THESE DE DOCTORAT

NNT : 2023UPASK004

"The Only Correct Line": A Transnational History of French Maoism in Catholic Mexico During the Late Sixties

"La seul ligne juste" : Une histoire transnationale du maoïsme français dans le Mexique catholique de la fin des années soixante

Thèse de doctorat de l'Université Paris-Saclay préparée dans le cadre d'une cotutelle entre l'Université Paris-Saclay et University of Notre Dame

École doctorale n° 629 : Sciences sociales et humanités (SSH)
Spécialité de doctorat : Histoire
Graduate School : « Humanités - Sciences du Patrimoine »
Référent : Université d'Évry Val d'Essonne

Thèse préparée dans les unités de recherche **IDHES (Université Paris-Saclay, Univ Evry, ENS Paris-Saclay, CNRS)** et le History Department of the Universisty of Notre Dame, sous la direction de **Frank GEORGI**, professeur, la co-direction de **Jaime Pensado**, MCF

Thèse soutenue à Paris-Saclay, le 24 Mai 2023

Jorge Ivan PUMA CRESPO

Composition du Jury

Edward BEATTY Professeur, University of Notre Dame	Président
Véronique HEBRARD Professeur, Université de Lille	Rapporteur & Examinateur
Geneviève VERDO Professeur, Université Paris 1	Rapporteur & Examinateur
Darren DOCHUK Professeur, University of Notre Dame	Examinateur
Nicolas HATZFELD Professeur Émérite, Université d'Evry-PS	Examinateur
Nikhil MENON Maître de conférences, University of Notre Dame	Examinateur
Eugenia PALIERAKI Maîtresse de Conférences, CY Cergy Paris Université	Examinatrice

université PARIS-SACLAY | ÉCOLE DOCTORALE Sciences Sociales et Humanités (SSH)

Titre : "La seul ligne juste" : Une histoire transnationale du maoïsme français dans le Mexique catholique de la fin des années soixante

Mots clés : Maoïsme, Eglise catholique -- Histoire, Mexique, France, Années 1960, Transnationalisme

Résumé : Ma thèse analyse les liens entre le radicalisme français, l'activisme catholique post-Vatican II et les mouvements de protestation mexicains afin de fournir la première histoire transnationale de la Política Popular (Politique populaire). Ce groupe maoïste, le plus influent du Mexique, trouve ses racines dans la formation intellectuelle d'Adolfo Orive Bellinger, un étudiant de l'économiste Charles Bettelheim qui a passé quatre ans à Paris dans les années soixante.

Si les chercheurs ont étudié cette époque de radicalisme en Amérique latine en se concentrant sur l'impact de la révolution cubaine et la présence impérialiste des États-Unis dans la région, ils n'ont pas examiné le rôle de l'Europe occidentale, de la Chine maoïste et de la question religieuse. Pour combler cette lacune, je m'appuie sur des sources d'histoire orale et des archives officielles et privées de cinq pays pour construire un récit à plusieurs niveaux du maoïsme français et situer le cas mexicain et ses militants dans le contexte mondial plus large du militantisme de gauche des "Global Sixties" (c.1956-c.1976).

Pour compliquer ce récit, je soutiens que l'idée d'une politique de ligne de masse qui a largement défini l'époque se superpose aux aspects progressistes du catholicisme. Issues des universités parisiennes, des écoles de Pékin et des cercles catholiques, les idées révolutionnaires françaises de l'époque ont joué un rôle fondamental dans l'émergence d'une gauche transnationale qui s'est identifiée à la révolution culturelle chinoise. Les leaders des deux mouvements ont permis la formation de coalitions politiques et ont partagé une compréhension similaire des modèles de développement économique qui ont permis l'émergence d'un "script" maoïste d'activisme dans les communautés rurales, d'insertion dans le syndicalisme de l'industrie métallurgique et de mobilisation des nouveaux migrants urbains.

En plus de rassembler les études sur la Nouvelle Gauche radicale et le catholicisme progressiste dans le contexte transnational des Global Sixties, je décentre l'histoire du radicalisme étudiant au Mexique à la fois de la capitale nationale et de l'année 1968. Je réponds ainsi à une série de questions qui n'ont pas reçu suffisamment d'attention de la part des historiens : Comment les étudiants et les prêtres mexicains se sont-ils impliqués dans les réseaux transnationaux de pensée radicale ? Comment ont-ils apporté ces idées à leurs communautés ? Et comment leurs interactions ont-elles façonné le radicalisme des Global Sixties ?

Title : "The Only Correct Line": A Transnational History of French Maoism in Catholic Mexico During the Late Sixties

Keywords : Maoism, Catholicism, Mexico, France, Global Sixties, transnational history

Abstract: My dissertation analyzes the links between French radicalism, post-Vatican II Catholic activism, and Mexican protest movements to provide the first transnational history of Política Popular (People's Politics). This was the most influential Maoist group in Mexico with roots in the intellectual upbringing of Adolfo Orive Bellinger, a student of the economist Charles Bettelheim who spent four years in Paris during the sixties.

While scholars have studied this era of radicalism in Latin America, focusing on the impact of the Cuban Revolution and the imperialist presence of the US in the region, they have failed to look at the role of Western Europe, Maoist China, and religion. To fill the gap, I rely on oral history sources and official and private archives from five countries to build a multilayered narrative of French Maoism and situate the Mexican case and its activists in the broader global context of the leftwing militancy of the "Global Sixties" (c.1956—c.1976).

In complicating this narrative, I argue that the idea of mass line politics that largely defined the era overlapped with progressive aspects of Catholicism. Coming out of Parisian universities, Beijing schools, and Catholic circles, the French Revolutionary ideas of the era played a fundamental role in the emergence of a transnational Left that identified with the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Leaders of both movements enabled political coalitions and shared similar understandings of economic patterns of development that allowed for the emergence of a Maoist "script" of activism in rural communities, insertion in the metal industry unionism, and mobilization of new urban migrants.

In addition to bringing together the scholarships of the radical New Left and progressive Catholicism in the transnational context of the Global Sixties, I decenter the history of student radicalism in Mexico from both the nation's capital and the year 1968. In this effort, I answer a set of questions that have not received enough attention from historians: How did Mexican students and priests get involved in transnational networks of radical thinking? How did they bring those ideas to their communities? And how did their interactions shape the radicalism of the Global Sixties?

1 Supporting Institutions

2 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my advisors, Jaime M. Pensado and Frank Georgi, for their patience and feedback. This endeavor would not have been possible without the support of professors Marnix Dressen, Darren Dochuk, and Alexander Martin, who believed in the project and worked for its approval by Notre Dame and Paris-Saclay. Also, I am incredibly grateful to my defense committee (professors Ted Beatty and Nikhil Menon) and jury members (Nicolas Hatzfeld, Véronique Hebrard, Eugenia Palieraki, and Geneviève Verdo), who generously provided their time and knowledge.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this dissertation by the Fulbright-García Robles Postgraduate Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and Comisión México-Estados Unidos para el Intercambio Educativo y Cultural (COMEXUS). Its contents are solely the author's responsibility and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Fulbright Program, the Government of the United States, or the Comisión México-Estados Unidos para el Intercambio Educativo y Cultural (COMEXUS).

Moreover, this dissertation could not have advanced without the generous support and funding of the following institutions: The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, the Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de las Revoluciones de México, the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, the Centro de Estudios de China-México de la Facultad de Economía de la UNAM (CECHIMEX), and the American Catholic Historical Association. Their funding allowed me to travel to archives in Mexico, France, and the Netherlands to conduct research. Additionally, this dissertation is based upon research supported by the Chateaubriand Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences of the Embassy of France in the United States.

Finally, this work was supported by a public grant overseen by the French National Research Agency (ANR) as part of the «Investissements d'Avenir» program, through the "ADI 2020" project funded by the IDEX Paris-Saclay, ANR-II-IDEX-0003-02.

I want to sincerely thank Adela Cedillo, Susanna de Stradis, Jaime Ortega, Gema Santamaría-Kloppe, Sarah Miles, Julio Ernesto Souza de Oliveira, and David Carlson for their editing help, feedback sessions, and moral support. Thanks should also go to Adolfo Orive Bellinger, Jean Meyer, Gabino Martínez (†), Jesús Vargas Valdés, Agustín Acosta, Javier Gil(†), Hugo Andrés Araujo, José Augusto Sánchez Galindo, Pablo Mijangos, Benigno Martínez, Carlos Castañon, Luis Hernández Navarro, and Bernard Chavance, who deeply impacted this dissertation through their inspiration, support, and shared knowledge.

I am also thankful for the selfless help of my interviewees and informers from Torreón, Gómez Palacio, Durango de Victoria, and Mexico City. They provided me with information without any retribution, but my commitment to represent their words faithfully. Any mistake in the dissertation is entirely mine. I am also grateful to the archivists and librarians in Argentina, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United States. They offered me their time and knowledge, pointing towards sources I did not know before, and opened new venues of research that improved my dissertation.

I would like to recognize the hard work of love and sacrifice of my wife, Rebeca Romo. She was the inspiration and my rock-solid support to finish this dissertation. I want to acknowledge the unflinching support of my parents, Jorge Puma Armendariz and Angelita Crespo, and my brother, Sinue Puma. Finally, my Ph.D. resulted from three generations of hard-working people who rose from poverty thanks to the Mexican Revolution's efforts to help the peasants and the working class. Accordingly, my parents and grandparents taught me to work for the people, and I wrote this dissertation on that spirit of service to the truth and justice. As Víctor Jara said: Yo canto porque mi guitarra tiene sentido y razón (I sing because my guitar has meaning and reason).

3 CONTENTS

4 FIGURES

5 INTRODUCTION

5.1 OVERVIEW

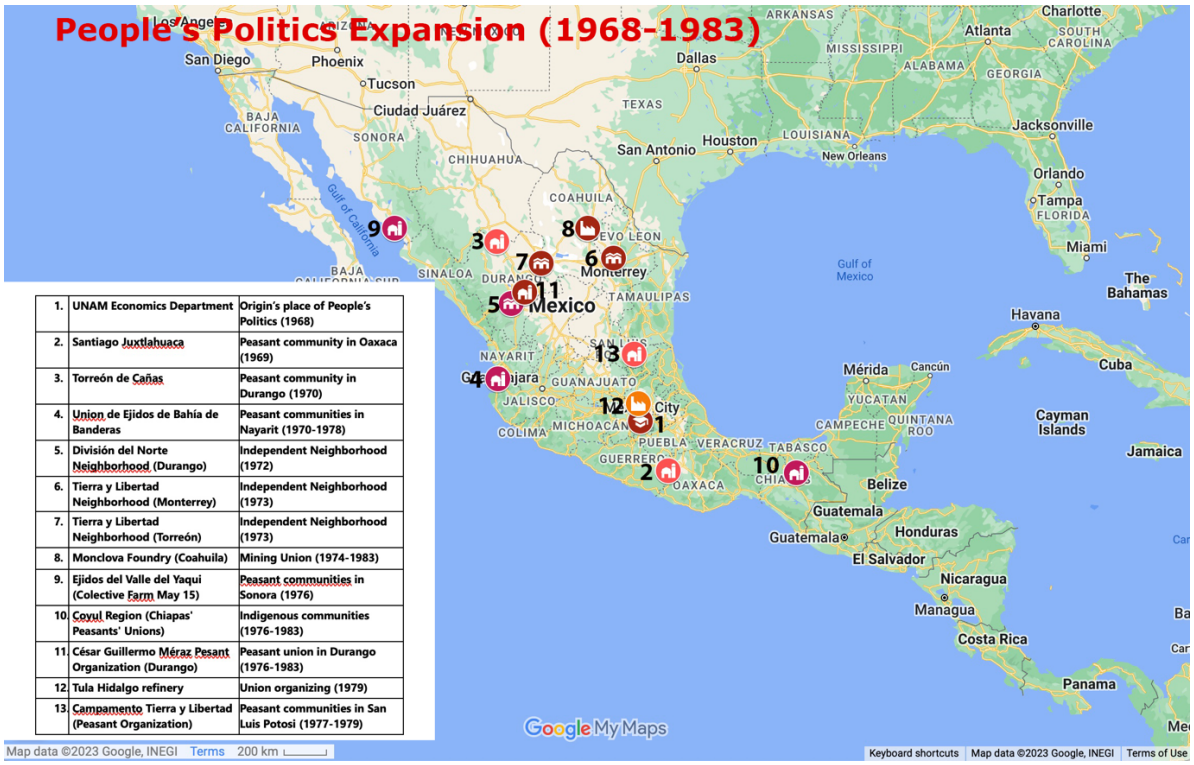
My dissertation examines the reception of the Mao Zedong thought in Catholic Mexico as a first step towards a transnational and comparative history of the impact of the Chinese Revolution with attention to religion in the formation of one of Latin America's largest leftwing groups during the late Sixties. I pay particular attention to political activism, including the important role Maoists played in union politics and the creation of an organized squatter movement in northern cities of Mexico. I rely on oral history sources and internal documents of Mexican and French Maoist organizations. The latter were influential as some of the founders of Maoism in Mexico became politically engaged in Paris during the period examined in my dissertation. In addition, I draw from a broad range of national newspapers representing various parts of Mexico, as well as official and non-official archives from Argentina, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United States.

With these various sources, I build a multilayered narrative of Maoism and situate the Mexican case in the broader context of leftwing militancy during the Global Sixties (c.1956—c.1976), when a series of convergent and sometimes interrelated events impacted Latin America after the Second World War. The rise of a radical Left in love with armed struggle, the countercultural leanings of certain elites and some working-class sectors, the questioning of the traditional hierarchies, and the expansion of new spiritual options spanned across the late 1950s until the mid-1970s. As Van Goose argued, the period, and not only the New Left, was a collection of movements overlapping one to the other.[1]

[1] See Van Gosse, "A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left," in *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, ed. Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy

This dissertation examines how and why the image of Mao's socialist revolutionary practice attracted not only students, peasants, and workers but also priests. I argue that the idea of mass line politics overlapped with progressive elements of the Catholic culture to enable those political coalitions. Moreover, I demonstrate that shared economic development patterns (industrialization, migration to the cities, rural unrest) explain the emergence of a Maoist "script" of activism in rural communities, insertion in the metal industry unionism, and mobilization of new urban migrants. For that purpose, I follow the history of the organization Política Popular (People's Politics) and its interactions with different social movements across Mexico during the latter and more radical years of the Global Sixties, from 1968 to 1979, when leftwing activist risked their lives in the middle of a bloody counterinsurgent campaign. As shown in figure 1, People's Politics extended its influence across Mexico's diverse territory but had its main operations center in northern Mexico.

Rosenzweig (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 279.



1.	UNAM Economics Department	Origin's place of People's Politics (1968)
2.	Santiago Juxtlahuaca	Peasant community in Oaxaca (1969)
3.	Torreón de Cañas	Peasant community in Durango (1970)
4.	Union de Ejidos de Bahía de Banderas	Peasant communities in Nayarit (1970-1978)
5.	División del Norte Neighborhood (Durango)	Independent Neighborhood (1972)
6.	Tierra y Libertad Neighborhood (Monterrey)	Independent Neighborhood (1973)
7.	Tierra y Libertad Neighborhood (Torreón)	Independent Neighborhood (1973)
8.	Monclova Foundry (Coahuila)	Mining Union (1974-1983)
9.	Ejidos del Valle del Yaqui (Colective Farm May 15)	Peasant communities in Sonora (1976)
10.	Coyul Region (Chiapas' Peasants' Unions)	Indigenous communities (1976-1983)
11.	César Guillermo Méraz Pesant Organization (Durango)	Peasant union in Durango (1976-1983)
12.	Tula Hidalgo refinery	Union organizing (1979)
13.	Campamento Tierra y Libertad (Peasant Organization)	Peasant communities in San Luis Potosi (1977-1979)

Figure 1-1: People's Politics' Expansion (1968-1979)[2]

Decentering the history of student radicalism in Mexico from both the nation's capital and the year 1968, I complicate the all too familiar narratives of the 1960s and 1970s, which tend to minimize the role of the Catholic Church. Following the religious persecution of the late 1920s, Mexican bishops embraced a reactionary stance towards liberalism and socialism.[3] Yet, in the Global context of the Sixties, not all the priests on

[2] Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. "People's Politics' Expansion (1968-1979)." Ciudad de México, Google Maps, Accessed on May 15 2023.

[3] The Mexican Catholic Church faced the changes imposed by the Second Vatican Council with a sense of uneasiness and resistance. The Catholic church had suffered the impact of a social revolution and a civil war that lasted ten years (1910-1921), followed by religious persecution by the radical faction of the post-revolutionary Government during the 1920 and early 1930s. The Church spent the next thirty years trying to rebuild

the ground adopted this reactionary position.

Building over previous theological and political developments of the 1930s and 1940s, the Catholic Church began in the Sixties a process of deep reform towards modernizing its doctrine and functioning, an updating (aggiornamento).[4] In 1959, pope John XXIII called for a gathering of bishops and cardinals from all over the world in Rome in 1962, the Second Vatican Council. The Council lasted three years (1962-1965), and its official documents emphasized the collective nature of the Church. Afterward, the Church replaced the idea of an institution centered on the religious hierarchy (pope and clergy) with the principle of a Church composed of the sum of all the baptized believers, the "people of God."[5] In Latin America, the changes brought by the Council produced a powerful reaction. Then, in 1968 at its Medellin meeting, the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) pronounced itself for a social and political change putting the needs of the workers and peasant masses, the poor, in the center of the Church preoccupations.[6] Through these two epochal events, the Catholic Church had its own encounter with the Sixties.

---

its institutional capacities and public influence. For an interpretation of the history of the Mexican Church and its relationship with the changes brought by the Vatican II I rely on Edward Larry Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia Católica en México a partir del Concilio Vaticano II: 1964-1974" (Maestría en historia de Hispanoamerica Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977).

[4] For the antecedents of the Catholic "Liberation Theology" in Europe, see Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology, First Wave (1924-1959)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[5] For a study of the impact of the Vatican II reforms in Europe, see Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2015).

[6] For an analysis of the events of the Conference, see Charles Antoine, Guerre froide et Eglise catholique: l'Amérique latine (Paris: Cerf, 2000), 231-33.

In examining the important role of religion in the shaping of the Global Sixties, I argue a small but influential progressive group of Catholics played a defining role in the history of Maoism in Mexico. In so doing, I explore the impact the global radicalism of the Church had in Mexico beyond the usual figures of leadership (Bishops) and that of the intelligentsia (theologians and intellectuals). Instead, my research examines how and why parish priests from Torreón, in the northern state of Coahuila, organized into the Nazas-Aguanaval group. Moreover, it explores the reasons why these priests became involved in militant politics without abandoning their faith and without seeing any contradiction between active political participation in leftwing politics and their pastoral practice.

Through a history of Maoism in Mexico with attention to its counterparts in France and South America, I bring the global into the national without losing track of the local. In this effort, I answer the following questions: How did Mexican students and priests get involved in transnational networks of radical thinking? How did they bring those ideas to their communities? Why did they choose Maoism as the path towards a socialist revolution in Mexico, and what does this story tell us about the broader context of the Global Sixties? What are the possibilities and limits of a strategy that relies on building upon differences but emphasizes the unity of action?

5.2 METHODOLOGY

I follow Lynn Hunt's insights and her critique of modernization theory, Marxism, the Annales school, and the cultural turn in history. She argues that those historiographical approaches left behind the search for answers to the "big questions" of history in the case of the latter, while the former tended to ask the wrong questions by being tied to a teleology centered on the West. Hunt instead argues that a transnational approach from the bottom up brings back interest in the causes of social and political events

without a Eurocentric bias.[7]

I draw from Lynn Hunt's discussion of the transnational as an explicative axis of my dissertation. However, while she places emphasis on the idea of interdependence of global events as the true mark of transnationally connected processes, I argue that interconnection, the mere existence of contact between actors, remains equally important. That is the reason I point out the activities of non-state actors moving within and among circuits of exile, revolutionary tourism, international conferences, and study abroad during the sixties. The use of a transnational approach allows me to frame my narrative as a continuous process of multidirectional influences intervening in the formation of a local moment of dissent and accommodation.[8] This last step, the focus on the local conditions and local forms of participation, remains a fundamental correction against state-centered approaches that may erase or downplay the role of contingency and the agency of other actors.

Accessibility of sources in multiple locations around the world and their interpretation shaped my election of the transnational lens over the idea of a "global" history of Maoism. Moreover, the connections between Maoism and Catholic progressivism militated against the idea of simultaneity and structural explanations. Besides, the transnational approach provided an amicable setting to analyze different kinds of agency: elite and non-elite, state and non-official, local and beyond the local. The parallels between Maoist groups were striking and warranted a close reading of their literature available in archives dispersed along the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

During a decade of research, I found in their almost forgotten collections

---

[7] See Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (WW Norton & Company, 2014), 44-77.

[8] For a discussion about global and transnational history approaches see Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton University Press, 2016), 62-84.

the links between diverse groups or at least the shared element explaining how they ended up going to the same places, using the same tactics, and finding the same problems. As a result, despite its transnational focus on the emergence of Maoist groups in France and Mexico, the dissertation also used a comparative method to explain the different outcomes produced by French Maoism when facing similar problems.[9] Combining the transnational and comparative methods underscored the role of shared economic, political, and social processes in the path followed by the young Maoists during the Global Sixties: migration to the cities, deindustrialization, rigid trade union structures, state surveillance, and repression.[10] The weight of the comparative method was particularly salient in the analysis of the insertion of students in the working-class environment in the last chapter of this dissertation.

For this dissertation, I combined oral history research with a close reading of archival materials and secondary sources. I began interviewing my subjects during my Master's in 2012, as part of an oral history project on People's Politics, and I have kept collecting life stories of its militants since then.[11] At the time of finishing the dissertation, my oral history archive has extended to twenty-five interviews totaling more than sixty hours of tape. I conducted these interviews in an open format with the goal of reconstructing the divergent life histories of people who participated in Maoism in Mexico. These interviewees included, among others, twenty

---

[9] On the use of the comparative method after considering the interconnected nature of global history, see Diego Olstein, "Thinking History Globally: Comparing and Connecting," in *Thinking History Globally* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[10] For a similar exercise combining the transnational and comparative methods, in their case, to explain the similarities and differences of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, see Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[11] For a discussion about life history as a relationship between self-constructing narratives and the interviewer see Lynn Abrams, "Self," in *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 33-35.

militants of People's Politics, one former Catholic priest, and an active priest. I complemented these testimonies with archival and newspaper sources from Argentina, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United States.

In the United States, my sources included documents from the Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (First Latin American Meeting of Christians for Socialism) located at Columbia University as well as the records from the Belden-Fields collection of American and French Maoist pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers (1960s-1980s) housed at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. In Argentina and Mexico, I respectively examined the Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo (Priests for the Third World) documents in Buenos Aires and the government surveillance files from the National Archives (AGN) in Mexico City. These and additional documents from France's Archives Nationales and the Catholic Documentation Center at Nijmegen, Netherlands, not only confirmed the global nature of my project, but also reaffirmed my transnational approach.

In addition, these various sources from across the world helped me connect the dots between People's Politics and its allies in the Catholic Church with their more famous peers in the Liberation Theology circles of the Southern Cone. Finally, they allowed me to map the political trajectory of Adolfo Orive Bellinger, the principal founder of People's Politics, during his studies in France and England with intriguing findings from the personal archive of his professors Charles Bettelheim and the Louis Althusser's collection at the Institute Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (Institute for Contemporary Publishing Archives or IMEC).

Most of my research emerged from Mexican and French archives, both public and private, as well as local and national. I used the findings in these archives to contrast the narratives of former militants with those of state surveillance records and the memories of public intellectuals. For example, the files collected by the Mexican intelligence agencies on Adolfo Orive Bellinger and his correspondence with Charles Bettelheim at the French Archives Nationales contained information about his involvement in

radical politics from 1958 until the early 1990s. I juxtaposed these with the narratives from my oral history testimonies and those from police informants from Mexico. Combining these sources helped me overcome the pitfalls of fragmentary information, but not without first raising the problem of the limits and bias of the participants' memories.

5.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation intervenes in a current discussion on the meaning and consequences of the history of the Sixties in Mexico and the world. In the last decade, historians of the anglophone world have proposed the label Global Sixties to approach the study of the diverse movements and events that marked the period between 1956 and 1973.[12] They have built over a previously contested terrain of interpretations on the student protests, decolonization, and counterculture, mainly centered on the Western World. The end of the Cold War and the opening of the former Soviet bloc archives, together with the growing interest in the African, Asian, and Latin American perspectives, forced a global turn in the study of the Sixties.

In the case of Latin America, Eric Zolov defined the Global Sixties approach as: "[a] conceptual approach to understanding local change within a transnational framework, one constituted by multiple crosscurrents of geopolitical, ideological, cultural, and economic forces. Such forces produced a simultaneity of "like" responses across disparate geographical contexts, suggesting interlocking causes.[…]"[13] In the following years, the global turn proved fruitful as previously understudied topics and subjects gained importance.

---

[12] For an overview of the current state of the art of the Global Sixties literature, see Martin Klimke et al., *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties : Between Protest and Nation-Building*, First edition.. ed. (London : Taylor and Francis, 2018).

[13] Eric Zolov, "Introduction: Latin America in the Global Sixties," *The Americas* 70, no. 3 (2014): 354.

While the literature on Latina Americas's Global Sixties has successfully underscored the need to study Latin America with a transnational perspective, it has primarily placed the emphasis on cultural changes, with limited attention to the inter-connections between politics and religion.[14] Moreover, although this literature has recognized the importance of politics in the broader context of the Cold War era, and has effectively returned agency to Latin American states, it has placed little attention to Europe and China, emphasizing instead the roles of the United States and its ideological conflict with the Soviet Union. For example, in Eric Zolov's most recent book, *The Last Good Neighbor*, he brought back Cold War politics into the Global Sixties perspective by reconsidering Mexico's role in the emergence of the "Third World" and its impact on the Mexican Left.[15]

Nevertheless, despite the emphasis that Global Sixties studies have placed on the cultural aspects of the New Left and its use of the biographical as a tool to explore the emergence of transnational networks, this scholarship has paid little attention to Maoism and its intellectual roots in France. Additionally, while this historiography has expanded its chronological scope to cover the encompassing movements that shaped the New Left across the world from the 1950s to the 1970s, it has primarily emphasized Marxist and secular perspectives. In the meantime, historians began to add some subjects previously left behind. For example, Theodora Dragostinova and Kristen Ghodsee broke the crystal ceiling that limited the studies of the Global Sixties to the Western Hemisphere and published work on Bulgaria's cultural diplomacy and the women's

[14] See ibid. and Patrick Barr-Melej, *Psychedelic Chile. Youth, Counterculture, and Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship* (Chapel Hill,NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

[15] See Eric Zolov, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* (Duke University Press, 2020).

movement on the Socialist bloc.[16]

The growing diversity of subjects and topics brought by the global turn into the study of the Sixties reconfigured our understanding of the Sixties. Nonetheless, doubts about the coherence or relevance of such a broad approach emerged. Recently, Salar Mohandesi advocated for sharpening our understanding of the Global Sixties to only consider those local emancipatory events and their reactions, as well as they transnational connections during a period going from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s.[17]

Salar Mohandesi's answer to the Global Sixties impasse found a sympathetic rejoinder in Jaime Pensado's response article in *The Americas*. First, Mohandesi's proposal broke with previous culturalist approaches to the Sixties history, as the one advanced by Arthur Marwick, who underscored the countercultural and individual elements of the social movements of the period.[18] By contrast, Mohandesi and the French historiography of "1968 years" (les annés 68) focused on the political and collective nature of the contestation processes that erupted in France and Europe during the late sixties.[19] Second, in his reply to Mohandesi's article, Pensado accepted the need for a coherent periodization but argued that

---

[16] See Theodora K Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021).; and Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (Duke University Press, 2019).

[17] Salar Mohandesi, "Thinking the Global Sixties," *The Global Sixties* 15, no. 1-2 (2022/07/03 2022): 4-6, https://doi.org/10.1080/27708888.2022.2144246, https://doi.org/10.1080/27708888.2022.2144246.

[18] See Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c. 1974* (A&C Black, 2011).

[19] See Robert Frank, "Les temps de 68," in *Les annés 68 un monde en mouvement: Nouveaux regards sur une histoire plurielle (1962-1981)*, ed. Caroline Apostolopoulos, Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, and Irène Paillard (France: BDIC-Syllepse, 2008).

the "messiness" of the Sixties could be better understood by maintaining an openness to the different forces in play. Finally, as a scholar of modern Latin American history, Jaime Pensado considered Mohandesi's emphasis on "structural zones" of comparison as unfit to the study a region as diverse as Latin America.[20]

The debate between Salar Mohandesi and Jaime Pensado has established the poles where any Global Sixties research could be situated and illuminated new paths for further inquiry. Either by siding with the "kaleidoscopic" approach advocated by Pensado or by "highlighting" the emancipatory nature of the Sixties, as proposed by Mohandesi, researchers could advance a more coherent narrative of the period. Considering this context, while accepting Jaime Pensado's call to bring new voices to the conversation over the Global Sixties beyond the dichotomy of emancipatory/reactionary forces, this dissertation is a step closer to certain French historiographical interpretations of the "years 1968" as a period of political militancy and emancipatory struggles. However, the dissertation approaches the study of People's Politics through Pensado's periodization that sets 1968-1976, the late sixties, as the more radical and bleak stage of the Sixties, at least for the case of Mexico in opposition to the more utopian moment of the pre-1968 period.[21]

As a result, without falling into the temptations of writing a "militant" history, my research contributes to the historiography of the Global Sixties by drawing attention to progressive Catholicism and placing the political impact and transnational mobilization of Catholics in the radical leftwing militancy of the era. Unlike most studies on progressive Catholicism during this period, I also make significant contributions to the study of Maoism. In that sense, my research connects with recent histories of the

---

[20] Jaime M Pensado, "Teaching the Global Sixties: A Perspective from Latin America," *The Global Sixties* 15, no. 1-2 (2022).

[21] Ibid.

Global Sixties in the Socialist World and South-South exchanges. Finally, while a representative sample of Global Sixties scholars has recently turned their attention to the study of religion, little attention has been placed to examine the different ways in which progressive Catholicism shaped the Cold War era.[22]

On the one hand, for the most part, these recent studies have shared with their secular predecessors an emphasis on the countercultural elements of the period but opened a new area of research. On the other, most of the scholarship on Latin American progressive Catholicism published in English has focused on Central and South America. It has paid almost exclusive attention to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Peru, and Chile during the 1970s and 1980s, with an overwhelming emphasis on the struggles for human rights, resistance to military dictatorships, and the involvement of radical Catholics in guerrilla organizations.[23] Mexico has only played a peripheral role in this literature. Studies on Catholic progressivism only mentioned Mexico in passing when discussing its relationship with the rise of guerrilla movements or social movements.[24]

The history of Liberation Theology is the focal point of the study of progressive Catholicism in Latin America during the Sixties. The Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez coined the term Liberation Theology in 1968. Afterward, it grew around the radicalized middle-class activists of

---

[22] See Jaime M Pensado, *Love and Despair: How Catholic Activism Shaped Politics and the Counterculture in Modern Mexico* (Univ of California Press, 2023).

[23] See Michael Fleet and Brian H Smith, *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru* (University of Notre Dame Pess, 2015).

[24] See María Luisa Aspe Armella, "Las repercusiones del Concilio y de la apertura de la Iglesia y de la Compañía al mundo, en la Provincia Mexicana de la Compañía de Jesús (Pulgas: julio de 1967-noviembre de 1969)," *Historia y grafía*, no. 29 (2007). and Miguel Concha Malo et al., *La participación de los cristianos en el proceso popular de liberación en México*, ed. Pablo González Casanova, Biblioteca México: Actualidad y perspectivas, (México, D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1986).

Catholic Action in Brazil, Colombia, and Perú. A corpus of theological writings, Liberation Theology practitioners understood it mostly as a political and ecclesial project centered on fighting for structural change in Latin American social conditions. As a political theology, it mixed Catholic Theology with an interpretation of history derived from some aspects of Marxism and Dependence Theory.[25] Liberation Theology attempted to answer the question: What is the relationship between salvation and the process of human liberation throughout history? Or, more precisely, what is the meaning of the struggle against an unjust society and the creation of a new humanity in the light of the Word?[26] The way Liberation Theology practitioners in Latin America answered these questions in the Sixties put them close to a growing cohort of young New Leftists worldwide.

Surprisingly, the 1977 master's thesis of Edward Mayer-Delappe, an American seminarian writing in Spanish, has continued to be the most reliable study of Liberation Theology and progressive Catholicism in Mexico during the 1970s.[27] More recent interpretations have taken a transnational turn and brought female and black theologians to the table, successfully explaining these once marginalized actors' role in shaping Liberation Theology. Nonetheless, for the most part, this scholarship has obscured the relationship progressive Catholicism established with Marxism.[28] These latest publications have also paid little attention to Mexico and nearly always with a narrow focus on leftwing bishops such

---

[25] Josep-Ignasi Saranyana, "I. Teologías latinoamericanistas y teología de la liberación," in *Teología en América Latina: El Siglo de las teologías latinoamericanistas (1899-2001)*, ed. Josep-Ignasi Saranyana and Carmen-José Alejos Grau (Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2002), 255-65.

[26] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 83.

[27] See Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia católica en México."

[28] Cfr. Lilian Calles Barger, *The World Come of Age: An Intellectual History of Liberation Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

as Samuel Ruiz in San Cristóbal, Chiapas, and Sergio Méndez Arceo in Cuernavaca, Morelos.[29]

By comparison, the European literature on the leftwing priests' groups has underscored the political involvement of the Catholic clergy in the Global Sixties and its dialogue with the Marxist Left.[30] Inspired by the modernizing project of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), this scholarship has convincingly argued that Catholics worldwide confronted a convoluted world and broke the old political alliances with the privileged elites of society. Scholars of the Southern Cone have reached similar conclusions and have demonstrated the important role the 1968 Latin American bishops Conference (CELAM) in Medellin played in confronting institutional violence and working to advance the cause of the oppressed.[31] For example, this scholarship has produced rich studies of the various national priests' groups who followed the directives of the

---

[29] For examples of the historiography of the Liberation Theology in Mexico see Luis G Del Valle, "Teología de la Liberación en México," in *El pensamiento social de los católicos mexicanos*, ed. Roberto J. Blancarte (México, D. F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996), 266-301.; and Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez, "La teología de la liberación en México: recepción creativa del Concilio Vaticano II," *Theologica Xaveriana* 64, no. 177 (2014): 157-79. For the controversies around Ivan Illich's anti-missionary project and the impact of his presence in Cuernavaca see chapters 2 and 5 in Todd Hartch. *The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West*. (New York : Oxford University Press, 2014). For the political biographies of Samuel Ruiz and Sergio Méndez Arceo see Jean Meyer, *Samuel Ruíz en San Cristóbal* (México, D.F.: Tusquetes, 2000).; and Raúl Macín, *Méndez Arceo, ¿político o cristiano? (Una revolución de la Iglesia)*, vol. 17, Colección Duda, (México, D.F.: Editorial Posada, 1972).

[30] See Horn, *The spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties*.

[31] For an account of the impact the Council and the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM)Medellín meeting in the emergence of a progressive tendency in the Latin American Church see Pablo Richard, *Los Cristianos y la Revolución*, ed. M. Eliana Veas M., Series Debates Nacionales, colección Camino Abierto, (Santiago de Chile: Quimantú, 1973).

Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo (Priests for the Third World) and their confluence with Peronism in Argentina. It also has examined the support Cristianos por el Socialismo (Christians for Socialism) gave to the Unidad Popular coalition in Chile.[32] Other scholars have also paid attention to the less studied case of the Golconda movement in Colombia and have provided an interesting example of the different options progressive Catholic priests had in the 1970s, from armed struggle to social activism in the slums to journalism and theological reflection.[33] Finally, recent histories of the ONIS priest group in Perú analyzed the interaction between foreign-born and local priests in the middle of a revolutionary process led by the armed forces.[34]

The last two decades saw a renewed interest in the study of progressive Catholicism in Mexico during the Sixties. Most of the new studies were undergraduate theses and some doctoral dissertations with a focus on the role nuns, bishops, and lay Catholic organizations had in the emergence of a new discourse on human rights and feminism.[35] By contrast, the

---

[32] For the case of the Priests for the Third World see José Pablo Martín, *El Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo: un debate argentino* (Guadalupe:, 1992). and Marcelo Gabriel Magne, *Dios está con los pobres: el Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo, prédica revolucionaria y protagonismo social, 1967-1976* (Imago Mundi, 2004). For a history of the Chilean Christians for Socialism see Michael Ramminger, *Éramos Iglesia… en medio del pueblo: El legado de los Cristianos por el Socialismo en Chile 1971-1973*, ed. Julio Pinto Vallejos, Historia, (Santiago de Chile: LOM, 2019). and Esteban Miranda Chávez, *Cristianos por el Socialismo*, Colección America, (Concepción, Chile: Ediciones Escaparate SpA, 2020).

[33] See Javier Darío Restrepo, *La revolución de las Sotanas : Golconda 25 años después*. (Santafé de Bogotá, D.C., Colombia : Planeta, 1995).

[34] See Juan Ramírez Aguilar, "Movimiento sacerdotal ONIS: la Iglesia en el Perú ante las demandas de justicia social (1968-1975)," *Phainomenon* 13 (2014), https://doi.org/10.33539/phai.v13i1.333. and Young-Hyun Jo, *Sacerdotes y transformación social en Perú (1968-1975)* (México, D.F.: UNAM-CCyDEL, 2005).

[35] For the emergence of a new human rights discourse and the role of lay Catholics organizations had on it, see Raquel Pastor Escobar, "Vaticano II en el laicado mexicano:

studies of radical Catholic priests' organizations in Mexico were more limited. Among others, they include Young-Hyun Jo's article on the Sacerdotes para el Pueblo (Priests for the People), the 1986 classic book edited by Miguel Concha on Christian participation in popular movements, José Zárate's dissertation on the early years of father Rodolfo Escamilla in León, Guanajuato, and Pilar Puertas' text on the Mexican chapter of Christians for Socialism.[36] Most recently, Jaime Pensado published an article on father Rodolfo Escamilla's martyrdom in the context of his transnational connections during the height of the Cold War in Mexico.[37] Finally, my article on the progressive priests of La Laguna contributed to the discussion by assessing those priests' involvement with local struggles in light of the global changes brought by the Second Vatican Council. It also put in conversation the literature on progressive Catholicism with the global history of Maoism.

Commonly, the literature about global Maoism produced in the United States and Europe has paid attention to the relationship of diverse groups

---

José Álvarez Icaza y la puesta en práctica del Concilio Ecuménico" (Ph. D. UNAM, 2004).; and Ariana Quezada, "The Revolution in Crisis: A History of Human Rights in Mexico, 1970-1980" (Ph. D. University of Oklahoma, 2016). For the relationship between nuns' activism and feminism see Saúl Espino Armendáriz, "Feminismo católico en México: la historia del CIDHAL y sus redes transnacionales (c. 1960-1990)" (Ph. D. El Colegio de México, 2019).

[36] See Young-Hyun Jo, "Movimiento "Sacerdotes para el Pueblo" y la transformación socioeclesiástica en México," *Revista Iberoamericana* 21, no. 1 (2010).; Concha Malo et al., *Cristianos*.; José Israel Zárate Ortiz, "Las acciones y la represión de la Iglesia de los pobres en la diócesis de León, 1959-1969" (B.A. in History Universidad de Guanajuato, 2017).; and Pilar Puertas, "Cristianos por el Socialismo en México," in *Los proyectos católicos de nación en el México del siglo XX: Actores, ideologías y prácticas*, ed. María Gabriela Aguirre Cristiani and Nora Pérez Rayón y Elizundia (Ciudad de México: UAM-Xochimilco, 2020).

[37] See Jaime M. Pensado, "Silencing Rebellious Priests: Rodolfo Escamilla García and the Repression of Progressive Catholicism in Cold-War Mexico," *The Americas* 79, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2021.146.

with the People's Republic of China or at least with a particular idea of China. Since the 1950s, two early literatures have appeared, mostly developing independently. On one side, some studies focused on explaining those split communist groups claiming to follow the Chinese example in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These studies used intelligence and diplomatic reports from the United States or European origin. They presented an image of the perils of a new militant form of communist subversion in Asia and Latin America.[38] They tried to determine why some young militants found Mao's China attractive but blamed Chinese propaganda and subversive efforts for it. Their reliance on intelligence reports or secondary sources in English, besides this early literature's Cold War outlook, tainted its conclusions. Still, some of its insights on the importance of the social context of the leaders remained useful.

A totally different kind of literature appeared during the late 1960s and 1970s with the emergence of the New Left. These studies had the imprint of militant sympathies and Marxist theoretical leanings. Its authors were as militant as their Cold Warrior cousins but used internal sources and some direct observation on the ground to explain the emergence of Maoist groups. However, it was until the 1980s when academic works began using the sources created during the 1970s. For this literature, China remained important, but it was not central to the story. [39] According

---

[38] See Cecil Johnson, *Communist China & Latin America, 1959-1967* (Columbia University Press New York, 1970). ; and Philippe Richer, *La Chine et le Tiers Monde (1949-1969)*, Bibliothèque Historique, (Paris, France: Payot, 1971).Philippe Richer, *La Chine Et Le Tiers Monde (1949-1969)*, Bibliothèque Historique (Paris, France: Payot, 1971). Latin American academics produced works with a similar emphasis during the 1970s, see Humberto Garza Elizondo, "América Latina," in *China y el Tercer Mundo. Teoría y práctica de la política exterior de Pequín, 1956-1966*, Colección Centro de Estudios Internacionales (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1975).; and Leonardo Ruilova, *China Popular en América Latina* (Bogotá, Colombia: Sociedad Ediciones Internacionales 1978).

[39] French literature about Maoism in France falls into the first pattern. For an example of those pioneer studies see Patrick Kessel, *Le mouvement "maoïste" en France: Textes et documents, 1963-1968*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris : Union Générale D'Éditions, 1972); and Michèle Manceaux, *Les Maos en France* (France: Gallimard, 1972). For the later academic

to these authors, agency returned to the militants and sometimes to the "masses" of peasants or urban dwellers working for revolution. Besides what was happening in the United States academia, Latin American and European scholars studying social movements and the history of the Left began to retell the triumphs and defeats of the sixties upsurge.[40]

The end of the Cold War, the changes in China, and the emergence of a new historiography of the veterans of the Sixties student revolts transformed the historiography of global Maoism. A multipolar system of diverse influences bloomed after the barren silences of the 1990s. Globalization itself became the primary motive in the new research about radicals claiming the heritage of Mao from Paris to Buenos Aires. Instead of Chinese agents in every hamlet of the Peruvian Andes or Parisian outskirts, the historiography recognized dozens of students reading the Little Red Book creatively.[41] The idea of a revolutionary script interpreted in different scenarios around the world seemed to emerge as a new dominant narrative of Maoism.[42] Differing with this interpretations, the Franco-Mexican intellectual historian Camille Robcis offered a different explanation of the reception of Chinese political motifs in France by downplaying the real China in favor of the French utopia identified with

studies see A. Belden Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism. Theory and Practice in France and the United States* (New York: Autonomedia, 1988).

[40] For the Mexican case see Paulina Fernández Christlieb, *El espartaquismo en México* (México, D.F.: Ediciones "El Caballito", 1978).and Julio Moguel, *Los caminos de la izquierda* (México, D.F.: Juan Pablos, 1987).

[41] For an example of this new trend see Alexander C Cook, *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[42] Matthew D Rothwell, *Transpacific Revolutionaries: The Chinese Revolution in Latin America*, vol. 10 (Routledge, 2013).

the Cultural Revolution.[43]

Nonetheless, the new transnational historiographies of Maoism lacked some of the depth of the nationally centered research of the 1980s, and its reliance on intellectual history sources risked obscuring some of the political implications of carrying the banner of Mao.[44] The easy path of fixing the narrative of the Maoist moment into a revolving door towards non-governmental organization activism whitewashed the radical implications of student activism and some of the continuities in the ultra-Left camp and even to nowadays leftwing populism.[45] Responding to the limitations of the intellectual history of Maoism in vogue at the turn of the century, in the last ten years, researchers from Argentina, Colombia, France, Mexico, and the United States have presented a series of investigations of national cases and the first efforts of a transnational study of Maoism.[46]

---

[43] See Camille Robcis, ""China in Our Heads" Althusser, Maoism, and Structuralism," *Social Text* 30, no. 1 110 (2012).

[44] We still don't have updated research comparable to Robert Alexander's survey of Maoist organizations around the globe. Cfr. Robert J Alexander, *International Maoism in Developing World* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999).; and Robert J Alexander, *Maoism in Developed World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).

[45] For an example of the narrative of Maoism as a prelude to NGO and human rights activism see Richard Wollin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Oxford, Inglaterra: Princeton Universtiy Press, 2010). For a narrative trying to trace the connection between contemporary radical politics and Maoism in France see Collectif, *Les noveaux partisans: une histoire de la Gauche prolétarienne*, Documents, (Al Dante, 2015).

[46] For a survey of recent developments of the Latin American historiography of Maoism see Miguel Ángel Urrego, "History of Maoism in Latin America: Between the Armed Struggle and Serving the People," *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 44, no. 2 (2017). For an interesting French comparative study on Maoism see Miao Chi et al., *La Révolution culturelle en Chine et en France* (Riveneuve éditions, 2017).

Meanwhile, Maoism in Mexico remained an elusive and controversial subject until the twenty-first century's second decade. It has been usually mentioned as one of the factions of the New Left in Mexico and studied as one of the communist tendencies along with Trotskyism.[47] During the last century, Mexican and American scholars have provided overviews of the Mexican Left and have written specific studies on union and peasant struggles.

Unfortunately, except for the Liga Espartaco, Maoist organizations like the Movimiento Marxista Leninista Mexicano (Mexican Marxist-Leninist Movement) or People's Politics have not enjoyed a comprehensive analysis.[48] Mainly using oral histories of militants, internal documents from private archives or libraries, press articles, and Mexican security agencies files from the National Archives (AGN); historians who have studied Maoism in Mexico have written narratives exclusively from a national or local perspective, with scarce references to comparative or transnational connections.

Continuing with that tendency, recent popular histories of the Mexican Left as Carlos Illades's *De la Social a Morena*, dealt with People's Politics in three pages.[49] The rest of the literature that mentioned the Mexican Maoists was mainly sociological tracts or political histories of the late twentieth century peasant movements. An excellent example of those studies was the book of Paul Lawrence Haber on Durango's Maoists in the 1970s and 1980s, which explained the long march from activism to

---

[47] See Octavio Rodríguez Araujo, "El espartaquismo y el maoísmo," in *Las izquierdas en México*, Colección Política y Sociedad (México, D.F.: Orfila, 2015).

