did respond by declaring the area an emergency zone under military control and sending troops, they carried out indiscriminate attacks on local indigenous communities, killing thousands in the process. By driving survivors into the arms of Shining Path, the military helped to strengthen rather than weaken the guerrilla forces they were trying to destroy. The military's actions also served to demonstrate to the most affected that the Peruvian state was not concerned about the welfare of the area's indigenous population.

Third, contributing to Shining Path's momentum was a set of central government economic policies in the late 1980s that brought about hyperinflation, crippling negative growth, and a hollowing out of government services. Most of the population was negatively affected and began to doubt the ability of authorities to manage the country. Military capacity was also seriously impacted by the economic crisis, and thousands of officers and subordinates resigned. When the guerrillas, following the Maoist principle of taking the war from the countryside to the cities, began to attack targets in the capital of Lima itself, it appeared to many that Guzmán and his guerrilla organization were well on their way to defeat government forces and take power. (Palmer, 2015, 254-256)

Why Shining Path Failed

Yet against all odds, Shining Path failed. Why this happened is an object lesson in the steps a government can take to overcome an existential threat.

First of all, military authorities finally realized that the counterinsurgency approach they had followed was a failure. With the assistance of a small group of outside military and security advisors, the Peruvian armed forces adopted a radically different set of procedures. These included a focus on human rights, civic action, smaller operational units which included personnel from the area, and the training and very modest arming of local, community-based civil defense forces, known as *rondas campesinas*. The

military finally recognized that it was necessary to enlist the support of the local community to be able to counteract Shining Path advances.

Secondly, the Ministry of the Interior quietly established a specialized unit of the national police force whose only responsibility was to find and track the Shining Path leadership. It had become clear that the guerrilla organization was dependent on a very few individuals for formulating the strategy and tactics of their operations. If they could be located and captured, the government would be able to deliver a blow to Shining Path from which it might not be able to recover. None was more important than the group's key figure, founder, ideologue, and chief strategist, Abimael Guzmán Reynoso himself.

Thirdly, although the government changed its approach in other ways as well, none was more significant than the introduction of a micro-development program targeted primarily at the 200 poorest districts in the country. Most of these were in the rural highlands, and most were affected by Shining Path presence and often by guerrilla control as well. The program was based on the presence of several small, decentralized new government agencies which consulted with local community leaders to determine what programs they wanted and provided the materials, with community members providing the labor to carry them out. They included small projects in such areas as potable water, electrification, reforestation, access road or trails, irrigation, and schools. By responding to local needs and priorities, government demonstrated, however belatedly, that it had community members concerns in mind and merited their support. (Palmer, 2001: 147-152, 170-175)

In combination, such significant shifts in central authorities' responses to the insurgency enabled the government to regain the initiative in the guerrilla war. Although Shining Path pressed forward with plans to carry out a final offensive, the popular support it had long claimed no longer existed. By the time the police unit dedicated to tracking down the leadership located Guzmán himself and captured him, several other members of the Central Committee, and the master plan for the final offensive without firing a shot, Shining Path was a spent force. Although sporadic violence continued for some time, the remnants ceased to represent a threat to the state. (Palmer, 2015: 257-261)

Lessons Learned

What lessons can we take away from the Peruvian experience?

1. The ability of a single individual to organize a guerrilla insurgency through long-term preparation that included a clear ideological prescription, recruitment of supporters, preparation of cadre and the launching of armed struggle based on his interpretation of the proper application of radical Maoist ideological principles

2. The role of the university as an incubator of radicalization in a broader Latin American context of university autonomy from government interference, internal administrative participation by students and faculty, and a tradition of anti-establishment behavior

3. The presence of revolutionary options as role models, as well as the availability of financial support and training by outside socialist state actors

4. A specific national context of permissiveness for Marxist groups within the university and in the wider body politic

5. The formation of a radical Maoist organization with a Central Committee made up entirely of university graduates and faculty without representation from the indigenous population or a single speaker of an indigenous language

6. A guerrilla campaign based entirely on the application of the "proper" interpretation of radical Maoist ideology

7. A guerrilla organization dominated by a single figure whose elimination would jeopardize its ability to continue to operate

8. A government that was unwilling or unable to apply appropriate counterinsurgency responses until threatened with its very existence

9. A beleaguered government's willingness to seek discrete outside assistance and to carry out its recommendations

10. The implementation of a set of appropriate new approaches to counterinsurgency and community development which overcame the threat and responded to popular needs which regained support

A Broader View of Universities and Radicalism

These lessons learned are, by and large, specific to the Latin American and Peruvian experiences. Universities have had a particular historical dynamic that made them more autonomous and more politically oriented than in some parts of the world. The more permissive environment for the presence and expansion of Marxist groups that was found in Peru from the 1960s to the 1980s was unusual, even in the region. The fact that a primary radical organizing principle was based on ideological rather than religious fundamentalism also distinguishes Latin America from some other regions of the world, such as the Middle East. The presence of the Cuban revolution and the figure of Fidel Castro offered a particular model to university youth. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Communist states of Eastern Europe, and China's shift to a less radical economic approach, revolutionary options based on one variety or another of Communism have ceased to serve as models.

In conclusion, if we stand back to consider what might be learned from Peru's experience with Shining Path and the importance of the university in its development that could be applied more generally in other national contexts, there do appear to be a number of relevant elements.

1. The need for government authorities to pay close attention to radical leadership as it emerges within academic institutions. As this case has demonstrated, a university refounded with a distinctive mission to serve the wider community in which it was located was progressively subverted by a charismatic, ideologically-driven professor. It wasn't the radicalism of the institution but rather that of the individual leader who turned it into a vehicle to pursue his own violent revolutionary agenda. In so doing, he completely undermined the original educational and community improvement missions of the university.

2. The value of official economic support for less privileged students who gain admission to the university, which could serve to blunt the appeal of radical demagogues

3. The provision of sufficient resources to universities to enable them to offer quality academic programs for students in areas where both national needs and post-graduate employment opportunities are greatest, which would be likely to reduce the appeal of radicalism

4. A willingness of central government security forces to establish and maintain a presence in more remote areas of the country to help nip radical organizing there in the bud

5. A robust program of micro-development in local communities to win support by responding to priorities as local populations define them, which would serve to undermine efforts by radical groups to establish a presence and advance their agendas beyond the university environment

6. A willingness by central government to treat ethnic or other minorities as respected members of the national population rather than as outsiders, which serves to limit the possibility of a turn to anti-government radicalism.

It is clearly the case that lessons learned from experiences in one part of the world do not necessarily translate well into other historical, cultural, religious, and political contexts. Nevertheless, the ability of a radical organization like Shining Path to emerge in a university under the leadership of a single professor over well more than a decade should offer an object lesson in how an institutional context specifically designed for learning and contributing to national progress can be grossly manipulated and abused. The challenge is how to prevent such dynamics from developing in the first place or, if already present, how to deal with them without destroying the basic principles on which the university is based.

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