[48] See Fernández Christlieb, *El espartaquismo en México*. An exception to this tendency was the Mexican Marxist-Leninist Movement's history in Enrique Condés Lara, "El maoísmo en México.," in *Represión y rebelión en México. 1950-1985* (México, D.F.: BUAP-Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2009).

[49] See Carlos Illades, "La nueva izquierda," in *De la Social a Morena. Breve historia de la izquierda en México.* (México, D.F.: JUS, 2014).

electoral participation.[50] An exception to this rule was the article by Julio Bracho, "La izquierda integrada al Pueblo," which provided a balance of People's Politics on the eve of the Zapatista uprising of 1994.[51]

Nonetheless, in the broader scholarship of the Left and the Global Sixties, little attention has been placed on People's Politics. The efforts of a younger generation of historians and some former militants have helped to create a more nuanced discussion about the history of the Mexican Maoist organizations. Jesús Vargas' *Patria de la Juventud,* Sandra Arenal's Mujeres *de Tierra y Libertad*, and Roberto Rico's history of the Compañero organization are examples of this.[52] Most recently, former People's Politics members have taken an interest in writing studies of their organizations, such as *Poder Popular* by Adolfo Orive Bellinger and Julio Torres. Other examples include Miguel Saucedo's studies on La Laguna case, Agustín Acosta's memories in *Así lo recuerdo*, and the local histories of the urban movement in La Laguna by Salvador Hernández Vélez.[53] In addition, a new

---

[50] See Paul Lawrance Haber, *Power from Experience. Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, 2006).

[51] There is a recent French version available of the 1993 article. See Julio Bracho, "La gauche integree au peuple: Rétrospective sur politica popular," *Communisme*, no. 83-84 (2005). For a history of the Zapatista uprising and the attempt to stop it, see Ma. del Carmen Legorreta Díaz, *Religión, política y guerrilla en las Cañadas de la Selva Lacandona* (México, D.F.: Cal y Arena, 1998).

[52] See Jesús Vargas Valdés, *La patria de la juventud. Los estudiantes del Politécnico en 1968* (Chihuahua, Chih: Nueva Vizcaya Editores, 2008).; Sandra Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, Ensayo, (Monterrey, N.L.: Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes de Nuevo León-CONACULTA, 1999).; and Roberto Rico Ramirez, *El Retorno. La Unión de Colonias Populares del Valle de México (UCP-VM): sus orígenes, sus organizaciones.* (México, D. F.: Brigada para Leer en Libertad, 2012).

[53] See Adolfo Orive and José Luis Torres, *Poder Popular. Construcción de ciudadanía y comunidad* (México, D. F.: Juan Pablos-Fundación México Social Siglo XXI, 2010).; Miguel Ángel Saucedo Lozoya, "Prácticas y representaciones sociales de colonos urbanos y trabajadores agrícolas. El caso de la región lagunera en los años '70" (Ph.D. in Sciences

generation of historians that includes Azucena Citlalli Jaso, Ricardo Fuentes, Juan López Pérez, Javier Soto, Uriel Velázquez, and myself have also recently published a series of new works on the history of Mexican Maoism considering topics of gender, intellectual history, transnational connections, and political history.[54]

These recent works have advanced the study of Maoism in Mexico and have shed light on various actors that tend to be excluded in the histories of the Left, such as indigenous peoples. They have also prioritized new subjects that draw attention to the cultural production of leftist organizations. I have drawn from these interpretations of Mexican Maoism and brought attention to marginal voices. Besides radicalized students, I also examine social organization coalitions and female squatters. In addition, I bring them into conversations with my transnational actors residing in Europe and active in the various progressive institutions of the Latin American Catholic Church.

---

and Humanities for Interdisciplinary Development Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, 2016).; Agustín Acosta Zavala, *Así lo recuerdo* (Torreón, Coahuila, 2015).and Salvador Hernández Vélez, *El movimiento urbano popular en La Laguna 1970-1980* (Torreón, Coahuila: Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, 2014).

[54] See Azucena Citlalli Jaso Galván, "La Colonia Proletaria Rubén Jaramillo: La lucha por la tenencia de la tierra y la guerra popular prolongada (31 de marzo de 1973-enero de 1974)" (Licenciatura en Historia Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011).; Ricardo Yanuel Fuentes Castillo, "Procesos de formación política en la militancia maoísta en México. el caso de política popular 1968-1979" (Master in Educative Research Universidad Autónoma de Morelos, 2020).; Juan López Pérez, "La Organización Comunista Cajeme: una manifestación del maoísmo en México (1973-1978)" (Licenciatura en Historia Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2019).; José Javier Soto Gómez, "Formación y organización de las colonias del movimiento urbano en una región del Norte de México: 1972-1974," *Artificios. Revista colombiana de estudiantes de historia*, no. 22 (2023).; and Uriel Velázquez Vidal, "Historia del Partido Revolucionario del Proletariado Mexicano, 1969-1974" (Maestría en Historia y Etnohistoria Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2020).

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The rise and fall in Mexico and Latin America of a non-armed leftwing alternative to electoral politics during the 1970s has been obscured by the 1990s emphasis on Non-Governmental Organizations and the human rights discourse and its lasting effects. This was a global phenomenon that had parallels with Western Europe and North American evolutions in the fate of the Sixties New Left. My research shows how the practices of a broad coalition of students, priests, peasants, trade union activists, and squatters took the form of advancing a particular idea of the "people." In that sense, the Maoist rhetoric of "serving the people" could be translated into "creating a people" and connected with the contemporary practices of the leftwing populist movements of the twenty-first century.

People's Politics Maoists believed that a "true new type" organization only followed a correct political line when its members had woven numerous, deep, and durable ties with the broad masses. For them, living and working with the people using the mass line, or in other words, people's politics, was the only correct line.[55] To understand how using the "only correct line," this dissertation studied the history of People's Politics, dealing with the transnational history of French Maoism and its connection with Mexico's 1968.

The dissertation approaches its topic thematically and chronologically. First, Chapter 1 provides an intellectual biography of Adolfo Orive Bellinger, examines his pamphlet *Hacia una Política Popular* (Towards a People's Politics), and introduces the main ideas behind the mass-line Maoism of People's Politics. Chapter 2 analyzes how People's Politics built a significant following among university students and pushed them into an insertion process in the slums of northern Mexico. Chapter 3 then detours into the world of Catholic radicalism, another product of

[55] Anonymous, *Hacia una Política Popular*, (México, D.F.: Coalición de Brigadas Emiliano Zapata, 1968), 26.

transnational networks crossing the Atlantic and moving around the Americas. In addition, this chapter focuses on the participation of the Nazas-Aguanaval group in forming the support base of People's Politics in La Laguna. Chapter 4 returns the reader's attention to politics with an emphasis on feminism and explains how women were the backbone of People's Politics squatter movement in the northern cities of Monterrey, Durango, and La Laguna. This chapter situates women at the center of the vibrant history of organization and resistance. The dissertation closes with Chapter 5, a case study of the displacement of People's Politics militants to the steel industry and the organization's participation in trade union politics. This last chapter provides additional elements of comparison with the French etablissement (student insertion) phenomenon in the context of the post-1968 period of union militancy.

6 FRENCH CONNECTION: CHARLES BETTELHEIM, MEXICAN STUDENTS IN 1968, AND TRANSNATIONAL MAOISM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The triumph of the Chinese Communist Party at the hands of Mao Zedong over the nationalist regime of Guomindang was one of the main events of the Cold War. A peasant revolution led by communist activists, the Chinese Revolution caught the imagination of thousands of leftists around the world and fed the nightmares of the Capitalist West. The epic of the Long March and the People's Liberation Army, together with a cunning policy of alliances, marked the end of almost 30 years of civil war in China and the start of a new regime.[1] On the other side of the Pacific, the People's Republic of China's proclamation in October 1st, 1949, caused a frenzy among the American anti-communist establishment.[2] A wave of persecution destroyed lives and reputations throughout American society.

In Mexico, an earlier peasant revolution produced a totally different political outcome that defied definition during most of the twentieth century. After years of insurrection and civil war (1910-1921), a coalition of peasants and petit-bourgeois revolutionaries destroyed the oligarchic "liberal" state and its armed forces. The Mexican Revolution began as a middle-class movement for democracy against the aging "liberal" dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911). Soon, it turned into a popular rebellion against landlords and local oligarchies. When the revolutionary leader turned president, Francisco I. Madero, was deposed in 1911 by a military coup; the revolutionary forces wiped out the remnants of the

[1] For a critical history of the Chinese "revolutions" see Rebecca E Karl, *China's Revolutions in the Modern World: A Brief Interpretive History* (Verso Books, 2020).

[2] See Robert P Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the Loss of China* (University of California Press, 2021).

Porfirio Díaz' regime after three more years of war. [3]

Soon afterward, the revolutionary factions began a civil war in 1915. Around 1917, the moderate elements led by Venustiano Carranza defeated the radical factions of Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa.[4] Nevertheless, the Carrancistas enacted a new Constitution that incorporated many of the radicals' demands, including the foundations for agrarian reform, the recognition of unions, the right to strike, and the Mexican state's original property over natural resources.[5] These legal settings of the new regime set the basis for many of the future political demands of the Mexican Left.

In the aftermath of the armed conflict, Mexican Communists and other leftists participated actively in the process of state formation through a Popular Front of sorts. An experiment that limited their chances to form an independent working-class movement but left a legacy of symbols and ideas. From Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros' murals to the traces of "socialist education" in the public education system, Mexicans formed an idea of the state and politics receptive to Marxism and socialism.[6] By contrast, for the governing elites, the decades of the 1930s and 1940s pointed to a moment of state formation and the building of institutions.

---

[3] For a history of the Mexican Revolution see Felipe Ávila and Pedro Salmerón, *Historia breve de la Revolución mexicana* (México, D.F.: INERHM-Siglo XXI, 2015).

[4] For a history of the civil war between revolutionary factions see Pedro Salmerón, *1915 México en Guerra* (México, D.F.: Planeta, 2015).

[5] For a political history of the social rights section of the 1917 constitution see Ignacio Marván, "Orígenes, alcances y limitaciones de nuestro constitucionalismo social," in *Cómo hicieron la Constitución de 1917*, Biblioteca mexicana (Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica-CIDE, 2017).

[6] See Barry Carr, "The Fate of the Vanguard under a Revolutionary State: Marxism's Contribution to the Construction of the Great Arch," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

They developed the industrial economy to raise the living standards of thousands of urban dwellers and placed the peasant masses on a waiting list for land distribution and credit.

The best example of the leftwing course of the revolutionary elites was the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas between 1934 and 1940. Cárdenas nationalized oil companies and set a series of great land-distribution efforts in motion. Still, he also established the foundations of the corporatist politics that defined Mexico's twentieth century.[7] How to deal with his legacy soon became a riddle for generations of Mexican leftists. In 1962, the novelist and dissident leftwing Communist José Revueltas (1914-1976) put forward a harsh diagnostic of the situation: "The Mexican working class has been in the last fifty years a proletariat without a head or with a head that is not his own."[8] Basically, the theses proposed by Revueltas hit a nerve on the Mexican Left's failure to compete against a regime that claimed the heritage of a popular revolution. In addition, he also set the tone for a new generation of leftists carving out an alternative to the corporatist state.

Meanwhile, when the dust of the armed period settled, a new elite rose from the ashes of the Porfirista liberal technocracy.[9] The Mexican elite, la familia revolucionaria (or revolutionary family), in the 1950s was a

---

[7] For an examination of the relationship between the Mexican Left and Cárdenas see Arturo Anguiano Orozco, Guadalupe Pacheco, and Rogelio Vizcaíno, *Cárdenas y la izquierda mexicana* (México, D.F.: Juan Pablos Editor, 1975).

[8] José Revueltas, *Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza*, ed. Andrea Revueltas and Philippe Cheron, 24 vols., José Revueltas. Obras Completas, (México, D.F.: ERA, 1982), 75. Translation is mine. For a study on Revueltas thought and political activism see Arturo Anguiano, *José Revueltas: un rebelde melancólico* (Ciudad de México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, DCSH/UAM-X, 2019).

[9] For a panoramic view of the liberal elites during Porfirio Díaz dictatorship (1876-1911) see Luis Gonzalez, "Paz porfírica," in *Historia general de México*, ed. Centro de Estudios Históricos (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 2000), 672-75.

heterogeneous group that included veterans of the revolutionary war, union leaders, returned grandsons of the Porfirian elite, and alumni of the state universities. They derived their legitimacy from loyalty to the institutionalized rhetoric of the Mexican Revolution. However, in the late 1940s, the Revolution's radicalism and Cárdenas' presidency remained a recent memory. As a result, the post-revolutionary elites had to maintain a commitment to social justice and the nation's defense. To further complicate matters, at the start of the Cold War, most leftwing elements ended up at the fringe of political representation.[10] Nevertheless, the strength of the "ideology" of the revolution kept most of them inside the government's coalition, powerless witnesses of the rising anti-communist nature of the regime controlled by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI), officially founded in 1946.

The governing elite that joined the PRI ruled Mexico until 2000, when their longtime foes from the moderate right-wing Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party or PAN) displaced them from the presidency.[11] The heirs of the Mexican Revolution controlled national politics for seventy years through a combination of populist rhetoric, corporatist politics, and an economic development agenda. PRI government resorted as much as possible to coopting the opposition but fiercely repressed any political force that contested its hegemony. While electoral fraud was a constant among the PRI tactics, it became more salient in the last twenty years of

[10] The fate of the Henriquista movement is an example of how hard was to create an effective dissidence among the revolutionary elites. See Elisa Servín, *Ruptura y oposición: El movimiento Henriquista, 1945-1954* (México, D.F.: Cal y Arena, 2001).

[11] For a history of the PRI see Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez, *Historia mínima del Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, Historia mínimas, (Ciudad de México: El Colegio de México, 2016).For a history of the National Action Party (PAN) see Yemile Mizrahi, *From Martyrdom to Power: the Partido Acción Nacional in Mexico* (Notre Dame, IN: Univerity of Notre Dame, 2003).

the regime.[12] Despite the growing rejection of PRI's undemocratic legacies, the memories of the "good old times" of the Pax priísta allowed them to win the presidency again in 2012. Afterward, they collapsed electorally in the middle of accusations of corruption, ceding the dominant position in Mexican politics to the new leftwing populist force of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2018-2024).

During the second half of the twentieth century, PRI governments responded to social and political change by adapting their policies and ideologies to the moment's mood. The variety of ideological tendencies among Mexico's presidents during the hegemony of the PRI is baffling. For example, while most of the PRI regime's statist structures and endemic corruption developed during the right-wing government of Miguel Aleman (1946-1952), the PRI also elected a populist president in the 1970s, Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) who combined a dirty war against leftist guerrillas with an attack against the Mexican oligarchy.[13] By the 1980s, Echeverría's populism produced enough backlash to open the door to a political transformation. One more time, the PRI led the march with a series of market-oriented reforms. From 1982 onwards, the PRI put in charge a series of neoliberal reformers: Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988),

---

[12] For a history of the Mexican "transition" to democracy and the impact of electoral fraud on its development see Ricardo Becerra, Pedro Salazar, and José Woldenberg, *La mecánica del cambio político en México: elecciones, partidos y reformas* (México, D.F.: Cal y Arena, 2000).

[13] For a history of Alemán's presidency see Tzvi Medin, *El sexenio alemanista: ideología y praxis política de Miguel Alemán*, ed. Rubén Jímenez Ricárdez, Problemas de México, (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1990).For a short appraisal of Echeverría's government focused on its relationship with the Left see Adela Cedillo and Ricardo Gamboa, "Interpretaciones sobre los espacios de participación política después del 10 de junio de 1971 en México," in *Violencia y sociedad. Un hito en la historia de las izquierdas en América Latina*, ed. Verónica Oikión Solano and Miguel Ángel Urrego Ardilla (Morelia, Mich: Colegio de Michoacan-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas-Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2010).

Carlos Salinas (1988-1994), and Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000).[14] These presidents "buried" the legacy of the Mexican Revolution, and their reforms transformed Mexican politics and society beyond recognition.

Long before the neoliberal tide of the 1990s, the development project of the post-revolutionary governments in Mexico coincided with the high tide of planning and economic intervention of the state between 1945 and 1973. Newly independent countries in Asia and Africa sought a path out of dependency and underdevelopment. Many of them put their sight on different types of socialism and mixed-economy systems. In that context, economists and consultants from both sides of the Cold War divide offered their services to the governments of the ancient colonies or the brand-new revolutionary regimes. They also traveled around the globe looking for valuable experiences out of the perceived problems of the "free world" and the Soviet model. One of the leading planning experts of the Sixties, the French economist Charles Bettelheim (1913-2006), found in Maoist China the ideal of an economy working under democratic socialist principles. He visited China on three occasions between 1954 and 1970 and became the head of the French-China Friendship Association.[15] Bettelheim's ideas on the transition to socialism and the virtues of the Chinese Cultural Revolution greatly impacted a generation of young students and activists from the Third World.

While highly critical of the political and economic models of the Soviet Union, Charles Bettelheim believed the Chinese Cultural Revolution showed the way to the democratic control of the workplace.[16] He praised

---

[14] For a history of Mexican neoliberalism see Rafael Lemus, *Breve historia de nuestro neoliberalismo: Poder y cultura en México* (Ciudad de México: DEBATE, 2021).

[15] For Charles Bettelheim trajectory see Francois Denord and Xavier Zunigo, "Révolutionnairement vôtre. Économie marxiste, militantisme intellectuel et expertise politique chez Charles Bettelheim," *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 158 (June 2005).

[16] For Bettelheim's critique of the Soviet Union see Charles Bettelheim, *Class Struggles in*

the Cultural Revolution for erasing the hierarchies among workers and distinctions between the urban and the rural. In the scenario described by his interlocutors at a Shanghai's hosiery, Bettelheim saw fulfilled the old Marxist dream of proletarians owning the means of production. Instead of a mere juridical change of ownership in the name of the people (nationalizations, state enterprises), the Cultural revolution announced a political movement of workers directly taking control of factories and rural communes.[17] Both a critique of other socialist regimes (the Soviet Union and Cuba) and a proposal for socialist renewal, Bettelheim's interpretation of the Cultural Revolution involved a transformation of the social relationships in a democratic direction. Such an attractive model enthused his students; among them, a young Mexican, Adolfo Orive Bellinger.

Using oral history and intelligence sources from Mexico and the United States, this first chapter provides an introductory approach to the intellectual history of a particular type of Mexican Maoism. With the legacy of the Mexican Revolution in the background, it explores the political trajectory of the Orive family, an emblematic group that embodied the post-revolutionary elite that ruled Mexico with the founding of the PRI. The chapter explains how Adolfo Orive Bellinger, the son of an official loyal to the conservative administration of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), combined the national language of the old cardenista Left while adopting a French interpretation of Mao Zedong thought after studying in France and England in the Sixties. The intellectual upbringing of Orive Bellinger not only illustrates the transnational aspect of this dissertation but also points to the ideological divisions that polarized the Left in Mexico during the Sixties, a key moment of the broader Cold War, as discussed in the introduction that forced a new generation of Mexican leftist to revisit the legacy of the

---

the USSR: First Period 1917-1923, trans. Brian Pearce, 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

[17] See Charles Bettelheim, *Révolution culturelle et organisation industrielle en Chine*, Petite collection Maspero, (Paris: François Maspero, 1973), 75-102.

Mexican Revolution in conversation with a New Left that unfolded across the world in the aftermath of the anticolonial events in China, Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam.

6.2 THE FATHER: ADOLFO ORIVE DE ALBA

Adolfo Orive Bellinger was raised in a family loyal to the legacy and principles of the Mexican Revolution. His father, Adolfo Orive de Alba was the son of a Mexico City physician whose political career initiated as a Maderista Congressman for the Popotla district of Mexico City in 1912.[18] Orive Bellinger's grandfather fled from Mexico City after the murder of president Francisco I. Madero, and he later became a Colonel in the General Staff of Venustiano Carranza's army.[19] Meanwhile, Orive de Alba's mother soon passed away, and he lived two years under the tutelage of his aunts, who told him that his father had died in the armed conflict. Then, his father returned to Mexico City with the victorious Carrancista army in 1914 and began homeschooling him. Because of the armed conflict, young Orive de Alba only began his formal studies in 1919 at a small public school near the Colegio Militar (Military Academy) in Popotla directly in the sixth grade.

At the age of twelve, Orive de Alba enrolled in the prestigious National High School No. 1 in the old Colegio de San Ildefonso building. He studied under Vicente Lombardo Toledano, the leading Marxist intellectual of the period who introduced him to union politics and a progressive interpretation of the mission of the Mexican Revolution.[20] With a degree

---

[18] For the following short biography of Adolfo Orive de Alba, María Elena Azpíroz, *El campo en el México moderno: Nueve ex secretarios hablan sobre las políticas de desarrollo rural*, ed. Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos-Sextante (México, D.F., 1988).

[19] For a history of the Carrancista-Constitutionalista revolutionary faction see Pedro Salmerón, *Los carrancistas: La historia nunca contada del victorioso Ejército del Noreste* (México, D.F.: Planeta, 2010).

[20] For a biography of Vicente Lombardo Toledano see Daniela Spenser, *In Combat: The*

from the National Engineering School, he received a scholarship from the Mexican government to study irrigation in the United States at the Bureau of Reclamation, a US government agency.[21] There, Orive de Alba learned the practical skills necessary to break the Mexican National Irrigation Commission's dependence on American experts.

At some point during his high school studies, probably influenced by the teachings of Lombardo Toledano, Orive de Alba became a leftwing sympathizer. When he moved north in 1935 to build a dam close to Tijuana at the U.S.-Mexico border, he also spent some time as a delegate at California of the newly created Mexico's Workers Confederation (Confederación de Trabajadores de México or CTM). Led by Orive's mentor, Lombardo Toledano (1936-1940), the CTM had emerged as a leftist alternative to previous union confederations and had allied itself with the progressive government of Lázaro Cárdenas. Simultaneously, on the international stage during the 1930s and 1940s, the CTM pursued a broadly leftist agenda that supported anti-fascism and defended the rights of Mexican workers in the United States.[22] Yet, the leftist orientation of the CTM did not last. As happened with the AFL-CIO in the United States, Cold War politics impacted the goals of the CTM. In 1948, the PRI expelled Lombardo from the leadership of the CTM and replaced him with Fidel Velázquez. Later, from 1948 to 1997, the CTM adopted an anti-communist stance and turned the most important labor unions under its leadership into key elements of the corporatist apparatus of the PRI. In the Cold War era context, the CTM grew in power and membership, turning into the largest labor union in Latin America. In contrast, its days

---

Life of Lombardo Toledano (Brill, 2019).

[21] Adolfo Orive de Alba, "Historia y continuidad de la política hidráulica," *Tecnología y ciencias del agua*, no. Ingeniería Hidráulica en México (January 1987): 29-31.

[22] See Luis Fernando Álvarez, "La relación obrera México-Estados Unidos (1936-1949)," in *Vicente Lombardo Toledano y los sindicatos de México y Estados Unidos* (México, D.F.: UNAM, 1995), 113-44.

as a progressive force in the labor movement only faded in the past, as a distant memory.[23]

During his stay in California, Orive de Alba played a decisive role during the progressive period of Mexico's Workers Confederation (CTM). In 1939, as one of its leading union representatives, he requested information on a California legislative measure that deprived Mexican workers of "relief" to Eduardo Quevedo, then president of the Congreso de Pueblos que Hablan Español (Congress of Spanish-Speaking People). In the same letter, he encouraged the CTM and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (ClO) to support the Congreso against attempts to repatriate Mexican workers.[24] Orive de Alba's career as technical advisor to the Mexican government on irrigation soon obscured his political commitments. Nevertheless, his participation in the popular front politics of greater Mexico brought to light the nature of his political sympathies.

But it was in the 1940s when the political life of Orive de Alba witnessed a more drastic turn. In 1944, he played a vital role as the designer of the US-Mexico treaty on waters. The treaty allowed the Mexicali valley to become a productive agricultural region by recognizing the exchange of water flows between the Rio Grande and Colorado irrigation systems.[25]

---

[23] For a history of the Mexico's Workers Confederation (CTM) see Francisco Javier Aguilar Garcia, ed., *Historia de la CTM, 1936-2006: el movimiento obrero y el estado mexicano*, 2 vols. (México, D.F.: UNAM, 2009).

[24] [B.1.f.8] Eduardo Quevedo Papers, M0349, Dept. of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif. See also Gigi Peterson, ""A Dangerous Demagogue": Containing the Influence of the Mexican Labor-Left and Its United States Allies," in *American Labor and the Cold War* (Rutgers University Press, 2004). For *Congreso*'s history and its role in the emergence of the *chicano* political mobilization in the late 1930s and early 1940s see Enrique M Buelna, *Chicano Communists and the Struggle for Social Justice* (University of Arizona Press, 2019).

[25] For Orive de Alba's role in the New Deal's interaction between American and Mexican agrarian reform technicians see Tore C Olsson, "Chapter Six: Transplanting "El Tenesí"," in *Agrarian Crossings* (Princeton University Press, 2017).

That work got Orive de Alba close to President Lázaro Cárdenas (1936-1940) and propelled his career in the Mexican government. Meanwhile, his leftist activities continued during World War II when he participated in the USSR-Mexico Friendship Society. This association, founded by Lombardo Toledano and other Mexican leftists in 1935, was pivotal in restoring diplomatic relations between Mexico and the Soviet Union in 1943 after thirteen years of rupture.[26]

Nonetheless, Adolfo Orive de Alba's open activities in the Mexico's Workers Confederation (CTM) and the USSR-Mexico Friendship Society were only one side of a more profound commitment to the Soviet cause. During the same period, he became part of a ring of Soviet spies and was involved in the financial scheme behind smuggling nuclear secrets from the United States.[27] Despite this hidden trajectory, Orive de Alba had a long career in the Mexican government.

---

[26] See Adolfo Mejía González, "México y la URSS, unidos contra el nazifascismo," in *México y la Unión Soviética en la defensa de la paz* (México: Agencia de Prensa Nóvosti, 1986), 39-49.

[27] For Adolfo Orive de Alba's role as a Soviet spy, see John Earl Haynes, Mexico City KGB-Moscow Center Cables Cables Decrypted by the National Security Administration's Venona Project, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011).

Surprisingly, he rose to preeminence during the presidency of Miguel Alemán, a period marked by corruption, pro-capitalist development policies, and PRI's shift to the Right. During the administration of Alemán, Adolfo Orive de Alba became the first minister of water resources in Mexico and inaugurated the office building of the new ministry in Mexico City. Photos from the period, such as Figure 1, showed a mature Orive de Alba as a close ally to president Alemán. He traveled to the United States in the 1950s to study the Tennessee Valley Authority while living the glamorous life of Miguel Alemán's cabinet member, courting one of Mexico's "Golden Age" cinema stars, Rita Macedo.[28]

Figure 2-1: Adolfo Orive de Alba (left) and president Miguel Alemán (right) in the inauguration of the Water Resources Ministry (SARH) (Copyright © Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, México, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)[29]

[28] A depiction of Adolfo Orive de Alba's personal life during his period as water resources minister can be found in the memoirs of her lover Rita Macedo, a film actress that appeared at Luis Buñuel's films and married later with novelist Carlos Fuentes. See Cecilia Fuentes, *Mujer en papel: Memorias inconclusas de Rita Macedo* (Ciudad de México: Trece Ediciones, 2019).

[29] Casasola, "Miguel Alemán and Adolfo Orive de Alba in the SARH's office," (México,

The political success of Adolfo Orive de Alba propelled him to believe that Miguel Alemán would select him as his successor. But in 1952, the PRI instead successfully elected Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958).[30] Disillusioned, Orive de Alba left the public service during this period and instead worked as an international consultant to the United Nations. Under this leadership, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he established an extensive network of contacts among professionals working on economic development and infrastructure building in the Third World. Later, during the populist administrations of Echeverría (1970-1976) and López Portillo (1976-1982), Orive de Alba worked as the CEO of the nationalized steel company Altos Hornos.[31]

In sum, throughout his career, Adolfo-the father- worked as an agent of the Mexican Revolution's developmental project and embodied its contradictions. Like others of his generation, he began as a radical politician, loyal to the most progressive ideas of the Mexican Revolution. Then, as the PRI turned further to the Right in the 1940s and 1950s, he transformed himself into a technical expert and became a high-ranking officer in one of the most pro-capitalist governments in Mexico.

6.3 THE SON: ADOLFO ORIVE BELLINGER

Adolfo Orive Bellinger followed the steps of his father in building a unique trajectory in leftist politics; but he did so in the more radical context of the late Sixties and its turn to the early years of the neoliberal period. He navigated this transition with successive leaderships of Mexico's post-

---

D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, México, November 28 1950), Photograph.
http://mediateca.inah.gob.mx/repositorio/islandora/object/fotografia%3A232679.

[30] Fuentes, *Mujer en papel*, 164-65.

[31] Azpíroz, *El campo en el México moderno: Nueve ex secretarios hablan sobre las políticas de desarrollo rural*, 82-83.

revolutionary government, from the entourage of the populist President Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) to the more technocratic administration of President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994).

Orive Bellinger was born in 1940 in Tijuana while his father studied the international waters problem of the Rio Grande and Colorado rivers. Adolfo -the son- lived his early years at the Lomas de Chapultepec, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of Mexico City. Growing up a problematic teenager, always getting into trouble in school, his father sent him to a military academy in the United States. At fourteen, Orive Bellinger traveled by plane to Chicago and then by train to South Bend, Indiana. His destination was half an hour by car, the Culver Military Academy.

Culver Military Academy was a small elite school located next to a gorgeous lake in northern Indiana. Founded in the late nineteenth century, the academy attracted many Mexican elite families. Influential captains of industry as Emilio Azcarraga Milmo, the television mogul from Televisa, and Alberto Alberto Baillères González, owner of Peñoles mining company and the Palacio de Hierro chain store, studied there a couple of years before the young Adolfo Orive Bellinger arrived at the academy. Culver was the refuge of the rising Mexican bourgeoisie of the post-revolutionary period, who sent their children to learn English and discipline. A men's only institution until the 1960s, Culver provided "an education for responsibility," as promotional films from 1949 and 1960 announced. Culver cadets combined military instruction with arts and sports while receiving personalized education. Swimming, polo, and gun practice complemented literature, mathematics, and chemistry lectures. In Culver, the Mexican elite mixed with their peers from the United States, Europe, and other Latin American countries and experienced a very particular portion of the so-called American dream.

The young Adolfo Orive Bellinger spent two years in Culver studying middle school. Culver's 1954 yearbook, shown in figure 2, showed a petite blond kid in military garb who was praised for his academic progress in troop D, where he obtained the highest grades of his cohort in 1953 and

the following year for the whole school.[32] Years later, he fondly remembered his experience in Culver and expressed that his contact with the United States reinforced his will to bring a Socialist revolution to Mexico.


SECOND PLATOON

left to right: Jones, D. B.; Morey, C. T.; Hilge-
Hargitt, P. L.; Ryall, J. H.; Johansen, C. R.; Evans,
artin, J. E.; Phillips, D. J.; Stone, P. V.; Bruns,
ldon, J. P. **Second row:** Layne, P. R.; Moore, J.
.; Webb, R. T.; Freeman, R. W.; Witsell, G. P.;
Fleming, P. L.; Fleeger, L. L.; Porter, J. G.; an
T. K. **Third row:** Schmid, K. B.; Canizares, J. G.
Carter, D. R.; Coony, T. M.; Valles, T.; Brasser
M. E.; Howard, T. H.; Waldheim, W. W.; an
C. E. **Fourth row:** Orive, A.; Villacorta, E.; Go
Bullock, R. C.; Geisel, J. J.; and Marcus, B. M.

Figure 2-2: Adolfo Orive Bellinger as a cadet in Culver (Left to the right, first of the fourth row), "Roll Call 1954", photo by Culver Military Academy[33]

[32] For Orive Bellinger's record on the Culver Military academy see William L. Cross, ed., *The Culver Roll Call Yearbook from the 1953-1954 School Year*. (Culver, IN: Culver Military Academy, 1954), 96-97.

[33] Culver Military Academy, "Company D Second Platoon," (Culver, Indiana: Culver Military Academy, January 1954).

It is hard to judge Adolfo Orive Bellinger's memories of his period in Culver, but his actions in the following two years, after he returned to Mexico, give credit to his purpose to get involved in politics. The next time he appeared in the public record was when he became president of the National High School No. 1 students' society in 1957, the same school where his father studied under the leadership of socialist Lombardo Toledano. But unlike his father, the young Orive Bellinger presided over a student association that raised his political mobilization and shaped his ideology against the post-revolutionary regime.

In the shifting context of the Sixties, teachers and rail workers fought for the independence of their unions from Mexico's Workers Confederation (CTM). At the same time, students marched on the streets in support and asked to lower the price of bus tickets.[34] The rise of union insurgency and student militancy provided the local impetus to create a broad leftwing coalition inspired by the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and Africa and Asia's decolonization process. Former president Lázaro Cárdenas, the old family friend, joined Adolfo Orive Bellinger's generation in their sympathy towards revolutionary Cuba. In the middle of that process, Orive Bellinger met the old stateman in February 1959 after one of his trips to the Soviet Union and China, taking a picture, shown in figure 3, that he kept as a treasure.

---

https://cdm17320.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/Rollcall/id/1914/rec/2.

[34] "Adolfo Orive Bellinger" 1957-1983. Archivo General de la Nación. Fondo Gobernación. Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Box 192.

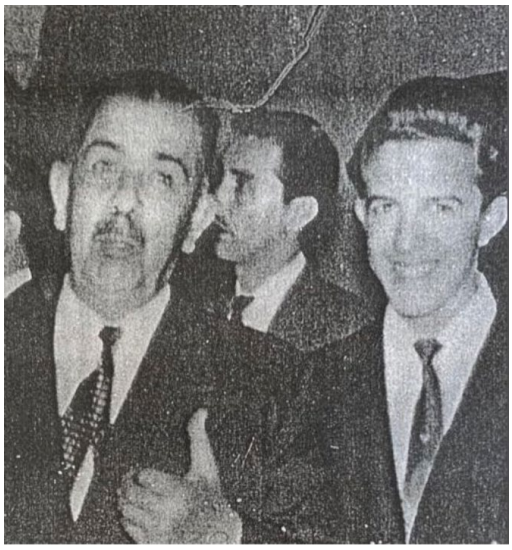


Figure 2-3: Adolfo Orive Bellinger (right) and Lázaro Cárdenas (left) after the general returned from his tour to China and the Soviet Union, ca. February 1959, Personal archive of Adolfo Orive, reproduced with the permission of Adolfo Orive Bellinger.[35]

Then, on April 17, 1961, Lázaro Cárdenas called for volunteers to defend the Cuban Revolution against a counterrevolutionary expedition organized by the CIA that had disembarked at Playa Girón, Cuba.[36] Cárdenas could not travel to Cuba because President Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964) did not authorize his departure. As a result of the presidential veto of his trip, on the night of April 17, he mustered a massive meeting at Mexico City's central plaza, the Zócalo, in defense of Fidel Castro's revolution. Hearing Cárdenas' call to aid Cuba, Orive

[35] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Adolfo Orive Bellinger and Lázaro Cárdenas after the General Returned from his Tour to China and the Soviet Union," (México, D.F., February 1959).

[36] For a study of the counterrevolutionary movement in urban Cuba and its connection with the Bay of Pigs invasion see Jonathan Brown, "The Gusano Counterrevolution," in *Cuba's Revolutionary World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

Bellinger traveled to the island on April 19, 1961, as part of a Mexican group of volunteers. He saw no combat, as the Cuban government's militias had already crushed the invasion. However, he spent three weeks in Havana talking with workers, peasants, and a group of prisoners from the CIA's expeditionary force.[37] Like many others of his generation, who also traveled to Cuba in the early 1960s, he came back to Mexico full of revolutionary enthusiasm. He witnessed the creation of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Movement or MLN) in August of 1961, a byproduct of Cárdenas's appeal to defend Cuba and unite the various factions of the Mexican Left.[38]

In the middle of his political commitment, Adolfo Orive Bellinger continued his studies and graduated as a civil engineer at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in 1963. Hoping to follow his father's career path, he completed a thesis examining the economic development of Mexican rivers, focusing on the Rio Grijalva, a 400 miles waterway in Southern Mexico.[39] Despite his aspiration to work with the government, Orive Bellinger continued to express and interest in Marxism and the worldwide Socialist Revolution. His ideological interests in leftist politics remained strong, and in the summer of 1962, he spent some time in prison for protesting the visit of John F. Kennedy to Mexico City.[40] The

---

[37] For Orive Bellinger's trip to Cuba see César Gómez Chacón, "Lázaro Cárdenas quiso combatir en Girón," *Diario Granma. ÓRGANO OFICIAL DEL COMITÉ CENTRAL DEL PARTIDO COMUNISTA DE CUBA*, no. 106 (2011). http://www.granma.cu/granmad/2011/04/16/interna/artic06.html.

[38] For a history of the National Liberation Movement (MLN) see Miguel Ángel Beltrán Villegas, "El MLN: historia de un recorrido hacia la unidad (México 1957-1967)" (Ph. D. in Latin American Studies Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000).

[39] See Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Técnicas modernas de planeación en relación con el desarrollo integral de la cuenca del Río Grijalva" (Licenciatura en Ingeniería Civil Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963).

[40] Roger Bartra, *Mutaciones: Autobiografía intelectual* (Ciudad de México: DEBATE, 2022),

political activities of Orive Bellinger began to worry his father, who looked for a way to keep him away from danger.

Like others of his generation, Adolfo Orive Bellinger grew critical of leftist factions that remained loyal to the Soviet Union and instead became sympathetic to those that openly expressed pro-Chinese sympathies. He considered learning Chinese and traveling to China, but following his father's guidance, he chose France as his destination. During this period, Adolfo Orive de Alba worked as an international consultant, which brought him in touch with an Argentinean friend, who then provided Orive Bellinger with the opportunity to meet Charles Bettelheim.[41] The international connections of his father proved crucial in this decision and its consequences.

Charles Bettelheim (1913-2006) was one of the major players in the intellectual discussions on implementing Socialist economic plans outside the Soviet camp and the person who served as the principal mentor to Adolfo Orive Bellinger during the Sixties. Third World governments (Cuba, Egypt, India, Cambodia, Mali, Iraq, and Algeria) called him to help develop industrialization plans and set the basis for governmental control over the economy.[42] His participation in the early stages of the Cuban Revolution, including its transition to a socialist economy, and his discussions with Ernesto "Che" Guevara guaranteed him a place among the favorite intellectuals of the Latin American Left during the Sixties.[43] His lectures at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes were filled with dozens of eager

---

79.

[41] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Interview with Adolfo Orive Bellinger III," interview by Jorge Puma, *Ph.D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, July 16, 2018.

[42] Denord and Zunigo, "Révolutionnairement vôtre. Économie marxiste, militantisme intellectuel et expertise politique chez Charles Bettelheim," 16-23.

[43] See Jérôme Leleu, "Charles Bettelheim et la planification économique à Cuba (1960-1968)," *Mondes en developpement*, no. 2 (2017).

French and international students in the aftermath of May 1968. His seminaries became so popular that he had to split them into different sections. Without enough time, as he was also the Director of Studies of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Bettelheim asked his assistants to teach the sections.[44] In the meantime, and with the help of his secretary, Madame Paulette Vanhecke, he kept an active correspondence with dozens of students, politicians, academics, and activists.

Adolfo Orive Bellinger first established contact with Charles Bettelheim in 1962. In preparation to work with him, Charles Bettelheim sent Orive Bellinger a lengthy bibliography and encouraged him to travel to Paris before classes began at the university in the fall of 1963.[45] It was a timid and erratic beginning for an association that transformed into a close friendship and a rich intellectual mentorship. Years later, in 1973, Orive Bellinger wrote to Bettelheim:

> For better or worse, I was born to revolutionary theory with you as my partero [or paternal figure.] Through you, I apprehended a particular system of questions that have guided us in the last five years. As you will see, you or your teachings (or rather: and your teachings) are present at every moment of my [political] struggle.[46]

These and similar sentiments continued to be expressed in a mutual correspondence that lasted more than thirty years and ranged from theoretical discussions on Marxism to utterly personal communications

---

[44] Bernard Chavance, "Conversation with Bernard Chavance, Former Charles Bettelheim's Assistant," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, December 17, 2021.

[45] Charles Bettelheim, "Letter to Adolfo Orive, September 24, 1962", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[46] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, December 14, 1973", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

over Charles Bettelheim's health and Orive Bellinger's family life.

With a scholarship from the UNAM, Orive Bellinger traveled to Paris in November 1963 and got access to the graduate seminars that the economist Charles Bettelheim conducted in the École Pratique des Hautes Études.[47] He was not the only international student or foreign government touched by Charles Bettelheim's ideas. During the late Sixties, the intellectual prestige and connections helped Maoism spread into a small but influential group of French and international students.

Adolfo Orive Bellinger studied economic planning and Marxism under Charles Bettelheim for three years. He attended courses on socialist planning, economic calculus for centralized economies, and problems transitioning to a socialist economy. He also participated in research groups studying the economic developments of the newly independent Algeria as well as economic theory that ranged from the physiocrats to Marx.[48] Meanwhile, Orive Bellinger filled his shelves with Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin's works in French while living through the final moments of the corporatist order in French student politics.[49] During this period, he read the original discussions on the Chinese Cultural Revolution published

---

[47] Details of the personal and political life of Adolfo Orive Bellinger are mainly from interviews conducted in the last eleven years in Mexico City by the author: Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Interview with Adolfo Orive Bellinger I," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, August 10, 2012; Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Interview with Adolfo Orive Bellinger II," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, October 18, 2012.and

[48] Charles Bettelheim, "Attestation, June 9, 1967", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[49] For an deeply well researched portrait of the College student politics in the eve of the 1968 movement in France and its relationship with the French state and the old left see A. Belden Fields, *Student Politics in France: A Study of the Union nationale des etudiants de France*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset, Student Movements-Past and Present, (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

by the communist student organizations in Paris.

In Paris, Adolfo Orive Bellinger also read French Marxists, ranging from Althusser and Balibar to Samir Amin, and with his peers, he discussed transitional problems to socialism and imperialism. In addition, he also studied French translations of Soviet authors to understand economic planning. Therefore, It is unsurprising that Adolfo Orive Bellinger participated in the genesis of Althusserian Marxism and its expansion to Latin America.

In 1965, Althusser invited Charles Bettelheim to lead a seminar on "forms of transition" to socialism for the 1965-1966 academic year.[50] The previous year, a group of students from the Ecole Normale Superior, among them future luminaries of French Philosophy, Étienne Balibar and Jacques Rancière, organized a seminar with Louis Althusser to read and discuss Marx's *Capital*.[51] At the seminar, they presented a series of papers proposing a reading of the Capital that eventually turned into a book titled *Lire le Capital* [Reading Capital]. In the next decade, it became a seminal book in the intellectual development of Althusser's thought and a classic of Marxist thought.[52] In contrast, the 1966 seminar was never published but brought together Althusser and Bettelheim students, including Adolfo Orive Bellinger.

The 1966 seminar was not the only time Althusser joined Bettelheim in the classroom. Previously, on March 16, 1965, Charles Bettelheim conducted a discussion of two texts on Cuba's transition to socialism, one

---

[50] Charles Bettelheim, Lettre à Louis Althusser, April 15 1965, Projet de séminaire de Charles Bettelheim à l'École normale supérieure. 1965-1966, Fonds Louis Althusser, 20ALT/50/23, Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC), Caen, France.

[51] Louis Althusser, Olivier Corpet, and Yann Moulier Boutang, *The Future Lasts Forever: A Memoir*, trans. Richard Veasey (New York: New Press, 1993), 208.

[52] Étienne Balibar, "Presentation," in *Reading Capital. The Complete Edition*, ed. Louis Althusser et al. (New York: Verso, 2016), 1-2.

by Belgian Trotskyist economist Ernest Mandel and another by Cuba's Minister of Industries, Ernesto "Che" Guevara. At the seminar, Bettelheim presented a draft of his response to Mandel and Guevara regarding the need to keep some market mechanisms (prices, money, incentives) in Cuba.[53] The seminar transcription included a vivid debate on the shortcomings of the Cuban and Soviet experiences, with most of the debate centered on Bettelheim and his students and some Althusser commentaries. Surprisingly, Madame Paulette Vanhecke, Bettelheim's secretary, underscored Adolfo Orive Bellinger's presence in one of the seminar sessions. She wrote on the cover page of the folder containing the seminar transcription: "The recording was sometimes bad on a short passage which probably cut off some interventions. This probably happened when Orive Bellinger brought the microphone closer to the speaker to record better the person who was speaking."[54] Through a little misstep, he deprived us of the opportunity to learn more about the seminar discussions.

However, Charles Bettelheim's seminar provided Adolfo Orive Bellinger the occasion to meet Robert Linhart, the leader and founder of the pro-Chinese Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes (Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist or UJC-ml).[55] As a young Maoist,

---

[53] Bettelheim, Mandel, and Guevara debated over how to build a socialist economy in conditions of underdevelopment and what role market mechanisms played in the process. This debate is usually referred to as the "Great Debate" see Helen Yaffe, "Che Guevara and the Great Debate, Past and Present," *Science & society* 76, no. 1 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1521/siso.2012.76.1.11.

[54] Transcription d'une discussion autour des articles d'Ernest Mandel et de Che Guevara entre Althusser, Bettelheim, Bogorad, Delilez, Godelier, Linhart et Orive., Fonds Louis Althusser, 20ALT/50/20, Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC), Caen, France.

[55] For a history of the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml)see Collectif, *Les noveaux partisans: une histoire de la Gauche prolétarienne*, 25-35.; and Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism.*, 88-94.

Linhart and other leaders of the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist, the direct antecedent of the Gauche prolétarienne (Proletarian Left) of the post-1968 period, decided in 1967 that the Revolution demanded that they integrated among the working class. As a result, he left Academia and became a worker at a Citroën's car factory at Porte de Choisy in Paris.[56] Sharing these formative moments, the trajectories of Orive Bellinger and Linhart mirrored each other and affected the development of French and Mexican Maoism.

Studying with Bettelheim and Althusser left a deep mark on Adolfo Orive Bellinger and a diverse group of Latin Americans attending their seminars. Besides learning the complexities of Marxist analysis, these international students dissected the situation in their countries through the lens of the Vietnamese and Chinese experiences and witnessed the path of proletarianization taken by Robert Linhart and other Maoist students in France. Their discussions took them to debate the relationship between the objective and subjective conditions of the social revolution.[57] Orive Bellinger, as many of his Latin American peers, reexamined the old Leninist question of "what is to be done." He thought it involved a deeper consideration of the role of the will. He believed, following Bettelheim, that subjective conditions were not enough, and a rigorous analysis of the objective conditions was the first step toward revolution. At the same time, he interpreted the French image of the Chinese cultural revolution and the Vietnamese resistance as a call for the construction of socialist subjectivities as a fundamental element on the road to revolution, turning the masses into the subjects of their history. This discussion was fundamental in Orive Bellinger's future, including his political commitment in Mexico, but also the point of origin of the most widely read Marxist tract in Latin America: *Los conceptos elementales del*

---

[56] For Linhart's experience as a voluntary worker and Maoist activist see Robert Linhart, *L'établi*, Collection "double", (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1978).

[57] Orive Bellinger, interview I.

materialismo histórico (Historical Materialism's Elemental Concepts, 1968).[58]

During the heyday of the Guerrilla movements in Latin America, thousands of students and militants read *Los conceptos elementales* as the ideological justification of the vía armada (armed revolution), turning the book into a bestseller with 65 editions and almost a million copies sold.[59] According to the Chilean Marxist and author of *Los conceptos elementales*, Marta Harnecker (1937-2019), the author of *Los conceptos elementales*, Adolfo Orive Bellinger, sponsored an informal seminar for a group of fifteen Latin American students in Paris.[60] Harnecker described the genesis of the text in 2014 as follows:

> I am not a philosopher. I am a psychologist and a pedagogue. I was interested in Althusser and tried to […] when I was invited to remain in France for one more year. We were kind of fifteen [seminar participants]. There was a Mexican, a Brazilian, a Chilean, and a Haitian. I explained to them Historical Materialism for a year. Then, I made the pedagogical effort to explain Althusser [That] later turned into Siglo XXI's [publication].[61]

---

[58] See Marta Harnecker, *Los conceptos elementales del materialismo histórico*, 65 ed. (Siglo XXI, 2007).

[59] Jorge G Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left after the Cold War* (Vintage Books, 1993), 72.

[60] Marcelo Starcenbaum, "Entre Althusser y la Unidad Popular," *Marta Harnecker: La pedagogía del marxismo* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2022), https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewBook?id=0.

[61] Brancaleone Films and Cátedra Che Guevara, "Tras las pistas de Althusser (Entrevista a Marta Harnecker de Néstor Kohan)," in *Memoria del Futuro*, ed. Néstor Kohan (February 7, 2022 2014).

Adolfo Orive Bellinger also contributed to the inception of Harnecker's book by promoting its publication at the newly founded Siglo XXI publishing house. The Marxist publishing house Siglo XXI was an initiative of Arnaldo Orfila, an Argentinean editor exiled in Mexico, who had been the head of the prestigious Fondo de Cultura Económica (Economic Culture's Fund or FCE) publishing house between 1948 and 1965. Orfila led this public enterprise with efficiency and published some of the most important texts of the Sixties and translations of the foundational books that radicalized the era, including a series of economics, philosophy, and sociology classics, among them Karl Marx's *Capital* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. He also published a translation of Charles Wright Mills' *Listen, Yankee*, causing the protest of the American Embassy in Mexico, but without much consequence for the publishing house.[62] Despite his undisputable success as a prolific editor, however, the Mexican government fired him in 1965 after Orfila reprinted Oscar Lewis's book *Sons of Sánchez*, a raw account of the urban poor in Mexico and their "culture of poverty," that contradicted the "revolutionary progress" that the PRI continued to claim. Facing the censorship of the regime, Orfila and a group of progressive intellectuals that included Elena Poniatowska and Carlos Monsiváis (among others) founded Siglo XXI in 1966. They began to build a catalog of novelties from the nascent New Left and re-editing Marxist classics, including a new Spanish edition of *Capital*.[63] The publication history of Althusser and Harnecker's books was part of that process and epitomized a central chapter in the history of the Global Sixties in Latin America.

It was Charles Bettelheim who passionately recommended Orfila to publish Althusser's seminars and writings, the famous *Reading Capital,*

---

[62] Víctor Erwin Nova Ramírez, "Siglo XXI Editores, la revolución latinoamericana del pensamiento crítico contemporáneo," in *Arnaldo Orfila, una revolución editorial latinoamericana*, Cuadernos de Universidades (Ciudad de México: UDUAL, 2022), 54.

[63] For the role of Orfila in the development of a leftwing public sphere in Latin America during the 1970s see ibid.

and *For Marx* soon after Siglo XXI's founding.[64] Charles Bettelheim had a long relationship with Arnaldo Orfila since his period at Economic Culture's Fund (FCE). That relationship was crucial in the reception of French Marxism in Latin America, and remarkably, Adolfo Orive Bellinger functioned as a messenger between them, bringing books and news. In a letter to Bettelheim, Orfila recalled him as "our young friend Orive."[65] Ultimately, Orfila made up his mind and acquired the rights to Althusser's books from the most important publishing house of the French radical Left, Maspero.[66] Since the late Sixties, Althusser and Harnecker's books have been the core of Siglo XXI's catalog.

In the summer of 1966, Orive Bellinger and his wife Alicia Hernández followed Adolfo Orive de Alba to the East, traveling to China under the auspices of the Latin American- Chinese Friendship Association. They also visited the Soviet Union, India, and Japan. Young Adolfo requested the help of his mentor and wrote from India to Bettelheim's assistant, Madame Paulette Vanhecke, for directions to contacts in India and China.[67] Bettelheim's contacts and Orive de Alba's standing as a former high-ranking officer of the Mexican government guaranteed the Orive family access to Chinese officials, including poet Guo Moruo, a Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee member.[68]

---

[64] Charles Bettelheim, "Letter to Arnaldo Orfila, March 21, 1966", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Arnaldo Orfila.

[65] Arnaldo Orfila, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, July 19, 1966", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Arnaldo Orfila.

[66] See Julien Hage, "Vie et mort d'une librairie militante: La Joie de lire (1958-1976)," in *68, une histoire collective (1962-1981)*, ed. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Paris, France: La Découverte, 2018).

[67] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Telegram to Mme. Vanhecke, May 17, 1966", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[68] For a profile of Guo Moruo see Pu Wang, *The Translatability of Revolution* (BRILL, 2020).

The Orive family's visit to China coincided with the eve of the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, Adolfo Orive Bellinger asked his Chinese hosts about the dozens of trucks loaded with young people arriving in Beijing. Nobody could provide him with an answer.[69] In a letter to Charles Bettelheim written during his return trip, Orive Bellinger candidly asserted: "I asked several questions in China, the answers to which depended on the degree of theoretical knowledge they had of their society and of others in which the proletariat had already taken power. This knowledge does not exist, and their confusions can have serious consequences."[70] In the next ten years, the confusion of Chinese officials turned deadly, as evident in the successive purges of Party functionaries first and leftist activists later, where the executioner of one day became the victim of another.[71]

After three years in France, Adolfo Orive Bellinger moved to England to work under Joan Robinson, a prominent leftwing Keynesian economist who developed a fierce critique of the foundations of neoclassical economics with her theory of imperfect competition and produced a popular introduction to Marx's economic ideas.[72] At Cambridge, he received a more orthodox economic education. First, Orive Bellinger studied neoclassical economics. Later, he had the opportunity to explore more "contemporary" authors from the Keynesian tradition, focusing on

---

[69] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Conversation with Adolfo Orive Bellinger II," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, January 24, 2022.

[70] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, July 06, 1966", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[71] For an account of the excesses of the Chinese Cultural Revolution see Yang Jisheng, *The World Turned Upside Down: A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021).

[72] For a comprehensive intellectual biography of Joan Robinson see Geoffrey Harcourt and Prue Kerr, *Joan Robinson* (Palgrave McMillan, 2009).

their discussion of capital accumulation and growth.[73] In England, he spent one year deepening his admiration of Mao's ideas of participatory democracy and prepared himself to return to Mexico just in time to participate in the 1968 student movement.

Adolfo Orive Bellinger's acquaintance with Robinson coincided with Robinson's more Maoist period when she was part of the intellectual admirers of the Cultural Revolution policies.[74] In December 1967, she traveled to China to witness the Cultural Revolution when she functioned as Orive Bellinger's mentor at Cambridge. One month later, Adolfo wrote to Bettelheim and told him:

> Professor Joan Robinson gave us a presentation on the Cultural Revolution. She perfectly understood class struggle, the role of ideology in the construction of socialism, the mass line, and even the thought of Mao Tse-tung. It is remarkable to see how an honest person with analytical power who is not a Marxist-Leninist can understand things that others (revisionists) who call themselves Marxists do not understand.[75]

Joan Robinson's support of Maoist China puzzled many of her admirers, but she was not alone in asking, "How does the thought of Mao Tse-tung make crops grow on a stony hill?"[76] Ironically, her answer involved a deeply voluntaristic position towards the possibilities of political

---

[73] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, September 24, 1967", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[74] For Joan Robinson's engagement with Maoist China see Pervez Tahir, *Making Sense of Joan Robinson on China* (Springer Nature, 2019).

[75] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, January 28, 1968", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[76] Joan Robinson, "The Cultural Revolution in China," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 44, no. 2 (1968): 214.

mobilization that remind us more of Che Guevara's stand than Charles Bettelheim's stress on the objective conditions for revolution. Perhaps for this reason, her support of China's anti-imperial example motivated dozens of South Asians and Latin Americans to join Maoist-inspired organizations.

6.4 The Spirit: Hacia una Política Popular as an Application of Maoism to Mexican Conditions

Despite the growing interest in anarchism and utopian socialism that characterized Latin America during the Sixties, the history of the Left in the region during the broader context of the twentieth century was the history of communism. Still, Maoism posed a different question. Why was the radical upsurge of student activism in the late Sixties related to the image of non-compromising revolutionary politics of the Chinese communists?[77] At that time, the idea of raising the red flag against the red flag won the devotion of hundreds of militants around the globe. It forced veteran communists and student newcomers to consider difficult questions about tactics and strategy.

Maoism attracted radical Sixties students who saw it as a new model of communism based on the political conditions of the Chinese environment. Despite its originality, the new model did not completely break with the Stalinist scheme of replacing the proletariat with the leading cadres of the communist party. Besides, Maoism always contained a tension between vertical politics and the emphasis on consulting the masses. Furthermore, Mao maintained the primacy of the proletariat (understood as an urban working class). Nonetheless, he also extolled the revolutionary role of the peasantry based on the class contradictions prevailing in China in what he called the "democratic" stage of the

[77] See Alan Angell, "La izquierda en América Latina desde c. 1920," in *Historia de América Latina. Política y Sociedad desde 1930*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Barcelona: Crítica-Cambridge University Press, 1997).

revolution. As a result, Mao's conception of class was much broader than that of classical Marxism. The revolutionary subject often included proletarians, peasants, "petty bourgeois," and even criminals (éléments declasses).[78] Finally, another attractive element of the Maoist discourse was its emphasis on the revolutionary will of the party official (militant) and "peasant values" such as struggle, sacrifice, and austerity, which were considered necessary elements for the revolution.[79]

The idea of "going to the people" resembled the tradition of Russian populism. This phrase referred to the movement of 1874 when young Russian intellectuals (Narodniks) tried to integrate with the peasantry and the Maoist idea of the "mass line."[80] The Maoist idea of the "mass line" appeared in the 1930s because of the need of the Chinese communists to maintain strong ties with the population with which they worked.[81] In its final form in the 1940s, Mao explained the concept in the following way:

> In all the practical work of our party, every correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses to the masses." This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold

---

[78] Stuart R. Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 41-54.

[79] Ibid., 199. See also Philip Short, *Mao*, Biblioteca de Bolsillo, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003), 57.

[80] For the history of the 1874 movement see Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution. A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 469-506. For the Maoist usage of the phrase see Tse-Tung Mao, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking, PRC: Foreign Language Press, 1966), 170-74.

[81] Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, 55.

> fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.[82]

The interpretation of this appeal to the masses diverged among academics and activists outside China. Stuart Schram, a professor at the University of London and editor in English of the works of Mao Zedong, maintained that this "populist" impulse did not break with the traditional Leninist position of the impossibility of the proletariat to generate a political line of its own regarding its liberation. According to this interpretation, the ideas of the party officials, external to the working class, guided the revolutionary work. Hence, Schram strongly criticized the attempts to romanticize this political idea and turn it into a call for an "extended democracy."[83]

In contrast, in the context of the Sixties, European activists and intellectuals idealized the "mass line" as a "democratic" discourse. Moreover, the image of the Cultural Revolution incentivized in France a reading of the "mass line" opposed to Leninist vanguard practices of the old communist Left. As Charles Bettelheim and Jacques Charrière declared on the eve of the Cultural Revolution: "This dialogue between the masses and the political direction (going through the channel of the organizations) is, apparently, the foundation and the necessary condition of any true socialist democracy."[84] Eventually, many radicalized College

---

[82] Mao Zedong, "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership, June 1, 1943," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 119.

[83] Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, 45-46.

[84] Charles Bettelheim, *La construcción del socialismo en China*. 3 ed, El hombre y su

students from the École Normale Superieur and Latin American Maoists took to heart this democratic interpretation and coupled it with a critique of the Soviet Union.

These populist elements of confidence in the masses, the flexible conceptualization of the "people," and the ideological purism attracted communist militants disenchanted after the crisis generated in 1956 by the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. In that Congress, the Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev denounced in a "secret speech" Stalin's "personality cult" and his crimes during the 1930s purges. The "secret speech" generated a strong reaction from Mao, who broke his relationship with the Soviets and accused them of being "revisionists."[85] This reaction laid the foundations of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, a phenomenon that generated a wave of sympathy for the renewed revolutionary impulse of the Chinese communists, and its influence in France had consequences for the Mexican student activists of the late Sixties.

6.4.1 The Experiment of Maoism with French Characteristics

After the end of the Second World War, communism in France improved its image due to its participation in the Resistance against Nazi Germany. Nonetheless, after participating in the first government of the Fourth Republic, the French Communist Party became a parliamentary party with an unrepentant Stalinist orientation.[86] Moreover, the contradictory

---

tiempo. (México, D.F.: ERA, 1975), 165.Translation is mine. For Bettelheim's later critique to Chinese leadership after the death of Mao see Charles Bettelheim and Neil G. Burton, *China since Mao* (New York : Monthly Review Press, 1978).

[85] For the impact of the "secret speech" and its relationship with the beginnings of the Cultural Revolution in China see Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2006), 3-7.

[86] Julian Mischi, *Le parti des communistes: Histoire du PCF de 1920 à nos jours*, Faits & Idées, (Marseille: Hors d'atteinte, 2020), 313-14 and 91-92.

response of the communists to the French counterinsurgent war in Algeria (1954-1962), as well as their lack of support for the independentist movement, alienated a large portion of the immigrant working-class in the metropolis and veterans of the Resistance who were sympathetic to the "national liberation" movement.[87] They were not alone in their disapproval of the party line. The communist support of the socialist government's measures against the Algerian insurgency enraged many young militants who formed the basis of leftist organizations in the late Sixties.[88] In this scenario, those seeking an alternative model distinct from a bourgeois-democratic state and the Soviet bureaucracy found an option in the Chinese Revolution.

French Maoism never was a unified nor uniform doctrine or current. The Chinese critique of Soviet communism attracted veterans of the Resistance and hardcore Stalinists who saw in the peaceful coexistence a betrayal of the revolutionary nature of communism. A younger group rallied to the banners of the Cultural Revolution, interpreted as a rebellion against an aged establishment and a renewal of the revolutionary spirit.[89] These conflicting views resulted in two main branches of Marxism-Leninism, as Maoism saw itself in the Sixties: the hierarchical and the anti-hierarchical.[90] In the end, the nuances of this distinction did not travel well through the Atlantic, and People's Politics presented elements of both despite its connections with the anti-hierarchical current: tactical flexibility paired with orthodox theoretical approaches to politics.

---

[87] Ibid., 435-37.

[88] See Hamon Hervé and Patrick Rotman, *Géneration. Les années de rêve*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 71-100. For a history of the war in Algeria, see Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne*, Champs histoire, (Barcelona: Flammarion, 2012).

[89] Roland Biard, "Maoisme," in *Dictionnaire de l'extrême-gauche : de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Belfond, 1978), 217-21.

[90] Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism.*, 87.

In the early Sixties, many critics grouped themselves around Marxist-Leninist circles generated by the Franco-Chinese Friendship Society. Eventually, they formed the Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France(France's Marxist-Leninist Communist Party or PCMLF). They were recognized as the official pro-Chinese group in France by the People's Republic of China. A strictly orthodox organization, the PCMLF suffered many splits and centered its activities on publishing its newspaper, *Humanité Rouge*. It received an influx of young militants in the aftermath of the 1968 events, only to lose them again in the series of internecine fights of the late Sixties.[91] However, the communist students attracted to Maoism ended up giving its characteristic tone to anti-hierarchical French Maoism. These students broke with the Union des étudiants communistes (Union of Communist Students or UEC) to form a new organization, the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml).[92] Despite their differences, all the Maoist organizations in France shared an idealization of the working class as a revolutionary subject.

Unlike the adult Maoists who followed a more traditional political approach, these young Communists considered generating a correct political line based on a research method (enquête). Later, under the influence of the Cultural Revolution, they tried to integrate themselves with factory workers and other lower-class elements (peasants and immigrants). At first, they attempted to infiltrate the communist-dominated Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Labor or CGT). However, their failure to seize power inside the CGT forced them to reconsider their tactics, and they began to form their cells inside the factories (établissement). [93] That is why the Union of Young Communists, Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml) confronted the events of May 1968 from an orthodox position and, at first, did not support the student

---

[91] Biard, "Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France (PCMLF)."

[92] Biard, "Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes (UJCML)."

[93] Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism.*, 88-92.

protests because, for them, the revolutionary subject had to be the working class. Notwithstanding their early reluctance to join forces with the student movement, soon afterward, they changed their position. Then, they joined other radicalized students seeking a broad alliance between students and workers. These strategies regarding the working class and the students were, curiously, the same strategies that People's Politics used a few months and years later in Mexico.

The Mexican and French établissement movements shared a common origin in former Louis Althusser and Charles Bettelheim students, convinced of the need to integrate with the working class following the example of the Cultural Revolution. In the words of Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, a leader of the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml), they arrived at the proletarianization process through an analysis of the social conditions of France based on their research on the ground mixed with a statistical analysis taken from Bettelheim's work and filtered by Althusser's Marxism.[94] In a sense, French Maoism emerged from the uneasy relationship of the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser and his disciples with the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml). Although Althusser never broke with the French Communist Party, his disciples participated actively in the foundation of the Union of Young Communists, Marxist-Leninist. This relationship of the so-called Cercle d'Ulm (Circle of Ulm) with Maoism influenced their mentor, who began to re-examine his view of the primacy of theory over practice. Althusser even collaborated with an unsigned article about the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml) journal *Les Cahiers marxistes-léninistes* (Marxist-Leninist Notebooks).[95] Althusser collaboration stopped there, but the philosopher's entourage was an appropriate environment to join the Union of Young Communists,

---

[94] Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, "D'où vient l'établissement?," *Les Tempes Modernes*, no. 684-685 (July-October 2015): 17.

[95] Julian Bourg, "The Red Guards of Paris: French Student Maoism of the 1960s," *History of European Ideas* 31, no. 4 (2005): 478-86.

Marxist-Leninist, and adopt the idea of "going to the people" as an ideological position.

After 1968, French Maoism split into an authoritarian tendency with orthodox overtones and another most publicized tendency with an anti-authoritarian character. In some quarters, Maoism quickly evolved into an anti-authoritarian strain of politics, highly influenced by semi-anarchist tendencies, and eventually led to innovative discourses and practices from where French feminism and the Gay liberation movement emerged.[96] Gauche prolétarienne and Vive la Revolution represented the latter and almost became a kind of fashion fad that went beyond political issues.[97] Its influence reached such dissimilar things as philosophy, cinema, and music. Fascination with Mao's China and the Cultural Revolution involved recognized figures such as philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and filmmaker Jean Luc Goddard. A fascination that soon moved away from politics permeated mass culture in France, where cultural artifacts such as the Mao suit or the *Little Red Book* turned into mass consumption and fashion products.[98]

Trotskyism and Maoism rose from the ashes of the 1968 protests to answer the New Left's shortcomings. Thousands of students and workers

---

[96] See Ron Haas, "Guy Hocquenghem and the Cultural Revolution in France after May 1968," in *After the Deluge: New Perspectives on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France*, ed. Julian Bourg (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004). and Manus McGrogan, *Tout! Gauchisme, Contre-culture et Presse alternative dans l'après-mai 68*, Dans le feu de l'action, (Paris: L'échappée, 2018).

[97] For a history of Gauche prolétarienne with radical undertones and contrasting with more mainstream accounts focused on the leadership, see Collectif, *Les noveaux partisans: une histoire de la Gauche prolétarienne*.For a history of the "authoritarian" version of French Maoism see Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism.*, 101-07.

[98] For a study of the impact of Maoism in French culture during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) see François Hourmant, *Les années Mao en France: Avant, pendant et après mai 68* (Odile Jacob, 2018).

joined the resurgent alternative to official communism and social democracy. At the same time, they pushed for militant politics in the workplace and the universities, published diverse political literature, and engaged in a rich cultural life while diving into an intense political commitment that lasted for almost a decade. Meanwhile, the French example had a substantial impact on the expansion of Maoism through Europe after 1968.[99] The transition from the New Left to a Far-Left remained a well-known process when discussing the United States and western Europe, but it did not stop there. As I argue in the next section, Parisian students did not insert only at French factories, but in the 1970s, one of them moved to Mexico's countryside and created a "mass line" movement with a presence in factories, slums, and colleges.

6.4.2 Hacia una Política Popular: The Maoist Response to the End of the 1968 Student Movement in Mexico

Adolfo Orive Bellinger was living in Cambridge with his wife, Alicia Hernández, when the May uprising paralyzed the streets of Paris in 1968.[100] Adolfo followed the student protests through the media and wrote a passionate letter to Bettelheim at the end of the month. He was eager to travel to Paris and lamented that he was not with their classmates at the barricades. At the same time, he had plans to return to Mexico as he had to begin teaching at the National University (UNAM) in June 1968. Nonetheless, Orive Bellinger asked Bettelheim if he considered it prudent that he stopped in Paris before going back to Mexico.[101] As the

---

[99] See Gerd-Rainer Horn, "Left, Left, Left: The Old, the New, and the Far Left," in *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe nd North America, 1956-1976* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[100] For a short but comprehensive study of the May events see Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Récit: L'épicentre," in *68 Une histoire collective (1962-1981)*, ed. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Paris: La Découverte, 2018).

[101] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, May 23, 1968", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.; and Charles Bettelheim, "Letter Adolfo Orive Bellinger, July 02, 1968", Archives Nationales,

"revolutionary situation" continued in June, Bettelheim's response did not arrive on time, reaching Orive Bellinger until July. The Orive family did not travel to Paris but moved soon enough to catch up with the Mexican rendition of the global moment of student revolt.

Adolfo Orive Bellinger came back to Mexico on June 17, 1968, a few days before the student movement erupted in Mexico City, one of the most massive uprisings recorded across the world during the Sixties. He taught undergraduate courses at UNAM, including one on Marxism-Leninism and others on socialism. As he had learned in Paris, he tried to innovate pedagogically and brought the latest theoretical fashion from France with him. Instead of teaching evaluation of projects at the Engineering department, for example, he turned his course into a seminar around Marxist theory and the economics of transition to socialism. The syllabus for a 16-week course included readings of Marx's *Capital*, as well as other important documents by Lenin, Sweezy, Robinson, Kalecki, Bettelheim, and Baran. In the school of economics, his courses were even more explicit. He taught a class on "Marxism-Leninism," in a Maoist and Althusserian key, and another on "economics of socialism," in which he discussed the category of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Lenin and the Soviet economy), "revisionisms," the Chinese cultural revolution, Vietnam and Cuba.[102] He was probably one of the first teachers to introduce Althusser's theories to a broader public of students in Mexico, which became hegemonic in the national academia in the aftermath of the Sixties, including during the 1980s when the nation transitioned to a neoliberal path.[103] Perhaps Orive Bellinger would have reached a stellar career in Mexican academia. But in the context of the late Sixties, he,

---

Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[102] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, July 20, 1968", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[103] For the weight Althusser's ideas had in the Mexican academia see Carlos Illades, *El marxismo en México: Una historia intelectual* (Taurus, 2018), 221-32.

instead, preferred to "make the revolution." Five weeks after his return to Mexico, in July 22, 1968, a small clash between high school students in Mexico City turned into a massive student protest movement repressed by the riot police in July 26.

The 1968 student movement coincided with the organization of the Olympic Games, the first to be hosted by a developing nation. As their counterparts in Uruguay and Brazil, the Mexican students paralyzed the universities and high schools in the nation's capital for almost three months, from July to the October 2 student massacre at the Plaza of Tlatelolco. The movement represented the rupture between a middle-class youth and the PRI regime. Students from UNAM and their more working-class peers of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México (National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico or IPN) revolted against the lack of democracy and authoritarianism while demanding better conditions at their schools. They united behind a plan of six points (pliego petitorio): 1. Freedom for the political prisoners; 2. Destitution of the Mexico City chiefs of police; 3. Dissolution of the riot police; 4. Derogation of the crime of social dissolution; 5.Reparations to the families of the victims of police repression of the July 26, 1968, event; 6. Identify and punish the true author of the mutiny of July 22, 1968.[104] By the month of August, the student protest had transformed into a massive national movement, and in the broader context of the Sixties, it converged with the remnants of the communist opposition and the local New Left. Unlike other movements in Latin America, the movement collapsed weeks after the army violently dissolved a meeting at the Three Cultures Square, also known as the Plaza of Tlatelolco, in Mexico City on October 2, 1968.

Adolfo Orive Bellinger participated actively in the student movement, as many progressive professors, artists, and intellectuals did at the time. A

---

[104] Consejo Nacional de Huelga, "El pliego petitorio," in *La transición en México: Una hisotria documental 1910-2010*, ed. Sergio Aguayo Quezada, Obras de Política y Derecho (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010).

worried Bettelheim wrote to him on October 11 demanding news about the protests.[105] In response, the 28 years-old Adolfo explained to his mentor the specifics that led to the violent clash between the students and a government, that unlike some of its Latin American counterparts in the Southern Cone, which turned to military regimes, continued to insist that it was democratic. Orive Bellinger qualified the tragic events that unfolded at the Plaza of Tlatelolco as "the biggest massacre known in Mexico since 1913." He described the tactics of the movement (street meetings, propaganda diffused by small groups) and explained that the student activists had begun to look for a way out of the limitations of the movement. In passing, he announced that he would send Bettelheim a "document" on how the democratic character of the student movement could blend with a "revolutionary movement."[106] In other words, they were asking how to transform their society and overthrow the PRI.

The pamphlet *Hacia una Política Popular* (Towards People's Politics) that appeared in December 1968 offered such an answer. Adolfo Orive Bellinger, in collaboration with a group of students and professors from the IPN and UNAM, drafted the pamphlet, which appeared as the product of the Coalición de Brigadas Emiliano Zapata [Brigade Coalition Emiliano Zapata].[107] Two later editions of the pamphlet appeared in 1970 and 1973 published by People's Politics organization. The third edition was the basis of later editions and reprints by Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango (Durango's Juárez State University or UJED) in 2006, the first time it appeared in a book format, and Partido del Trabajo (Workers' Party or PT) in 2014. This last edition was uploaded by the Workers' Party on its webpage and finally made available for the general public fifty years later

---

[105] Charles Bettelheim, "Letter Adolfo Orive Bellinger, October 11, 1968", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[106] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, November 05, 1968", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[107] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, interview by the Jorge Puma, August 10, 2012.

of its first appearance.

As promised, Orive Bellinger sent the document to Charles Bettelheim using a friend as a courier, most likely Gustavo Gordillo, a leader in the 1968 student movement enrolled at the Economics department at UNAM.[108] Gustavo Gordillo's exile in France represented another point of contact between Europe and the Mexican 1968 student movement as well as an element in People's Politics history. In 1969, Gustavo Gordillo fled to Paris to avoid jail and, for a short time, studied under Charles Bettelheim. He wrote some articles advocating the release of the Mexican political prisoners of the 1968 movement in French and Belgian media and interviewed Jean-Paul Sartre, arguably, one of the most important intellectuals of the Sixties. In the meantime, the Gordillo-Orive Bellinger alliance proved short living. Gordillo soon broke with People's Politics over issues of political strategy. In response, Orive Bellinger sent a harsh letter to Bettelheim denouncing Gustavo Gordillo's Trotskyist sympathies.[109] Despite this conflict, both militants continued to work together occasionally until the late 1990s. In that sense, Gordillo set a pattern for the future associates of Orive Bellinger: periods of collaboration followed by dramatic ruptures and collaboration again.

As per *Hacia una Política Popular,* references to it emerged in the correspondence between Adolfo Orive Bellinger and Charles Bettelheim until 1978. Sadly, Bettelheim's archives did not keep a copy of People's Politics foundational text. Besides the history of contact with French radicalism, *Towards a People's Politics* represented a fierce leftwing critique of the old Mexican Left. In the pamphlet's text, the authors

---

[108] See Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, November 14, 1968", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

[109] Gustavo Gordillo, "Interview with Gustavo Gordillo, Former Juan N. Noyola Group Member," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, December 22, 2012. and Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Letter to Charles Bettelheim, April 24, 1970", Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/646, Folder Adolfo Orive.

criticized the political action of leftwing organizations and other twentieth century social movements in Mexico (railroad workers' unions, peasants, students). They proposed the creation of a new organization under the principles of the "mass line" idea to overcome the shortcomings of those movements. They summarized their political line in four sentences: 'We do not want to do politics in the name of the people. We want the people to make their politics and then do it with them. This is to MAKE PEOPLE'S POLITICS [capitalized in the original] and fight for true democracy, popular and revolutionary democracy.'[110] In the years that followed, the militants of the new organization called the pamphlet the *documento amarillo* (yellow document), perhaps in allusion to the color of its cardboard cover and Mao's *Little Red Book*.

The collective authorship of *Hacia una Política Popular* led to watering down its Maoist orientation in the first edition of the pamphlet. The first edition included a first chapter absent in other editions and presented an analysis of the origins of the student movement of 1968. This early version rejected that the 1968 student movement was part of an "international plot," as the government and the status quo had insisted in nearly all of the national press, or that the student protests were exclusively caused by state repression, as some liberals had instead suggested. In that sense, the authors blamed the contradiction between the revolutionary principles that the Mexican government claimed to uphold and the anti-democratic and unjust reality that the students experienced.[111] The pamphlet proposed that the objectives of the students should go beyond the demands of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga (National Strike Council), the central organization in charge of the representative body of the 1968 student movement, because:

---

[110] Anonymous, *Hacia una política popular*, 3 ed., Libros UJED, (Durango: Editorial Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango, 2006), 46-47.

[111] See Anonymous, *Hacia una Política Popular*, 1968, 1-2.

> The six points were, during some months, the expression of dissatisfaction with some of the social, political, and economic characteristics of our country and the need to fight to transform them into something better. [...] However, the six points were never in the students' minds the whole meaning of the movement, only a particular expression of everything we effectively fought, the conquest of democratic freedoms.[112]

Likely, it was the participation of Heberto Castillo (1928-1997), as one of the central authors of the document, that gave the pamphlet its cardenista overtones as emphasized in its fight for "democratic freedoms." [113] Castillo was a former member of the Movement of National Liberation (MLN) and one of the central leftist leaders who came in support of the student movement. In 1968, he ended up in jail, accused of leading the student protests.[114] Despite his early involvement with People's Politics, Castillo's ideas did not survive long in *Hacia una Política Popular*. The emphasis on the struggle for democracy and Mexico's Constitution disappeared in the following editions of the pamphlet.

While the authors of the *Yellow Document* underscored the importance of the student movement and its "popular" character, their analysis focused on a diagnosis of the movement's "failure." They attributed the failure of the movement of 1968 to its focus on student concerns and lack of leadership with a clear political orientation. Simultaneously, they tried to convince their fellow students and activists that: "[...] we must understand

---

[112] Ibid., 3.

[113] For Castillo's involvement in drafting the *Yellow Book* see Heberto Castillo, "La rebelión," *Proceso* (Opinión), 15 de enero, 1994.

[114] As noted earlier, the National Liberation Movement (MLN) was an expression of the cardenista Left presence in Mexican politics during the twentieth century. See Elisa Servín, "Algunas ramas de un árbol frondoso: el cardenismo a mediados del siglo XX," *Historias* 69 (2008).

that the popular classes transformed into a political force are the only ones capable of conquering any objective. We, as students, can only push them [the government] to "concede" some."[115] In that context, the response to the problem posed by the limitations of student activism was evident to the authors of *Towards a People's Politics*: going to the factories and to the countryside to become part of the working class.

The *Yellow Document* never mentioned the "mass line" explicitly, but when dealing with the subject of proselytizing, within the mechanics of permanent integration with the people, it suggested the following:

> Once the right ideas have been selected, they must be summarized - synthesized and systematized through their study - and then we must retake them to the masses, propagate and explain to them so that the masses can make them their own, and turn them into action; at the same time, we must verify in action the correctness of those ideas; then, summarize the ideas of the masses and take them to the masses to persevere in them.[116]

It was a quote, not entirely textual, of the classical approach of the "mass line" proposed by Mao Zedong in the 1930s. In the synthesis proposed by the authors of *Hacia una Política Popular*, the Maoist concepts -"contradiction," "main contradiction," "fair ideas," and "mass line"- provided a script for the student activists of the Sixties seeking a method to integrate among factory workers and peasants. Another feature of the reception of the "mass line" idea in Mexico was the adoption of the slogan

---

[115] Anonymous, *Hacia una Política Popular*, 1968, 6.

[116] Anonymous, *Hacia una política popular [3ed]*, 55. From here the references correspond to the 2006 edition published by the UJED, except when explicitly referred to the first edition.

"lean on your effort and work hard."[117] Although the *Yellow Document* only enunciated it to attack the culture of dependence on Government support and diminish the risk of co-optation,[118] the organization's evolution translated it into the development of "political and economic apparatuses" in the style of the Chinese communes.

The Maoist character of the pamphlet did not stop there. It was also possible to discover its intellectual origin in the response it gave to who should integrate into the people: not the intellectual, but those with the will and ability to become selfless activists.[119] This reading of Maoism based on the mass line and voluntarism led to an anti-elitist movement, suspicious of the concept of a rigid party organization and prone to decentralized action.

Against earlier critiques of Mexican communism, such as 1962 José Revueltas' *Ensayo sobre un Proletariado sin Cabeza* (Essay on a Headless Proletariat), the authors of *Hacia una Política Popular* broke with the vanguardist vision of Leninism. While Revueltas called for intellectuals to lead the working class and create a truly revolutionary party, *Towards a People's Politics* argued that only the people could transform reality to their own benefit and criticized those who created revolutionary groups from outside society.[120] Nonetheless, the authors of the *Yellow document* did not abandon the idea of a revolutionary party completely.

The pamphlet left the question to a later moment and affirmed that the party would be an "organic" product of people's struggles. For *Hacia una Política Popular*'s authors, it was not about founding a new party on paper

---

[117] See Mao Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, 194-95.

[118] Anonymous, *Hacia una política popular [3ed]*, 47-48.

[119] Ibid., 72.

[120] Cfr. Revueltas, *Proletariado sin cabeza*, 51 and 193.

but a political group with real grassroots connections.[121] Then, the revolutionary party was on the horizon, and People's Politics' brigadistas had to work to build the conditions for its creation. In the meantime, the immediate task was to generate its preconditions by integrating with popular forces and making "people's politics" with them.

Before concluding with a reiteration to create a political program based on the people's political experience, the authors of the *Yellow Document* discussed the shape of the nascent organization. At first, they rejected the idea of a centralized organization. Centralization would come only after the organization grew. Instead, they spoused a loose formation of autonomous militants with a certain level of horizontal coordination through regional committees. The authors of *Hacia una Política Popular* believed that a decentralized coalition of militants benefited from the experiences developed in grassroots movements. Besides, they considered that decentralization had the advantage of preventing the leadership from taking an opportunistic turn or falling into an authoritarian temptation. Finally, the Maoist ideas set the tone one more time when the authors of *Towards a People's Politics* established a collective leadership with a strong relationship with the masses as the ideal for the organization.[122] It was an ideal hard to reach, and People's Politics suffered bitter disputes on the centralization issue in the mid-1970s. But in the broader context of the Global Sixties, a group of committed student activists inspired by *Hacia una Política Popular* left everything and went into the interior to apply the "mass line" to the Mexican reality.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

Adolfo Orive Bellinger did not have a strong presence in the intellectual history of the Mexican Left. Yet, his role in the development of a national

---

[121] Anonymous, *Hacia una política popular [3ed]*, 81.

[122] Ibid., 94.

version of Maoism was of foremost importance, and so was his role in the proliferation of Althusser ideas across Latin America during the Sixties. His relationship with Charles Bettelheim proved to be crucial in this regard as well as the transformative contact that he developed with Arnaldo Orfila, namely surrounding the publication in Spanish of some of the main books of Althusserian Marxism with the Siglo XXI publishing house. But how did he get involved in the radical politics of the Sixties despite being the son of a former minister in a conservative PRI government?

Adolfo Orive Bellinger had inherited the ideals of the left wing of the post-revolutionary Mexican elite that included those of his father, as evident in his affiliation with Lombardo Toledano and Lázaro Cárdenas, arguably the two most important leftist intellectuals and players of an earlier era; one that faced the more radical language of the New Left during the Global Sixties. In addition, his privileged social position allowed him to study abroad with some of the most prominent radical thinkers of the latter era, including Louis Althusser, Charles Bettelheim, Marta Harnecker, and Joan Robinson. In the process, he became part of the transnational network of students, intellectuals, and activists behind the popularity of the "mass line" beyond China and Western Europe in the late Sixties. It was not an extravagant option. At the end of this era, for thousands of young people around the world, the Cultural Revolution in China and the ideas of Mao Zedong served as political alternatives to the stalled Soviet communism or Western imperialism. In the Mexican context, the 28 years-old Adolfo and his associates used a French version of Maoism to question the shortcomings and contradictions of the Mexican Revolution, including its inheritors and decayed legacies.

Adolfo Orive Bellinger brought to Mexico from Paris the democratic interpretation of Mao's ideas that he learned with Charles Bettelheim and used the "mass line" as a tactical orientation to challenge the ideological hegemony and repressive institutions of the PRI, a governing apparatus that insisted on being revolutionary and democratic, but, just like many of its Latin American counterparts, had also evolved into a repressive apparatus. In this context, the contribution to the Maoist elements in

Hacia una Política Popular pamphlet reflected an enthusiastic reception and adaptation of concepts developed by Mao Zedong, distinct from Chinese propaganda. These ideas came from the political and intellectual milieu of France, which during the Global Sixties, created a non-authoritarian version of French Maoism and motivated hundreds of French students to leave the classrooms for the factories. After all, Adolfo read the same books and learned the same lessons on China and Vietnam as those who later founded Gauche prolétarienne or joined the more orthodox Maoist sects in France in the 1970s. That is why People's Politics shared a common origin with these French organizations, the Althusser and Charles Bettelheim seminar sessions. There, Adolfo acquired the tools necessary to convince a small but dedicated group of UNAM and IPN students to launch a Maoist organization in the aftermath of the 1968 student movement.

As examined in the next chapter, the militants of People's Politics organized primarily outside of the universities of Mexico City, keeping their activities out of the focus of the Mexican leftwing intelligentsia. The authors of the *Yellow Document* conceded that their strategy was "[…] not romantic nor exciting as a demonstration or taking to the hills with a rifle […]", but they insisted that their proposal was "[…] the only position consistent with what intrinsically caused the student movement."[123] Nonetheless, *Hacia una Política Popular* left a strong mark on hundreds of student brigadistas and thousands of peasants, squatters, and workers across Mexico, especially in the northern Mexico metropolis of Torreón and Monterrey. The deep commitment of those young students to the "mass line" transformed People's Politics from a small activist group into a massive organization.

[123] Anonymous, *Hacia una Política Popular*, 1968, 22.

7 Socially Restless Students in Torreón and the Encounter Between the Local and the Global

7.1 Introduction: The First Years of People's Politics

When Adolfo Orive Bellinger returned from England to Mexico in July 1968, he soon joined the economics school at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) as a subject teacher. He taught research methods, the economic problems of Mexico, and other social science subjects.[1] Teaching Althusserian Marxism, Orive Bellinger attracted the attention of a group of students who mobilized around cultural issues and who became active politically during the 1968 student movement. The contact between the young professor and the radicalized students in the middle of the 1968 student movement generated the conditions for the creation of People's Politics.

During the Mexican 1968 student movement, the militancy of many students manifested under the umbrella of the brigadas (brigades), small affinity groups formed in the heat of propaganda runs and demonstrations coordinated by the school committees (*comités de lucha)*. The student brigadistas gathered in groups six to distribute flyers and collect funds and food. Individually, they proselytized in markets, factories, and rural hamlets of Mexico City's outskirts.[2] Adolfo Orive Bellinger joined other professors to support the mobilization and got impressed by the brigada experience. As a result, when the movement collapsed under the pressure of governmental repression, a group of student leaders in *Hacia*

[1] Adolfo Orive Bellinger, "Interview with Adolfo Orive III," interview by Jorge Puma, *Ph.D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, July 16, 2018.

[2] José René Rivas Ontiveros, *La izquierda estudiantil en la UNAM. Organizaciones, movilizaciones y liderazgos. (1958-1972)* (Miguel Ángel Porrúa-UNAM-FES Aragón, 2007), 622-24.

una Política Popular sent brigadas to the countryside to meet the masses.

Many brigadistas, attracted by the message of *Towards a People's Politics,* heeded the call and founded People's Politics as a brigadas' coalition in November 1968. These activists from the School of Economics of the UNAM and the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) were the products of a decade-long process of radicalization and militancy among high-education students in Mexico. Coming from middle-class families of Chihuahua and Tamaulipas in northern Mexico, the 1968 movement transformed the lives of these non-Mexico City students.[3] In the months that followed the end of the massive protests in Mexico City, they returned to their states of origin to implement the mass line idea of the *Yellow document*.

The original core of People's Politics, including Adolfo Orive Bellinger and newly minted physician Javier Gil (†), first attempted to "integrate" with the rural masses in the summer of 1969. They worked under the guise of a medical brigade and moved into the Mixteca region in the southern Mexico states of Guerrero and Oaxaca. They built upon the experience and wrote an evaluation of this first attempt at insertion in their internal document, *Experiences of some People's Politics brigades in the peasant sector*.

The booklet considered the main problems that they -and many other young activists from the universities- faced during the Sixties, including distrust of the local population and the strength of local power factors. At the same time, their analysis covered the limitations of the integration process. At the stage of organizing, this included a lack of physical condition, short time spent in the communities, and difficulty integrating into the peasant environment due to their privileged middle-class origin. One of the solutions proposed in the pamphlet was to deepen the political

[3] For a history of student radicalization during the 1950s and 1960s, with an emphasis on the IPN, see Jaime M Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture during the Long Sixties* (Stanford University Press, 2013).

formation of the militants and offered a study agenda centered on the works of Mao Zedong, Marta Harnecker, and Lenin and studies of Mexican anthropology and sociology on the rural milieu.[4] If the *Yellow Document* had attempted to avoid an explicit declaration of adherence to Maoist theses, this internal document clearly showed the political inclinations of the group.

Not all those who had adhered to the *Yellow Document* took the integration route with the peasants, however. Some stayed at the UNAM to participate in the organizing drive for a teachers' union in the 1970s.[5] For example, Jorge Alberto Calderón, also known as "El Robin," traveled to Paris to study with Charles Bettelheim. Supported by Orive Bellinger, Calderón studied between 1971 and 1974 in Paris, working on a dissertation about State Capitalism in Mexico that he eventually defended in 1990. But "El Robin" gradually split with Orive Bellinger and joined the ranks of the union bureaucracy and the reformist Left in the 1980s. However, in between, he sympathized with the more "orthodox" positions of the pro-Albanian faction of Maoism.[6] His long relationship with Bettelheim and his early research interests showed the many paths that global Maoism followed in the concluding years of the Sixties.

Other early allies of People's Politics, such as Gustavo Gordillo, followed the path of electoral agitation proposed by Heberto Castillo (1928-1997).

---

[4] Política Popular, *Experiencias de algunas brigadas de Política Popular en el sector campesino*, (1969).

[5] For the history of the teachers unionism in the UNAM during the 1970s see José Woldenberg, *Memoria de la izquierda* (Cal y arena, 1998). and Jorge Basurto, "El SPAUNAM," in *Los movimientos sindicales en la UNAM* (México, D.F.: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales-UNAM, 1997).

[6] Archives Nationales, Fonds Charles Bettelheim, Box EHESS_PR/638, Folder Calderón Salazar, Jorge A. (1973-1990). For a survey on the role of Albania as an ideological pole for radicals see Elidor Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017).

As noted earlier, Castillo was the co-author of *Hacia una Política Popular*. In 1968, he was imprisoned for participating in the 1968 student movement. Together, they became the backbone of a series of left-populist parties that included the Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores (Mexican Workers Party or PMT).[7] They tried to revive Lázaro Cárdenas' leftist nationalism, ultimately achieving Castillo's dream of forming a non-communist Left dissidence against the PRI. Eventually, in the 1980s, several of them converged again in the unitary efforts of the Mexican Left as the Movimiento de Acción Popular (Popular Action Movement or MAP) or the Partido Mexicano Socialista (Mexican Socialist Party of PMS).[8] By then, the Global Sixties had come to an end, only to be replaced by the more pessimistic outcomes that leftists saw with the rise of neoliberalism.

Those who persevered in the "mass line" embarked on a journey to the north and west of Mexico. Between 1969 and 1970, they tried to integrate into northern Mexico's small rural communities where some political organization already existed, such as in Torreón de Cañas, Durango. A different group of them organized in the sugar cane plantations in Tamaulipas.[9] At the same time, Adolfo Orive Bellinger and other brigadistas undertook another experience of a peasant organization in the Bahía de Banderas area in the western state of Nayarit that mixed a process of infiltrating the PRI structures of the area, the formation of collective farms (ejidos) and electoral struggle.[10] In the end, these

---

[7] For a history of the PMT see Javier Santiago, *PMT La difícil historia 1971-1986* (México, DF: Editorial Posada, 1987, 1987).

[8] See Barry Carr, *La izquierda mexicana a través del siglo XX*, trans. Paloma Villegas, Problemas de México, (México, D.F.: Ediciones ERA, 1996), 291-96 and 307.

[9] For the experience of People's Politics in Tamaulipas Javier Gil, "Conversation with Javier Gil, Founder of People's Politics," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, September 30, 2013.

[10] José Luis Torres, "Unión Ejidal Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit," in *Poder Popular: Construcción de Ciudadanía y comunidad*, ed. Adolfo Orive Bellinger and José Luis Torres

attempts failed, either because of the strength of local PRI control in Tamaulipas and Nayarit or because of unfortunate accidents such as in Torreón de Cañas, where a young man lost his life when he got lost in the wilderness.

Meanwhile, other brigadistas went to northern Mexico cities in Sonora and the capital of Durango to work in the local universities. By the end of 1970, the advances of People's Politics were modest, but the presence of its brigadistas in Durango allowed them to expand to Monterrey and Torreón, Coahuila. The brigadistas entered northern Mexico at a time of social and economic transition in the region. Just as the cotton boom was ending, a period of economic contraction began. This had a sharp effect in intermediate cities as Torreón and plunged the agricultural economies of the northwestern states of Sonora, Sinaloa, and Durango into crisis.[11] Hidden by the boom and expansion of Monterrey and the debacle of Mexico City, the stagnation of northern Mexico propitiated the rise and fall of a powerful leftwing social movement in the urban periphery and in certain rural areas of the region.

Between 1972 and 1976, the years that marked the end of the Sixties, People's Politics focused its organizing efforts on the slums of Durango, Torreón, and Monterrey, although the experiment of peasant organizing in Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit persisted during the following years and well into the 1980s. Initially, the strategy of building a decentralized organization with broad autonomy for the brigadas worked. The creation of "colonias independientes" (autonomous neighborhoods) allowed People's Politics to grow. Over time, the local power accumulated by the brigadistas of student origin clashed with the attempt to create a centralized organization around the ideological leadership of Adolfo

---

(México, D.F.: Juan Pablos Editor-Fundación México Social Siglo XXI, 2010).

[11] Luis Aboites Aguilar, *El norte entre algodones: población, trabajo agrícola y optimismo en México, 1930-1970* (El Colegio de México AC, 2013), 149-75.

Orive Bellinger.

Although the brigadistas in La Laguna remained loyal to Adolfo Orive Bellinger, a plurality of those working in Monterrey and Durango split in 1976, taking their neighborhoods with them. On one side, the Frente Popular Tierra y Libertad of Monterrey (Monterrey's Land and Freedom People's Front) and most of Durango's brigada broke with Adolfo's position. At the same time, La Laguna and some Monterrey militants around Línea Proletaria (Proletarian Line) followed him. After the internal conflict, Proletarian Line redirected its efforts to peasant organizing (Durango and Chiapas) and union work (mining union, teachers, and telephone workers).[12] In the next years, Proletarian Line would be present along this route in the first skirmishes against privatization and neoliberal reforms.

Contrary to what happened in Mexico City in the 1970s and 1980s, the squatters' movement in Durango and La Laguna did not originate primarily in the population's growth since it occurred when the urban population was beginning to falter. Instead, due to popular mobilization and later to the interests of real estate entrepreneurs, the northern cities grew vertiginously in extension just when their population growth rate slowed. In an intermediate step, the State intervened to stop the development of popular occupations and cut off the northern leftists. Within this story that unfolded from Tijuana in the Pacific to Tampico in the Gulf of Mexico, mass line Maoism was essential in mobilizing thousands of settlers, peasants, and students.[13]

---

[12] Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, "Maoists of Northern Mexico: A Short History of Política Popular-Línea Proletaria, 1969-1979," [Los maoístas del norte de México: breve historia de Política Popular-Línea Proletaria 1968-1979.] *Revista Izquierdas*, no. 27 (April 2016), https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-50492016000200008.

[13] Luis Aboites Aguilar, *El norte mexicano sin algodones, 1970-2010: Estancamiento, inconformidad y el violento adiós al optimismo* (Ciudad de México: Colegio de México, 2018), 207-10.

This chapter argues that after the 1968 student movement, a moment that in Mexico opened the last and more radical chapter of the Sixties, People's Politics channeled student unrest into organizing squatters and peasants. Using *Towards a People's Politics* theses, Mexico City veterans of the 1968 movement recruited radicalized students from the local universities and high schools of La Laguna, Durango, and Nuevo León. Their integration into People's Politics drew these middle-class youth away, not only from guerrilla organizations but also from electoral politics. Hundreds of students joined the ranks of this Maoist organization, and for a decade, they believed theirs was the only correct political line toward revolutionary change.

The chapter first explains how and why the People's Politics version of revolutionary politics outcompeted the old Communist Party and other New Left rivals in some northern Mexico cities during the late Sixties and thereafter. To understand how that happened, it analyzes the recruitment process of student brigadistas from the IPN and UNAM after the collapse of the 1968 student movement. Then, it follows Adolfo Orive Bellinger and People's Politics brigadistas to a contradictory episode of peasant organizing and municipal politics on the Pacific coast of Mexico. Next, it studies the case of Durango de Victoria to demonstrate how the mass line tactics and an early alliance with old Communist militants provided a recipe for creating a strong squatter organization. Finally, it examines the rise of a local moment of political and countercultural effervescence among college and high school students at La Laguna that provided the cadres for the future expansion of People's Politics.

7.2 A Tale of Two Campuses: 1968 Student Brigadistas and People's Politics

Like in France, political activism in Mexican universities predated the 1968 movement. Nonetheless, the Mexican post-revolutionary state was able to successfully cope with student unrest during the 1940s and the early years of the Sixties (c. 1956-1968). It used a mix of mild repression and manipulation through funding of recreative activities, sports, culture, and

relajo (disorder).[14] This contention measures failed in 1968 when social change among the youth in the latter and more radical years of the Sixties combined with the growing influence of revolutionary ideals that originated from Cuba and the national liberation movements in Vietnam and Algeria.

A small incident, a fight between rival gangs of high school students violently repressed by the police, motivated a local protest that escalated into a massive student movement at the high education institutions of Mexico City and beyond.[15] Between July and October 1968, students from various universities joined forces with their professors, demanding respect for their institutions, the dissolution of the riot police, and the liberation of political prisoners.[16] The response of an increasingly authoritarian government worried that the protests could affect the Olympic games, culminated in the October 2 massacre of Tlatelolco.[17] As the Belgian magazine *Le Point* put it in November 1968: "400 dead, thousands of wounded and imprisoned. Diaz Ordaz' dictatorship unveiled [...] the peace of the gods of the stadiums should not be perturbed...."[18] Nonetheless,

---

[14] For the dynamics of *relajo* as a combination of organized pranks, mockery, and carnival oriented to keep students away from politics see Jaime M Pensado, "Fun and Politics in Postwar Mexico," in *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[15] Compare it with the disputes between Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml) militants and right-wing activists that precipitated the police occupation of Nanterre University on May 3, 1968, beginning the "May events" in France. See Christophe Bourseiller, *Les maoïstes : La folle histoire des gardes rouges français* (Paris: Points, 2008), 87-88.

[16] A transcription of the student's movement *pliego petitorio* [list of demands] can be consulted at Huelga, "El pliego petitorio," 162-63.

[17] For an accessible English survey on the 1968 movement see Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico* (UNM Press, 2005).

[18] Marc Frère, Jeannine Garot, and Françoise Wolfers, "Mexique a l'ombre des jeux," *Le*

for a radicalized layer of students and their professors, Tlatelolco was not the end but a new and more radical beginning.

People's Politics emerged in the background of the radicalization of mobilized students caused by the 1968 movement. Orive Bellinger recruited the first members of the organization among two diverse sets of students mirroring the contrasting social experiences of higher education that characterized Mexico during these years. On one side, his call for a mass line organization echoed with significant support from a group of working class and low-middle-class students from the IPN. These twenty-something younglings were eager to act and saw Maoism as a quick response to the limitations of the student movement. On the other, former members of the Juan F. Noyola group, a cultural club of UNAM's school of Economics, followed Orive Bellinger to the countryside.

Juan F. Noyola's members were the exact opposite of the IPN students, rich and upper-middle-class UNAM students dreaming with revolution and embarking on a dangerous enterprise that took them far away from the amenities of their social milieu. Gustavo Gordillo, one of his members, characterized the Noyola as:

> A student group, totally composed of students, which was more cultural [than political], called "Juan F. Noyola" in honor of a Mexican economist who worked in the early years of the Cuban government and who died in a plane crash. Well, it was a student group more oriented to cultural issues. We had the [UNAM's school of] economics film club. And, well, the other common thing we had, we were the best students in the school.[19]

Security sources shared a similar assessment of these young economists

---

Point, November, 1968, 16.

[19] Gustavo Gordillo de Anda, interview by Jorge Puma, December 22, 2012.

in the late Sixties. According to the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (the Federal Security Directorate, DFS, in charge of surveillance and repression since the 1940s), these young activists pronounced themselves against Gustavo Diaz Ordaz' government (1964-1970). After, they participated in propaganda brigades and the counter-campaign against PRI's presidential candidate Luis Echeverría Alvarez (1970-1976), while opposing the pro-government groups of agent provocateurs (porros).[20] A DFS informer also mischievously considered: "Their members were of well-known intellectual capacity and physically attractive; all of them of well-to-do families, as it was known, they liked to consume drugs."[21] Unsurprisingly, household names of the 1990s Mexican politics appeared as part of the group. Beyond their privileged position, their political activities in the University put them in the spot.[22] The report mentioned, among others, the future undersecretary of agrarian affairs (1988–1994), Gustavo Gordillo, PRI politician Oscar Levín Coppel, and Confederación Nacional Campesina (Peasant National Confederation or CNC) leader during the Carlos Salinas de Gortari's presidency (1988-1994), Hugo Andrés Araujo.[23] Eventually, Hugo Andrés Araujo left the UNAM to do

[20] "Antecedentes del Lic. Adolfo Orive Bellinger" Versión pública Adolfo Orive Bellinger. 1957-1983. Archivo General de la Nación. Fondo Gobernación. Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Box 192. For a study of the post 1968 role of the *porros* see Jaime M Pensado, ""No More Fun and Games": From Porristas to Porros," in *ebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture during the Long Sixties* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[21] "Antecedentes del Lic. Adolfo Orive Bellinger" Versión pública Adolfo Orive Bellinger. 1957-1983. Archivo General de la Nación. Fondo Gobernación. Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Box 192.

[22] For a history of the role among Mexican elites that UNAM's School of Economics had during the period see María Eugenia Romero Sotelo, "The Origins of Economic Orthodoxy in Mexico," in *Economic Development and Global Crisis: The Latin American Economy in Historical Perspective*, ed. José Luís Cardoso, Maria Cristina Marcuzzo, and María Eugenia Romero Sotelo (Routledge, 2014).

[23] The famous libel against the 1968 movement, *El Mondrigo,* reproduced too the slander of characterizing the student activists as drug users. Explicitly mentioning Hugo Andres

political work in the countryside along the lines of People's Politics orientation.

Coming from more humble origins, IPN activists joined in the wave of radical activism that followed the end of the 1968 movement. After their contact with Maoist ideology and participating in the 1968 movement, the sons of the working class or the emergent low-income middle classes from places as Mexico City, San Luis Potosi, and Parral, Chihuahua, spoused a more radical involvement than their UNAM peers. Their origins put a heavy burden on them. Severiano Sánchez, an IPN student leader and later Proletarian Line militant, explained: "I was from an extremely poor family. So I felt a great need and responsibility to pursue a career. No one in my family had studied beyond elementary school, and we were all forced to work since we were very young because my father died when I was three years old."[24]

Severiano Sánchez and his peers believed that socialism was around the corner and were eager to participate in any radical attempt to bring an end to the authoritarian regime ruling Mexico. One group of early People's Politics sympathizers eventually denounced the organization as "espontaneist" and created a more "orthodox" Marxist-Leninist organization. They ended up organizing among the teachers and students of the self-sustaining Preparatorias Populares (People's High Schools) and UNAM's Colegios de Ciencias y Humanidades (Sciences and Humanities Colleges), where many low-income students sought to continue their

---

Araujo's participation in an apocryphal reunion on September 25, 1968, the government libel mentioned: "[…] Hugo Araujo and Genaro Alanís are old friends of L.S.D. and peyote. I just noticed it!" Anónimo, *¡El móndrigo! Bitácora del Consejo Nacional de Huelga* (México, D.F.: Editorial Alba Roja, S.C.L., 1968), 152.

[24] Severiano Sánchez, "Interview with Severiano Sanchez, IPN student activist in 1968 and brigadista of People's Politics in Local 147 of the Miner's Union in Monclova," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History University of Notre Dame*, March 14, 2017.

studies.[25] Others, as Alberto "Güero" Escudero and Jesús Vargas Valdés, left the school and became full-time cadres of People's Politics, organizing peasants and squatters in Durango. All of them shared the experience of radicalization during the 1968 movement and a belief in the Maoist idea of "serving the people" that marked the latter years of the Sixties.

7.3 From Integration with the Masses to Contesting the Municipal Presidency: Maoists Within the PRI?

The early years of People's Politics were an example of the difficulties faced by university students when trying to integrate into peasant, marginal, and indigenous rural communities. Besides their political inexperience, ignorance of the local language, and scarce means, brigadistas encountered the presence of a corporate structure, a traditional community impervious to their propaganda and, often, historically ruled by caciques (local bosses) loyal to the PRI. On the one hand, by 1972, most of the brigadistas had abandoned the countryside and moved to the urban periphery of Durango, Monterrey, and Torreón. On the other, in 1970, the organization's founder, Adolfo Orive Bellinger, and his followers took advantage of their government contacts to move to the Bahía de Banderas area in the western state of Nayarit. There, they founded a credit union and mobilized their peasant followers electorally.

The Bahía de Banderas experiment took place when the Mexican government started its plans for the tourist development of Nuevo Vallarta. It also coincided with president Luis Echeverría's attempt to promote Nayarit's economic development through tobacco cultivation. Besides, Nayarit was going through a moment of political effervescence. The PRI's leftwing dissident Alejandro Gascón Mercado won the position of Major of Nayarit's state capital a few months later of the arrival of the People's Politics brigade. Gascón Mercado built a powerful political

[25] For a history of this group of IPN Marxist-Leninists see López Pérez, "La Organización Comunista Cajeme: una manifestación del maoísmo en México (1973-1978)." b

movement in the state, and only an electoral fraud deprived him of the governorship in the 1980s.[26] In that context, People's Politics attempted to create an agricultural "commune" in Nayarit's Bahía de Banderas by navigating the contradictions of the Mexican political system in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

According to Adolfo Orive Bellinger's version, the brigadistas of People's Politics entered the area during the peasants' (ejidatarios) resistance to President Diaz Ordaz's expropriation decree of November 1970. Díaz Ordaz's administration intended to generate a tourist project in the area after connecting it with the Compostela-Puerto Vallarta highway, recently completed in 1968. People's Politics brigadistas learned about the organizational experience of the Bahía de Banderas peasants (ejidatarios) through their contact with Antonio Rosas Alegría, a communist rural teacher originally from Nayarit, who worked in Oaxaca when the brigada was there. At the request of former president Lázaro Cárdenas, the brigadistas met him. Afterward, Rosas Alegría helped them to join the peasant resistance movement.[27]

Under the threat of expropriation of their lands, peasants of seven farming communities (ejidos) on the southern coast of Nayarit (El Campomo, La Peñita de Jaltemba, Sayulita, Higuera Blanca, La Cruz de Huanacaxtle, Bucerías, and Jarretaderas) sought legal protection. Also, they began to negotiate with the incoming government of President Luis Echeverría(1970-1976). Echeverría's populist project found in these circumstances an opportunity to give a different twist to the tourism project in the area. Echeverría's government accepted almost all the peasants' demands without losing control of the financial resources

---

[26] On the Gasconist experience, see Carlos Rafael Rea Rodríguez, "El gasconismo: surgimiento de una cultura política regional," *Desacatos* 25, no. Septiembre-diciembre (2007).

[27] Orive and Torres, *Poder Popular*, 287-96.

destined for the Trust to manage the expropriated lands.[28] For this reason, in 1971, the farming communities, shown in figure 1, created a legal coalition (union of ejidos) and agreed to participate in the expropriation Trust.

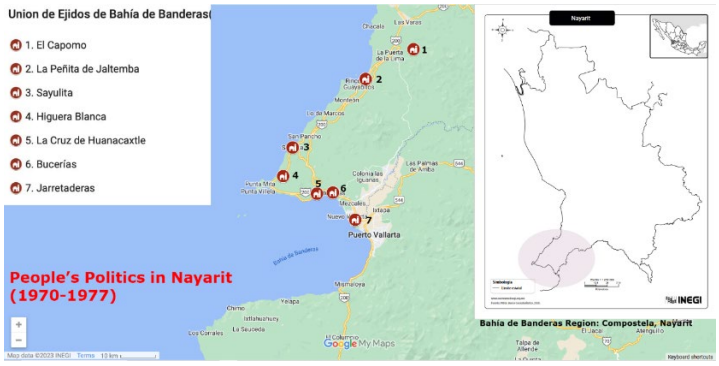


Figure 3-1: People's Politics first peasant organization, Unión de Ejidos de Bahía de Banderas (Elaborated with information from Orive y Torres, 2010)[29]

In the 1970s, the Mexican state injected millions of dollars into developing various agricultural, industrial, and tourism projects. President Luis Echeverría's Bahía de Banderas development project combined two initiatives. On the one hand, the union of ejidos provided the framework to organize collectively. On the other hand, the Mexican government intervened in the area's local economy through the Bahía de Banderas Trust Fund. [30]

---

[28] Juan de Dios García Rivera et al., "Bahía de Banderas: Lucha política y desarrollo regional. 1970-1984" (Licenciatura en Sociología Tesis, ENEP Acatlán-UNAM, 1987), 23-33.

[29] Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. "People's Politics First Peasant Organization, Unión de Ejidos de Bahía de Banderas ". Ciudad de México, Accessed on May 15 2023.

[30] Ibid., 41-42.

The brigadistas of People's Politics had the greatest influence within the agricultural committee of the union de ejidos, especially in the vegetable project, where they formed a political force in alliance with poor and middle-class peasants. They also promoted creating an alternative educational system using the Montessori method for elementary education and established a network of libraries created with material from the Fondo de Cultura Económica (one of the nation's most important publishing houses) in each farming community (ejido). During this period, the brigadistas worked under the assumption that their work was creating a space where peasants could organize themselves democratically and independently.[31]

At the end of 1972 and the beginning of 1973, members of the union de ejidos and the brigadistas of Popular Politics managed to capture the PRI municipal committee. They presented a candidate for the municipal presidency of Compostela, Nayarit, and won it. In the process, they confronted the local PRI elite, which competed in the National Action Party (PAN) slate.[32] At that moment, the local PRI elite was losing power, and the brigadistas had the federal government's support.

People's Politics brigadistas benefited from president Luis Echeverría's attack against the local PRI cadres who opposed his populist policies. In this context, it is necessary to place the appointment of Adolfo Orive Bellinger, who since September 1971 was the general resident of the Bahía de Banderas Trust in the area, as deputy assistant regional manager of the recently founded public company, Mexican Tobacco (TABAMEX), on December 21, 1972.[33] From that position, he actively participated in the

---

[31] Orive and Torres, *Poder Popular*, 209 y 309.

[32] Ejidos de Compostela, "Carta abierta de los ejidos de Compostela al Presidente Lic. Luis Echeverría," *El Nayar. Diario del medio día* (Tepic, Nayarit), 17 de enero 1973.

[33] For a history of TABAMEX, see Antonio Chumacero, *Origen de una empresa pública. El caso de Tabacos Mexicanos.* (Tepic, Nayarit: Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit, 1985).

dispute for the municipal presidency of Compostela.

Contradicting his future rejection of electoral politics, Adolfo Orive Bellinger threw himself into the electoral conflict. As shown in figure 2, he appeared leading the union de ejidos' peasants trying to regain the municipal presidency, which the National Action Party (PAN) sympathizers had taken at the end of 1972.[34] The struggle of the Bahía de Banderas peasants and the brigadistas was successful, as the PRI candidate took control of his office on December 30 of that year. Later, in mid-February 1973, he faced again another PAN attempt to evict him from the City Hall. One more time, the union de ejidos peasants mobilized to defend their Municipal president.

Figure 3-2: Adolfo Orive Bellinger giving a speech in Compostela, Nayarit, in support of the union de ejidos candidate for the municipal presidency (El Nayar, 1973)[35]

[34] "Mitin monstruo del PRI, de apoyo a Ocegueda alcalde de Compostela," *El Nayar. Diario del medio día* (Tepic, Nayarit), 14 de febrero 1973.

[35] La Redacción El Nayar and Monsalvo, "Triunfo del Ing. Orive en la agitación política de

In 1973 Nayarit progressivism seemed to be on the verge of taking power in the state by the hand of two complementary projects. First, a year earlier, Alejandro Gascón Mercado became the Popular Socialist Party Mayor of Tepic, Nayarit's capital. He represented a Revolutionary nationalist and Stalinist project. Second, with the federal government's support for the nationalization of tobacco companies, there was a favorable situation for the Left in the state. Under these conditions, People's Politics tried to organize the day laborers in the tobacco fields.[36]

People's Politics experiment in Nayarit culminated with the rising resistance of the oligarchic groups of the area. One by one, they lost positions in the government. Soon after defeating National Action Party (PAN) protestors in 1973, Compostela's Municipal president defected to the local PRI elite. Then, People's Politics lost one of his allies in the federal government, Peasants' National Confederation (CNC) leader Alfredo V. Bonfil, to an aircraft accident. Afterward, the local PRI elite threatened to murder the brigadistas and forced them to flee. The last nail in the coffin of the project was the expulsion of People's Politics sympathizers from the leadership of the union de ejidos in May 1973, instigated by a rival PRI faction.[37]

However, part of the educational and productive program established by People's Politics persisted on a more modest scale until 1977 through the Sociedad de Crédito Ejidal "Emiliano Zapata" ("Emiliano Zapata's" Farmers' Credit Union), which brought together 21 peasants (ejidatarios) expelled from the union of ejidos. In 1977 the Credit Union dissolved due to contradictions between the socialist program of People's Politics

---

Compostela," (Tepic, Nayarit, February 19 1973).

[36] Orive and Torres, *Poder Popular*, 339-41.

[37] For a contrasting opinion with the version of Orive and the former brigadistas of Política Popular, see Augusto Gómez Villanueva, *El campo que yo conocí: La tierra, los hombres, la política. Memorias* (México, D.F.: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2015), 667-83.

brigadistas and the "capitalist" interests of the peasants who benefited from the improvements introduced by the Sociedad de Crédito. By then, the Credit Union was already a self-sustaining project that contrasted favorably with the productive wreckage of the state-controlled unión de ejidos.

The authors of the *Yellow document* argued that the forms of political struggle would depend on the specific conditions of the organizing process. The early experience of electoral participation, indirect in the case of the municipal presidency of Compostela, was implicit in *Hacia una Política Popular*. Indeed, the Mexican Left had no chance to participate legally in politics until 1977, again, a moment that marked the end of the Sixties and paved the way for the neoliberal path.[38] In this context, *Towards a People's Politics* advocated working outside the Mexican state institutions.[39] Nevertheless, the *Yellow document* did not deny entering the realm of legality when possible. On the contrary, their authors sustained:

> When an activist begins his integration with a section of the people involved in a [reformist-legal] struggle, he should not reject it nor stay out of it. Instead, he must participate alongside the workers, peasants, students, and employees. His objective should be to politicize his working-class comrades and educate them on the limits of any reformist struggle presented as a petition to the government.[40]

---

[38] For a balance of the 1977 political reform that legalized the Communist party and opened the door to electoral politics from the point of view of a mass line militant, see Julio Moguel, "Venturas y desventuras de la izquierda en el espacio de la Reforma Política," in *Los caminos de la izquierda* (México, D.F.: Juan Pablos, 1987).

[39] Anonymous, *Hacia una política popular [3ed]*, 40-44.

[40] Ibid., 66.

Years later, when People's Politics concentrated on the squatter movement and the unions, it saw the "bourgeois" forms of struggle with greater distrust.

7.4 The Maoists of Durango: Brigadistas of 1968 in Search of Revolution

The state of Durango came out of the Mexican Revolution without a powerful local elite, as they bet on the defeated faction of the civil conflict, the Francisco Villa's army. As a result, Governors until the 1970s were appointed from Mexico City.[41] The state's economy focused on agriculture and exploiting natural mineral and forest resources. The other significant player, the Catholic Church, did not have much political weight despite its social strength after the government defeated the last Cristero rebels in the 1940s, remnants of the religious conflict between the revolutionary state and militant Catholics (1926-1929).[42]

The domination of the state by the coalition of governmental, ecclesiastical, and lumber business interests did not make the development of a communitarian resistance easy.[43] And yet, localist sentiment drove two protest movements in the Sixties where a coalition of business people, students, the Catholic Church, and local politicians demanded that the federal government intervene on their behalf. First, they protested in 1966 against a Monterrey mining company's exploitation of the iron deposit in Cerro del Mercado. The protest ended under the weight of repression. Its leaders sold out to the government,

---

[41] Miguel Palacios Moncayo, *Durango: Economía, sociedad, política y cultura* (Durango: UJED, 2005), 21-22.

[42] For a history of the Cristero rebellions in Durango, see Antonio Avitia Hernández, *El caudillo sagrado: Historia de las rebeliones cristeras en el estado de Durango, México*, 2 ed. (México, D.F.: Antonio Avitia, 2005).

[43] Palacios Moncayo, *Durango: Economía y sociedad*, 29-78.

and the authorities promised vaguely to use a new tax to promote the creation of a steel mill in Durango.

Then, in 1970 the students took over and protested against the corruption and authoritarianism of the state government. On that occasion, President Luis Echeverría intervened with resources for the local educational system, highways, and political support for the movement's leaders.[44] At the same time, the Echeverría administration implemented a bloody counterinsurgent campaign against the nascent urban guerrilla movement, which proliferated in the aftermath of the 1968 movement and throughout the late Sixties. In this rarefied environment, Luis Echeverría's repressive government opened the door to leftwing political initiatives in northern and western Mexico, including the capital of Durango, La Laguna, and Monterrey.

In this context of the late Sixties, Durango experienced a series of protest movements in the rural northern part of the state bordering Chihuahua. In the municipalities of Ocampo and Madera, a movement fighting for land and against logging interests was the breeding ground for the first attempt at modern guerrilla warfare in Mexico. In the region's peasant struggle, the leadership of Álvaro Ríos connected local demands with the leftist reformism around Vicente Lombardo Toledano and with some radicalized student groups seduced by the image of revolutionary China.[45] One of these groups, the Marxist-Leninist Movement of Mexico, tried to form a guerrilla base in Torreón de Cañas, Durango.[46] In that town, the peasant struggle eventually ended in the expropriation of a sheep farm and the constitution of a collective ejido managing thousands of sheep. It

---

[44] Gabino Martínez Guzmán, *CDP. El Poder del Pueblo.* (Durango, México: Universidad Juarez del Estado de Durango, 2012), 25-44.

[45] José De la O Holguín, *Álvaro Ríos: El agrarista de las caravanas rojas* (Durango: ICED, 2015), 29-37.

[46] Condés Lara, "El maoísmo en México.," 119.

was there where the students of the IPN planned to open a "northern front" and inserted themselves into the masses. The project was wrecked by the accidental death of two of the young people. One of the survivors of the experiment and former leader of Biological Sciences of the IPN during the strike of '69, Jesús Vargas Valdés, revived the People's Politics brigada in the capital of Durango in 1972.

A former basketball star in high school and college, Jesús Vargas Valdés was the sixth brother in a family of nine supported by a widow of a steelworker from Parral, Chihuahua. He arrived in Mexico City in 1962 following his brothers and worked in an electronics factory to support his studies at the IPN. After an injury forced him to drop basketball, he radicalized in the middle of the 1968 movement. As hundreds of young Latin Americans of the period, Jesús was tempted by the call to arms of Guevara and Mao and joined the Mexican Marxist-Leninist Movement.[47] Before leaving for the north, he married a young student activist and amateur photographer, Marcela Frías. They fell in love during the 1968 movement and its aftermath when she engaged in risky activities such as smuggling propaganda, taking pictures of the student mobilization, and visiting the political prisoners at the infamous Lecumberri prison, where labor and student leaders were detained and left incommunicado throughout the Sixties, including an undetermined number of students during the 1968 movement. Years later, Marcela Frías resented that they did not have a honeymoon in their eagerness to make the revolution. Despite these later regrets, in 1970, the revolutionary couple moved from Mexico City to a rural house of a farmer's family at Torreón de Cañas, where they lived in a room next to their hosts of the Contreras family.[48] The Sixties Revolution at that time demanded sacrificing privacy and

---

[47] Vargas Valdés, *La patria de la juventud. Los estudiantes del Politécnico en 1968*, 69-226.

[48] Jesús Vargas Valdés and Marcela Frías, "Interview with Jesús Vargas and Marcela Frías former People's Politics Brigadistas," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, July 13, 2013.

personal life, a call that implied a heavy toll on many families.

After the failure at Torreón de Cañas, Jesús Vargas left the Mexican Marxist-Leninist Movement and joined People's Politics. Then, he promoted the return of People's Politics to Durango after a failed attempt at insertion in 1970 when Alberto Anaya had tried to insert himself into the local student movement. That first attempt did not prosper but resulted in the contact of People's Politics with the political and pastoral work of a group of priests from La Laguna. As will be further examined in the following chapter, it was in Durango that Anaya listened to a conference given by Father José Batarse (†) and reported to the organization the presence of a group of priests eager to undertake awareness-raising work for social change.[49] This corresponded very well with the objectives of the organization. From this meeting, Adolfo Orive Bellinger deepened the relationship with this group of priests, and People's Politics sent a couple of brigadistas to La Laguna: Hugo Andrés Araujo and Javier Gil (†).

Meanwhile, in Durango, Alberto Anaya left the region for Monterrey, where reinforced by a group of local activists, he joined the squatters that founded the Tierra y Libertad (Land and Liberty) "independent" neighborhood on March 28, 1973. The new brigada formed by Jesús Vargas, Marcela Frías, Ramón Durán, Marcos Cruz, and Alberto Escudero began organizing in the tenements of Durango.[50] At first, they received the support of Carlos Ornelas, leader of Durango's 1970 student movement, who had become one of the public figures favored by Echeverrista politics. Subsequently, old communist and teacher militants Antonio Luna, Martin Rosas, and Margarita Maldonado helped them

---

[49] Juan Riera Fullana, *Ejido Colectivo Batopilas. Su historia*, Serie Hacia una Política Popular, (Ciudad de México: Creática Editorial, 2016), 171.

[50] Jesús Vargas Valdés, "Interview with Jesús Vargas Former People's Politics Brigadista," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, July 12, 2013.

mobilize Durango's urban poor.[51] It was these communist militants who taught the brigadistas how to work in the urban environment. Jesús Vargas remembered that:

> In Durango, the man who taught us to do grassroots work, to do popular organization work, was Manuel Rosas. He was an older man, about fifty-something, sixty years old, with a stand where he sold magazines and used books on Marxist theory. And he was the one who pulled me and the "güero"[Alberto Escudero] in the beginning to go around the tenements. We set out to visit as many tenements as we could. [52]

In addition, using the letterhead of the Frente Popular de Lucha-Unión Popular Independiente [People's Struggle Front-Independent People's Union], the organization of the moribund local student movement, the People's Politics brigade managed to mobilize a large number of inhabitants of the tenements to protest the increase in water fees. The mobilization caught the local authorities by surprise.

Large demonstrations filled Durango's avenues, as seen in the Colonia Proletaria División del Norte documentary.[53] At that moment of ferment, the former students of the IPN undertook a first invasion of urban land and founded a neighborhood which they baptized División del Norte in memory of Francisco Villa's revolutionary army. The occupation provoked a violent response from the local police, and the brigadistas went to jail. On this occasion, the local newspaper *El Sol de Durango* identified Jesús Vargas Valdés as the leader of the squatters. As shown in figure 3, Jesús

---

[51] Martínez Guzmán, *CDP. El poder del pueblo.*, 42-49.

[52] Jesús Vargas Valdés, "Interview with Jesús Vargas Former People's Politics Brigadista," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, July 13, 2013.

[53] Juan Antonio De la Riva, "La colonia proletaria División del Norte," (Durango de Victoria, Durango, 1973), 8 mm film. https://youtu.be/B2UxujFy9Jg.

Vargas appeared on the pages of the newspaper with an unkept beard resembling the Cuban revolutionary look in fashion among many leftwing activists of the Sixties.

Figure 3-3: Jesus Vargas Valdés detained after the occupation of Durango**'**s old airfield terrains. (El Sol de Durango, February 10, 1973)[54]

In 1977, four years after its founding, a brochure of the organization in Durango described the process of founding:

> In 1972 a group of brigadistas began touring more than 250 tenements here in Durango and invited us to come together to fight for a piece of land, and they explained why all the poor needed to unite. [...] Little by little, we

[54] El Sol de Durango, "Jesús Vargas Valdez, High School Teacher and Main Instigator of the Occupation of the Old Airfield Terrains. ," (Durango de Victoria, Durango: El Sol de Durango, February 10 1973).

> realized this was a struggle worth joining. In the beginning, we were not even a hundred. A few months later, two thousand of us went to the rallies. [...] The brigadistas always explained that through our struggle and unity, we would solve this problem and all the others that the poor class has.[55]

As with other Sixties movements, the brigadistas and squatters organized the neighborhood free from the PRI and government controls. Among other tasks, the squatters instituted volunteer workdays on Sundays to build a school, a clinic, and a day care center.[56] Drainage, electricity, and utilities were brought into the settlement by the collective work of its inhabitants. In the spirit of self-sufficiency promoted in *Hacia una Política Popular*, moreover, the inhabitants of the División del Norte settlement left petitioning behind, and the brigadistas went to live with them, sharing food and their way of life. While some brigadistas received economic support from People's Politics, others financed their stay with their work.[57] Over time, assemblies with the massive participation of the inhabitants decided how to manage things in the neighborhood while the block and sectors of the neighborhood began appointing their own representatives.

The success of the People's Politics brigade attracted the attention of other political actors of the time, including guerrilla leader Lucio Cabañas, one of the most influential Mexican guerrillas and martyrs of the Sixties. Lucio had worked as a teacher in Durango after leaving the teacher

---

[55] Comité Organizador Colonia Proletaria División del Norte, *Cuatro años de lucha popular, 1973-1977*, (Durango de Victoria: 1977).

[56] Ibid.

[57] For the role of People's Politics on funding their militants in Durango see Martínez Guzmán, *CDP. El poder del pueblo.*, 48. As for the self-sustaining nature of some of the militants' work see Jesús Vargas Valdés, "Interview with Jesús Vargas Former People's Politics Brigadista," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, July 13, 2013.

preparation school. One of his contacts at the time was Professor Martin Rosas, a political ally of People's Politics brigada in Durango. When Lucio Cabañas tried to break the military and political siege that his organization was suffering in Guerrero, People's Politics and its brigadas were one of the groups he contacted and proposed to form a political-military alliance to defeat the PRI -government.

Through sympathizers of the Ho Chih Minh Sectional of the Spartacus Communist League, Lucio Cabañas met with Adolfo Orive Bellinger in Xochimilco.[58] Orive Bellinger was impressed by the political reasoning of the guerrilla leader, but the meeting did not translate into major political consequences. Something similar happened later in Durango when Lucio Cabañas met with the People's Politics brigada and proposed they join his guerrilla movement.

The young brigadistas recognized the guerrilla's struggle but refused to commit the squatter's movement to the armed struggle.[59] The state security forces and the local government soon discovered the contact. Alberto Ulloa, Lucio Cabaña's security detail member, later blamed the brigadistas for blowing up Lucio's cover during the trip.[60] Whatever happened, Mexican government security forces arrested the Durango brigadistas, who were, until the end, confident that the popular support would be sufficient protection against repression.

In 1973, Mexican security forces transferred Jesús Vargas and his wife Marcela Frías to Military Camp Number 1 in Mexico City, where many

---

[58] Plutarco Emilio García Jiménez, *Memoria en el tiempo y un poco de historia* (Ciudad de México: Juan Pablos Editores, 2021), 227.

[59] Jesús Vargas Valdés, "Interview with Jesús Vargas Former People's Politics Brigadista," interview by Jorge Puma, July 13, 2013.

[60] Alberto Ulloa Bornemann, *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir*, ed. Arthur Schmidt, Voices of Latin American Life, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 58-59.

activists were tortured during the Sixties, while the state police expelled the rest of the brigadistas from the state. Their families and comrades launched a public campaign for their release. They soon returned to Durango and continued protests for the liberation of the rest of the detainees. Jesús and Marcela's detention was short, and, unlike other stories of the period, the detainees did not suffer violent repercussions.[61]

The return of Jesús Vargas Valdés and Marcela Frías to the División del Norte neighborhood was brief because, for security reasons, the organization proposed that they leave the city and go to the mining area of Santa Barbara in Chihuahua. The couple's departure closed the first stage of the popular urban movement in Durango as the brigada split into different political directions.

From the original core of brigadistas, the UNAM's physician Ramón Durán moved to the region of the plains of Victoria in Durango. There he began a process of integration into the peasant communities of the region and founded the Peasant Organization César Meraz.[62] Unlike other political initiatives of People's Politics, the organization headed by Ramón Durán participated politically within the official peasant organization, the Peasant National Confederation (CNC). After being relocated to the Monclova steel plant under the instructions of Proletarian Line leadership, Durán harshly criticized the attempts to move around the leaderships and cadres of the local organizations managed by the brigadistas. Fiercely independent, he returned to the city after the collapse of People's Politics.[63] He died in Durango under suspicious circumstances after a

---

[61] Vargas Valdés and Frías, interview.

[62] See Arturo León López, *El movimiento campesino en los Llanos de Victoria, Durango, 1970-1980*, Breviarios de la Investigación, (México, D.F: UAM Xochimilco, 1986).

[63] and Ramón Durán, "Veinte años de lucha de masas parte XIII El triunfo del movimiento de masas es a la vez el inicio de una futura división al interior de la dirección," Marzo, lunes 18, *El Sol de Durango* (Durango, Dgo), 18/03/ 1991; Ramón Durán, "Veinte años de lucha de masas parte xiv," Marzo, viernes 22, *El Sol de Durango* (Durango, Dgo), 22/03/

brawl in 2003.[64]

When the radicalism of the Sixties had faded in the past, during the 1980s, the remnants of the brigada founded the Comité de Defensa Popular-Durango (Popular Defense Committee of Durango or CDP-Durango). Among the new organization's leaders were Marcos Cruz, originally an activist from an IPN high school, and Alberto Escudero, an IPN tourism college graduate. Under their leadership, the CDP evolved into a quasi-partisan organization that eventually won Durango's capital municipal presidency and became one of the founding organizations of the Workers' Party (PT).[65] In Durango during the 1990s, the former People's Politics brigadistas abandoned their old qualms about elections. In a sense, their political evolution buried the mass-line utopian potential.

7.5 The Student Movement in La Laguna, 1971-1974, Local Replicas of 1968

For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Torreón remained at a crossroads between politics, industry, agriculture, and commerce. It represented the contradictions between the struggles for democracy, an active nation state, and a capitalist development model. La Laguna's main cash crop was cotton, and the cotton industry attracted workers from the interior of Mexico, China, Lebanon, and Spain. Between the 1880s and the 1930s, cotton cultivation expanded to around 150,000 hectares, making

---

1991; Ramón Durán, "Veinte años de lucha de masas parte XVII," Abril lunes 1, *El Sol de Durango* (Durango, Dgo), 01/04/ 1991.

[64] José L. Fuentes Delgado, "Capturan a presuntos homicidas de Durán Martínez," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coah.), October 21 2003, https://www.elsiglodedurango.com.mx/noticia/2003/capturan-a-presuntos-homicidas-de-duran-martinez.html.

[65] For a study of Popular Defense Committee of Durango's evolution see Paul Lawrance Haber, "The Comité de Defensa Popular de Francisco Villa de Durango," (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

La Laguna Mexico's leading cotton producer. [66] Banks, factories, and stores soon followed the expansion of irrigation canals and other infrastructure.

At the end of the Sixties, cotton production in La Laguna entered a crisis characterized by high unemployment. The irruption of the union insurgency led by railroad workers and electricians who demanded democracy in their unions and better wage conditions was joined by a growing student movement in the region's secondary and high schools.[67] Although the student protests began with local demands such as discounts on transportation or the completion of drainage works, the students soon offered solidarity to those demanding housing.

In 1972, People's Politics sent to Torreón two of its founding militants, Hugo Andrés Araujo and Javier Gil (†), who began their political work with the help and guidance of a group of progressive priests organized in a pastoral work team.[68] Priests José Batarse (†), Benigno Martínez, and Jesús de la Torre, key players in the next chapter, provided logistical support and allowed the brigadistas to integrate into the local milieu. In addition, working as professors at the Instituto Tecnológico Regional de la Laguna (La Laguna Regional Technological Institute or ITRL), Araujo and Gil contacted a small group of student activists who, together with the priests, became the core of People's Politics activists and supporters in La Laguna.

The irony of the situation is that their first diagnosis of the revolutionary potential of the area concluded that there was neither the social ferment

---

[66] Mario Cerutti and Araceli Almaraz, eds., *Algodón en el norte de México (1920-1970) Impactos regionales de un cultivo estratégico* (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2013), 76-100.

[67] Hernández Vélez, *MUP en La Laguna*, 38-41.

[68] Riera Fullana, *Ejido Batópilas*, 172-73.

nor the organizational base to develop political work. Teresa Fernández, a militant with roots in the leftwing Catholic milieu and one of the founders of the militants of People's Politics in Torreón, assessed the situation in the following way:

> Our conception of La Laguna was that of a place where the organized Left did not exist, a peaceful region regarding social mobilization. At that time, there was only the memory of the peasant movements of [19]36, the agrarian distribution. Then everything calmed down. It was a place where the contradictions were not strong, the neighborhood movements were stillborn, and I believe that the vision held at that time was partial. There was no deep analysis of the Comarca Lagunera. At least it was not made explicit at that time.[69]

Moving to La Laguna became a "necessary mistake" on their way to transforming People's Politics from a group of brigadistas to a grassroots organization. This would not have been possible if the brigadistas coming from Mexico City had not found in Torreón and Gómez Palacio a nascent student movement and university students eager for revolutionary action who had a strong presence in the local media.

In 1970, the Torreón press oscillated between the enlightened conservatism of *El Siglo de Torreón* and the timid liberalism of *La Opinión* (Torreón). El *Siglo de Torreón* put on paper the voice of the local oligarchy defending their property and political standing. It watched the emergence of protest movements in La Laguna with disgust and surprise. On the contrary, *La Opinión* (Torreón) published progressive and conservative opinion articles in parallel. It also gave extensive coverage to popular movements, often with a critical tone but also with sympathy. When *El Siglo de Torreón* published an article by Alberto Montaner criticizing the boom novelists Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel García Márquez for their

[69] Ibid., 195.

support of the Cuban Revolution, *La Opinión* (Torreón) gave space to the reply of a young writer from La Laguna.[70] Including leftwing voices became one of the hallmarks of *La Opinión* (Torreón). In the meantime, the astute owner of *La Opinión* (Torreón) did not hesitate to print long propaganda supplements of the Luis Echeverría's government. At a time when the PRI's hegemony seemed eternal, it was not superfluous to have the Mexican state as an ally.

For two years, the editor of *La Opinión* (Torreón) opened the pages of the newspaper to a group of university students and young radical professors.[71] They used the monthly section *Nuestro Siglo* (Our Century) to debate political ideas, their schools' current affairs and experiment with literature. Like any student section or university newspaper of the time, *Nuestro Siglo* varied in quality and length. The texts represented the broad spectrum of the New Left with anti-American overtones and airs of Mexican nationalism. Marcuse appeared in *Nuestro Siglo* as much as Carlos Fuentes and the Cuban Revolution. And while several authors clearly preferred socialism, this included criticisms of communism. Mexican nationalism was the common glue of the collaborations. To the extent that even the pair of conservative texts that challenged the leftist ideas of *Nuestro Siglo* were fiercely nationalistic.

Nuestro Siglo was the first public expression of what later became the local cadre of militants of People's Politics in La Laguna. Young medical student Miguel Murillo contributed articles on social medicine and Vietnam to the section.[72] Sociologist Héctor Ehrenzweig, trained in Monterrey, wrote

---

[70] Adan Almonte, "En torno al colonialismo cultural," *La Opinión* (Torreón), 26 de abril 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

[71] Redacción La Opinión, "El Mundo de los Jóvenes," Editorial, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 18 de enero 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

[72] Miguel Murillo, "Viet Nam del Sur," Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 18 de enero 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

philosophical treatises, essays on historical materialism, and summaries of aesthetic theory.[73] Professor Eduardo Botello, a rural teacher, discussed teacher unionism and Soviet psychological theories. Memories of the cardenista Left, and Lombardo Toledano appeared alongside a critical review of Herbert Marcuse's call for liberation from guilt and repression. Like many Latin American leftists of the time, the young Lagunero writers had a deep distaste for the pop culture of their time, which they saw as emblematic of the cultural aspects of the US empire. For the same reason, they showed no sympathy for new wave rock or the romantic and more commercialized ballads so popular with the Mexican public.[74] Private television channels and government pandering were the obvious villains, but the tenets of imperialism were not far behind on the list.

The future brigadistas and their associates showed a propensity to dream of revolution without having any popular support to advance their aspirations. There were only six of them when they organized a protest in 1970 to commemorate the Tlatelolco massacre of October 2, 1968.[75] However, that soon changed. In the April 12, 1970, issue of *Nuestro Siglo*, Miguel Murillo proposed the formation of medical brigades to link the university with the people.[76] He blamed the educational authorities for the problems of medical students in La Laguna. They lacked a plan based on a scientific diagnosis of the needs of society, he wrote vehemently at the time. Earlier, he had defended student activism as just another form

---

[73] Héctor Ehrenzweig, "Los sofistas contemporáneos," Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 26 de abril 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

[74] Juan Sebastian Medina, "Música, enajenación y dialéctica," Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 22 de febrero 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

[75] Miguel Murillo, "Conversation with Doctor Miguel Murillo, Former Student Activist in Torreón " interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph.D. in History, Notre Dame*, July 7, 2021.

[76] Miguel Murillo, "Acercamiento entre estudiantes y pueblo," Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 12 de abril 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

of study, "a student who marches is a student who learns." He was ready to leave the discourse and move on to direct action. Ehrenzweig did not wait in his quest for real-world impact. Along with professor Botello, he attempted to mobilize rural unrest under the idea of revolutionary reformism, but he focused most of his efforts on the university self-government movement in Coahuila.[77]

The explosion of militancy and popular activism during the late Sixties in La Laguna region ended the apparent calm that People's Politics militants spoke of upon their arrival in the area. Between 1971 and 1973, students from several high schools and community colleges in Torreón fought to incorporate their schools into the Autonomous University of Coahuila. They also advocated for joint councils of academics, students, and authorities. In addition to marching in the streets, they closed their schools to protest curriculum reforms and evaluations at the La Laguna Regional Technological Institute (ITRL). Finally, in 1972 students went beyond local demands and conducted acts of regional solidarity by suspending classes in support of protests organized by students from other Tecnológicos, such as the Technological Institutes of Delicias and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.[78]

On the other side of the Nazas River, between 1973–1974, a student movement arose at the Instituto "18 de Marzo" in Gómez Palacio, Durango, where high school students joined a coalition of workers (electricians, marble workers, sanitation unions), supported by some of their teachers. They mobilized against Gómez Palacio's major failure to stop the stench produced by repairs to the sewage system. With the city's

---

[77] Héctor Ehrenzweig, "Interview with Héctor Ehrenzweig, Former People's Politics Brigadista in La Laguna and Chiapas," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *PhD in History, University of Notre Dame*, July 7, 2021.

[78] Salvador Hernández Vélez, "Interview with Salvador Hernández Vélez, Former People's Politics Brigadista in Torreón," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, August 12, 2013.

population's support, the protesters forced the mayor to resign. These same students already had experience in high school protests, where they had succeeded in getting their school principal dismissed. José Augusto Sánchez Galindo, also known as "Guti," one of the leaders of the *People's Politics* in Gómez Palacio, recalled their politicization process and criticized the "militarization" of the current educational system in Mexico in these terms:

> I started participating in high school when I was 16 or 17 years old. How did I get involved? In the "Ricardo Flores Magón" high school, […] That was the emblematic school of those times, in the sixties, seventies, right? I entered in '69 and left in '72, right? We were influenced by a group of teachers from local 35 of the union [Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación-SNTE] […] fighting to democratize the SNTE, and they were our teachers. They influenced us, they guided us […] When there was a contest to determine the name of the high school, they proposed that it should be called "Flores Magón," and we fought for it to be called Ricardo Flores Magón. Those were our first struggles […]; we participated in the student government elections… and launched our first strike when we dismissed the principal, influenced by our teachers. He was a director, a dictator, obsessed with efficiency as they want these days [2013], so strict, so honest, and our student council organized the strike movement, and we [the students] fired him. We stopped the school for the first time, a model school! A very controlled school, full of microphones, there were microphones everywhere, and the principal watched all the classes […] That's how he controlled us. We struck, and the authorities from Mexico City had to come. We stopped [the school] in October-November… and the director left in January.[79]

[79] José Augusto Sánchez Galindo, "Interview with Augusto "Guti" Sánchez Galindo,

Like Guti, dozens of "socially restless" students in La Laguna saw People's Politics as a vehicle to deepen their political commitment. Miguel Murillo, our medical student from Torreón, perceived the arrival of Mexico City People's Politics militants as follows:

> When they arrived, I was like them: a student with political concerns who had participated in the popular movement, who knew people in some neighborhoods, who had participated in old struggles. That helped us get closer to other neighborhoods and people [...] The movement was started by [Hugo] Andrés [Araujo], me, and others.... When the People's Politics people arrived, they dictated (contributed to) the [political] line of the movement. Those of us who were already there contributed our political curiosity and related with the people of the Communist Party. We had a relationship with people who were doing politics on their own. We worked with everybody and had relations with the Espartacos and people from the Socialist People's Party, but none of them had a political line that interested us. I think the difference is that we started to structure a movement with a method in People's Politics. First of all, we began to change our attitude, listen to the people, and work considering the interests of the people. We had to adopt a series of positions and be consistent with them [...] We embarked on a short, medium, and long-term movement. We started to make contacts; we began to form groups of land petitioners in some places, such as Corona, in San Miguel, to help them with the procedures.[80]

These students' curiosity was not limited to the political and ideological

---

Former People's Politics Brigadista in Gómez Palacio, Durango," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, August 28, 2013.

[80] Riera Fullana, *Ejido Batópilas*, 195-96.

aspects of their mobilization but also combined with a particular appreciation for protest culture and rock music (despite the criticism that others on the orthodox Left expressed towards it, as noted earlier). In many cases, local newspapers such as *El Siglo de Torreón* published reports on the strikes and protests and articles acknowledging the organization of popular music "auditions" or recitals of protest songs.[81] For example, in March 1971, a high school graduation party featuring the nationally popular rock band "La Revolución de Emiliano Zapata" and a local band, "Golden Stones," led to accusations of drug use by the musicians.[82] Upset by such accusations, the local band published a rebuttal in *El Siglo de Torreón*. They expressed "that the accusations were not about them because none had that vice." They claimed to belong to well-known and respectable families of the Comarca Lagunera and that in all their presentations, they follow the strictest order and decency."[83] In addition to this tepid declaration of decency, the popularity of these concerts served as a reminder of the presence of counterculture at the back door of this provincial city surrounded by an agrarian ethos.

Beyond seeing jipis (Mexican hippies) as an exotic youth subculture, the concerned middle-class Laguna writers and readers of *El Siglo de Torreón* were constantly exposed to the presence and influence of avant-garde cinema and Latin American folk groups in the region. Conversations about jipismo (the hippie counterculture) among the concerned conservative sectors were the perfect counterpoint to the screenings of *Farrebique*, Georges Rouquier's 1946 film about a rural France family, winner of the Grand Prix du Cinéma Français, and the emergence of experimental

---

[81] See La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Una audición de música de protesta," Advertisement, *El siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), March 6 1971.

[82] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Audición de música moderna," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), March 10 1971.

[83] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Aclaración de Golden Stones," Note, *Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), March 25 1971.

theater and rock bands among the students. Silvestre Murillo, a former People's Politics militant and brother of Miguel Murillo, who later made a career as a mime, commented on the cultural environment of the student movement and how that involved him in the militancy of People's Politics:

> Because of a friend, I got together with a group at the house of one of them, and there I met people who were studying at Tec [the La Laguna Regional Technological Institute]. At that time, we dedicated ourselves to cultural activities, and we did theater. And then, we got together more with those from the Tec because they were more proactive, restless, and dynamic. And the people with whom I started… well, they were more apathetic (apathetic). When I was with this group of friends, we became politicized when they told us about Fidel Castro. We learned about that movement, which practically awakened our interest in politics. We were also into the cultural scene: rock music, the Beatles, and Jimmy Hendrix. But then came the interest in politics, and through a contact, we organized with the Espartacos. And then we started to have some literature, some reading, especially the *Communist Manifesto*, which I think I only read up to page sixteen.[with laughter].[84]

La Laguna activists radicalized through this powerful synthesis of cultural and political revolutions. Over time, student mobilization merged with popular demands articulated by peasants and settlers. The most politicized students and their student organizations moved away from traditional academic subjects, abandoning the classroom to "integrate with the people" in the new working-class neighborhoods and factories.

At this time, students faced repression from local and state forces,

---

[84] María Concepción Castro Hernández, Silvestre Murillo, and Francisco Aldama Pérez, "Interview with Former People's Politics Brigadistas in La Laguna," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, September 20, 2015.

particularly in Durango and Coahuila. The repression coincided with the growth of People's Politics in the working-class neighborhoods of La Laguna and the 1976 presidential succession. Lagunero students' response to the repression differed from that of their comrades in the Chihuahua Technological Schools, who ended up joining the guerrilla cells of the September 23 Communist League, the largest guerrilla movement in Mexico, founded in 1972 in Guadalajara and Monterrey, and active across the country for most of the decade.[85] In La Laguna, repression and revolutionary ideals alone did not lead directly to armed struggle.

7.6 CONCLUSIONS

After the 1968 student movement ended, People's Politics transformed student unrest into an organizing drive of squatters and peasants. The organization, which expanded during the late Sixties, attracted a motivated cadre of college graduates and dropouts from the UNAM and IPN who were eager to act. These northern Mexico students, fresh from the experience of the 1968 movement, used *Towards a People's Politics* ideas to recruit younger students from the local universities and high schools of La Laguna, Durango, and Nuevo León. The recruits built a national coalition of brigadas first and a centralized organization later, taking distance from the temptations of armed struggle and electoral politics.

Luis Echeverría's populist policies gave cover to the brigadistas' activities while at the same time destroying the lives of guerrillas and peasants close to the areas where People's Politics developed. Under those circumstances, People's Politics militants alternated a rejection of electoral politics with a flirtation with them at the local level, as in Bahía de Banderas. They also had a complicated relationship with the guerrilla organizations in Durango and Monterrey, oscillating from measured

[85] Ibid.

sympathy and support to fierce competition and mutual suspicion.[86] The correct revolutionary line for People's Politics Maoists was to develop mass organizations first and move only to the armed struggle when the masses were ready.

Throughout the late Sixties, People's Politics led students and squatters in northern Mexico to adopt mass-line Maoism as the ideological foundation of their struggles for land, services, and political self-determination. In contrast, early People's Politics members, such as Jorge "El Robin" Calderón and Gustavo Gordillo, followed a different path: working in universities and participating in electoral politics. Meanwhile, People's Politics used Maoist guerrilla warfare concepts and the Vietnamese experience to experiment with self-government in the occupation neighborhoods of northern Mexico. They proved that the guerrilla rhetoric of Mao Zedong and the National Liberation Front of Vietnam had more uses than posing at university seminars or guiding the work of armed groups in the world's jungles.

Although a superficial reading would tend to brush aside this episode as just another misunderstanding resulting from the heated Maoist propaganda of the time and the lack of information about what was happening in China in those years, the creative utilization of the democratic elements of the mass line is an undoubted fact. Thanks to People's Politics missionary efforts, the revolutionary morality of the People's Republic of China captured the imagination of middle and high school teenagers. As a result, rows of makeshift huts were home to Red Guards in northern Mexico's dry, dusty streets.

Unsurprisingly, Maoists were not the first on the ground. While the Maoist script provided strategic guidance to the aspiring organizers of People's

---

[86] For the relationship between People's Politics and the guerrilla organizations see Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, "Small Groups Don't Win Revolutions. Armed Struggle in the Memory of Maoist Militants of Política Popular," *Latin American Perspectives* 44, no. 6 (November 2017), https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X17699902.

Politics, they did not have any practical experience collaborating with peasants or the urban working class. They had to learn on the run the basics of their new trade. On certain occasions, as in Durango and La Laguna, brigadistas benefited from the experience of local communist teachers or progressive Catholic priests already working with the people in the tenements. Where People's Politics brigadistas secured the alliance of progressive Catholics and other leftists, a powerful coalition for the "people's liberation" emerged.

8 La Laguna's People's Church: The Nazas-Aguanaval Group and the Global Network of Leftwing Priests, 1969-1976.[1]

8.1 Introduction

Since 1973, during the week before December 12, the feast of the Our Lady of Guadalupe, thousands of squatters and dozens of People's Politics brigadistas marched from the Alameda Zaragoza Park through Torreón, Coahuila's Juárez Avenue in a pilgrimage honoring the Mother of God and demonstrating against the local government. They chanted "¡A la Virgen pedimos, al Gobierno exigimos! (From the Virgen we ask, to the government we demand!)." Like many traditional pilgrimages, the demonstration ended in the diocese's Guadalupe's Sanctuary in downtown Torreón, in northern Mexico.[2] There, a young priest celebrated

[1] A previous version of this Chapter was published as Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, "The Nazas-Aguanaval Group: Radical Priests, Catholic Networks, and Maoist Politics in Northern Mexico," *The Americas* 79, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2021.141.

[2] Hernández Vélez, *MUP en La Laguna*, 236. For the importance of Guadalupano pilgramages for Torreón's squatter movement, see Saucedo Lozoya, "El caso de la región

a mass and blessed the demonstrators as a sign of support. The photograph of the Virgin surrounded by protest signs stayed as proof of an almost forgotten episode in the history of the Catholic Church in Mexico. It bore testimony to the rise and fall of the leftwing priest group, equipo Nazas-Aguanaval (Nazas-Aguanaval team) in Torreón's diocese.

The Nazas-Aguanaval priest group emerged in September 1970 from Torreón's diocese's attempt to implement a pastoral de conjunto (joint pastoral plan) that created six priest teams among the local clergy. Pastoral de conjunto involved a high level of collaboration and dialogue among all the ministers of the dioceses and laypeople through a plan established by the bishop. As shown in figure 1, in the mid-1970s, the group had twelve members, representing 17% of the diocesan clergy. It became an active minority inside the Torreón diocese working in urban and rural parishes. Inspired by the ideas of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the Medellin meeting (1968) of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM), this group of priests tried to push the diocese into a more politically engaged direction.

---

lagunera en los años '70," 69-70.

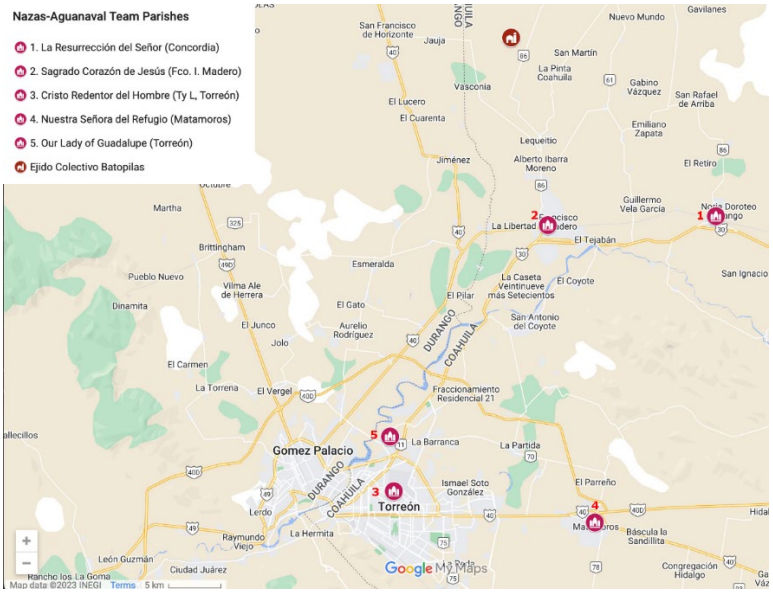


Figure 4-1: Nazas-Aguanaval priest group expansion in the 1970s (From information from the interviews with Benigno Martínez and Armando Sánchez)[3]

[3] Puma Crespo, Jorge Ivan. "Nazas-Aguanaval Priest Group Expansion in the 1970s ". Ciudad de México, Google Maps, May 15, 2023.

The Second Vatican Council promoted a more decentralized and less hierarchical Church, emphasizing individual conscience and openness toward other religious and philosophical traditions.[4] The Council's documents emphasized the Church's collective nature as it moved from an institution centered on the pope and the religious hierarchy into an institution formed by the sum of all the baptized believers, the "people of God."[5] This ecclesiological change proved a revolutionary idea for Catholics worldwide, especially for the laypeople who began to act independently from the clergy tutelage and became the main actors of the Church's participation in the secular world.[6] The new conception of the Church as a more inclusive institution also impacted the liturgy. After centuries of using Latin, local churches began to celebrate the mass in their vernacular languages and to incorporate modern and local elements of their culture, for example, Mariachi music or even protest music, in the ceremony.[7]

---

[4] Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford University Press on Demand, 2007), 93.

[5] Second Vatican Council, "Chapter II On the People of God," in *Dogmatic constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, on November 21, 1964*, Documents of the Second Vatican Council (Rome, November 21 1964), section 9. For the impact of the "people of God" theological interpretation, see See Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in The Long Sixties*, 21-24.

[6] For a book centered on the new relationship between the laity and the clergy for the case Mexico, see Maria Martha Pacheco Hinojosa, *La Iglesia católica en la sociedad mexicana, 1958-1973: Secretariado Social Mexicano, Conferencia de Organizaciones Nacionales* (México, D.F.: Instituto Mexicano de Doctrina Social Cristiana, 2005).

[7] For the liturgical changes brought by the Council, see Second Vatican Council, "Chapter I General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy " in *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium Solemnly Promulgated by his holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963*, Documents of the Second Vatican Council (Rome, 1964), Sections 37-40. For the interactions between Catholic liturgy and the emerging Latin American protest music, see Montserrat Galí Boadella, "Música para la

In Latin America, the changes brought by the Council produced a powerful reaction. Then, in 1968, gathered in Medellín, Colombia, the Latin American bishops debated over the social and political situation of the region in light of the transformation of the Church after the Second Vatican Council. The result was a victory for the progressive wing of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM). The conclusions of the CELAM Medellín Conference reaffirmed the Council's liturgical reforms. They recommended celebrating the mass (Eucharist) in small groups (base communities) and advocated a renovated emphasis on the communitarian study of the Bible.[8] In terms of politics, the final document provided a sharp analysis of the social and economic inequalities that plagued the Latin American countries and affected the poor, from economic exploitation and racism of the local elites towards the poor to the unjust dependence of the Latin American countries to the "economic center."[9]

Besides a diagnostic of the Latin American reality, the conclusions of the CELAM Medellín Conference promoted a new attitude for the Church where the bishops and the clergy had to claim the mantle of evangelic poverty and denounce "the unjust lack of this world's goods and the sin that begets it."[10] In practical terms, it implied that the Church had to distribute its "[…] resources and apostolic personnel […] giv[ing] [effective] preference to the poorest and most needy sectors and to those

---

teología de la liberación," *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia*, no. 11 (2002).

[8] Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), *The Church in the Present Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council: Conclusions*, vol. II, ed. Louis Michael Colonnese (Latin American Bureau, Division for Latin America, Department of International Affairs, United States Catholic Conference and the General Secretariat of CELAM, 1970), 155-56.

[9] Ibid., 71-75.

[10] Ibid., 215.

segregated for any cause whatsoever [...]."[11] As a result of this call to serve the poor effectively, many Latin American Catholics, including the priests of the Nazas-Aguanaval group, embarked on a quest to bring the Church in contact with the problems of the modern world: the scientifical revolution, the sexual revolution, underdevelopment, and democracy.

The Nazas-Aguanaval group's early attempts focused on the youth ministry and inside Catholic organizations, such as those affiliated to the Movimiento Familiar Cristiano (Christian Families Movement), a lay movement mostly composed of urban sectors of the middle classes. However, the rise of a strong popular movement in the region between 1971 and 1977, reinforced by People's Politics brigadistas and local student activists, redirected the political commitment of Benigno Martínez, Armando Sánchez, and José Batarse Charur. These progressive priests became the public face of the Nazas-Aguanaval group, and in the repressive context that continued in the aftermath of the Sixties, they paid a heavy price for it.

The three of them participated in the activities of the Maoists, faced jail, and were exiled. Eventually, Batarse and Sánchez left the priesthood to integrate into the organization as full-time members. At the same time, father Jesús de la Torre became involved in defense of the squatters' movement and their colleague's commitment using a series of spaces at the local press and television. This combination of political involvement in grassroots actions and public presence became the group's hallmark.

In the early 1980s, when technocrats ended the political radicalism of the past, the remnants of the Nazas-Aguanaval group turned back into the ministry of the poor. They promoted the creation of Christian Base Communities. But this proved futile, as the tide of progressive Catholicism had receded at La Laguna. The arrival of a new bishop and the triumph of neoliberalism coincided with the end of the group Nazas-Aguanaval.

---

[11] Ibid., 216.

Another aspect of the Nazas-Aguanaval group's significance was its participation in the wave of progressive priests' movements in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century. Historians have already produced a substantial literature on the emergence of priests' groups inspired by the Second Vatican Council and the 1968 meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) in Medellín, Colombia.[12] On the contrary, the progressive priests of La Laguna have been absent from the historiography of Latin-American progressive Catholicism. This chapter seeks to address this absence by examining the involvement of these Mexican priests in local struggles in light of the global changes brought by the Second Vatican Council without losing track of the ideological currents that polarized young activists during the sixties, as discussed in the previous chapters.

For the reconstruction of the history of the Nazas-Aguanaval group, this chapter relied on the testimonies of a couple of their former members, Benigno Martínez and Armando Sánchez, and their political allies at La Laguna people's movement of the 1970s. Also essential to map their intellectual and political evolution was the weekly column *La Iglesia, promotora del hombre* (The Church, promoter of the human being) that father Jesús de la Torre wrote in his contribution to *La Opinion* (Torreón)for almost fifty years. Also useful were the files from the archives of the bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo, as well as those documents from the Torreón's Municipal archives, the First Latin American Conference of Christians for Socialism collection at Columbia University, and the José María "Pichi" Meisegeier collection from Córdoba's Catholic University at Argentina. The literature on Mexico's participation in the growing leftwing Catholic movements that emerged after the Second Vatican Council underscored La Laguna as one of the few sites where the direct

[12] For an account of the impact the Council and the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM)'s Medellín meeting in the emergence of a progressive tendency in the Latin American Church see Richard, *Los cristianos y la revolución*. For the European case, see Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties*.

involvement of local clergy resulted in popular mobilization.[13]

This chapter complements the literature on Catholic progressivism in Mexico during the late Sixties with a case study on how Catholics were involved in leftist politics, held revolutionary ideas, and sought to implement the Second Vatican Council beyond the walls of the temples. It argues that the Nazas-Aguanaval group's progressive Catholicism, connected to a transnational network of leftwing priests, was crucial to forming a formidable alliance between students, priests, peasants, and squatters during this period. This coalition provided hundreds of impoverished rural immigrants with housing, services, and political power and created one of the most enduring experiments in collective farming in Mexico, the ejido colectivo Batopilas.[14] The success of that coalition depended on the enthusiastic participation of the Nazas-Aguanaval group in the People's Politics project.

To advance its argument, the chapter first explains how the convoluted history of the Mexican Church and the reforms of the Second Vatican Council provided the necessary context for the emergence of the Nazas-Aguanaval group. Second, it describes how their understanding of the message of the Second Vatican Council and the Medellín Conference led the Nazas-Aguanaval priests into a path of more profound political commitment in favor of workers and peasants. Then, the third section provides an overview of the participation of the Nazas-Aguanaval group in the Latin American networks of progressive priests that emerged in the early 1970s. Finally, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the last years

---

[13] See Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia Católica en México," 272-73.; Patricia Arias, Alfonso Castillo, and Cecilia López, *Radiografía de la Iglesia católica en México, 1970-1978* (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1981), 53-57.; and Roberto J. Blancarte, *Historia de la Iglesia católica en México, 1929-1982* (Cd. de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica-El Colegio Mexiquense, 2012), 294-96.

[14] See Saucedo Lozoya, "El caso de la región lagunera en los años '70." and Riera Fullana, *Ejido Batópilas*. The collective experience of Batopilas ended around 2020.

of the Nazas-Aguanaval group, from their involvement in the agrarian conflict of the Batopilas vineyard to their final dismiss after the collapse of their leftists allies and the conservative backlash of John Paul II.

8.2 The Mexican Church and the Impact of the Second Vatican Council

On October 16, 1976, Coahuila's state police detained the Catholic priest Benigno Martínez and a group of brigadistas from the People's Politics and peasants from the ejido Batopilas. Born in León, in the Cristero state of Guanajuato, in Central Mexico, to a family of five brothers, in 1966, Martínez enrolled with the order of the Misioneros del Espiritu Santo (Holy Spirit Missionaries) and studied in Mexico City's Altillo seminary. There, he was influenced by the ideas of the Second Vatican Council and collaborated with the Secretariado Social Mexicano (Mexican Social Secretariat, or SSM), the Mexican bishops' advisory group on working-class issues. Martínez spent a few months working in the slum of Cerro del Judío in Mexico City and later worked as an advisor of the Juventud Obrera Católica (Young Catholic Workers, or JOC). That experience changed him.

After requesting permission to abandon his order, Benigno Martínez moved to Torreón, Coahuila, a city in the north of Mexico, in August 1969, looking for a place where he could serve as a priest committed to the idea of social change. Upon his arrival to La Laguna, he worked at San Pedro de las Colonias, promoting the liturgy and enrolling peasants into the Catholic organizations of the dioceses. Despite being one year of Theology short in his studies, the bishop of Torreón, Fernando Romo, ordained him on February 2, 1970. Bishop Romo appointed Benigno head of the youth ministry, and soon he got involved in promoting the ideas of the Second Vatican Council.

Later, as a rural parish priest, Father Benigno Martínez was fundamental in connecting People's Politics brigadistas with a group of discontented farmhands from the Batopilas vineyard, then a private-owned farm

dedicated to producing grapes for making brandy wine.[15] Although it began as a labor conflict in 1972, since 1974, Batopilas became an experiment of communal farming and self-management when the former farmworkers became owners (ejidatarios*)* and took over the farm.

The detention of Fr. Martínez and People's Politics brigadistas happened in the context of the transformation of Batopilas into a collective farm (ejido).[16] Just as they had done with the young people who joined the Maoist led movements, police accused them of engaging in vandalism, although the perpetrators belonged to the Socialist People's Party (PPS).[17] The conflict between People's Politics, which supported the squatter and peasant movement in La Laguna, and the government of Coahuila, escalated during the second week of October 1976. Martínez was part of a group of progressive priests who had supported the movement since 1972 and who were targeted and arrested by the state police together with People's Politics brigadistas. One of these priests, Fr. José Batarse Charur, hid in the parish house of the town of Francisco I. Madero and was protected by his parishioners while the police waited outside to take him to prison.[18]

Most accounts about Fr. Benigno Martínez's detention and the

---

[15] Benigno Martínez "Interview with Father Benigno Martínez," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, November 22, 2019. Jesús De la Torre, "Parece un Éxodo," Column, La Iglesia, Promotora del Hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), April 2 1972.

[16] On the participation of Benigno Martínez and other priests in the early stages of Batopilas' transformation into a self-managed collective farm see Riera Fullana, *Ejido Batópilas*, 168-85.

[17] Juan De Ayala, "600 campesinos del PPS bloquean carreteras en San Pedro, Coahuila," *Excelsior* (México, D.F.), October 12 1976, En los Estados.

[18] Redacción La Opinión, "Serie de arrestos en Francisco I. Madero," *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 16 1976.

persecution of José Batarse emphasized the widespread reaction against Coahuila's state government and the broad coalition favoring Batarse's defense. They all mentioned the protection that Torreón's bishop, Fernando Romo, provided to Batarse and his courageous stand in support of "people's causes."[19]

Indeed, Bishop Fernando Romo intervened on behalf of Torreón's janitors during their strike in 1973.[20] In his Palm Sunday homily of April 15, 1973, Romo spoke of the unsolved problem of land distribution and the suffering of the squatters and encouraged his parishioners to understand better and support the struggle of workers demanding better working conditions. At the end of the homily, published by *El Siglo de Torreón*, Romo declared: "We have to understand that, in case of doubt, Christians should always act on behalf of those in need because that was the position our Lord Jesus Christ […]."[21] Although Bishop Fernando Romo acted on several occasions to protect his priests, this reflected only one side of the story.[22]

In a press release published by *El Siglo de Torreón* on October 24, 1976, Bishop Fernando Romo complained about the protestors and the squatter organizations' demand to keep father José Batarse in Torreón despite his

---

[19] Proceso, "Sacerdotes comprometidos… y desterrados," *Proceso: Semanario de información y análisis* (National news), November 6, 1976. and Concha Malo et al., *Cristianos*.Concha Malo et al., *Cristianos*, 153-57.

[20] For a chronicle of the janitors' strike see Hernández Vélez, *MUP en La Laguna*, 73-97.

[21] Fernando [Torreón's Bishop] Romo Gutierrez, "Palabras del Obispo," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), April 16 1973.

[22] As I will explain later, in 1976 Bishop Romo negotiated with the state government, through father Rodríguez (a conservative priest of his entourage) the release of father Martínez in exchange of father Batarse's removal to the diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas. Sergio Méndez Arceo, "Plática sostenida con Don Samuel Ruiz" October 20 1976, Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Personal Collection, Box 72, folder 1 in CAMENA, Mexico City

order to transfer him to Chiapas. He accused the squatters of coercing Batarse to stay and disobey him. With this statement, Romo sought to reinforce his image as a bishop committed to the liberation of his people: "My concern, affection, and love for the poor and dispossessed hurt too much and for so long, [and have] always kept me looking for the best ways to serve them. That is why I chose priests that could serve them best."[23] In contrast, Romo also expressed his weariness with the "methods" that led the common people to assume a disgruntled attitude instead of a peaceful one.

Like other Mexican bishops and the Mexican Episcopal Conference, Fernando Romo had trouble dealing with the challenges posed by leftwing priests involved in social activism with workers, peasants, and squatters. Bishops oscillated between dialoguing with the radical priests, transferring them, issuing calls to obedience, and denouncing their attempts to use the cause of the "oppressed people" as part of an "international plot," not too different from the accusations that state also made in the context of the Sixties, and thereafter, against political activists, including students.[24]

Bishop Fernando Romo and other bishops put institutional obedience over these radical priests' prerogatives. Romo always protected his priests from governmental repression. When the state police kidnapped father Jesús de la Torre in 1978, he published an open letter asking for de la Torre's release to president José López Portillo (1976-1982).[25] However,

---

[23] Fernando Romo Gutierrez [Torreón's Bishop]. "Mensaje Del Obispo." *Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón Coahuila), October 24 1976.

[24] See Arias, Castillo, and López, *Radiografía de la Iglesia católica en México, 1970-1978*, 57-60. For an example of rejection to the possibility of an alliance between Catholics and Socialists see Cardinal José Salazar's speech in ibid., 110-14.

[25] See Fernando [Torreón's Bishop] Romo Gutierrez, "A la opinión pública [letter to the Mexican president and authorities]," Paid insertion, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), April 29 1978.

Romo never abandoned his role as an institutional leader defending the unity of the Church. In 1976, he declared: "There are not two Churches, the bishop's and the people's, the Church is one, and the Lord put Peter and the apostles, among them the Pope and the bishops, in charge […]."[26] The Nazas-Aguanaval priest group had a different interpretation of Romo's reaction.

On November 20, 1976, father Benigno Martínez sent a letter to the radical bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo, who, by then, had openly sympathized with socialism, analyzing Torreón's political crisis and its resolution from the progressive priests' point of view. In the letter, Fr. Benigno Martínez criticized bishop Fernando Romo for presenting Batarse with the crucible of supporting the popular movement or obeying the bishop. He used a Maoist trope, "a lack of integration with the people," to explain bishop Romo's shortcomings.[27] The clash between the Nazas-Aguanaval priest group and bishop Romo was harsh but never reached a breaking point.

The latter episode is illustrative of the profound transformations that impacted the Church during this period and of the set of conflicts that put into question deep-seated notions of what it meant to be a Catholic in the political realm. These transformations need to be understood against the backdrop of the changes set in motion by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). In less than a decade, the climate created by the Council's reforms had enabled a small but highly active section of the Mexican clergy, in the broader context of the Sixties, to move from sponsoring anti-

[26] Fernando [Torreón's Bishop] Romo Gutierrez, "Mensaje del Obispo," *Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón Coahuila), October 24 1976.

[27] Sergio Méndez Arceo, "24. Carta a obispo Fernando Romo (Benigno Martínez)" November 20 1976, Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Personal Collection, Box 72, folder 1 in CAMENA, Mexico City

communist demonstrations to allying with leftwing activists.[28]

By contrast, traditional sectors of the Mexican Church, particularly a conservative group of bishops that included Antonio López Aviña of Durango, and others who identified with traditionalist and integralist perspectives, faced the changes imposed by the Second Vatican Council with a sense of uneasiness and resistance.[29] Their weariness was probably informed by the Church's previous encounters with progressive ideologies. Indeed, the constant clashes with radical Liberalism in the nineteenth century and later with the post-revolutionary governments of the 1920s, especially the Cristero War (1926-1929), set a precedent that was hard to overcome.[30]

Considering the religious persecution experienced by the Church during the prior decades, the Mexican bishops' active opposition towards liberalism and socialism was not a surprise. On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, conservative positions among the Mexican bishops were hegemonic. Historically, this conservatism did not approve of the

---

[28] On clerical anti-communism during the Cold War, see María Pacheco, "Cristianismo sí, comunismo no!. Anticomunismo eclesiástico en México," *Estudios de historia moderna y contemporánea de México* 24, no. 024 (2002). For a history of leftwing Catholicism in Latin America during the 1960s and beyond, see Jean Meyer, "El radicalismo rojo (1960...)," in *Historia de los cristianos en América Latina. Siglos XIX y XX.* (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1999).

[29] Archbishop López Aviña participated in the Second Vatican Council. In his memoirs, he constantly defends his loyalty to the Council's teachings rejects while rejecting the idea of a "new Church." Despite recognizing the revolutionary nature of the event, he provides a very traditionalist reading of the Council summarized in the sentence: "Christ is the same than yesterday, today, and always." See Antonio López Aviña, "Asistencia al Concilio Ecuménico Vaticano II," in *Remembranzas de un Obispo* (México, D.F.: Editorial Diana, 2001), 245. For a short overview of the reaction of Mexican traditionalists to the Second Vatican Council, see Blancarte, *Historia de la Iglesia católica en México*, 280-87.

[30] For a history of the Cristiada, see Jean Meyer, *La cristiada: La guerra de los cristeros*, vol. 1 (Siglo xxi, 1994).

existence of independent Catholic lay movements. As a result, the bishops' relationship with political movements with ample Catholic participation but outside of the hierarchy's control, such as sinarquismo, a counterrevolutionary movement with fascist overtones, was always ambivalent.[31] These attitudes partly explain why the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, with a new role for the laypeople, never got traction among the Mexican hierarchy, except in small groups of younger priests who operated on the margins of the Church. These young priests were in the inferior ranks of the Church and sympathized with the grassroots activism proposed by organizations such as People's Politics.

Nonetheless, the Mexican Church stumbled upon modernizing its structures and doctrine. The bishops gave a new impetus to the reading of the scripture. They made timid moves towards collegiality by creating informal groups to exchange opinions and experiences.[32] Two main factors prevented the emergence of a solid progressive faction in Mexico's Church: its subordinated position to the state; and its failure to advocate for social policies that could compete with the national-revolutionary welfare state.[33] While in Brazil and Chile, bishops, priests, and theologians

---

[31] Sinarquismo arose as a vehicle for the continuous mobilization of Catholic laypeople after the Cristiada. Between 1937 and 1944, sinarquistas became a transnational movement with a large peasant following in the Bajío region and the American Southwest bound by the idea of a Catholic nation and a counterrevolutionary discourse. See Jean Meyer, *Historia de los cristianos en América Latina: Siglos XIX y XX* (Mexico City: Jus, 1999), 307-10.

[32] For the position of the Second Vatican Council on the development of formal and informal structures of cooperation among bishops, especially the analysis of the article 37 of the *Christus Dominus* decree, see Ormond Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II : Its Fundamental Principles* (Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press Academic, 2019), 329-34.

[33] Robert Sean Mackin, *The Movement that Fell from the Sky? Secularization and the Structuring of Progressive Catholicism in Latin America, 1920s-1970s* (University of Wisconsin--Madison, 2005). For a critique of the Mexican bishops' division between progressive supporters of the Second Vatican Council and conservative traditionalists resisting change, see Roderic Ai Camp, *Crossing Swords: Politics and Religion in Mexico*

experimented with new pastoral grassroots practices and organizational innovations as the comunidades eclesiales de base (Christian Base Communities, or CEBs). In Mexico, the bishops tried to reintroduce the more corporatist and authoritarian model of 1930s Catholic Action to get closer to the masses.[34] Despite this general pattern, a few Mexican bishops and priests attempted to emulate their South American peers. They soon gained notoriety for their actions and ideas.

At the end of the Second Vatican Council, a group of eight Mexican bishops led by bishop Alfonso Sánchez Tinoco, from the southern Mexico diocese of Papantla, created the Unión de Mutua Ayuda Episcopal (UMAE-Episcopal Mutual Help Union). The UMAE embraced a renewal of the pastoral work by promoting cooperation between Mexican bishops interested in incorporating the Council's innovations. Members of the UMAE invited the French priest and scholar Fernand Boulard to investigate their communities' social conditions and help them develop a plan to attend to the faithful's needs based on the spirit of the Council.

The result of that collaboration was a report published in 1966 exploring the demography and economy of nine dioceses.[35] Also, starting in 1965, the UMAE partnered with the Instituto de Pastoral Latinoamericana (Latin American Pastoral Institute) to impart courses introducing hundreds of priests and nuns to the idea of a pastoral de conjunto.[36] In 1966 UMAE

(Oxford University Press on Demand, 1997), 271-74.

[34] See Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia Católica en México," 61-195. There are not precise statistics on the size of the progressive faction in Mexico. However, Baltazar López, a longtime supporter of the bishop Méndez Arceo, estimated only 15% of the Mexican clergy supported the application of Second Vatican Council methodologies. See Ai Camp, *Crossing Swords: Politics and Religion in Mexico*, 86.

[35] See Unión de Mutua Ayuda Episcopal, *Investigación regional para la planeación pastoral* (México, D.F., 1966).

[36] The courses included subjects such as: theology of evangelization; history of the evangelization process in Mexico; social and religious obstacles (*condicionamientos*) to

formed a committee to promote pastoral de conjunto and advocated for the formation of Diocesan Commissions centered on pastoral ministry with uneven results.

Under the guidance of Bishop Fernando Romo and following the pattern of the pastoral de conjunto, a group of progressive priests was already developing pastoral and social work among the farmers and land laborers of La Laguna's countryside. They had begun to move from working with middle-class Catholic organizations such as the Christian Families Movement to engaging directly with the mass of impoverished urban dwellers and young peasants looking for land.[37] The bishop tolerated them because of the conditions of his see, which was in dire need of priests.

According to a study by the University of Trent, in 1967, there were only 14 parishes served by 52 priests in Torreón dioceses.[38] As each priest had to minister to almost 7000 parishioners, Bishop Fernando Romo needed to preserve his forces and was open to recruiting any priest he could get. Romo's policy opened the opportunity for priests expelled from more conservative dioceses to seek refuge in Torreón. In contrast, in a diocese that had only 12 years of existence, the resistance against the innovations of the Second Vatican Council and the political commitment of these

---

evangelization. Jesús Torres Jara. "Unión de Mutua Ayuda Episcopal" in Correspondencia de Sergio Méndez Arceo. México, D.F., 1967-1968., Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Diocese of Cuernavaca Collection, Box 15, folder 16-3, Centro Académico de la Memoria de Nuestra America (CAMENA), Mexico City.

[37] See Jesús De la Torre, "XXVIII Asamblea Nacional de Trabajadores Guadalupanos," Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón), September 12 1971.; and Jesús De la Torre, "¡Alto ahí!," Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón), October 10 1971.

[38] Universita degli studi di Trento. Centro interuniversitario per la ricerca matematica., *El Catolicismo en cifras America y México. Comisión de estadística*, 2 ed. (Publicaciones de la CIRM, 1967), 24.

priests came from sectors of the clergy and the middle classes that supported a more "traditional" view of Catholicism.

The position of these "traditionalists" overlapped with the integrist complaints about the abandonment of the fiercely anti-communist outlook of the previous period and expressed a longing for a Church "purely" committed to the spiritual and sacramental. F. Villarreal carried that critique at *La Opinión* (Torreón) between 1970 and 1974, mirroring De la Torre's articles, and sentenced: "They [the Nazas-Aguanaval group] do not believe in God but the historical process. The 'Theology of God's death' turned them into worshipers of Marx. They do not believe in anything, so they preach nihilism."[39] Strong words that haunted the practitioners of the preferential option of the poor at Torreón and the rest of Latin America.

As noted above, Bishop Fernando Romo maintained an ambiguous stance towards the popular movements and the active participation of some of his priests in them. In 1973, bishop Romo defended Torreón's janitor's strike, but one year later, he denied such support while keeping a critical stance towards Torreón's elites.[40] Still, Romo's position was far more progressive than the one taken by Durango's archbishop, Antonio López Aviña, who did not allow the introduction of any progressive practices in his diocese.[41]

---

[39] F. Villarreal, "Demagogia Clerical," Opinion article, *La Opinión* (Torreón), October 20 1971, Editorial pages.

[40] . For the ambiguous position of Romo regarding his support of the janitors' strike, see his letter to Mayer Delappe in the appendix of Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia católica en México."

[41] Not long before his death in 2007 Romo bragged that, despite the challenges he faced, he had lost only five priests while the heavy-handed approach of López Aviña lost him dozens. Javier Garza Ramos, "La memoria del obispo," Interview, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coah), December 16 2007, https://www.diocesisdetorreon.org/honraran-memoria-del-primer-obispo-de-torreon/.For López Aviña's position regarding CEBs see

8.3 To Let the Oppressed Go Free: The People's Priests of La Laguna.

In 1968, the Second Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) meeting in Medellín allowed priests to discuss the transformations the Second Vatican Council promoted and their application to the Latin American context. In the conclusions of the Conference, the progressive wing of the Latin American Church found its rallying cry: it was time to shift the Church's traditional siding with the powerful and wealthy and, instead, move "closer to the poor in sincerity and brotherhood…."[42] Meanwhile, in the aftermath of Medellín, internal conflict was rife within the Mexican Catholic Church.

From the seminaries of Mexico City to the urban parishes of Guadalajara, Monterrey, and León, voices of change confronted the ecclesiastical establishment. A small group of newly ordained priests pushed for implementing measures according to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. They sought to give new life to the exhausted structures of the Mexican Catholic Action.[43] At some dioceses, compromises between

---

José Miguel Romero de Solís, *El aguijón del espíritu: historia contemporánea de la Iglesia en México, 1892-1992* (El Colegio de Michoacán AC, 2006), 502.

[42] (CELAM), *Medellín Conference Conclusions*, II, 216.

[43] Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia Católica en México," 247-66. Mexican Catholic Action was an organization that concentrated the laity in an attempt to "re-Christianize" society. It was founded in Mexico in 1930 with four branches: for adult males, the Unión de Católicos Mexicanos (Union of Mexican Catholics Union); for female adults, the Unión Femenina Católica Mexicana (Union of Mexican Catholic Women); for young men, the Asociación Católica de la Juventud Mexicana (Catholic Association of the Mexican Youth); and for young females, the Juventud Católica Femenina Mexicana (Mexican Female Catholic Youth). For a history of the Mexican Catholic Action see Bernardo Barranco V., "Posiciones políticas en la historia de la Acción Católica Mexicana," in *El pensamiento social de los católicos mexicanos*, ed. Roberto J. Blancarte, Sección de Obras de Historia (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996).

bishops and local oligarchies hindered the push for change.

Under the pressure of local business organizations, the bishop of León forced the priests Armando García, Natividad Fuentes, and Carlos Zarazúa -who were working with the Young Catholic Workers (JOC)- to leave the city. These priests moved to Torreón, where they found refuge and a space to work following the principles of progressive Catholicism developed after the Second Vatican Council and the Medellín Conference, where a group of radical priests from Latin America voiced, in the context of the Sixties, an assertive critique of imperialism and the legacies of colonialism. There, they met with Fr. Benigno Martínez and became the core of the Nazas-Aguanaval group. Martínez had traveled from Mexico City to Torreón and had left behind an elite-oriented Catholicism and adopted instead a vision centered on defending the rights of the poor, thanks to his contact with the Young Catholic Workers (JOC), the Mexican Social Secretariat, and with those supporting the work of Mexican Social Secretariat's director Pedro Velázquez.[44] Rev. Pedro Velázquez (1913-1968) was the director of the Mexican Social Secretariat for 20 years. He gradually led the Mexican Social Secretariat to become independent from the hierarchy. He tried to engage with Marxism by offering Catholic Social Teaching as an alternative to solve social injustice (poverty, exploitation, workers' rights).[45]

In 1983, after 13 years of pastoral work, the Nazas-Aguanaval group was in the parishes of Matamoros, Cristo Redentor del Hombre (Torreón), La

---

[44] Martínez interview.

[45] For the role of Pedro Velázquez in the emergence of a more progressive Catholicism in Mexico, see Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia católica en México," 274-79. For an overview of Catholic Social Teaching and its relationship with Marxism, see José Ramón Enriquez and Jorge Iñiguez, *Cristianismo y marxismo: Historia de un encuentro*, Serie Alternativas, (México, D.F.: Editorial Posadas, 1979). For a more general study of the dialogue between Christians and Marxists, see Peter Hebblethwaite, *The Christian-Marxist Dialogue: Beginnings, Present Status, and Beyond* (United States: Paulist Press, 1977).

Unión, Francisco I. Madero, and Concordia. They tried to push the diocese into a more politically engaged direction following the ideas of the Second Vatican Council, Medellín's meeting, and the mutualism of UMAE.[46] Most of them had humble origins and were in their early 1930s in 1968. Some came from the Catholic traditionalist hotbed of Guanajuato, but others were part of La Laguna middle-class.

The priest José "Pepe" Batarse Charur was the central figure who brought together the Maoist students and the Nazas-Aguanaval group. After finishing his chemical engineering degree at La Laguna Regional Technological Institute (ITRL), Batarse entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in Monterrey. He studied in Spain and Rome before returning to La Laguna to minister.[47] His name appeared regularly in the announcements of weddings, baptisms, and Catholic charity events in the "Society" section of *El Siglo de Torreón*. Simultaneously, de la Torre's column portraited a cleric highly involved in the inner life of the dioceses. Batarse led the efforts to renew the Catholic Action in Torreón and supervised the Christian Families Movement. A leadership figure inside the Church, Batarse could have quickly become a bishop.[48]

Notwithstanding his privileged background, father José Batarse's social commitment surfaced as a panelist in *Diálogo* [Dialogue], an opinion show

---

[46] Martínez interview.; and Comisión de Prensa, "Comunidades Eclesiales de Base. XI Encuentro Nacional.Concordia, Coah." October 1983, Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Box 114, folder 29-2, page 9 in CAMENA, Mexico City. For statistics of the Mexican dioceses see "Apendice Estadístico" in Mayer Delappe, "La política social de la Iglesia Católica en México," 3.

[47] Acosta Zavala, *Así lo recuerdo*, 160. and Miguel Angel Ruelas, "Sacerdote Mexicano que Laboró en Radio Vaticano," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), July 23 1972.

[48] Benigno Martínez "Conferencia testimonial en memoria de José Batarse Charur: Participación de la Iglesia Progresista en los movimientos de masas de la laguna.," in *50 años de línea de masas en México* (Mexico, Saturday July 24 2021). https://www.facebook.com/100066014410480/videos/530708621502991/.

on Torreón's local TV channel 2. The program aired for two years and consisted of a 45-minute discussion panel that invited people from all walks of life, including civic associations, students, squatters, workers, peasants, politicians, local and federal authorities, artists, and employers. The program's director was a local intellectual and later National Action Party (PAN) militant Alberto González Domene. Batarse shared the space with other local scholars, including the former secretary-general of the University of Coahuila and later preeminent columnist of the daily *Reforma* (Mexico City), Armando Fuentes "Catón."

Diálogo was a pluralistic space. It held roundtables with local political parties and hosted squatters from the Tierra y Libertad neighborhood. Before its cancellation on April 10, 1973, *Diálogo* was temporarily shut down after a contentious interview with Fr. Carlos Bonilla, another activist priest of the cane plantations in Veracruz.[49] *Diálogo* converged with the development of a robust clerical presence in the local media. Besides using the press to communicate bishop Fernando Romo's pronouncements and father Jesús de la Torre column at La Opinión (Torreón), many priests participated in radio shows. Even the Nazas-Aguanaval group had its tv show between 1971 and 1973, *Signo de los tiempos* (Sign of Times), at the local channel 4.[50] Hence, it was not surprising that father José Batarse published on May 5th a short article at *La Opinión* (Torreón) in which he called for an alliance between students, workers, peasants, and squatters under the idea of "fraternity."[51]

---

[49] See Equipo Dialogo, "A la Opinión Pública: Sentimos el deber de informar a la Comunidad Lagunera sobre la SUSPENSION del programa "DIALOGO" de televisión a partir del sábado 2 de abril de 1973," news release, April 10, 1973.For an overview of the sugar cane workers' movement in the town of Carlos A. Carrillo, Veracruz and the involvement of father Bonilla in it see Carlos Bonilla Machorro, *Caña amarga: Ingenio San Cristobal, 1972-1973*, 2 ed. (México, 1981).

[50] Jesús De la Torre, "Nuestro trabajo en comunicación social," Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón), February 4 1973.

[51] See José Batarse Charur, "Las movilizaciones populares: Paracaidistas, colonos,

Father José Batarse's public stance and media presence turned him into the public face of the Nazas-Aguanaval group and put him in contact with various radical groups, including People's Politics. The first encounter between People's Politics brigadistas and the priests of the Nazas-Aguanaval group occurred in Durango's state capital at the Juárez University of Durango state (UJED) in 1970. After presenting a lecture entitled "Analysis of reality based on God's laws," Batarse was approached by Alberto Anaya, then a young member of People's Politics and future leader of Partido del Trabajo (Workers' Party) in the 1990s. He was the one who informed People's Politics about the Nazas-Aguanaval activities.

As a result, People's Politics founder Adolfo Orive Bellinger traveled multiple times in 1971 from Bahía de Banderas, in the western coastal state of Nayarit, to Torreón, Coahuila, in northern Mexico to convince José Batarse to allow the young brigadistas of People's Politics to join the priests in their social activism among the urban poor.[52] The Nazas-Aguanaval group analyzed People's Politics documents and compared them with Church positions on the social question developed after the Second Vatican Council and Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM)'s Medellín meeting. The Nazas-Aguanaval priests found them compatible and adopted People's Politics' political analysis and some concepts regarding the role of "the people" as "the subject of its own history."

Another sign of these priests' promotion of progressive Catholicism was the advertisement of a series of talks sponsored by the Unión Femenina Católica Mexicana (Union of Mexican Catholic Women) in the Cathedral of Torreón. Buried in the social section of newspapers along with seemingly unimportant stories, the advertisements announced talks by

---

estudiantes, ferrocarrileros, campesinos, trabajadores del Departamento de Limpieza, etc. y la organización de la fraternidad," *La Opinión* (Torreón), May 5 1973.

[52] Benigno Martínez, interview by author, November 22, 2020; and Adolfo Orive, interview by author, October 18, 2012.

father Benigno Martínez about the Second Vatican Council and its reforms each Friday afternoon during Pascua (Lent) of 1972.[53] Later, on August 26, the Nazas-Aguanaval group published a manifesto in *El Siglo de Torreón*, denouncing the detention of peasants from the "La Victoria" and "La Fe" ranches. In the manifesto, the priests condemned governmental repression and declared themselves in favor of the struggles of "workers, peasants, railroad workers, electricians, students, and squatters." Moreover, they asked Catholics from the rich and influential sectors of society to "review before God their Christian commitment to their fellow brothers who suffer oppression."[54] The group's process of radicalization would deepen in the following five years.

Since 1971, the Nazas-Aguanaval group became involved in organizing peasants and squatters in La Laguna. They limited their minister to weekends and served as advisors to their parishioners in their demands for land and services. Through their contact with People's Politics, the Nazas-Aguanaval priests crossed the line from preaching to actively supporting the struggles of La Laguna's poor. In 1986, José Batarse claimed that the turning point was the People's Politics-led janitors' strike of 1973, one of the pivotal years of the radicalization and state repression in the Mexican history of the Sixties. As shown in figure 2, Batarse appeared at the picket line in full priestly regalia, deterring the police from engaging in more violence against the protestors.[55] From then on, their participation in the popular movement increased.

---

[53] Unión Femenina-Católica Mexicana, "Ciclo de Pláticas en Catedral," Advertisement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), February 24 1972, Sociales y Personales.

[54] Agustin Cerda et al., "A la opinión pública," Paid Annoucement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), August 26 1972.

[55] Riera Fullana, *Ejido Batópilas*, 174-75. See also Arturo Cadivich, "¿Por qué intervino el clero en el caso de la Limpieza?," *La Opinión* (Torreón), April 17 1973.

Figure 4-2: José Batarse supporting the janitors' strike in Torreón (Archivo Municipal de Torreón)[56]

Father Batarse stayed after mass on Sunday, August 26, 1973, with a group of squatters at the Prolongación División del Norte neighborhood. The situation was tense as the squatters feared the police would repress them. In these circumstances, father José Batarse called father Jesús de la Torre, who had a friendly relationship with the occupiers, seeking help.[57] The next day the police received a report from a snitch in the neighborhood that accused the priest of leading the occupation of the vacant land. The accuser was one of the corrupt leaders of squatters sponsored by the PRI who opposed forming an independent squatter organization.[58]

---

[56] Presidencia Municipal de Torreón, "Priest José Batarse Charur intervened in favor of the janitors," (Torreón, Coahuila: Archivo Municipal de Torreón, April 13 1973). Fondo Presidencia Municipal 1972-1979, Collection Mitín Departamento de Limpieza 1973, Box 4, File 6, Folder 3, photo 15.

[57] See "Invaden Terrenos 80 personas encabezadas por 2 sacerdotes," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), August 27 1973.

[58] "Parte de Novedades, 27 de agosto de 1973" by Bernardo Segura Gurza in Parte de

Nonetheless, this became the most widely known version of the facts when *El Siglo de Torreón* published a note from the point of view of the priísta group.[59] Moreover, two days after the invasion, a conservative pundit mocked the priests' involvement with a satirical piece in *El Siglo de Torreón*. It stated: "and now people say they plan to invade the bishop's house (obispado) from which they could carve ten little houses of the right size."[60]

Around 1973, the relationship between these Torreón priests and the Maoists of People's Politics evolved into full cooperation in support of peasants and squatters. The priests' political involvement infuriated the local oligarchy and triggered their persecution by Coahuila's state government. The state police put them under surveillance, beat them, and finally imprisoned them without trial.[61] Fathers José Batarse and Armando Sánchez radicalized even more during this process and left the ministry to become full-time political activists as La Laguna high school students had previously done. The Nazas-Aguanaval priests followed the path chosen by hundreds of other clerics during the late Sixties in Latin America: redemption through revolution.

Novedades Jefatura de Policía: Dirección General. Dirección de Seguridad Pública, Presidencia Municipal Records, 1973, Box 39, folder 3, file 120, Archivo Municipal de Torreón, Torreón, Coahuila.

[59] See Jesús De la Torre, "¿Dos sacerdotes invaden..?," *La Opinión* (Torreón), August 30 1973.

[60] Nau-Yaca, "De lo que El Siglo informó," Column, De lo que El Siglo Informó, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), August 29 1973.

[61] For the reaction of the local oligarchy see Camara Agrícola y Ganadera de Torreón [Farmer and Ranchers Guild] and Coahuila Camara Agrícola de San Pedro de las Colonias, "A la opinión pública," Paid annoucement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 26 1976.About the persecution of the priests and the position of bishop Romo towards them, see Romo Gutierrez, "Mensaje del Obispo."; and Romo Gutierrez, "A la opinión pública [letter to the Mexican president and authorities]."

8.4 The Nazas-Aguanaval and the Progressive Priests' Movements

Between April 23 and 30 of 1972, the Chilean organization Christians for Socialism gathered Catholic clergy and laypeople interested in advancing a socialist agenda in their countries at the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism. The encounter also represented the highest point of the Latin American priest movements and, for the Nazas-Aguanaval group, the culmination of its involvement with the Latin American network of progressive Catholics.[62]

The Mexican security apparatus and the press carefully followed the meeting at a distance. Almost all attention centered on the bishop of Cuernavaca, Sergio Méndez Arceo, the most important figure of Catholic progressivism in Mexico during the late Sixties, a sympathizer of Marxism, and the only Latin American bishop to attend the Chilean conference.[63] In early 1972, government agents reported rumors of an invitation sent to twenty Mexican Catholics (priests, nuns, and laymen) to attend the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism in Chile. Rumors became a reality when Méndez Arceo announced he would attend the conference, although not as a representative of the Mexican Church. In parallel, a committee of Mexican priests and laypeople involved in social justice initiatives began to prepare a national report to present during the encounter.

The report provided a brief leftwing history of the post-revolutionary regime, along with a critical description of the living conditions of workers,

---

[62] Federal Security Directorate (DFS) agents surveilled the activities of Méndez Arceo since the late 1950s. See "Sergio Méndez Arceo 1972. 2" April-May 1972. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN). Fondo Gobernación. Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (IPS), Box 78.

[63] For a biography of bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo, see Carlos Fazio, *La cruz y el martillo* (México, D.F.: Moritz/Planeta, 1987).

peasants, and indigenous peoples during the twentieth century up to 1971, and information about the emergence of a progressive faction among the Mexican clergy.[64] Its input came from a nascent organization called Grupo Liberación (Liberation Group), which evolved into Priests for the People.[65] This organization took inspiration from the development, between 1970 and 1971, of various movements involving radical priests in South America: Priests for the Third World in Argentina, Golconda in Colombia, and Christians for Socialism in Chile. The group had connections across twelve cities, including Monterrey, Torreón, Hermosillo, Poza Rica, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosí, Cuernavaca, Tepic, Zacatecas, Guadalajara, and Zamora.[66]

Bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo and the Mexican delegation traveled to Santiago de Chile on April 20, 1972. There, the bishop of Cuernavaca gave the keynote speech to an audience of young radical priests, nuns, and journalists in the hall of a textile union. For seven days, attendants discussed and debated texts from Catholic and Marxist authors, as well as Latin American anthropologists. They listened to protest music (or nueva canción, a musical genre that used folkloric instruments and revolutionary lyrics) and drafted the final document of the meeting.[67] A correspondent

---

[64] See "Informe México" in Missionary Research Library Archives 9: Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS) Records, 1971-1973, Box 1, folder 7, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

[65] For a history of the Grupo Liberación, see Pensado, *Love and Despair: How Catholic Activism Shaped Politics and the Counterculture in Modern Mexico*. For a short history of the group see Jo, "Movimiento" Sacerdotes para el Pueblo" y la transformación socioeclesiástica en México."

[66] Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Pueblo (Estado de Morelos), June 27, 1972 AGN. Fondo Gobernación. Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS), Box 297.

[67] "Despachos del Secretario Ejecutivo, pre y pos encuentro, Julio de 1971-Septiembre 1972." Missionary Research Library Archives 9: Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS) Records, 1971-1973, Box 2, folder 1, The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

sent copies of the text to the United States (where a complete archive remains), and soon an edited version circulated in English and Spanish.[68] The event gained visibility in the press; a brief article in the *New York Times* and at least eight Mexico City newspapers covered the event.[69]

Besides the press coverage of the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism, the example of Christians for Socialism repeatedly appeared in Mexican intelligence documents that narrate the emergence of Priests for the People. The surveillance agents worried about the potential links between Mexican guerrillas, such as the September 23 Communist League, and progressive Catholics. One of their numerous reports noted, for example, that both groups' geographical zones of influence overlapped on the map.[70]

Altogether and with journalistic detail, Mexico's Federal Security Directorate (DFS) reports and the documents from bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo's private archives uncovered a network of Mexican priests involved in a Latin American movement of radical Church politics advocating for socialism. The Nazas-Aguanaval group was related to that network, and as noted earlier, bishop Méndez Arceo had emerged as a vocal sympathizer of Marxism. Through their relationship with an Argentinean priest, the group members were the only Mexican signatories of the letter

---

[68] For the English version, see John Eagleson, *Christians and Socialism: Documentation of the Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America* (Orbis Books, 1975). For the Spanish version, see Cristianos por el Socialismo, "Primer Encuentro "Cristianos por el Socialismo" -Documento final-," *Servir: Revista de Pastoral*, June, 1972.

[69] See Juan De Onis, "Assembly in Chile Urges Socialism," *The New York Times* (New York), May 4 1972, https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/04/archives/assembly-in-chile-urges-socialism-group-led-by-priests-seeks.html.;and "Sergio Méndez Arceo 1972. 2" April-May 1972. Archivo General de la Nación. Fondo Gobernación. Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, Box 78.

[70] The area corresponded to the states of Morelos, Chihuahua, and Chiapas. Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Pueblo. Clero, 1978. AGN. DFS, Box 297, versión pública 2016.

of Latin American priests sent to the 1971 Synod of Bishops in Rome.[71]

Under the instructions of Pope Paul VI, the Synod discussed the role of priests in the modern world and the subjects of peace and justice. It also provided a target for a vast coalition of progressive priests' groups emerging in Europe after the Second Vatican Council and throughout the Sixties. Among them, the Dutch Septuagint group led and organized a series of international encounters that resulted in a global initiative, "Operation Synod."[72] Designed as a mix of a lobbying effort and counter-conference, the operation called for priests to challenge the bishops gathered at Rome to democratize the Church and promote a social justice agenda.[73] In that context, the European priests reached out to their Latin American peers, giving birth to a complementary initiative, a Latin American letter to the bishops connected through the Louvain Coordination Center to the Operation's command in Europe.[74]

Promoted by the Argentinean group Priests for the Third World and

---

[71] Jesús Moreno Mejía, "Carta al Sínodo: Fue firmada por mil Presbíteros; Trece de Ellos de Esta Ciudad," Interview, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 18 1971.

[72] For a history of the Septuagint group see Horn, *The spirit of Vatican II: Western European progressive Catholicism in the long sixties*, 86-88.

[73] For the organization of the "Operation Synod" see Joost Reuten and Leon Naveau, "Invitation to participate in Operation Synod '71," June 1971. Archive Aktiegroep Septuagint, Box 183, folder 132, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Radboud University. Nijmegen, Netherlands. For the democratizing objectives of Operation Synod see Opération Synode Centre de Coordination Internationale, "Communiqué de Presse: Présentation de l'Opération Synode" September 27, 1971. Archive Aktiegroep Septuagint, Box 183, folder 132, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Radboud University. Nijmegen, Netherlands.

[74] For the connection between the Operation Synod and the Argentinean Priests for the Third World see Opération Synode Centre de Coordination Internationale, "Anexe I: Liste d'adresses" April 20, 1971. Archive Aktiegroep Septuagint, Box 183, folder 132, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Radboud University. Nijmegen, Netherlands.

signed by dozens of other Latin American priests, the letter tried to influence the Synod's discussions from the point of view of Latin America. They advocated for the political involvement of Catholic priests in the struggle for social justice. They also argued that local Christian communities should decide the specific terms of the priests' commitment to the "liberation" process.[75] The final document of the Synod, "Ministerial Priesthood," recognized the duty of the priests in defense of human rights and the promotion of justice. Still, they also reaffirmed that politics belonged to the laity and that the primary mission of the priests was sacramental.[76]

The Mexican press focused on the Synod's discussion of celibacy. It gave scant attention to issues of primary concern to the Priests for the Third World or the Nazas-Aguanaval group, such as workers' and peasants' rights.[77] To fight against the media's interpretation, Father José Batarse used his media presence to publicize the letter and explain its content. He talked about it on *Diálogo* and gave an interview to *El Siglo de Torreón*.[78] It was to no avail. The political nature of the letter got lost in the middle

---

[75] "Ministerio sacerdotal dentro de la misión liberadora de la Iglesia en A. L.," September 8, 1971, in Colección José María "Pichi" Meisegeier, S.J., Archivo Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo (MSTM), temas afines y posteriores, Box 5, folder 19, Jean Sonet S.J. Library, Universidad Católica de Córdoba, Argentina.

[76] See Sínodo Episcopal de 1971, "El sacerdocio ministerial:_texto definitivo aprobado por los obispos sinodales," in *El sacerdocio ministerial* (Barcelona: Centro de Pastoral Litúrgica, 2019), 31-32.

[77] On how the Mexican press covered the Synod, see Alberto Carbone, "Apoyo mexicano al celibato de los sacerdotes," *El Informador. Diario Independiente* (Guadalajara, Jalisco), October 5 1971, Front page.

[78] See XHIA-TV Canal 2, "Programación para el día 15 de octubre de 1971: 13:00 Dialogo en vivo: Mesa Redonda sobre la Carta que trece sacerdotes torreonenses enviaron al Sínodo Romano," Advertisement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 15 1971, Avisos de Ocasión.

of the celibacy debate.

Without a doubt, the most substantial evidence of the participation of the Nazas-Aguanaval priests in this Latin American network was the story of their delegate at the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism. In 1972, the Nazas-Aguanaval group sent father Armando Sánchez de la O as their representative to the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism despite the objections of Bishop Fernando Romo. Instead of returning after the end of the Conference, Sánchez de la O stayed in South America for six months and traveled to Chile, Argentina, Perú, Ecuador, and Brazil. He became acquainted with many progressive practices among priests there, from urban worker-priests in Chile to rural base communities in Brazil and Perú. Sánchez de la O left the priesthood two years later but helped connect Torreón's priests with their South American peers after returning to Mexico. [79] Afterward, he became an active militant of People's Politics, working in the slums of Torreón and the surrounding countryside for a decade. Sánchez de la O's commitment to La Laguna's people caused his imprisonment in October of 1976 when the local authorities put him in jail together with Hugo Andrés Araujo and father Benigno Martínez and others who remained committed to the grassroots politics of the era.

Meanwhile, the contact between Mexican and South American priests' movements continued well into the late Sixties. In the weeks after their return from Santiago, members of the Mexican delegation at the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism began publishing a bulletin calling to create a chapter of Christians for Socialism in Mexico. In May of 1973, the newsletter included a solidarity declaration issued by the Second National Congress of Priests for the People. The resolution expressed the priests' support for Torreón janitors who went on strike with

---

[79] Armando Sánchez de la O, "Telephone Conversation with Former Priest Armando Sánchez de la O," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, November 23, 2019.

the backing of People's Politics brigadistas and "seventeen priests, who followed their bishop, and [...] opted for the people."[80] The manifesto closed with a cartoon from a Chilean pamphlet that contrasted the alliance between the Church and the capitalists to the new coalition formed among workers and young priests to defend the workers' rights.[81] Priests for the People and many progressive priests in Latin America believed, in the era's language, that the time for an alliance between the working class and the Church had arrived. These efforts will continue in the aftermath of the Sixties when Mexico, as other countries in Latin America, would take steps to crumble the welfare state and embark on a neoliberal path.

8.5 FROM BATOPILAS TO CHIAPAS AND BEYOND

In 1994, communities in the southeastern state of Chiapas rebelled against the Mexican state under the banner of the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation). The rebellion is well known in the scholarship. [82] Nonetheless, one of the paths that led to the uprising has received less attention from historians; one that started in the community of Francisco I. Madero, Coahuila, where in the context of the late Sixties, Maoism intersected with progressive Catholicism.

As the parish priest who served the local Batopilas vineyard since 1973, Fr. Benigno Martínez developed his pastoral work close to the rural workers and farmers of the area with former priest Armando Sánchez de la O. In

---

[80] Sacerdotes para el Pueblo, "Declaración en el II Congreso Nacional de "Sacerdotes para el Pueblo" a las recientes luchas de liberación de los oprimidos en Torreón," *Boletin Cristianos por el Socialismo Mexico*, May, 1973, 8.

[81] See Secretariado de Cristianos por el Socialismo (Chile), *El pueblo camina ¿Y los cristianos?*, (Santiago de Chile: 1972), Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile.

[82] For a history of the origins of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation see Adela Cedillo, *El fuego y el silencio*, vol. VIII, México: Genocidio y delitos de lesa humanidad. Documentos Básicos 1968-2008, (México, D.F., 2008).

1976, Batopilas farmworkers sought the priests' help in a dispute with the vineyard owner. Afterward, the Nazas-Aguanaval priests put them in contact with People's Politics brigadistas based in Torreón.[83] A strike followed, and a coalition of students, squatters, and strikers took over the farm. The conflict lasted until 1984, and a combination of protests and legal actions resulted in forming a collective ejido where the former strikers became the owners of Batopilas.[84]

Under the orders of the governor of Coahuila and with the support of La Laguna's oligarchy, state police arrested Benigno Martínez, Armando Sánchez de la O, Hugo Andrés Araujo, and three Batopilas workers in October of 1976.[85] The event sparked the protest of Bishop Fernando Romo, the squatters, and the former leader of the National Action Party (PAN), José Ángel Conchello. The latter declared the detention was "only a lesson to anyone who claims land and does not do it through the mechanisms of mass control created by the state."[86] In the following days, the coalition for the liberation of People's Politics prisoners kept growing while a propaganda campaign against them appeared in the local media.

Supporters of the prisoners included the bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Samuel Ruiz, and the future president of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who had contacts in People's Politics. They visited the prisoners

---

[83] Benigno Martínez, interview by author, November 22, 2020; and Adolfo Orive, interview by author, October 18, 2012.

[84] See Línea Proletaria, *BATOPILAS… Trabajadores que ante la explotación despiadada han dicho BASTA*, (Torreón, Coahuila: 1976).; and Línea Proletaria, *Ejido colectivo Batopilas: Un año trabajando la tierra en pie de lucha*, (Torreón, Coahuila: 1977).

[85] La Opinión, "Serie de arrestos."

[86] Olga Quirarte, "El pueblo paga la lucha por el poder: Conchello," *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 17 1976.

in Torreón.[87] Bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo also defended the priests in his homily of October 26, 1976.[88] Then the conflict became national news with Méndez Arceo's intervention. It gained visibility through the newspaper Excélsior (Mexico City) pages, and the newly created weekly *Proceso* (Mexico City) narrated the event in its first issue.[89] In response, the enemies of the Batopilas prisoners began a smear campaign against the priests in *El Siglo de Torreón*.

The smear campaign included two cartoons shown in figure 3. In the first of these illustrations, the local and state governments appeared as a woodcutter knocking down the tree of tolerance for the squatters. In the same cartoon, the squatter leaders are represented as a peacock, looking at the tree with tears. The following day, a second cartoon represented the town of San Pedro, Coahuila, as an older woman, worried by the protests of the squatters and the chance of a mutiny. During the conflict of the Nazas-Aguanaval group over Batopilas, Torreón's conservatives rallied behind the repressive actions of Coahuila state's and Torreón's governments.

---

[87] Carlos Salinas had a long-term relationship with People's Politics since his days as a student of Adolfo Orive at UNAM. Hugo Andrés Araujo, leader of Torreón's brigadistas and founding member of People's Politics, mentioned visits by Salinas and Samuel Ruiz as a sign of the diverse coalition supporting them in La Laguna. Hugo Andrés Araujo de la Torre, "Interview with Hugo Andrés Araujo de la Torre Founder of People's Politics," interview by Jorge Puma, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, July 30, 2014. Samuel Ruiz was in La Laguna on the occasion of a priests' meeting. See Sergio Méndez Arceo, "Documento Confidencial" October 21, 1976, Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Personal Collection, Box 72, folder 1 in CAMENA, Mexico City.

[88] Sergio Méndez Arceo, "Parte final de la Homilía del Señor Obispo en la misa de 11:00 a.m.," October 24, 1976, Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Personal Collection, Box 66, folder 1-22 in CAMENA, Mexico City.

[89] For *Excélsior* coverage of the conflict, see Jesus Delgadillo, "Liberan a un sacerdote, preso por invasión de tierras en Coahuila," *Excelsior* (México, D.F.), October 26 1976. For *Proceso*'s coverage see, Proceso, "Sacerdotes comprometidos."

Figure 4-3: Anti-Batarse smear campaign (El Siglo de Torreón, October 1976)[90]

Soon after the detentions, bishop Fernando Romo pressed the authorities to release Fr. Benigno Martínez and tried to avoid father José Batarse's detention using the help of the Francisco I. Madero parishioners. At the same time, bishop Samuel Ruiz acted as a mediator with the authorities.[91] As mentioned before, a compromise was reached involving the "exile" of Batarse to Chiapas, but not before the Church hierarchy faced the resistance of grassroots organizations that rejected the expulsion of Batarse from La Laguna.

In the heat of the conflict for Batopilas and the persecution of priests and brigadistas, People's Politics and progressive Catholic ideas converged in La Laguna. In their role as Catholics, the squatters' movement and parish

---

[90] Enriquez, "¿Se cayó el arbolito?," Cartoon, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 19 1976.; and Enriquez, "En San Pedro, Coah," Cartoon, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 20 1976, Editorial section.

[91] Proceso, "Sacerdotes comprometidos," 28.

assemblies asked the bishop: "Like you, we are also concerned about the unity of Christians: That is what we seek! That the attacks of the mighty, the enemy, the exploiter, find us all united and organized against him to confront and defeat him so we can build a more just, more fraternal world where we, the poor, can live with more dignity."[92]

Eventually, bishop Fernando Romo and the local authorities reached an agreement for the liberation of father Benigno Martínez and the safety of father José Batarse. In time, People's Politics brigadistas followed Batarse in his exile to the southern Mexico state of Chiapas, where he worked briefly in Samuel Ruiz's diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Hence, these northern Maoists moved into the jungles and mountains of Chiapas.[93]

In a more dangerous scenario than the early 1970s, José Batarse returned to Torreón on April 23, 1977. Soon after, the local police harassed him, raising the alarm of the Nazas-Aguanaval group and the local Church. Then, two days after Batarse returned to Torreón, the progressive bishop of the southern Mexico diocese of Tehuantepec, Arturo Lona (1925-2020), suffered an attack. Lona survived, but his chauffeur died in the shooting. On April 28, 1977, father Rodolfo Escamilla, another progressive priest and founder of the Young Catholic Workers (JOC) in Mexico, was murdered in Mexico City. It was the second murder of a progressive priest in less than a month, as the memory of the assassination of father Rodolfo Aguilar in

---

[92] Gonzalez, "Al señor obispo Fernando Romo." The same idea will resurface in a letter from Benigno Martínez to Bishop Romo, in which Martínez analyzes the crisis and its resolution from the progressive priests' point of view. Sergio Méndez Arceo, "24. Carta a obispo Fernando Romo (Benigno Martínez)" November 20, 1976, Sergio Méndez Arceo Archive, Personal Collection, Box 72, folder 1 in CAMENA, Mexico City.

[93] For Batarse's presence in Chiapas and the impact of Batopilas in the diocese of San Cristóbal see Jesús Morales Bermúdez, *Entre ásperos caminos llanos: La diócesis de San Cristóbal de Las Casas 1950-1995* (Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, 2005), 173-75.

the northern Mexico state of Chihuahua was still fresh.[94]

The response of the Church hierarchy was tepid. Only progressive bishops Sergio Méndez Arceo from Cuernavaca and Adalberto Almeida from Ciudad Juárez protested. The lack of response of the Church authorities to the murders contrasted sharply with Batarse's support in 1976.[95] Probably, the support of his bishop, Fernando Romo, other religious authorities, and the well-connected secular allies from Peoples Politics saved Batarse's live on May 16, 1977. That day, only two weeks after his return to Torreón, the police took him by force, only freed him at night that same day.[96] The difference in outcomes was radical.

Forced to move again in the growing repression against People's Politics and its progressive Catholic allies, José Batarse went to Tula, Hidalgo. He worked with a People's Politics brigada to infiltrate the PEMEX (Mexico's state-owned oil industry) refinery there. In the meantime, Batarse entered a relationship with a former secretary of his parish. He wanted to continue his ministry as a married priest, but the Church forced him to decide between priesthood and marriage. As a result, José Batarse left the priesthood and, for a short time, was part of a People's Politics brigade at Queretaro's Sierra Gorda.[97] In 1979, People's Politics disbanded due to internal conflicts, and Batarse returned to Torreón, where he lived a

---

[94] Jesús De la Torre, "Otro sacerdote asesinado y un obispo que escapó," Column, La Iglesia, Promotora del Hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), May 1st 1977, B.

[95] For the lukewarm response of the hierarchy in the case of Rodolfo Escamilla's murder, see Pensado, "Silencing Rebellious Priests: Rodolfo Escamilla García and the Repression of Progressive Catholicism in Cold-War Mexico."

[96] Redacción La Opinión, "Apareció el padre Batarse; no fue secuestrado," News report, *La Opinión* (Torreón), May 17 1977.

[97] Martínez "Conferencia testimonial en memoria de José Batarse Charur: Participación de la Iglesia progresista en los movimientos de masas de la laguna.."

modest life outside politics.[98]

Shortly before returning to Torreón in the Spring of 1977, José Batarse sent a letter to the squatters of the "2 de Marzo" neighborhood requesting solidarity for the Batopilas' struggle and begging them to keep the communal organization alive. He reminded them of their past efforts and compared the indifference of some with Cain's attitude when God asked him about Abel. In this one-page flyer, brother and compañero (comrade) Batarse made a last stand call to maintain an independent and non-electoral people's struggle at La Laguna.[99] Nonetheless, the end of People's Politics brought the retreat of the student activist and the gradual collapse of the independent organization in the neighborhoods. The remaining priests turned to pastoral work, establishing Christian Base Communities and raising the consciousness of the peasants. Their work was cut short by the rising tide of conservatism in the Church and neoliberal policies in the countryside.[100] In 1984, following Bishop Fernando Romo's retirement, the Nazas-Aguanaval group dissolved.

8.6 CONCLUSIONS

The economic and social conditions of La Laguna partly explain the convergence between the transnational currents of Maoism and progressive Catholicism with the local activism of students and priests. However, after a history of almost two centuries of confrontation between the Church and progressive political movements in Mexico and Latin America, only the wave of reform brought by the Second Vatican Council

---

[98] For a short overview of People' Politics' collapse see Legorreta Díaz, *Religión, política y guerrilla*, 119-23.

[99] José Batarse Charur, *¡Felicidades, por otro año más de su lucha!*, (Gómez Palacio, Durango: 1977).

[100] Benigno Martínez "Conversation with Father Benigno Martínez," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, June 30, 2021. See also Concha Malo et al., *Cristianos*, 265.

could create the conditions for the ideological realignment of an active minority of the Latin American clergy. In this sense, the rise of a multi-class coalition in La Laguna during the late Sixties continued the long history of revolutionary mobilization in the region, but the active participation of Catholics played a crucial role in its success.

The emergence of Latin American priests' movements, including the Nazas-Aguanaval group, was a testimony of a tentative alliance between the clergy and the popular movements of peasants and workers. At the same time, the 1971 letter to the Synod and the 1972 First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism were proof of the scope and reach of a growing network of Latin American Catholic progressives. These networks brought to the fore how Catholic ideas and persons circulated and came into contact in Mexico and Latin America.

In this context, the decision of the Nazas-Aguanaval priest group to side with the poor allowed them to ally with the Maoists of People's Politics and the already radicalized students of La Laguna. On the contrary, whereas the relation between the Nazas-Aguanaval group and People's Politics with local authorities was antagonistic, the relationship of the priests with the bishop and local elites was more complicated. The ambiguous position of Bishop Romo spoke to the realities of an institution that tolerated political diversity to a certain degree but was totally against insubordination. By contrast, Batarse's dealings with National Action Party (PAN) leaders and Torreón intellectuals in the TV show *Diálogo* reflected the priests' privileged position in La Laguna society. These dealings ended with the collapse of People's Politics in 1979 and the decline of progressive ideas within the Church during John Paul II's papacy in the 1980s, when, in the shifting context of neoliberalism, the Vatican adopted a dual confrontational stance against progressive Catholicism and communism.

After disbanding in 1984, the priests of the Nazas-Aguanaval continued their pastoral work individually following the new directives of the diocese's plan established by the new bishop Luis Morales, who requested the dissolution of the group and its integration into diaconates. The

Nazas-Aguanaval weighed the need to align themselves with the diocese instead of keeping a "sectarian" attitude and falling into isolation. They saw this as an opportunity to transfer their experience into the work of the parishes. They continued supporting popular movements and forming Christian Base Communities, but the diocese's plan allowed them to overcome the tensions with the more conservative sections of Torreón's clergy.[101] Their disappearance as a distinct group, their adherence to the new position of the dioceses, and the political defeat of popular movements in La Laguna in the 1990s ended their conflict with the conservative Church.

As this chapter proved, dialogue and cooperation between Marxists and Catholics in Latin America during the late Sixties were not limited to the connections that developed between progressive Catholicism and Liberation Theology. A broader understanding of progressive Catholicism based on examining the priests' movements in Latin America and its regional manifestations as the one presented here complements those accounts focused on the intellectual history of Liberation Theology. But this history that often blurred the lines between progressive Catholicism and Maoism would be incomplete without taking a closer look at the important role of female activists and their compañeros in creating the urban squatter movements that exploded across Mexico during the late Sixties.

[101] Benigno Martínez, interview by author, November 22, 2020. On the defeat of the popular movements in La Laguna and northern Mexico in the 1990s see Aboites Aguilar, *El norte mexicano sin algodones, 1970-2010: Estancamiento, inconformidad y el violento adiós al optimismo*, 224-42.

9 URBAN SQUATTERS AND PEOPLE'S FEMINISM

9.1 INTRODUCTION

On April 2, 1972, Father Jesús De la Torre described in his weekly column of *La Opinión* (Torreón) how hundreds of low-income families abandoned Torreón's downtown for the outskirts. Fed up with paying rent in the poor-quality apartments controlled by the local bourgeoisie, an undetermined number of people moved to occupy the abandoned grounds of a fertilizer factory west of the old city center, not far from the airport. De la Torre underscored the impression caused at the time by the fires from the squatters' tents at night, "some [witnesses] comment[ed] that it look[ed] beautiful [,] like an exodus.[1] It was the beginning of the history of the Tierra y Libertad "independent" neighborhood, an episode of Northern Mexico's "popular urbanization" during the late Sixties. The squatting was a movement driven mainly by women and their families who adopted the revolutionary slogan of Emiliano Zapata, "Land and Liberty." At Torreón, Coahuila, it was a process where People's Politics militants left their more enduring legacy.

The movement was full of contradictions. It empowered women, but the leadership was a small cadre of former students in their early 1920s, primarily male. Still, the rank and file of the squatter movement consisted of a mix of conservative older women, prostitutes, recent immigrants from the countryside, and young urban girls. These women pushed their husbands, boyfriends, sons, and brothers to occupy the empty lands of the Northern Mexico cities, looking for a place to live and call home.

Sociologists, political scientists, and former militants monopolized for a long time the study of the movimiento urbano popular, the Mexican label for the squatters' organizing process. Deeply impacted by the French

[1] De la Torre, "Parece un Éxodo."

theoretical developments on the "Second Left" and the "new social movements," the literature on the movimiento urbano popular also responded to the political moment of the Mexican transition to democracy and tended to center on Mexico City.[2] There were strong reasons behind that. After the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, the political imagination of the Mexican Left turned to the growing number of homeless organized in coordinadoras (coordination groups). Studies of the movimiento urbano popular conceptualized their neighborhoods as autonomous territories and their organizations as counterhegemonic power expressions. At the same time, the movimiento urbano popular militants and their constituency became the backbone of the 1980s Center-Left struggle for democracy.[3] Eventually, they entered the Mexico City government in 1997 and faded into relative obscurity, always a political force but one deprived of the prestige of its early days as accusations of corruption and clientelist practices took a toll on its public image.

For its part, the literature on women's participation in the movimiento urbano popular appeared mostly when the enthusiasm for the squatters' organizations had already receded in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The number of articles and books was only a tiny fraction of the extensive production of texts focused on the 1970s-1990s mobilizations of the urban poor.[4] The studies on female squatters paid attention to gender

---

[2] For an example of the literature on the squatter's movement in Mexico see Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, *El movimiento urbano popular en México*, Biblioteca México: actualidad y perspectivas, (México, D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1986).

[3] See Felipe de Jesús Moreno Galván, *El movimiento urbano popular en el Valle de México* (UAM, 2013).; and Pedro Moctezuma Barragán, *La Chispa. Orígenes del movimiento urbano popular en el Valle de México* (México, D.F.: Fundación Rosa Luxemburgo Stiftung-Para Leer en Libertad A. C., 2012).

[4] For an example on the study of the *feminismo popular* see Alma Rosa Sánchez Olvera, *El feminismo mexicano ante el movimiento urbano popular: Dos experiencias de lucha de género (1970-1985)* (México, D.F.: UNAM-Plaza y Valdés editores, 2002).

issues. They developed the concept of a feminismo popular (people's feminism) that implied the struggle of working-class women to change gender relations positively while fighting for union democracy, land, and better living conditions. Ironically, part of the literature identified feminismo popular with the NGOs working with poor women's movements in the 1980s and the 1990s.[5] A legacy of the confusion between NGOs and female working-class activism was the relatively obscure position women of the non-electoral Left had in the historiography of feminism in Mexico.[6] Nonetheless, the literature on feminismo popular presented an alternative narrative to the more institutional and middle-class-centered literature on women's rights in Mexico.

These studies carefully set the point of origin of the feminist turn on the movimiento urbano popular in the 1980s during the rise of the Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular (National Coordination of the Popular Urban Movement or CONAMUP).[7] Before the unification efforts that created the Organización de Izquierda Revolucionaria-Línea de Masas (Revolutionary Left Organization-Mass Line or OIR-LM), the dispersed mass line organizations were movements of women. The emergence of the coordinadoras de masas allowed female activists from the neighborhoods to gather and advance their political agenda. Until then, female activists and squatters did not have a feminist

---

[5] Gisela Espinosa Damián, "Feminismo popular," in *Cuatro vertientes del feminismo en México* (México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, 2009), 85.

[6] Female participation in the squatters' movement received scant attention in Mexico's feminist historiography. Cfr. Dora Barrancos, *Historia mínima de los feminismos en América Latina*, Historia mínima, (Ciudad de México: El Colegio de México, 2020), 64-65.

[7] For a history of the CONAMUP see Josiane Bouchier, "La paradoja de la unidad. El movimiento urbano popular y la Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular (CONAMUP)," in *Movimientos sociales en México durante la década de los 80*, ed. Sergio Zermeño and Jesús Aurelio Cuevas Díaz (México, D.F.: UNAM, 1990).

discourse, but the coordinadoras' movement changed that.[8] In the 1990s, the experience was cut short. The rising tides of neoliberal reforms and the struggle for democratization sank their efforts to create their own path.

Following this brief review of the scholarship, this chapter emphasizes how Maoism, despite its emphasis in class and overall neglect from historians, provided an extensive array of opportunities to empower women in the public sphere and at home. However, it also argues that Maoism simultaneously subordinated the cause of women's rights to the common goals of general emancipation and material gains for the community. To advance this argument the chapter explores the conditions that promoted the emergence of the "popular urbanization" phenomenon in Northern Mexico and the role of women in it during the late Sixties and thereafter. First, it discusses the economic and social conditions that caused the creation of new "popular neighborhoods" in Durango, Monterrey, and Torreón despite the crisis of the cotton economy and the diminishing rate of population growth that characterized the Postwar, the Sixties, and the neoliberal eras. Second, it describes the interaction between the People's Politics militants and the tenements' inhabitants and how the struggle for better public utilities transformed into the squatters' movement in the late Sixties. Finally, it analyzes the role of women in the popular mobilization behind the squatters' movement in Northern Mexico during this era and thereafter.

[8] See Sánchez Olvera, *El feminismo mexicano ante el movimiento urbano popular*. For a discussion on the distinction between the women's movement and feminism, see Joan Wallach Scott, "Does the Presence of Women Always Call for Gender Analysis?," in *Gender and the Politics of History (Revised Edition)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

9.2 URBANIZACIÓN POPULAR: PEOPLE'S URBANIZATION IN NORTHERN MEXICO

Northern Mexico's economy experimented a boom in the years after World War II. The population grew, and the standard of living of the middle classes allowed families to send their children to study in Monterrey, Mexico City, Spain, and the United States. Cities expanded while the cotton economy lived its heyday from Mexicali to Matamoros. Economic opportunity attracted immigrants from central Mexico or their hinterlands to the Northern cities. These rural immigrants and their sons filled the tenements and slums of Torreón, Durango, and Monterrey. Between 1960 and 1970, Mexican society became a predominantly urban society, and by 1970, almost 60% of the population lived in the cities.[9] Then, the cotton economy faltered at the end of the Sixties, and population growth slowed in Northern Mexico.[10]

Durango, Torreón, and Monterrey expanded during the economic crisis despite the declining social optimism among the local elites. Hundreds of families occupied former agricultural plots, abandoned industrial units, and landfills and transformed the cities in what historian Luis Aboites called urbanización popular (people's colonization).[11] They brought to the northern metropolis the tactics their fathers used to request land from the agrarian reform functionaries affiliated to the government. Moreover, the squatters took advantage of the ideas the Mexican Revolution legitimized and codified into the legal system to allow land occupations. On the one hand, the concept of the "social function" of the property gave them a

---

[9] Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, "Población rural y urbana," (2020). https://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/poblacion/rur_urb.aspx?tema=P.

[10] See Luis Aboites Aguilar, "La Debacle," in *El norte entre algodones. Población, trabajo agrícola y optimismo en México, 1930-1970* (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 2013).

[11] Aboites Aguilar, *El norte mexicano sin algodones, 1970-2010: Estancamiento, inconformidad y el violento adiós al optimismo*, 156-57.

legal justification to seek the government's support on their demand for a place to live through expropriation or occupation.[12] On the other, the idea that the "Revolution" had to respond to the people's aspirations allowed translating into a common language the radical ideology of Maoist activists, the material needs of the squatters, and the policy options of the Mexican government.[13] During a decade, a window of opportunity opened for political experimentation in the outskirts of the Northern Mexico metropolis.

Conditions varied in the three cities where People's Politics militants intervened in the popular urbanization process. On one extreme, Monterrey had been Mexico's third most populated city since the 1940s (after Mexico City and Guadalajara). Its local entrepreneurial elites maintained their political grip on society through a paternalistic welfare system and a political agreement with the PRI.[14] Nonetheless, they faced intermittent challenges from the working class organized in the "official" unions at the steelworks and the rising tide of leftist elements in the universities.[15] The pressure was not enough to break their political hegemony but gave rise to a new generation of activists for the Left.

Torreón followed a similar expansion trajectory, but the cotton economy

---

[12] For an analysis of the Mexican Constitutional tradition of property's "social function," see Martín Díaz y Díaz, *Ensayos sobre la propiedad*, ed. Antonio Azuela (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigacioines Jurídicas, 2014), 9-70.

[13] On the importance of the "revolutionary" discourse as an element of negotiation between the elites and the subaltern population in Mexico, see Randall Sheppard, *A Persistent Revolution: History, Nationalism, and Politics in Mexico since 1968* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2016).

[14] Alex M. Saragoza, "The Making of an Industrial Elite: The Political Economy of Monterrey," in *The Monterrey Elite and the Mexican State, 1880-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).

[15] Michael Snodgrass, *Deference and Defiance in Monterrey: Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890–1950* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

crisis curtailed its growth. Also, the local elites never achieved the level of control of their Monterrey peers as the power of the PRI machinery surpassed them. In La Laguna, the new social movements benefited from a political tradition that dealt with them in a less violent and conciliatory way. A difference in degree, as the Monterrey militants faced a policy meant to exterminate them.[16]

Finally, Durango de Victoria was a more conservative city, but in the late Sixties, it experienced constant political turmoil and explosive population growth. First, in 1966, a student movement supported by local elites demanded that the gains from exploiting an iron mine close to the city remained at Durango instead of going to the coffers of Monterrey's capitalists. In the end, the movement failed, and the gains from the iron mines at the Cerro del Mercado kept flowing to Monterrey.[17] Four years later, a new student revolt protested the local government's lack of commitment to Durango's industrialization. Again, the mobilization ended without modifying the political status quo in the city or the state.[18] People's Politics militants parachuted into an already volatile situation and helped organize a massive movement among the countryside immigrants filling the small apartments of the tenements.

Maoists benefited from the experience of previous organizers, some of them from the Communist Party or the PRI and the Partido Popular Socialista (Socialist People's Party). These precursors had worked with the tenants and the urban poor throughout the 1940s and 1950s, founding

---

[16] On the extermination campaign against the urban Guerrilla see Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos Sociales y Políticos del Pasado FEMOSPP, Informe histórico a la sociedad mexicana, (México, D.F.: PGR, 2006).

[17] See Antonio Avitia Hernández, "Los Cincuenta y Siete Días de Hierro, o Los Colgados del Mito," in *La montaña de las ilusiones. Historia del Cerro del Mercado* (México, D.F.: 2003).

[18] See Carlos Ornelas Navarro, *Durango 70. Fracaso de una revuelta social* (Durango, Dgo: UJED, 2010).

some of the first "irregular" neighborhoods and squatter organizations. The memories of their achievements persisted among the recruits of the squatter's movement, and these organizations served as training grounds for the 1970s Communist Party dissidence during the Sixties.[19] Moreover, PRI's organizers also led the occupation of empty lands and negotiated with local administrations to purchase land for their followers' benefit. However, PRI-affiliated bosses established a more transactional relationship with the urban poor as they charged for their services. Despite their political connections and resources, they tended to fail in their promises to access cheap accommodations.[20] When a free and more reliable option appeared, the urban masses followed it despite the risk of putting themselves in the middle of anti-subversive campaigns from the government's security forces or suffering the wrath of the local oligarchies.

Indeed, life in the occupied land was harsh. Squatters had to sell most of their meager possessions and lived exposed to the brutal conditions of living outdoors in their improvised huts without access to water and electricity. However, they suffered constant rises in their lease and abuses from landlords. As a result, working-class women and their families wanted to leave the precarious spaces they rented downtown. When they heard about plans to occupy empty lots or ongoing occupation processes, they took a blanket, a couple of sticks, and their kids to build a tent in the promised land.[21] Their kids got sick during the rainy season as the streets became rivers of muddy water filled with garbage, excrement, and flies,

---

[19] Acosta Zavala, *Así lo recuerdo*, 34-38.; and Vargas Valdés, interview.

[20] See Diana R. Villarreal and Víctor Castañeda, *Urbanización y autoconstrucción de vivienda en Monterrey* (México, D.F.: Centro de Ecodesarrollo, 1986), 66-68.

[21] For a vivid portrait of the living conditions in the "independent neighborhoods," see the testimonies of Monterrey women in Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*. and Maurice Bulbulian, "Tierra y Libertad," (Monterrey, NL: National Film Board of Canada, 1978). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkEGPVK1T6I.

but they persevered and resisted efforts to relocate them by force.

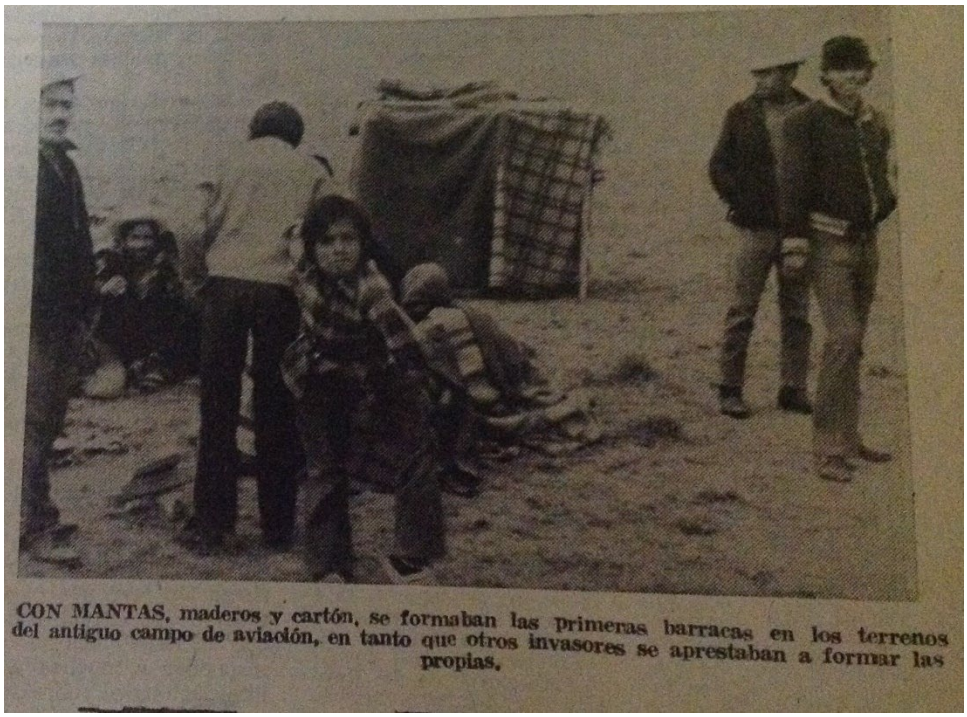
Squatters and their allies arranged the space distributing land equitably and accepting as neighbors only those without property. In Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad, the Maoists set a procedure for newcomers called "hacer bandera" (stand with the flag), where recruits had to stay in the neighborhood's parade ground for two weeks. It tested the recruit's commitment, and even the student activists had to pass through the ritual to move into the neighborhood. After testing the aspiring recruits, the neighborhood's general assembly assigned the newcomers a plot.[22] The size of the plot varied in every location, but in Torreón's Tierra y Libertad neighborhood, it measured ten yards in the front and 38 yards in deep.[23] As shown in figure 1, each family built its hut with makeshift materials ranging from blankets, wood, laminated cardboard, and foil to adobe bricks, whatever they could find to protect themselves against the harsh weather.[24] Nonetheless, the settlement was only the beginning.

---

[22] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 123-24.

[23] Venancio Chairez, "Conversation with Venancio Chairez Tierra y Libertad, Torreón, Coahuila Squatter," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, August 26, 2013.

[24] Roberto Guevara and Dolores Chairez, "Interview with Roberto Guevara and his Wife Lola Chairez, Tierra y Libertad, Torreón, Coahuila Squatters," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*, August 26, 2013.



CON MANTAS, maderos y cartón, se formaban las primeras barracas en los terrenos del antiguo campo de aviación, en tanto que otros invasores se aprestaban a formar las propias.

Figure 5-1: Squatters in Durango (El Sol de Durango, February 11, 1973)[25]

The "irregular" settlements were a rough space where a diverse range of immigrants and militants attempted to create a democratic community on the fringes of northern Mexico societies. People's Politics militants lived among the urban poor in the same small huts built by the squatters. "The students," as the squatters used to call them, bore witness to family fights and petty crime but also saw shows of collective solidarity as the squatters installed the sewer network of the neighborhoods and took turns to build elementary schools, churches, grocery stores cooperatives, and tortillerías (corn tortilla bakeries).[26] Meanwhile, squatters had to force

[25] El Sol de Durango, "With blankets, wood, and cardboard, squatters built the first barracks in the terrains of the old airfield.," (Durango, Durango, February 11 1973).

[26] For a cultural and social history of the industrial tortilla production, see Jeffrey M.

the authorities through political action and massive mobilizations to provide essential services as they negotiated the recognition of their claims to the land. Perhaps because most of the land occupied by Torreón and Gómez Palacio's squatters was not from private owners, the La Laguna popular movement negotiated the installation of public utilities with the authorities in a relatively short time.

On the contrary, Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad squatters set their home on private land, and their requests for water and services faced plain rejection by the authorities. As a result, they took the issue into their own hands, connecting themselves illegally to Monterrey's water pipeline network.[27] The sense of a shared purpose, and the need to solve day-to-day problems, reinforced a sense of community among the inhabitants of the independent neighborhoods.

In sum, northern Mexico's "popular urbanization" lasted no more than a decade. The slow collapse of the cotton economy and the governmental and elite pushback cut the wings of the popular coalition behind the invasions. Mexican government officials reacted to the menace posed by the independent organizations as they always did, combining repression and cooptation tactics. Consequently, People's Politics activists went to jail on multiple occasions, and in the 1980s, regularization programs turned the invaders into property owners. Nuevo León's state government was particularly effective in reducing the influence of the independent neighborhoods through its program, Tierra Propia (Self-owned Land). In fact, the Nuevo León's state government divided the Monterrey Maoists in the early 1980s when it offered the property of the plots to the squatters after acquiring it from the private owners whose land squatters occupied to create the independent neighborhoods.[28] Besides, as

---

Plicher, "Tortilla Technology," in *Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (UNM Press, 1998).

[27] See Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 26-27.

[28] For a study of the *Tierra Propia* program and Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad

economic conditions worsened in Torreón and Durango, many of the original squatters moved to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, or migrated to the United States, selling their plots to new arrivals who did not have the previous political experience of the occupation.[29] In the next twenty years, one after another, the independent neighborhoods opened the doors to PRI and governmental intervention. By then, the neighbors had transformed their makeshift huts into proud three-level houses built with concrete. By the 2010s, the kids and grandkids of the squatters turned into accountants, small traders, and sociologists. Perhaps "popular urbanization" was not a bad deal after all.

9.3 The Independent Neighborhoods: People's Politics and the Squatters' Movement

In 1976, in the heat of the dispute over if People's Politics should continue as a loose coalition of militants or a centralized organization, the faction led by Adolfo Orive Bellinger published a pamphlet, "Important questions about our line and our organization," explaining the ideology that inspired its actions. In the spirit of the late Sixties, this document bluntly expressed the ideological affiliation of People's Politics with the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the student movement of 1968, and Vietnamese Marxism.[30] Nevertheless, the Maoists found it necessary to present a theoretical justification for their mass work in the neighborhoods. They used a "class struggle" analysis to explain why they could not target the working class in Mexico at this stage. Instead, they had to consider the urban squatters as the revolutionary subject of the moment. The argument was simple,

---

neighborhood, see Villarreal and Castañeda, *Urbanización Monterrey*, 163-66.

[29] Venancio Chairez, "Interview with Venancio Chairez, Tierra y Libertad Squatter and People's Politics Brigadista," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo and Abraham Salazar, *Ph.D. in history, University of Notre Dame*, July 1st, 2021.

[30] Política Popular, *Cuestiones importantes sobre nuestra línea y nuestra organización*, (México: Política Popular, 1976).

the state controlled the Mexican working class through corporatism, while squatters were free of those chains. In that sense, squatters could conduct themselves in a revolutionary manner.

Furthermore, taking up Vietnam's experience, Orive Bellinger's faction argued that building support bases and the struggle for the social change needed two conditions: a divided enemy and the will of the masses to change their situation. They argued that "from our point of view, the neighborhoods are social bases of support for the revolution. We broke with the idea that they are only bases of support for the workers' and peasants' movement [...]".[31] This kind of argument in the internal conflicts of People's Politics showed the political importance of the squatter movement for these Maoists.

During the 1970s, neighborhoods such as Tierra y Libertad in Torreón and División del Norte in Durango functioned under a political conception inspired by the "mass line" and an analysis of the revolutionary subject that considered that:

> The combative settler begins as a villager who comes to the city pushed by the misery of the countryside, hoping to find work to give his family a better life. He is so humble that he cannot afford to pay the high prices for the land and for the right that we all have to a piece of land where we can live decently, and without the exploitation of the urban landowners and landlords, he is forced to invade because of the high rents charged by the landlords.[32]

Once the invasion ended, militants and squatters put the basis of a democratic community where the struggle for land and public utilities

---

[31] Ibid., C11.

[32] Política Popular, *Un colono combativo*, (Torreón: Política Popular, 1976), 1-2.

(electricity, sewers, and schools) had a "class" and "revolutionary" character. They operated under the principle of the mass line. In the first place, the student activists, who acted as advisors and leaders of the squatters, inserted themselves into the movimiento urbano popular using the *Yellow Document* as a guide. Hence, Maoist rhetoric infiltrated the discourse of the "students" but also among an active nucleus of radicalized squatters. Even kids chanted slogans: eche [sic] puño sí se ve (here it is a fist that can be seen) and played to reenact the land taking.[33] Second, squatters directed by People's Politics militants distributed land under the criterion of granting plots to those who did not own real estate and could not pay for it.[34] In other words, between 1972 and 1977, the years that marked the late Sixties, the political organization of the independent neighborhoods followed a clear criterion in favor of the dispossessed. Finally, neighborhoods led by People's Politics activists functioned as "liberated territories" independent of government control. The neighborhoods were social bases of support for a multi-class alliance that involved peasants or miners, depending on the region.[35] At the same time, the organization fostered a sense of empowerment among the squatters. It provided political education intending to turn the poor inhabitants into "subjects of their own history," self-sufficient, free from the clientelist and corporatist logic prevalent among the Mexican working class during this period and since the foundation of the PRI in the 1940s.

These developments contrasted with the origin of the first land invasions in La Laguna and Monterrey, where organizations and leaders linked to the PRI encouraged the illegal occupation of land. In those cases, leaders such as Jesús Landeros of the PRI's Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (National Confederation of Popular

---

[33] See Pedro Moctezuma Barragán, "La Manzana," in *Ciudad lacustre: antología de cuentos y crónicas* (México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2009).

[34] Chairez, interview..

[35] Popular, *Cuestiones importantes sobre nuestra línea y nuestra organización*, D3-4.

Organizations) used the squatters as cannon fodder and negotiated land in exchange for money. In negotiations with the municipal and federal government, Landeros managed to get private land expropriated and granted to his followers. Additionally, the support received by the squatters implied the payment of quotas to the leader.[36] As a result of their dealing with PRI bosses, squatters did not trust the newly arrived People's Politics activists. In Durango, a squatter described the situation in these terms: "At the beginning, nobody believed these people [People's Politics' brigadistas] because in the tenements other people would come by and promise us land because the government was going to give it to us, and they would take money from us with that story. Besides, the only organizations we knew were those that used us to fill the events of politicians."[37]

When People's Politics student militants and progressive Catholic priests became involved with the squatters, leaders such as Jesús Landeros faced fierce competition. While the "students" had relatively limited political experience and did not have the PRI connections of the "charro" (government-controlled) leaders, their commitment to the squatters was total and devoid of economic interest.[38] Moreover, in the context of the populist policies that complemented the repressive apparatus of the presidential administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), People's Politics militants had the tacit support of some federal officials. The tacit support of these officials allowed them to resist the pressure from local authorities.[39] As a result, People's Politics settlements thrived in the late Sixties at Durango's state capital, in the La Laguna cities and towns

---

[36] Chairez, interview.

[37] Norte, *Cuatro años de lucha popular, 1973-1977*.

[38] Hernández Vélez, interview.

[39] Aboites Aguilar, *El norte mexicano sin algodones, 1970-2010: Estancamiento, inconformidad y el violento adiós al optimismo*, 202-03.

(Torreón, Gómez Palacio, Lerdo, Francisco I. Madero), in Monterrey (31 neighborhoods and 16 tenements), and Monclova, Coahuila.[40]

By combining land occupation with the struggle for service demands and the defense of workers' and students' rights, People's Politics created a broad front of workers, squatters, and middle classes. The radicalized students of those years saw in the weekly assemblies an opportunity to experience direct and revolutionary democracy. Whether as participants in mass demonstrations demanding reduced water fees or expropriating and selling occupied land at affordable prices to squatters, local People's Politics militants attempted to combine the theory and practice of revolution in their cities.

People's Politics militants developed a theory of revolutionary democracy not only in internal documents to be read in study circles after classes but also in pamphlets in a "comic strip" format. While the comics' texts summarized texts from Mao or the *Little Red Book*, the drawings corresponded to the local reality, with bricklayers, settlers, workers, and their wives stressing the need for active participation in assembly democracy and demonstrations supporting other popular movements. Not surprisingly, a comic strip entitled *El colono combativo* (The fighting squatter) stressed the revolutionary virtues of the squatter and exposed the vices of those not committed to the People's Politics project. For example, the comic strip authors highlighted that, at home, the squatter's negative behaviors were:

1. He keeps his spouse enslaved to housework. He is authoritarian with his wife and children, and as he is very jealous, he opposes his wife's participation.

[40] For the number of People's Politics neighborhoods in Monterrey, see Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 16.

2. He is irresponsible in providing for his family since he consumes in "vice" a good part of his earnings.

3. The spouse is lazy, does not attend to her children or husband, and always spreads gossip.[41]

For People's Politics, revolutionary politics did not stop with seizing state power. Revolution also implied the transformation of society. A transformation that necessarily involved changing the living conditions of women.

By 1976, neighborhoods controlled by People's Politics practiced an egalitarian distribution of land and a model of self-government based on assemblies. In addition to a general assembly in which all the inhabitants participated, and student activists served as orientadores (facilitators), the neighborhoods had sector and block assemblies. The latter represented the highest decision-making body and appointed representatives to the general assembly. In many cases, the representatives were women as they had more interest in procuring a lot for their families, or in some cases, they had more spare time than their husbands, who had to spend most of the day in their jobs outside the neighborhood.[42] This "inverse pyramid" scheme allowed for solid organization and control over the "productive apparatus," or small businesses created in each block, which at this stage were collectively owned by the settlers of the block.[43] Hidden from the view of the authorities, a deeply organized society emerged.

---

[41] Popular, *Un colono combativo*, 35-36.

[42] Also, in the PRI-controlled neighborhoods, women had a strong presence in leadership positions, see Villarreal and Castañeda, *Urbanización Monterrey*, 55.

[43] Línea Proletaria, *Principales aparatos y mecanismos políticos e ideológicos de los centro de trabajo, zonas y regiones*, (México: Línea Proletaria, 1976), 4-5.

As part of a Maoist project with ethical undertones, the activists and squatters fiercely defended the collective nature of the independent neighborhoods. During the height of radicalism in the neighborhoods, no private businesses were allowed to open.[44] Moreover, when the neighbors discovered somebody selling alcohol clandestinely, they put the merchant on probation, and after a second warning, they threw him away from the neighborhood.[45] "Ana María," a squatter and block representative at Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad, explained how the Female league enforced the prohibition of selling alcohol in the neighborhood:

> We formed a large committee and went to the Health Ministry to ask for support, and for the first time, they listened to us: they came and closed [the bars]. When the owners reopened them, the women of the Liga Femenil (Women's League) agreed in our assembly to send large groups into their bars very early in the morning and take everything out into the street: tables and chairs, coolers. Right there, we broke all their bottles of wine and beer. After that, they did not open anymore.[46]

Once more, women's experience dealing with alcoholic partners and abusive fathers provided an additional reason for fighting the spread of "vice" in the "independent" neighborhoods.

People's Politics brigadistas and squatters lived the period of the foundation of the neighborhood as a moment of a widespread sense of discipline and respect among the early occupiers. Guardias populares (Popular guards), formed by men and women under the guidance of the

---

[44] Polo, "Interview with Polo, Tierra y Libertad Squatter," interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo and Abraham Salazar, *Ph.D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, July 6, 2021.

[45] For an example of a community trial of one of those liquor sellers, see Bulbulian, "Tierra y Libertad," minutes 36-42.

[46] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 47.

brigadistas and controlled by the neighborhood's general assembly, enforced strict discipline. For People's Politics militants, the popular guards "[…] help[ed] to end theft, drug addiction, alcoholism, gangsterism, and other vices propagated by the unjust system of exploitation of the bourgeoisie."[47] Even settlers who arrived in the final moments of the independent neighborhood remembered the guardias populares as an element of order.

Nevertheless, the radical experience in the neighborhoods was short-lived. In 1977, several student leaders and brigadistas moved to other cities or, as in Torreón, spent time in jail or exiled; many of the original squatters had sold the land and emigrated; others were abandoning the collective work initiatives.[48] Lack of preparation among the working-class activists in charge of the productive apparatus of the blocks brought an end to the tiny clothes and shoe factories set by the organization. "Juanita," a squatter and manager of some of those projects at Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad, described what happened next: "The [footwear] workshop soon closed, and the [sewing] machines were lost. Months later, they appeared in other houses, where the neighbors still used them as they should have been in the workshop."[49] In the mid-1980s, small-scale privatization followed the collapse of the collective experiment in the "independent" neighborhoods. Eventually, the neighborhoods filled with new inhabitants who lacked the experience of politicization and participation of the founders. Finally, some neighborhoods renounced their independent character and joined the PRI's corporative organizations.[50]

---

[47] Política Popular, *La Guardia Popular*, (Torreón: Política Popular, 1976), 6.

[48] Chairez, interview.; and Batarse Charur, *¡Felicidades, por otro año más de su lucha!*

[49] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 32.

[50] Martínez "Conferencia testimonial en memoria de José Batarse Charur: Participación

By 1981, "popular urbanization" was a memory in Torreón, Coahuila, and Monterrey's Maoist squatters only persisted in a few spots. In Durango, the collapse was slower. The popular urban movement organization Durango's Popular Defense Committee (CDP) won the elections for municipal government in the mid-1980s.[51] If the original squatters had migrated to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, or across the border, most student activists returned to the middle class, and some became professional politicians. Finally, by the time this happened, the neighborhoods ceased to be self-governing communities, and the utopian horizon of the mass line was exhausted. Only a few street names survived as a testimony to the revolutionary upsurge of the late Sixties.

9.4 Compañeras: Women in People's Politics "Independent" Neighborhoods

People's Politics never had a feminist discourse, and their activists kept themselves out of the development of the second wave of feminism that unfolded in urban centers across Mexico and most of the Western world during the 1970s. While their French peers had a significant role in the emergence of the women's liberation movement, People's Politics Maoists left that task to women from the Communist Party, the Trotskyist groups, and other leftwing currents.[52] Over time, however, a group of activists from People's Politics successor organizations participated in the First National Women's Encounter conference (1983) that originated the

---

de la Iglesia Progresista en los movimientos de masas de la laguna.."

[51] Paul Lawrance Haber, "Cárdenas, Salinas y los movimientos populares urbanos en México: el caso del Comité de Defensa Popular, "General Francisco Villa", de Durango," in *Movimientos sociales en México durante la década de los 80*, ed. Sergio Zermeño and Jesús Aurelio Cuevas Díaz (México, D.F.: UNAM, 1990).

[52] For the role of the Vive la revolution!'s Maoists in the emergence of French Feminism see McGrogan, *Tout! Gauchisme, Contre-culture et presse alternative dans l'après-mai 68*, 65-68. For the participation of the left in the history of Mexican feminism see

feminismo popular formula.[53] Nonetheless, women were at the forefront of People's Politics activities in the "popular urbanization" process before this period. They advanced a political agenda at the height of the People's Politics trajectory, resulting in their empowerment under the framework of the "mass line."

Working-class women of diverse backgrounds joined People's Politics land occupation events in the early 1970s. Female squatters shared with their male peers and families the realities of low-pay jobs, sometimes a product of a history of immigration from the countryside. Indeed, the urban poor who participated in the land occupations did not have enough resources to pay for the fees of realtors or other real estate sellers nor the political connections to unions or private companies that were the standard path to buy a house in northern Mexico cities.[54] Women tended to have lower levels of schooling and informal jobs, which made it even more difficult to access home ownership. Not to mention that, in many cases, they could be the sole breadwinners of their families.[55] Occupying a plot was an attractive alternative to paying rent or living with relatives in those conditions.

Female squatters paid a heavy price for a plot of land and the promise of a house. Moreover, women struggled to convince their partners to move into the new neighborhoods. For example, "Lola" Chairez, a squatter from

---

[53] Espinosa Damián, "Feminismo popular," 96. For a text of the conclusions of the Encounter, see Mujeres del Movimiento Urbano Popular, *Primer encuentro nacional de mujeres del Movimiento Urbano Popular, organizado por la Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular*. (México: CONAMUP, 1983). https://www.proquest.com/books/iv-encuentro-de-la-coordinadoria-nacional-del/docview/2352574704/se-2. .

[54] For the social profile of Monterrey's squatters, see Villarreal and Castañeda, *Urbanización Monterrey*, 79-110.

[55] For a sample of women participating in People's Politics' land occupations, including background information, see Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 9-12.

Torreón's Tierra y Libertad neighborhood, confronted her husband Beto and gave him the following ultimatum: "You know what? There is land. Let's go there. […] If you're not going. I'll go!"[56] Beto followed her into the People's Politics settlement, and eventually, Lola fulfilled her dream of owning a house. In other cases, women joined the occupation with their kids against the wishes of their husbands and had to wait alone in the wilderness for days or months. Either way, female squatters alternated activism in the "independent" neighborhoods with taking care of their families and their jobs as help in rich people's houses.[57] For a long time, middle-class feminists denounced double burden arrangements where they worked at the marketplace for a salary and had to continue working as a housewife at home.[58] Still, female squatters endured triple-burden lives when joining a People's Politics settlement. "Martha," a Monterrey's squatter, encapsulated the paradox: "I have asked myself if women are not better off locked up in their homes with only the household chores to do. Of course, we managed to be free from the husband's yoke, those of us who were very active, but that freedom cost us a lot. It is expensive, very expensive!"[59]

Despite the excessive burden of becoming activists, female militants in the neighborhoods experienced their role as block representatives and their political activities as transformative moments. As shown in figure 2, they used the opportunity to become leaders, change partners, push their husbands to sustain their kids, and even confront the governor. Besides, the strict conduct code among the People's Politics settlements curbed domestic violence. Eventually, the custom evolved into a justicia popular

---

[56] Guevara and Chairez, interview.

[57] See Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 83-92.

[58] See Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The second shift: Working families and the revolution at home* (Penguin, 2012).

[59] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 90.

(people's justice) system that targeted infidelity, domestic violence, and alcoholism. In the Justicia popular system, guardias populares put violent husbands in the neighborhood's jail and later in the hands of the police.[60] In that sense, women exercised power in the neighborhoods by defining how people behaved inside the settlements.

Figure 5-2: We did not come to negotiate with the Governor, comrades, shouted a female representative of the Tierra y Libertad Popular Front (El Norte, Monterrey, 1980).61

[60] See ibid., 79-80.

[61] El Norte-Redacción, "We did not come to negotiate with the Governor, comrades,

Women in the "independent" neighborhoods went beyond dealing with the problems of daily life as they became part of a network of solidarity with revolutionary struggles, from the factories and the countryside close to home to Central American guerrilla movements. For example, "Martha," the squatter who questioned made the harsh balance of women's participation in the movement, traveled to Nicaragua during the heydays of the Sandinista government in the 1980s. After years of militancy in a mass-line organization, "Martha" believed in the cause of the Latin American revolution, but the experience of witnessing the Nicaraguan civil war changed her. She returned to Mexico believing violence was not the correct path to social transformation.[62] Despite the bittersweet balance of those travels, working-class militants willingly engaged in the experience as part of their political commitment.

Other militants did not have to travel too far to demonstrate solidarity with other "revolutionary" causes. For example, Dolores "Lola" Chairez, one of the leaders of Torreón's Tierra y Libertad neighborhood, went to the Batopilas vineyard to help with the harvest after the peasants took over the farm.[63] Less spectacularly, women collected money through kermesses. They also organized carnitas (braised pork) cookouts in the collective efforts to build schools and public infrastructure during the domingos rojos (Red Sundays). In the independent neighborhoods, Women did not shy away from carrying bricks or picking up a shovel.[64] Participating in assemblies, protests, pilgrimages, and volunteer workdays

---

shouted a female representative of the Tierra y Libertad Popular Front " (Monterrey, Nuevo León: El Norte, May 9 1980).

[62] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 91-92.

[63] Guevara and Chairez, interview.

[64] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 70-71. For the emergence of the idea of the Red Sunday in the experience of the Ruben Jaramillo neighborhood in Cuernavaca, Morelos see Elena Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el silencio*, Serie Crónicas, (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1980), 199-200.

in the neighborhoods shaped the political understanding of People's Politics working-class militants as something ampler than the struggle for a piece of land or better living conditions.

People's Politics militants tried to educate squatters on the basics of Maoism and politics to connect their struggles with a more ambitious project of revolution and liberation. For that purpose, they wrote pamphlets and drew comics with approachable language.[65] Future cadre, including working-class women elected as block representatives, received a certain degree of political education from university students, priests, and union activists involved in People's Politics.

As the organization developed productive projects in the neighborhoods, many militants trained as technicians or managers to run textile or shoe workshops. However, the education of the working-class militants had an ideological and political emphasis and did not amount to a formal education. In the 1990s, "Juanita," one of the workshop's managers, complained, "The leaders always taught us theory, but they did not give importance to the issue of reading and writing, to education. Of course, I think that now. I didn't see it that way before. [...] we were always busy with thousands of tasks: demanding services, defending the neighborhood, or building infrastructure." [66] Later, People's Politics left a legacy of dozens of elementary schools and some high schools that benefited the kids and grandkids of the squatters. In contrast, People's Politics fell short of providing a solid ideological formation to their working-class militants. Even worse, it never gave the female squatters the tools to manage productive projects in the neighborhoods sustainably.

Even though People's Politics turned mothers, housewives, and squatters

---

[65] For a study of People's Politics as a political education project for working-class militants see Fuentes Castillo, "Procesos de formación política en la militancia maoísta en México. el caso de política popular 1968-1979," 167-84.

[66] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 31.

into "proletarian" militants, the class-oriented ideology of Maoism and the persistence of traditional gender roles limited the political empowerment of women in the neighborhoods and the organization. Inside People's Politics, women's demands remained subsumed in the more general demands of the working class. Besides, the pragmatic approach of People's Politics to coalition building restrained them from advancing policies that could alienate a conservative working class, in many cases, deeply religious. Additionally, most female militants of working-class origins were mothers or wives who had to combine their activism with sustaining a family. Even a student activist, Guadalupe "Lupita" Rodríguez, married to Alberto Anaya, Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad leader, had to cope with raising her children in the hostile environment of a poor neighborhood.[67] Again, "Martha" provided the best example of the limits of People's Politics nascent feminismo popular:

> Funny things also happened, like when Professor Lupita [Rodríguez] talked to us about women's exploitation, the need to liberate ourselves, and that we were on that path. We were all delighted, with our mouths wide open, listening to her. Then Professor Beto [Anaya] arrived and asked her where the food was, and the meeting ended. Immediately, we all ran to our chores at home.[68]

The wreckage of the independent neighborhoods as an alternative project and the difficulties in empowering working-class women went beyond the persistence of machismo and the subordination of women. In the long term, female squatters and Maoist militants came up against the emergence of criminal youth groups linked to drug trafficking, sometimes made up of their children. Some militants of student origin left the neighborhoods when they felt their kids were at risk of getting involved in gangs. In contrast, some working-class militants returned from far away

---

[67] See ibid., 124-25.

[68] Ibid., 88.

commissions after their wives told them about their kids' flirtation with drugs.[69] Not all of them were lucky enough.

"Elvira," a working-class militant at Monterrey's Tierra y Libertad, lost two kids to the gangs, one killed and the other in jail in the United States. She could not keep them out of trouble, and after they became drug addicts and dealers, she sought psychological help to rehabilitate them.[70] As a result, she found solace in Evangelical Christianity, and after the murder of her eldest, she became convinced that: "If God had not been with me, I would not have endured all that has happened to me. Now I dedicate myself to evangelizing and trying to rescue especially young people, so they don't get lost like mine."[71] In the case of "Elvira," the twin forces of the emerging drug economy in northern Mexico and the defeat of the transformative project of the Maoist Left pushed her into religious conversion, an ongoing story in contemporary Mexico.

9.5 Conclusions

In 1976, Sandra Arenal Huerta, a communist kindergarten teacher married to the pro-Chinese labor activist Edelmiro Maldonado, won the Makarenko literary contest at Nuevo León's Superior Normal School with her tale, *Vidas ásperas* (Rough Lives).[72] Arenal later became a prolific activist researcher who studied women's and children's lives in northern Mexico cities, including the anthology of testimonies of movimiento

---

[69] Vargas Valdés and Frías, interview.; and Chairez, interview.

[70] Arenal, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*, 60-65.

[71] Ibid., 65.

[72] For a short Sandra Arenal Huerta biography, see Sandra Maldonado Arenal, "El compromiso social de Sandra Arenal Huerta," *Hora Cero Nuevo León*, no. 366 (May 27 2020). https://issuu.com/horacero/docs/hc366_ok/32. For a profile of Edelmiro Maldonado, see Luis Hernández Navarro, "Edelmiro Maldonado, historia debida," *La Jornada* (Ciudad de México), July 28 2020, Opinion.

urbano popular's women in Monterrey, *Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad*.[73] In *Vidas ásperas*, Sandra Arenal described the life of a working-class woman who migrated from Guanajuato to San Luis Potosí and finally to Monterrey. In a fashion reminiscent of revolutionary corridos (songs), Arenal alternated scenes of great tenderness with the raw realities of violence against women but avoided the temptation of turning the text into mere propaganda.

Through the lens of the protagonists, Mercedes and her husband Anselmo, Sandra Arenal connected the history of the squatter movement with Mexico's agrarian revolution experience and the revolutionary mission of Mexico's public education system. Besides the political backstory of the agrarian reform struggle and the land occupation at Monterrey in the 1940s, the tale included a graphic description of Mercedes suffering sexual harassment as a young girl, the experience of giving birth at a rural hamlet and losing children to a smallpox epidemic. Eventually, Mercedes' tragedy and her husband's struggle to remain faithful to the cardenista spirit took them into Monterrey's peripheries.[74] In that sense, capitalism and violence against women marked Arenal's vision of "popular urbanization."

The final pages of *Vidas ásperas* focused on Anselmo's story as a peasant who turned into an honest agrarian reform functionary in the shadow of Lázaro Cárdenas presidency only to abandon his position instead of falling in the temptations of money and power.[75] In other words, Sandra Arenal used Anselmo's story to write a bittersweet rendition of the "betrayed revolution" narrative where former peasant activists, now working for the

---

[73] See Sandra Arenal, *Vidas ásperas* (Monterrey, N.L.: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2020).

[74] Ibid., 9-72.

[75] Ibid., 72-96.

government, betrayed their followers for money or seats in Congress.[76] In the tale, Arenal transformed Anselmo into a true believer in the ideals of the Mexican Revolution but also into a proletarian Aeneas and a working-class Moses. As the founder of the new Troy of the Mexican Revolution, Anselmo used his experience in the agrarian reform to create one of the first Monterrey's working-class neighborhoods over occupied land. However, Arenal's proletarian Moses never set foot into the holy land. After a temporary setback in court, the legal owner of the neighborhood's land, a Monterrey industrialist called "Garza," murdered Anselmo in revenge. In the tale's conclusion, the legal dispute over the neighborhood's land property remained unsettled, a prelude to the struggle of the squatter movement that unfolded during the late 1960s.

As Sandra Arenal's tale showed, the squatter movement of northern Mexico emerged from diverse social processes that developed from the Postwar years to the Sixties, from countryside migration to the cities to the arrival of leftwing militants to the slums. In fact, the participation of hundreds of women in political organizing in the late Sixties gave it a down-to-earth character to "popular urbanization" that set limits to the utopic dreams of Maoists and Catholics. Therefore, these women pushed their agenda of demands (housing, services, education) in the "independent" neighborhoods. Indeed, they imposed a "people's justice" system that responded to their need to curb domestic violence despite lacking feminist discourse. In that sense, People's Politics squatters' movement was a women's movement and the basis of the 1980s people's feminism in Mexico that expanded in the 1980s.

Working-class women in People's Politics movimiento urbano popular achieved material gains for their families and became respected militants. At the same time, the weight of their family responsibilities curtailed their political development, and they never broke the crystal ceiling of mid-

---

[76] For the "betrayed revolution" narrative, see Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution: A New Press People's History* (New Press, 2005).

rank positions (block representatives or activists). Women did not get high-rank leadership positions in People's Politics.

The lack of female leaders among the representative figures of People's Politics condemned it to play a peripherical role in the history of Mexican feminism. In the aftermath of the Sixties, it affected the survival prospects of the organization. People's Politics dissidents of the mass line organizations in Durango and Monterrey did a better job promoting women's political involvement, and they endured longer than Proletarian Line, the Orive Bellinger's faction. By contrast, after 1976, most of Proletarian Line's male activists moved out of the neighborhoods to organize unions. Proletarian Line brigadistas expanded in the indigenous communities in the southern state of Chiapas, the nationalized steel factories in Coahuila, and the national telephone company in Mexico City. The following chapter elaborates on this story by taking a closer look at the important role People's Politics Maoists played in the labor unions, with a more comparative approach to the events that simultaneously occurred in France during the late Sixties.

10 THE ÉTABLISSEMENT (STUDENT INSERTION) MOVEMENT: THE TURBULENT HISTORY OF A REVOLUTIONARY WORKING-CLASS THAT NEVER HAPPENED.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite their youth and social origins, the founders of People's Politics were aware of the recent history of the Mexican labor movement, to the extent that the *Yellow Document* presented a brief critique of the struggles for union independence during the Sixties in its first pages. The lesson drawn from the defeats of combative unionism was twofold: first, to persist in organizing truly independent unions outside governmental control and, second, to avoid the problems that a vanguard leadership brought to popular struggle.

In the late Sixties, People's Politics directed its organizing efforts first to the rural areas and eventually to urban slums. In a tactical recognition of the difficulty of confronting the corporate control of the unions, the young brigadistas began their political activism away from the industry. Soon that changed, as the early years of People's Politics coincided with the Mexican "union insurgency" that unfolded during the post Sixties era.

Since the 1940s, when the revolutionary elite founded the PRI, the government took a series of initiatives to support corrupt union leaders that later came to be called "charros" (cowboys). Their unions kept labor conflict at bay, especially after the defeat of the railroad and the teachers' movements in 1958. The 1960s witnessed several episodes of workers' protests and union movements, such as the resident doctors' strike in 1965, but the hegemony of the official labor organizations was not seriously threatened.[1] The "union insurgency" period represented a break

[1] See Saúl Alfonso Escobar Toledo, "Una reflexión sobre el corporativismo mexicano," in

with this imposed "social peace." In the 1970s, Mexican workers rose again to demand better working conditions and union democracy. This struggle was not limited to the remnants of communist trade unionism or the incipient attempts of the New Left to insert into the industrial world. Moreover, the "workers' insurgency" had one of its strongholds on the periphery of the ruling coalition, in the "Revolutionary nationalism" movement led by Rafael Galván in the electricians' union.[2]

The "democratic tendency" of the Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana (Mexican Republic Electrician's Union or SUTERM) led strikes and demonstrations all around the country to defend democracy inside their union. At the same time, the democratic electricians tried to push a nationalist and revolutionary agenda close to the democratic socialism of the time.[3] Their influence went beyond their manifesto, *Declaración de Guadalajara* (Guadalajara's Declaration), or their presence in the media. Their deeds motivated several young students in their cities. These restless young people learned from the electricians and the democratic railroad workers how to organize rallies and the importance of marching to demand their rights.

Democratic railroad workers were another beacon of rebellion in the late Sixties and, for some, a cherished family tradition of militancy. Memories of the defeat and the grievances of 1958, when a series of labor uprisings

---

El camino obrero: Historia del sindicalismo mexicano, 1907-2017, Sección Obras de Historia (Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2021).

[2] See Luis Humberto Méndez y Berrueta and José Othon Quiroz Trejo, "La izquierda nacionalista. De la Tendencia Democrática a la Unión Nacional de Trabajadores," in *La continuidad corporativa en México: Sindicalismo, empresarios e izquierda* (México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco 2010).

[3] See Saúl Alfonso Escobar Toledo, "La Tendencia Democrática del SUTERM y el Nacionalismo Revolucionario," in *El camino obrero: Historia del sindicalismo mexicano, 1907-2017*, Sección Obras de Historia (Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2021).

nearly paralyzed Mexico's railroad network, were still alive. The release from prison of their historic leader, Demetrio Vallejo, reignited the fight to democratize the union. Vallejo did not take long to return to the struggle, and his supporters expelling "charros" from union offices became daily news.[4] Eventually, young people and priests joined the vallejista protests and approached the railroad workers for support and advice.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Western Europe experienced increased union militancy and industrial conflict in the late Sixties. Strikes and demonstrations demanding better working conditions (a less aggressive rhythm of work on the production lane of cars and watches or an end to health risks produced by chemical exposure) sprouted all over the region. In France, the process began in the middle of the student protests of May 1968 and evolved into a wave of strikes that practically paralyzed the country.[5] The rise of working-class militancy allowed student activists to integrate with the workers and compete with the already established Communist Party trade union structures. The new arrivals had to cope with an industrial world in retreat and many of the new industrial actions began as defensive measures against companies' closures.

The presence of student activists in the factories (établissement) predated the events of May and June 1968. A significant number were members of the diverse Maoist organizations, but Trotskyists and Anarchist militants moved to the factories too. They also found a previous wave of Catholic priests, remnants of the workers-priests movement.[6] The results of the

---

[4] See Robert F Alegre, *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory* (U of Nebraska Press, 2013).

[5] Xavier Vigna, "Ouvriers en mouvement et mouvement ouvrier (des années 1950 aux années 1970) Une puissance en trompe l'oeil ?," in *Histoire des ouvriers en France au XXe siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2021), 263-96.

[6] For a sociological and historical study of the établissement movement, see Marnix Dressen, *De l'amphi à l'établi : les étudiants maoïstes à l'usine, 1967-1989* (Belin, 2000).

insertion experiment varied from place to place, but in the process, they generated many tracks and studies. Also, as their Mexican peers, the students appealed to the memories of resistance and working-class militancy to argue against the moderate course of action followed by the communist trade union functionaries. These efforts did not change the local or national political balance at the moment, but they gradually broke the communist monopoly of working-class politics.[7]

The balance of a decade of working-class militancy in France was bleak.[8] Despite the final outcome, the period ended with the election of the Socialist government of François Mitterrand (1981-1995), supported by the French Communist Party, and an early wave of nationalizations of enterprises. The Socialist administration backtracked in 1983 and started a set of policies that signaled the beginning of Neoliberalism in France.[9] Nonetheless, the election of Mitterrand was the culminating point of the 1968 developments; workers and activists received the news with hope.

This chapter takes a comparative approach to argue that global Maoism provided an ideological motif and justification for Mexican and French students to insert themselves into factories and mines during the late

---

For a history of the worker-priest movement, see Tangi Cavalin and Nathalie Viet-Depaule, "La mission ouvrière: la justification religieuse d'un déplacement à gauche (1940-1955)," in *À la gauche du Christ: Les chrétiens de gauche en France de 1945 à nos jours*, ed. Denis Pelletier and Jean-Louis Schlegel (Paris: Seuil, 2012).

[7] For a balance of the établi' experience, see Nicolas Hatzfeld, "Les établis : du projet politique à l'expérience sociale," in *68 une histoire collective (1962-1981)*, ed. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Paris: La Découverte, 2014).

[8] For a literary approach to the decadence of the communist dominance of the working-class political identity in France, see Didier Éribon, *Retours sur retour à Reims*, Champs Essais, (Barcelona: Flammarion, 2018).

[9] For an evaluation of the François Mitterrand presidency and the Left, see Donald Sassoon, "The French Experiment," in *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

Sixties. Accordingly, it reconstructs the global history of workers during this period, including its effervescence, its successes, and its ultimate defeat at the hands of the combined forces of state action and economic change.[10] By analyzing similarities, differences, and connections, moreover, this chapter examines local politics in the broader context of global history. It questions "methodological nationalistic" approaches that dominated the labor history of Mexico and provides a new understanding of the obstacles many young people faced when they eagerly left their schools in search of a revolution among the proletariat.

Not too different from their French counterparts of the late Sixties, People's Politics became involved in the workers' milieu directly, either by participating inside unions or as an organization pressuring the bosses. They also supported the struggle of the unionists in solidarity actions (demonstrations, pilgrimages, graffiti, sit-ins, and picketing). In making this argument, this chapter analyzes two cases in which People's Politics became directly involved in the workers' movement. First, it begins with the experience of organizing among Torreón's sanitation workers. Second, it studies the participation of People's Politics in the democratization of local 147 of the National Union of Mine-Metallurgical and Similar Workers of the Mexican Republic (SNTMMSRM or Mining Union). Third, it compares the Mexican experiences with the participation of Maoist militants in the French workers' struggle of the late Sixties. Finally, it considers the experience of proletarianization of People's Politics' student activists and the problematic relationship of Proletarian Line with the Mining Union (SNTMMSRM).

---

[10] For a history of the renewal of working-class militancy, see Donald Sassoon, "The Revival of Working-class Militancy 1960-1973," in *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014). For a chronicle of the workers insurgency in Mexico from the late Sixties to the early 1980s, see Raúl Trejo Delabre, *Crónica del sindicalismo en México (1976-1988)* (México, D.F.: Siglo XXI editores-Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales-UNAM, 1990).

10.2 THE TORREÓN SANITATION DEPARTMENT STRIKE (1972-1974)

In 1972, during the last year of the municipal administration of Juan Abusaid Ríos, the garbage collection system in the city of Torreón was experiencing a looming crisis. Urban growth and poor management by the municipal government generated the conditions for a conflict between the workers of the sanitation department and the authorities. The city authorities themselves had been aware of this crisis since April 1972. The head of the Sanitation Department, Libay D'Binion Salas, declared to *La Opinión* (Torreón) that the lack of drainage in 20 neighborhoods of the 58 existing at that time in Torreón forced the inhabitants of the working-class neighborhoods to dispose of their garbage in the streets and vacant lots.[11] A few months later, in an article in *El Siglo de Torreón*, the same official warned that garbage collection had increased significantly, going from 9,200 tons daily in 1971 to almost 9,350 tons in mid-1972. D'Binion stated, "this has forced collection trucks to make two or three trips to the municipal dump to deposit the garbage."[12] By the end of the year, the municipal sanitation service had nineteen trucks, 52 "hand carts," and 270 workers working a single shift from 16 to 18 hours, poorly paid and without benefits, with equipment in poor condition and authoritarian bosses.[13]

In November 1972, a few months after the change of municipal government, the sanitation workers of the municipality of Torreón presented the municipal president with a series of demands for improving their working conditions. The workers asked for "better wages, eight hours

---

[11] Eduardo Elizalde Escobedo, "Hay veinte colonias sin drenaje: Es un problema sanitario grave.," *La Opinión* (Torreón), 22 de abril 1972, B.

[12] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Se incrementa recolección de basura," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 02 de julio 1972.

[13] Oscar Wong Chávez, "La Alianza, el mayor generador de basura en nuestra ciudad," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 29 de junio 1972, A.

of work, two shifts, a day of rest, medical service for them and their families; vacations, the end of PRI dues [...] and humane treatment, as well as that they are provided with material for their work."[14] These requests represented nothing more than their fundamental labor rights recognized by the Mexican Constitution of 1917 and the labor code. Several of these sanitation workers lived in the Tierra y Libertad neighborhood, where the activists of People's Politics had been organizing the inhabitants since the beginning of the year. Soon, local student activists and the newly arrived brigadistas began advising the workers of the Sanitation Department.

On the one hand, the municipal government received the workers' demands with an attitude of dialogue. *El Siglo de Torreón*'s note states, "The Mayor (Presidente Municipal) viewed their legally sound requests with sympathy. On the other hand, the municipality ha[d] for many years found itself with budgetary limitations that prevent[ed] it from raising the salaries of municipal employees."[15] Although the Mayor promised to resolve the workers' demands within three days, that attitude would not last long. The next day sanitation workers reported that five of their co-workers had to sign blank papers, a step before a dismissal disguised as resignation.[16] The conflict soon escalated, and two municipal government administrations embarked on a political and labor conflict that would last a year.

Two days after the talks between the Mayor and the sanitation workers, the strike broke out on November 18, 1972. The front page of the November 19 edition of *El Siglo de Torreón* announced the conflict to its readers. It explained in a brief note the actions of the sanitation workers

---

[14] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "La autoridad estudiará petición de los empleados de limpieza," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 17 de noviembre 1972.

[15] Ibid.

[16] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Protestan trabajadores de limpieza," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 18 de noviembre 1972.

supported by activists of People's Politics and settlers of Guanos y Fertilizantes, the Tierra y Libertad neighborhood. In the chronicle of *El Siglo de Torreón*, the students led a protest outside the administrative offices of the Sanitation Department. They incited the workers to speak out through a megaphone. As a result, 100 workers stopped working, blocked the exit of the garbage trucks, and ended the day with a demonstration through the streets of the city accompanied by their wives and children. In contrast to this image of proletarian militancy and family solidarity, the sanitation workers' movement began under the accusation of the municipal government that subversives were behind the movement. The municipal government decried: "elements foreign to the workers who have disoriented them and employing violence and threats managed to prevent the garbage trucks from performing normal service."[17] An accusation that would remain a constant in the statements of the local authorities and that months later would mutate into an identification of the students as militants of the Spartacus Communist League.[18] Although the municipality refused to recognize sanitation workers as employees, the negotiations between both parties culminated in an agreement on November 21 to end the strike. Besides, the municipality committed:

> To cover a set of demands: the payment of the minimum wage, medical service in the Department of Social Prevention pending the incorporation of the municipal employees in the ISSSTE, one day of rest for six workers [sic], staggered vacations according to seniority and a

[17] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "No hay recolección y la basura invade esta ciudad," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 19 de noviembre 1972.

[18] See Juan Abusaid Ríos, "A la opinión pública: con relación al problema planteado por los trabajadores del Departamento de Limpieza," Desplegado, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 20 de noviembre 1972.

> ten-hour workday, including free time for their meals [...].[19]

The concessions ended the first round of the Sanitation Department conflict, and the workers returned to pick up the city's garbage.

The following month, citizen complaints about delays in garbage collection continued. Sanitation workers reported that "everything is because several trucks have been out of order for a few days, and the municipal authorities no longer bother to order the repairs."[20] The inauguration of the new Mayor, José Luis Solís Amaro, did not mean any improvement since implementing an eight-hour shift for the sanitation workers was insufficient to keep Torreón clean. Under these conditions, the sanitation workers continued to advocate for a new shift and give appropriate maintenance to the collection trucks.[21]

The new Mayor seemed open to dialogue with the workers and offered to talk with them at lunch on January 16, 1973. For a moment, a fix to the problems afflicting the Sanitation Department seemed possible. Unfortunately, the exchange did not occur. Like his predecessor, he accused the workers of being manipulated by "agitators and strange elements."[22] Moreover, a few days before the canceled negotiations, Torreón's Mayor had already shown his true face by accusing the workers

---

[19] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Quedó resuelto el problema y hoy se reanuda recolección de basura," Noticia, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 22 de noviembre 1972.

[20] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Se acumula la basura y causa serio problema," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 13 de diciembre 1972.

[21] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Ejército y policía desalojaron a los "vallejistas" de locales sindicales," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 20 de diciembre 1972.

[22] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Personas ajenas al Departamento de Limpieza agitan al personal," 17 de enero, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón) 1973.

of being unreliable and showing a film in which they appeared:

> chatting among themselves or with the public, reading magazines and newspapers. Workers shown in the film picked up garbage containers late and slowly; they did not collect all the containers as they passed through their assigned areas; and stopped to sell cardboard, paper, glass, and aluminum when this should have been done outside of their workday.[23]

In Solís Amaro's view, it was then justified for the authorities to act against the workers under the pretext of a "reorganization" of the Sanitation Department.

The sanitation workers did not keep quiet in the face of the major's offensive. Indeed, the workers and their families defended their position through street demonstrations while students distributed leaflets supporting the sanitation workers.[24] Additionally, the priests of the Nazas-Aguanaval group opened the microphone for the workers on the program *Diálogo* on local television channel 2 to counteract the Mayor's negative propaganda.[25] Meanwhile, the conflict escalated again, and on January 26, the municipality announced hiring additional personnel and private trucks to improve the garbage collection service.[26] Both in the streets and the public sphere, the conflict was about to reach its climax.

---

[23] Ibid.

[24] See Bernardo Segura Gurza, Se envía volante, "Police Report," February 21 1973, Box 40, Presidencia Muncipal Records, File 1, Torreón Comandancia de Policía, Coahuila, 2: Archivo Municipal de Torreón, Torreón Coahuila.

[25] XHIA-TV Canal 2, "[Programación de Canal 2] Sabado 20 de enero de 1973," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 19 de enero 1973.

[26] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Contratan personal extra y camiones para recoger la basura," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 26 de enero 1973.

The conflict intensified in mid-February when the municipality fired two sanitation workers: Carmelo Velázquez, with nineteen years of seniority, and Manuel Rodríguez. As a result, they lost access to medical services. Tragically, Carmelo Velázquez's wife and son died of pneumonia due to lack of medical attention soon after he got fired.[27] Enraged, the sanitation workers continued their protests throughout February and March. They began marching during their lunch hour at noon, forming long caravans with their garbage trucks and families.

On February 22, in a public dialogue with the municipal president, they defended themselves against accusations of tortuguismo (resistance to speeding up labor). They reaffirmed their demand for a second shift, improvements in work equipment, healthcare coverage, and reinstatement of their co-workers.[28] The newspaper photos show them with hat in hand and wild hair, in a firm and humble attitude, in front of the city authorities.

Moreover, while the sanitation workers stood up for their rights, students and brigadistas of People's Politics supported them. They filled the buses and Torreón airwaves with fliers and declarations to the local media, many of them kept by the Torreón's police archive and as well as in notes of the *La Opinión* (Torreón) and *El Siglo de Torreón*. University students used radical-sounding names for their brigadas that included "Sierra Maestra," "Mao Tse-Tung," "October 2," "Ho Chi-Minh," and "Professor Genaro Vázquez." Not surprisingly, the brigadistas joined the struggles of the sanitation workers "because they consider[ed] their position to be just and correct."[29]

---

[27] Redacción La Opinión, "Protestan los empleados de limpieza," *La Opinión* (Torreón), 15 de febrero 1973.

[28] Redacción La Opinión, "Se inicia el diálogo entre los colectores de basura y el alcalde," *La Opinión* (Torreón), 23 de febrero 1973.

[29] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Otra manifestación de protesta de empleados de

At the end of March, the municipal government tried to enlist the support of neighbors to clean up the city on weekends. Sanitation workers saw this as a provocation and threatened to strike again.[30] The municipal government continued with its "clean-up operation." On April 12, it fired 24 workers (six drivers, 13 laborers, three sweepers, and two sackers) in front of a notary for refusing to comply with a new regulation. The response of the remaining sanitation workers was to go on strike, and garbage collection stopped again in Torreón.

Consequently, the municipal government tried to maintain the service using farmers from the ejido La Perla as scabs. It also hired 45 trucks and kept the sanitation workers away from the collection routes with the help of 70 municipal police officers who occupied the facilities of the Sanitation Department. Some workers resisted, and the police forcibly removed them. Throughout the day, neighbors and wives of the sanitation workers protested and insulted the scabs.[31] That weekend, Saturday, April 14, 1973, the workers, their families, and neighbors marched with student and railroad union militants, protesting in front of the municipal palace, where a contingent of police armed with long guns and batons was waiting for them. As shown in figure 1, the protestors responded by painting the walls of the municipal palace with insults and slogans. In this context, the Mayor's callousness heralded an escalation of repression against the workers.

D. de Limpieza," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 28 de febrero 1973.

[30] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Nueva amenaza de los empleados del Departamento de Limpieza," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 27 de marzo 1973.

[31] Arturo Cadivich, "Cesan a 24 colectores de basura. El ayuntamiento los acusó de incumplidos.," *La Opinión* (Torreón), 13 de abril 1973. and Eduardo M. Presa, "Policías impiden el secuestro de camiones para limpieza urbana," *La Opinión* (Torreón), 13 de abril 1973.

Figure 6-1: Torreón's municipal palace after the janitors' protest in April 1973 (Archivo municipal de Torreón).[32]

Surprisingly, Bishop Fernando Romo, who had tolerated the activities of the progressive priests of the Nazas-Aguanaval group, intervened. In his April 15, 1973, Sunday homily, the bishop reminded his flock of the peasants' struggle for land, the injustice of the trade union bossism (charrismo), and the problem of the squatters and homeless:

> […] and now, the prolonged struggle of the workers of the sanitation department, who seek their betterment a little beyond the life of filth and waste in which they, because of their poverty, are forced to live. They do not find an answer. On the one hand, they suffer repression or obtain partial solutions. On the other, they face the cruel indifference of their brothers. Nonetheless, we are all beneficiaries of their services. Despite being a humble job, it does not cease contributing to our health and welfare. Desperation at a given moment makes them lose

[32] Presidencia Municipal de Torreón, "Torreón's municipal palace after the janitors' protest April 1973 " (Torreón, Coahuila: Archivo Municipal de Torreón, April 1973).Fond Presidencia Municipal de Torreón 1972-1979, Box 4, Folder 2, photo 1.

> their temper, and we all must regret the results because we see them. So, with Christian sincerity, we ask ourselves: Why should the weakest always lose? [33]

The bishop's intervention enhanced the legitimacy of the strike. The following day, when Father José Batarse walked around the sanitation worker's encampment dressed in his priestly garb, the workers felt supported to the point of desisting from returning to work. The intervention of Torreón's clergy also forced the Mayor to declare that "under no circumstances would reprisals be exercised" and that he would even pay the fallen wages.[34]

The conflict extended throughout the year, and despite the municipal government's efforts, the streets accumulated waste in the following months. The local media repeated news of the conflict day after day. The "independent" neighborhoods organized protests, and young students organized themselves into brigades to support the movement by playing music at the demonstrations, broadcasting bulletins on local radio stations, and handing out flyers on city trucks. Meanwhile, the municipal government and local police monitored the movement and its supporters, accumulating reports of demonstrations and photographing graffiti and rallies in detail.

In addition to police harassment, the workers now saw the consequences of the government's stubbornness and maintained their demands with greater resolve. The sympathy of the population, the progressive sector of the Catholic Church, the bishop, and even the conservative oppositional party, the National Action Party (PAN), counteracted a discourse that accused external influence as the origin of the conflict. Despite hesitation and inexperience, activists and workers organized an independent union

---

[33] Romo Gutierrez, "Palabras del Obispo."

[34] La Redacción El Siglo de Torreón, "Poco más de la tercera parte de los empleados de limpieza, regresaron.," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 18 de abril 1973.

and won better working conditions. The union struggle in Torreón's Sanitation Department soon connected with the struggle for autonomy at the University of Coahuila. It opened new spaces of participation for the brigadistas of People's Politics. Forty years later, one of the workers made the following assessment of the process when asked how they won the process:

> We won it to the extent that we created a union. We started to see the possibility of getting involved, legally and all that, because besides being very bold, we also had legal counsel who could guide us legally so that we would not get involved so much or screw up. [...] We were looking to get in, right? And that's how we did it, and, yeah, with time, we started[...] the union was created, and after a while, people from all over the Municipal services started to join it. Now, there is a massive union. As a result of that, all the workers in the municipality are union members, and we were the promoters of all that. The comrade I am telling you about, the one who has already left here, but we were the promoters.[35]

People's Politics' first incursion into trade union politics showed many continuities with its work among peasants or the popular urban movement. To a large extent, the brigadistas of People's Politics mixed actions typical of student activism (written propaganda, graffiti, marches, and rallies) with the organizing activities of the urban popular and peasant movements. In the struggle to reinstate the Sanitation Department workers, the brigadistas did not enroll as sanitation workers. Nonetheless, they accompanied their unionization process. The grade and nature of the students' involvement in the union movement would soon change in 1976, in the aftermath of the Sixties, when militants moved from the neighborhoods to the mining-metallurgical sector.

---

[35] Guevara and Chairez, interview.

10.3 THE MINING UNION: PROLETARIAN LINE IN MONCLOVA (1974-1982)

Monclova is an old mining city in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila. In the nineteenth century, it competed against Saltillo for the site of Coahuila's capital. Later, the city entered a period of decadence at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1932 it only had 6000 inhabitants. Nonetheless, its strategic location in the central region of Coahuila and its proximity to large coal deposits favored the installation of a steel foundry in 1942. The foundry was an old plant built before World War I, representing a tiny investment of North American capital. Even so, 30 years later, Altos Hornos de México, the company installed in Monclova, had replaced Fundidora de Monterrey as the leading steel producer in Mexico.[36]

From the small town of the 1930s, Monclova became a thriving industrial city of more than 200 thousand inhabitants where a job in the foundry guaranteed high standards of living for the workers. The metallurgical industry in Monclova attracted workers from neighboring municipalities, especially from Coahuila's coalfields, and the city's population grew by leaps and bounds. The metallurgical bonanza created a working-class population where three-quarters of the workers had houses fully equipped with modern utilities. Moreover, far from the cramped lodgings of other Mexican workers of the period, Monclova steelworkers' houses accommodated only two persons per room. With a higher education level than the rest of the local population, Monclova steelworkers organized around locals 147 and 288 of the Mining Union (SNTMMSRM). [37]

---

[36] Fe Esperanza Cárdenas and Vincent Redonnet, "Modernización de la empresa AHMSA en Monclova, Coahuila y su impacto sobre la población," *Estudios demográficos y urbanos* (1991): 678-82.

[37] Ilán Bizberg, *La clase obrera mexicana* (México, D.F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1986), 156 and 65.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the government imposed a "charro" leadership at the national level, allowing the local leadership to immerse itself in corrupt practices in managing the consumer cooperative. Local 147 shared with the rest of the Mexican labor movement the burden of the PRI corporatism of the time. At the same time, steelworkers struggled to express their problems and demands. Activists from the Communist Party and the Popular Socialist Party sporadically tried to challenge the PRI control over local 147, but those attempts failed. By the end of the sixties, intra-union politics in Monclova devolved into a competition between two slates to control the union's leadership and its resources. The prize for the winner was attractive enough as it included union funds, job promotions, and control over the union's supermarket (cooperativa) serving the foundry workers.

On one side, a "red" slate had the support of the Mining Union (SNTMMSRM)'s national leadership. On the other, a "blue" slate questioned the management of their rivals without breaking with the corporatist system.[38] During that period, workers watched helplessly a struggle of cliques that handed out crumbs and cared very little for their interests.

As in dozens of factories nationwide, the post-1968 student militancy made Monclova one of its objectives. From Durango and Monterrey, university students began to distribute propaganda at the door of the foundry. In 1969, Marcos Cruz, one of the students who would later form the brigade of People's Politics in Durango, tried establishing a beachhead in Monclova without much success.[39] In fact, as their French peers who

---

[38] Dionisio Garza, "La democratización en la sección 147 (Monclova) del sindicato minero-metalúrgico," in *Los sindicatos nacionales en el México contemporáneo*, ed. Javier (coord) Aguilar, Los Sindicatos Nacionales (México, D.F.: GV Editores, 1987), 209-17.

[39] Enrique Arreguín, "Telephone Conversation with Enrique Arreguín, Monclova Unionist and Proletarian Line Brigadista in Chiapas " interview by Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo, *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*, July 1st, 2020.

had to deal with the police repression and the communist party's constant opposition in the factories, the brigadistas of People's Politics encountered stiff resistance from the union apparatus and were forced to change tactics.

Mimicking what happened in Torreón with the Sanitation Department, People's Politics was more successful in organizing and channeling demands for services in the emerging popular neighborhoods of the city. A water conflict in Monclova allowed the Maoists to gain some metalworkers' trust and support. Soon, as had happened in Durango, People's Politics activists continued organizing settlers and peasants in the struggle for water and land, even founding a new neighborhood, Independencia. With the support of workers who had known about the organization's work in the struggle for water and housing, People's Politics allied with the "blue" slate.

In April 1974, the blue slate won the leadership of local 147, and workers' expectations arose. Shortly after, however, its leaders of the blue slate began to repeat the corrupt practices of their predecessors and opened the way for the formation in December of that same year of a new slate headed by members of People's Politics, the Primero de Mayo slate or "white" slate. Although they did not manage to win the elections for the leadership of the local 147 that year, the workers noticed that a different option was emerging. Eventually, the influence of People's Politics in the union went beyond the presence of its militant workers. A printed bulletin that the workers began to call *La Talacha* [The Gig] reinforced their presence. The anonymous bulletin was prepared by student brigadistas and distributed by sympathizers among the workers, who could find it in the cafeteria and shared spaces. The bulletin propagated People's Politics ideas and criticized the corruption of "red" and "blue" leaders.[40]

---

[40] José Luis Torres, "El movimiento de los obreros de Altos Hornos de México en Monclova, Coahuila," in *Poder Popular: Construcción de ciudadanía y comunidad*, ed. José Luis Torres and Adolfo Orive Bellinger (México, D.F.: Juan Pablos, 2010), 417-22.

While activists in Monclova managed to expand their influence within local 147, People's Politics went through one of its biggest crises in 1976. That year, a dispute between the ideological leader of the organization, Adolfo Orive Bellinger, and the leader of the Monterrey brigade, Alberto Anaya, fractured People's Politics. It was a dispute between different ways of conceiving the organizational process and a struggle of personalities. The rupture between those who supported Orive Bellinger in his project to create a more centralized national organization and those who preferred to maintain the autonomy of the local brigades materialized in violent confrontations and expulsions from the neighborhoods controlled by People's Politics in Monterrey. From the conflict, Proletarian Line was born as a mass line organization centered in La Laguna and, soon after, Chiapas.[41] The internal conflict provoked the division of the brigade in Durango and a turn towards union work in the mining-metallurgical sector. Student and popular urban movement militants, especially local leaders, were desplazados (relocated) to open new "work centers" and, in some cases, proletarianizing members of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois origin. In this way, veterans of the student movement of 1968, the popular struggles in La Laguna, and even student brigadistas with work in Chiapas moved to Monclova, Las Truchas, Michoacán, and the Fundidora in Monterrey. They attempted to shore up union work among the metalworkers.[42] Up to this day, the relocation process continues to be controversial among former Proletarian Line militants. In the end, to some extent, they cooperated in strengthening the organization of the miners' union.

In 1975 the "blue" leadership, which had reached an agreement with the "red" to share power in the local by taking turns in the lead every four years, angered the rank and file by renouncing the provision of the

---

[41] See Puma Crespo, "Maoists of Northern Mexico: A Short History of Política Popular-Línea Proletaria, 1969-1979," 213-16.

[42] On the presence of Proletarian Line in Las Truchas see Ilán Bizberg, *La acción obrera en Las Truchas* (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1982).

collective contract which mandated the company to build 150 houses per year for the workers. The militants of Proletarian Line took advantage of the situation to hold conferences and propaganda actions among the workers. In April 1976, when the section's leadership failed to demand profit sharing from the company, the workers began a series of protests and took over the union building. The union's national leadership called for new elections, and the Primero de Mayo slate emerged victorious. Although the "democratic" group now controlled the general secretary of the local, the coalition of "reds" and "blues" maintained spaces within it. Immediately, the Primero de Mayo slate sought to recover the union's resources, especially the union's supermarket (cooperativa). The store, until then, had been one of the juiciest businesses for the corrupt charro leaders. At the same time, it was a line of survival for the workers since, thanks to it, they could acquire cheap consumer goods and escape the abusive prices of Monclova merchants. Hence, the conflict over its control ended on January 10, 1977, with two workers shot to death by shooters of the charro group and one of the shooters dead from the wounds inflicted on him by the enraged workers. The crimes went unpunished, but the democratic leadership of the union recovered control of the union's supermarket (cooperativa). [43]

In this context, on March 22, 1977, the first strike in the history of Altos Hornos de México broke out. The strike lasted eight days and showed the strength and organization of the workers under a democratic leadership made up of Proletarian Line militants. The strike movement demanded salary rises and positions for temporal workers, and the company recommitted itself to re-establishing the service of building the 150 houses lost in 1975. The movement succeeded in forcing the company to grant 2,500 new positions for temporary workers, end outsourcing work to outside companies, and provide subsidized water and services for the workers' neighborhoods. It also gained union control over the entry of

[43] Garza, "La democratización en la sección 147 (Monclova) del sindicato minero-metalúrgico," 218-21.

technicians and non-union employees and the recovery of the 150 houses.[44] For the Proletarian Line militants, this was the peak of their influence within local 147.

At the same time, between 1977 and 1979, the influence of Proletarian Line in the mining-metallurgical union grew through the collaborative relationship with local 67 activists, especially at the time of the May 1977 strike at Fundidora Monterrey, as well as with the presence of Proletarian Line militants in local 271 of Las Truchas. During the following two years, the Proletarian Line militants in the union leadership renamed the "white" slate Union Unity (Unidad Sindical). They began to publish a new newspaper called *Despertar Obrero* (Workers' Awakening). Using the methods developed in the "independent" neighborhoods, the militants created discussion spaces in each Altos Hornos area and department. The small group meetings and the general assemblies encouraged the discussion of the workers' problems and facilitated the defeat of the last strongholds of bossism (charrismo). [45]

The actions of Proletarian Line in the miners' union were at least controversial and faced harsh criticism from activists close to the Mexican Communist Party. In Proletarian Line's version, the Old Left was schizophrenic between a reformist vision of the organization and an ultra-leftist practice regarding leading workers' struggles.[46] For Proletarian Line, the communists sought a confrontation with the state, which was unfeasible and harmful considering their strength in the mining-metallurgical union. Following Maoist ideas, according to this narrative,

---

[44] Enrique García Márquez, "La democratización de la sección 147 del SNTMMSRM, 1976," *Trabajo y Democracia*, no. 104 (Julio-agosto 2009): 96.

[45] Torres, "El movimiento de los obreros de Altos Hornos de México en Monclova, Coahuila," 442-50.

[46] See Línea Proletaria, *La construcción de bases sociales obreras de apoyo*, (Monclova: Línea Proletaria, 1978).

Proletarian Line tried to maintain political unity with the communists while simultaneously waging an ideological struggle against them, identifying the problem as a "contradiction among the people."[47] The communists accused Proletarian Line of committing political errors and contradictions by using a "two-faced policy" toward the Mexican state. As Daniel Molina, an editor of the leftist magazine *Punto Crítico* pointed out: "on the road traveled by Proletarian Line, we will find partial confrontations with the charros and the government. That lead to unprincipled alliances; whose ultimate goal is the bureaucratic, gradual and gradual control of positions of power [...]."[48] This dual balance in the political performance of Proletarian Line would haunt the organization. The problem rose to prominence with the attempt to take control of the national leadership of the Mining Union (SNTMMSRM) in 1979.

The blow to the democratizing advance was brutal and coincided with the collapse of Proletarian Line as an organization during the waning years of the late Sixties. In 1979, at the XX National Convention of the mining-metallurgical union, the delegates of Proletarian Line and its allies from Monterrey and Colima attempted to displace the "charro" leadership headed by Napoleón Gómez Sada. The strengthened national leadership disappeared "dissident" union locals and ignored the Monclova and Las Truchas delegates, crushing the dissidence and forcing the election of new leadership in these locals. Although it seemed that with the control of the most numerous and influential locals, Proletarian Line had the necessary majority, the political maneuvers of bossism (charrismo) defeated the insurgency.[49] Despite this, Proletarian Line in Monclova survived until

---

[47] Torres, "El movimiento de los obreros de Altos Hornos de México en Monclova, Coahuila," 449-50.

[48] Daniel Molina, "Las luchas mineras en el periodo 1970-1982," in *Minero-Metalúrgicos*, ed. Javier (coord) Aguilar, Los sindicatos nacionales en el México contemporaneo (México, D.F.: GV Editores, 1987), 279.

[49] Torres, "El movimiento de los obreros de Altos Hornos de México en Monclova,

1982, when the steel company fired its activists amid the first steps before privatization that characterized the neoliberal era.

10.4 Don't Erase our Traces: The French Établis in the Long 1968s

Mining and metallurgy, emblematic sectors of the working-class experience during the twentieth century, experienced a political and economic transformation that left a significant imprint in the period's history. Working-class militancy in France also suffered under the weight of repression by the state and gradually collapsed as many companies closed. Moreover, the metal and coal industry crisis visited the northern regions of France and Mexico during the late Sixties and buried the hopes of liberation that emerged after 1968.

A renewed interest and revalorization of the working-class partly motivated the emergence of far-left groups in France during the Sixties. Leftists in the French universities saw the working class as a transformative force contained by the conservative politics of the communists. They sought to join them in the factories and mines to unleash their revolutionary potential.[50] The presence of former university students at the factories of post-war France has many antecedents, including the experience of the worker priests.[51] For the young Maoist students of the Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist (UJC-ml), the first insertion attempts in the working-class milieu began in the summer of 1967. Dozens of pioneers moved to the countryside and the factories close to Paris to turn Althusser's theory and Bettelheim's ideas into revolutionary

---

Coahuila," 450-53.

[50] Philippe Buton, "À l'assaut des usines," in *Histoire du gauchisme. L'héritage de Mai 68* (Paris: Perrin, 2021).

[51] See Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, "La mission ouvrière: la justification religieuse d'un déplacement à gauche (1940-1955)."

practice.[52] The word of order was to learn from real-life experience. As a result, the 1968 revolt in France and, later, the working-class effervescence of the 1970s sent hundreds of promising young students to the assembly lines of Renault and other companies. They were not alone, as Trotskyists and other leftist-oriented students followed the same path.

While some of these students came from elite families, many were from middle and working-class origins.[53] They all had to leave their privileged status at the universities and move into the hard life of a worker, an alien territory far from the conference rooms, cafés, and books. Surrounded by immigrants and French workers, these exiles from the school had to adapt to their new environment and find a way to contest the hegemony of the Communist Party unionists already in place. The results ranged from utter failure to qualified and limited success.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the competing Maoist factions sent cadres to the factories and working-class neighborhoods. They engaged in a double work "shift," alternating industrial work with militant labor. Their dogmatism often restricted their reach, but that did not stop them from proselytizing their fellow workers with newspapers and pamphlets. Marnix Dressen, in his comprehensive study on the transition from the academic world to the world of labor, *De l'amphi à l'établi*, estimates that the number of établis (inserted students) was never too large, between 2000 and 3000 militants.[54] Nevertheless, their impact on French political imagination surpasses their actual number.

A series of novels narrating the experience of former students turned workers and union activists helped to fix the Maoist établi as a symbol of

---

[52] Le Dantec, "D'où vient l'etablissement?," 17.

[53] For the social origins of the établis, see Dressen, *De l'amphi à l'établi: les étudiants maoïstes à l'usine, 1967-1989*, 27-54.

[54] Ibid., 11.

the French Sixties. [55] Robert Linhart's memoir, *L'établi*, appeared in 1978 and became a classic of the genre, but it was not the only one.[56] Recently, female perspectives of the établissement started to break into a previously male dominated story.

Among the new titles appeared a peculiar graphic novel portraying the militant experience of a young Maoist singer: *Elise et les Nouveaux Partisans*. A graphic novel reminiscent of *Tintin*, it was a collaboration between the singer Dominique Grange and caricaturist Tardi and included an interesting Spotify playlist to hear with the book.[57] The comic also included a YouTube link to the song naming the book, the old Gauche prolétarienne hymn, *New Partisans*. During four minutes, Grange's sweet voice and guitar chords could transport the reader to the alienation of industrial jobs and the Sixties' revolutionary thirst for justice.

The graphic novel mixes an autobiographical narrative with a militant history of the French "long sixties." Although stories of the Gauche prolétarienne are an established genre in France, readers of Elise get a fresh approach from a rank-and-file militant with an artistic past. Then, far from the 1990s confessions of guilt from repented militants, Elise opens a window into the experience of insertion in the factories through the eyes of a young woman.[58] A young militant who left her artistic career in Paris to become a worker in a stationery factory in the south of France. Too tired to respond, one night, she had to endure the reprimands of Gauche prolétarienne officials for drinking and hanging out with her fellow

---

[55] For a discussion of the genre of établis' memoirs, see Claude Burgelin, "Entrer à l'usine, sortir de l'usine: l'impossible roman des «établis»," *Les Temps Modernes* 684685, no. 3 (2015).

[56] See Linhart, *L'établi*.

[57] Dominique Grange and TARDI, *Elise et les Nouveaux partisans* (Paris: Delcourt, 2021), Graphic Novel.

[58] For what follows, see ibid.

workers. After her long work hours, she shared the life of her fellow workers and used the rest of her time participating in propaganda distribution and political meetings.

Nonetheless, she rose to the occasion when a work accident provoked a strike in the factory and tried to organize the discontent, just to be violently expelled from work when she lost her cover. Radicalized by the growing repression of the French far-Left, Elise and her comrades moved underground and prepared for armed resistance. Surprisingly on November 2, 1973, the leaders of Gauche prolétarienne dissolved the organization and left hundreds of militants out in the cold. The graphic novel closes five years later, when the effects of the collapse of the Gauche prolétarienne settled, leaving behind a score of personal tragedies and stubborn militancy.

Besides the expansion of subjects, the study of the établissement experienced a geographic enlargement. Most studies regarding the phenomenon of the insertion of political cadres in French factories concentrate in the Paris area or industrial cities such as Lyon.[59] Nonetheless, as other northern Hemisphere Maoists, the French moved also into the mining areas, old centers of working-class activism.[60] In the early 1970s, the old coal region of Nord and Pas de Calais lived through a crisis, and there were no new jobs in the pits. Since 1969, around dozen activists fresh from Paris' high schools (Lycée) and universities or the local mining engineering schools relocated to northern France but failed to get

---

[59] See Marnix Dressen, *Les établis, la chaîne et le syndicat : Évolution des pratiques, mythes et croyances d'une population d'établis maoïstes 1968-1982. Monographie d'une usine Lyonnaise*, ed. Bruno Péquignot, Collection "Logiques Sociales", (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).

[60] For the experience of American Maoists' insertion in West Virginia's coal mines, see Aaron J Leonard and Conor A Gallagher, "Sinking Roots and Making the Papers," in *Heavy Radicals-The FBI's Secret War on America's Maoists: The Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party 1968-1980* (Zero Books, 2014).

hired in the mines of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais region. Their encounter with the "haunted" scenario of Zola's Germinal and 1948 strike filled them with illusion and horror.[61]

Moreover, they struggled to integrate into the working class, and their eagerness to contact the working class opened the space for police infiltration.[62] Constantly surveilled by the nationalized mining company Houillères du bassin du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais (HBNPC)' intelligence service, they published and distributed dozens of typewritten pamphlets and newspapers as *Combat ouvrier* or *Cause du mineur* with a Mao Zedong profile as a header.[63] The Maoists tried to rekindle the fires of the proletarian revolt in the area using cartoons, Molotov bombs, and propaganda stunts.

The Gauche prolétarienne treated its setbacks in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais region as new opportunities to advance the cause of the proletarian revolution in France or at least denounce the injustices still present in the

---

[61] Marion Fontaine, "Aller au peuple? Engagements maoïstes dans le Nord ouvrier," in *La révolution culturelle en Chine et en France*, ed. Miao Chi et al. (Paris: Rieveneuve éditions, 2017), 199. For the presence of the Lycée students in the region see Anonymous, *Combat ouvrier: journal marxiste-leniniste Nord-Pas-de Calais-Somme*, (1969), 3. in Nord, Fonds Gauche prolétarienne, 1970, F DELTA Res 576/22. La Contemporaine : Bibliothèque, archives, musée des mondes contemporains. Nanterre, France.

[62] For the infiltration of French intelligence agents in Gauche prolétarienne, see EINCIYAN, "Joseph, l'indic des RG qui fit tomber Geismar: la Gauche prolétarienne attirait les policiers. Un complément des RG au livre.," *Mediapart* (April 1st 2008). https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/010408/joseph-l-indic-des-rg-qui-fit-tomber-geismar.

[63] For the record of the surveillance over the Maoists at the Houillères du bassin du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais see Centre Historique Minier (CHM, Douai) 65 CW 8, Synthèse des renseignements Bassin 1971-1984. Copies of the Maoist tracts and newspapers rest on Nord, Fonds Gauche prolétarienne, 1970, F DELTA Res 576/22. La Contemporaine and 65 CW 22 CHM, Douai.

world of labor. For example, after some militants tried to set fire to the Company offices in response to the death of sixteen miners in a gas explosion at the Hénin-Liétard pit on February 4, 1970, the French police put nine Maoist militants in jail. As part of the campaign to free their comrades, an alliance of Maoist and leftist forces (Secours Rouge) set up an investigation committee (enquete) at Lens that accused the nationalized mining company (HBNPC) of murder by neglecting the safety of the miners. The Maoist invited the miners' community to participate as "judges" of the process to impart "true justice" or, in other words, "popular justice."[64] Led by Sartre, the Committee attracted enough publicity to raise awareness of the miners' health conditions and the oppressive nature of life in the nationalized mining company (HBNPC)'s villages (corons).[65] Eventually, the militants sent the stories to Paris, where Máspero published them in pocketbook format.[66]

Blocked by the Communist Party cadres' resistance in the miners' union, the Gauche prolétarienne militants did not break the power structures inside the unions or the mines. Nonetheless, they did not miss any opportunity to agitate the masses, including the housing problem in the villages of the nationalized mining company (HBNPC).[67] In April 1972, they began a movement in the mining villages to occupy some abandoned houses that lasted almost three years and surpassed them. In the long term, it was too late for the Maoists of Gauche prolétarienne to benefit from the growing discontent as the mines would close in the next two decades.

---

[64] "Un procès populaire", Nord, Fonds Gauche prolétarienne, 1970, F DELTA Res 576/22. La Contemporaine. Nanterre, France.

[65] Simone De Beauvoir, *All Said and Done* (Putnam Publishing Group, 1974), 437-39.

[66] See Secours rouge du Nord, *Les mineurs accusent* (Maspero, 1970).

[67] « Synthèse des renseignements recueillis au cours du mois d'avril 1972 » 65 CW 8, Centre Historique Minier (CHM, Douai), p. 8

The experience at Nord and Pas-de-Calais left its mark on the former students. Some even stayed in the area as union organizers or reporters after the collapse of Gauche prolétarienne in November 1973.[68] Others came back to Paris and had academic careers. Marie Fontaine analyzed the case of one of these militants, François Ewald, who later became Michel Foucault's assistant. She explained that without dealing directly with the experience of proletarianization, François Ewald's academic writing betrayed the scars of the shock of encountering the miners' world and the mining company's surveillance apparatus.[69] Indeed, after reviewing the highly detailed accounts of nationalized mining company (HBNPC)'s surveillance services, it is hard to reject Foucault's arguments on power's ever-present and diffused nature in our lives.

The French établissement movement provides a helpful point of comparison to understand the role global ideologies, such as Maoism, played in mobilizing the working class in the Sixties. While separated by thousands of kilometers and under different political conditions, Mexican and French student militants shared an imagined link to Cultural Revolution China that motivated their insertion in factories and mines. There, they found the same objective conditions of injustice and economic change that put them on the collision route with the Neoliberal closure of pits and foundries. In that sense, the comparison between the Mexican and French trade union insurgencies was justified.

10.5 Établissement (Student Insertion Movement) Mexican Style: Severiano's Story

In México, the relocation (traslado) of People's Politics brigadistas' experience brought together squatters and former university students in

---

[68] For a balance of the aftermath of the insertion process focused on the LIP case, see Dominique Bondu, "L'élaboration d'une langue commune: Lip-la GP," *Les Temps Modernes* 684-685, no. 3 (2015).

[69] Fontaine, "Aller au peuple?," 207-09.

an attempt to penetrate the industrial unions controlled by the PRI apparatus. Among the leading activists recruited by Proletarian Line was a former IPN student, Severiano Sánchez. His IPN id, issued in 1969, and shown in figure 2, brought the image of a formal young Mathematics student. Severiano came from a working-class family in the La Merced neighborhood in Mexico City. Son of a rail worker active in the cardenista Mexico's Workers Confederation (CTM), Severiano lost his father when he was a kid, and his mother raised him. His friendship with the son of a local PRI politician and his good grades opened the door to getting into college. Severiano followed the usual path for a young working-class student, and in January 1968, he entered the IPN.[70] One semester later, the 1968 events turned his world upside down.

Figure 6-2: Severiano Sánchez' IPN id (Severiano Sánchez' Personal Archive), reproduced with the permission of Severiano Sánchez.[71]

[70] For Severiano's trajectory, see Sánchez, interview.

[71] Severiano Sánchez, "Severiano Sánchez' IPN id " (México, D.F.: Severiano Sánchez' Personal Archive, 1969).

The 1968 student movement turned Severiano Sánchez into a full-time militant. Not even the movement's collapse after the October 2 massacre stopped him. Together with other militants, he continued his activism inside the IPN, demanding scholarships, changes to the curriculum, and better living conditions for the students. In the meantime, student militancy was turning into a risky business. The hour of reckoning came for Severiano on June 10, 1971, a second student massacre, this time at the hands of the administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976). For those who had already opted for the armed struggle, the Jueves de Corpus massacre confirmed that the state could only answer with violence to any reform demand. It also questioned the possibility of negotiating concessions by the state, a position supported by those who believed in the promise of a "democratic opening" of the Echeverría administration.[72] Beyond those evaluations, a new wave of repression affected the political participation conditions for all the Left.

The massacre was a repressive response after dozens of students marched through Mexico-Tacuba Avenue in downtown Mexico City to support the student movement at Monterrey's Nuevo León's Autonomous University. The March had departed from the IPN campus at the old Santo Tomas hacienda, but not far away from it, close to the Normal subway station, a group of agent provocateurs attacked them. The attack of the agent provocateurs resulted in dozens of students being injured and killed.[73] Severiano escaped alive but received a shot injury in his leg that took him away from activism for two months. Next year, the anti-subversion brigade of the Mexican intelligence put him in jail for a short period and forced him to leave Mexico City. He sought refuge in Navojoa, Sonora's

---

[72] Lucio Rangel Hernández, *El virus rojo de la revolución. La guerrilla en México. El caso de la Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, 1973-1981* (Morelia, Michoacan: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas Hidalgo, 2013), 119.

[73] See Enrique Condés Lara, *Los papeles secretos del 10 de junio* (México, D.F.: Reflexión Abierta, 2003).

countryside, working as a literacy tutor among the Mayo tribe.

At Navojoa, Severiano Sánchez struggled to integrate into the rural society. Social conditions did not facilitate political organizing, and cultural differences and the weather hardships turned his work into an almost missionary experience. Severiano rememorates:

> They didn't know about the tape recorder. The television? There was one in the town's general store, and the store owner rented it. The houses were made of bahareque, that is to say, dry wood, woven wood shells. They didn't stroll; they didn't go anywhere; they didn't go out. They just lived in the fucking town.[74]

The new wave of repression following the June 10 student massacre, largely motivated by the emergence of the September 23 Communist League guerrilla movement, ended this early episode of rural proletarianization. Despite the shock between the urban student and the realities of the indigenous countryside, the experience helped Severiano Sánchez better understand the needs and interests of the people he was trying to organize. Until 1977, Severiano moved around jobs and organizations in Sonora, Baja, California, and back in Mexico City. He alternated teaching jobs in the countryside with mason labor in the cities, always trying to organize the people around him to fight for their rights. Eventually, Proletarian Line recruited Sánchez in 1977 and sent him to Torreón to work in a foundry. However, his relationship with the organization was never terse, and he reports passing through a "reeducation process" as the leaders of Proletarian Line believed he had to renounce his leadership position and "little bourgeois" attitudes. Around 1979, the Mining Union (SNTMMSRM) activists rescued Severiano Sánchez and brought him to Monclova. Sánchez explains that:

---

[74] Sánchez, interview.

> End of '78 beginning of '79, they got me a contract right away, and then I was in [the factory]. Dude, [they assigned me] to the mechanics of traveling cranes, those cranes that run on high rails. The cranes lift six-ton steel plates with electromagnets or large ingots with hooks, ten or 20 tons. —[I did] maintenance, changing wheels, lubrication, [and] electrical issues.[75]

Severiano Sánchez had experience working in factories in Mexico City. Nevertheless, the steelworks were a different beast. The work experience was brutal, but at the same time, he had many chances to climb the ladder of union positions. Repression and competition opened the space for newcomers, especially when they brought political acumen and a more developed strategic sense. He rose to the Local 147 leadership from Department representative when most of the Proletarian Line activists had already abandoned the place. An early 1980s photo, presented in figure 3, showed Severiano using the rhetorical skills acquired as a 1968 activist surrounded by the banners of Local 147.

[75] Ibid.

Figure 6-3: Local 147 demonstration in the main plaza (Severiano Sánchez' Personal Archives, Monclova, ca 1980), reproduced with the permission of Severiano Sánchez.[76]

During those days of proletarian militancy that characterized the late Sixties, solidarity was not a scarce or sectarian good. In addition to fighting for the workers' demands, the Proletarian Line union members in Local 147 offered solidarity to the indigenous peasant movement in Chiapas. In the aftermath of this era, they received groups of Salvadoran and Nicaraguan musicians and painters who traveled through Mexico in search of support for the revolutionary movements in their countries. Nicaraguan painters even decorated an allusive mural in the union building. There was a rumor that Local 147 funded the Sandinistas and the Farabundo Martí Front of El Salvador.

---

[76] Severiano Sánchez, "Local 147 Demonstration in the Main Plaza " (Monclova, Coahuila: Severiano Sánchez' Personal Archive, 1980).

10.6 Conclusions

The late Sixties marked a defining chapter in the global history of Maoism. During a global moment of working-class unrest and union insurgency, Young Maoists in Mexico and France made inroads into the working-class milieu from the periphery. Their strategy followed the Maoist idea of the encirclement of the cities from the countryside. They came from the auditoriums of Paris and Mexico City universities or the humble classrooms of provincial colleges and high schools, looking to "learn true from facts." Young people believed the working class was the force behind any revolutionary project and that they needed to integrate with them, "get down from the horse," to advance a correct political line.

As a result, they all converged into the working-class fortresses, where they faced the fierce resistance of established unions, the PRI, or the French Communist Party. It did not matter who. Not surprisingly, governmental intelligence services and the mining companies' surveillance gaze followed their activities and kept a detailed record of their attempts to agitate the workers. In the next years, small local archives in Torreón, Mexico, and Douai, France, preserved a rich collection of intelligence reports, pamphlets, and Maoist newspapers as a legacy of those surveillance efforts.

The Maoists' strategy of using the struggle for specific demands (water, housing, services) in the "independent" neighborhoods and corons as a "pretext" to advance the revolutionary struggle ("objective") allowed them to win the sympathy eventually and sometimes the loyalty of workers and squatters. Later, they brought their experience of student activism and urban slum organizing to the new setting of the mines and factories. Ultimately, they used their capacity to agitate and their connections among the elites to raise awareness of the problems of the working class.

In the Mexican case, the local and regional victories allowed Proletarian Line to try to dispute the control of the mining union to the charro leadership. In the end, the organization suffered its most brutal defeat. Nevertheless, the organization's influence in Monclova or Las Truchas

allowed them to overcome that test. The confrontation with the charro leadership did not exempt the leadership of Proletarian Line from criticism by activists close to the Communist Party. The balance of the Maoist attempts to break the control of the "official" labor organizations on both sides of the Atlantic ended in defeat but left significant traces of their struggle to insert themselves in the union insurgency of the Sixties.

Comparing the participation of Maoist militants in the global moment of union insurgency during the Sixties provides an opportunity to understand how a global ideology such as Maoism benefited from shared social and economic conditions, the metal industry crisis, and the aftermath of 1968, to expand. Local history and contingency resulted in different outcomes, the relative success of Proletarian Line in contesting the leadership of the mining union contrasted with the marginality of the French établis in the union world. Nonetheless, both experiences faced a final defeat when the Neoliberal closures and privatizations ended the union insurgency moment in 1979 in France and 1985 in Mexico.[77] Finally, the comparison between Mexican and French union insurgencies contradicts appraisals of the Sixties that downplay their revolutionary character. The defense of industry as the basis for the sustenance and identity of the working class was a revolutionary moment on both sides of the Atlantic.

[77] For the closing of the 1968 moment of union insurgency in France, see Xavier Vigna, "Luttes dans la sidérurgie en 1979: la fin de l'insubordination ouvrière," in *68 une histoire collective (1962-1981)*, ed. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Paris: La Découverte, 2018). For the defeat of the mass line project in Mexico during the privatization drive of the 1980s, see Méndez y Berrueta and Quiroz Trejo, "La izquierda maoísta: la línea de masas en el mundo del trabajo," 140-44.

11 CONCLUSIONS

In the early months of 1998, the national leftwing newspaper, *La Jornada* (Mexico City), published two articles by reporter Arturo Cano criticizing Adolfo Orive Bellinger's actions as a chief advisor of the Minister of Interior during the technocratic presidential administration of Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000).[1] Sympathetic to the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the articles of *La Jornada* (Mexico City) also presented a concise history of People's Politics, including the leading role of Orive Bellinger, emphasizing its complicated relationships with the Mexican state and its political elites, from the presidency of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) to Carlos Salinas (1988-1994)' government. The main point behind Cano's articles was to underscore the link between People's Politics and the paramilitary organizations in Chiapas participating in actions against the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and Orive Bellinger's role in the government's counterinsurgent policies.

Despite their critical tone, both articles gave a comprehensive picture of People's Politics using internal documentation of the organization, interviews, and the transcription of a newspaper article written with information from the Federal Directorate of Security (DFS) in 1983. The result was two interrelated but different stories. The first article, "La larga marcha de Adolfo Orive (Adolfo Orive's Long March)," relied on interviews from former People's Politics militants, pamphlets from the organization, and an unpublished manuscript of Adolfo Orive Bellinger. It presented the long march of Orive Bellinger in fairly accurate terms, from his studies with Bettelheim to his participation in People's Politics and Proletarian Line. The second of Cano's articles, "De las sombras a las enchiladas (From the Shadows to the Enchiladas)," commented an earlier article by Televisa reporter Joaquín

[1] Arturo Cano, "Del maoísmo a Gobernación. La larga marcha de Adolfo Orive," *La Jornada* (México, D.F.), 18 de enero 1998, Suplemento Masiosare, http://www.jornada.unam.mx/1998/01/18/mas-maoismo.html. and Arturo Cano, "De la sombra a las enchiladas," *La Jornada* (México, D.F.), 22 de marzo 1998, Suplemento Masiosare, http://www.jornada.unam.mx/1998/03/22/mas-enchiladas.html.

López-Doriga accusing Orive Bellinger of being behind a series of protests that occurred in 1983 in the northern city of Monclova. Without citing his sources, López-Doriga' used information from a Federal Security Directorate (DFS) report and reproduced many of its mistakes, such as identifying Orive Bellinger as a Cornell University alumnus.[2] In fact, both articles correctly identified People's Politics as a mass-line organization interested in working side by side with peasants, squatters, and unions.

The global aspects of the Sixties shaped the history of Maoism. During the latter years of this period, People's Politics succeeded in creating a coalition of middle-class students, Catholic priests, peasants, squatters, and unionized workers. A new generation of activists, composed of young men and women, used the Maoist ideas developed by Adolfo Orive Bellinger in the *Hacia una Política Popular* pamphlet to organize the life of their communities and set the political orientation of their unions, brigadas, and peasant confederations. They were not alone. Thousands of militants worldwide, especially in France, shared their ideas of "serving the people" and "learning from the masses."

Moreover, People's Politics interpretation of Mao Zedong's ideas, especially its emphasis on the need to listen to the people and its call to live among the people, came from the teachings of Charles Bettelheim on the Chinese Cultural Revolution. As a Bettelheim student, Adolfo Orive Bellinger adopted this democratic interpretation of the mass line and promoted it in Mexico after his return in 1968. In the context of the collapse of the 1968 student movement in Mexico, the message of "going to the masses" provided Adolfo's students a way forward to socialism and the defeat of the PRI, a hegemonic party that ruled with a repressive hand from its foundation in 1946 until its defeat in 2000.

However, the Maoist alliance with progressive Catholics allowed an undetermined number of activists to weave "numerous, deep, and

---

[2] Cfr. Antecedentes del Lic. Adolfo Orive Bellinger" Versión pública Adolfo Orive Bellinger. 1957-1983. Archivo General de la Nación. Fondo Gobernación. Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Box 192.

durable ties with the broad masses." [3] In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM)'s Medellin meeting (1968), a small but assertive group of priests and members of religious orders broke with anti-communism. It began a prolific political relationship with the leftist movements, including People's Politics Maoists, who shared similar concerns. Perhaps more effective than the Maoists, these priests created more concrete networks of solidarity that moved from the local and the national to the international, producing global impact initiatives, such as Operation Synod (1971) and global movements as Christians for Socialism demonstrated.

The progressive Catholics and Maoists' political alliance in Mexico resulted in a political movement that combined a secular and religious message of participatory democracy, community, and anti-capitalism. In the case of People's Politics, its brigadistas crossed paths with a group of diocesan priests from La Laguna in 1972, the Nazas-Aguanaval team. The experience did not have a parallel in France, as the Maoist organizations preserved the anti-religious bias of the French Left. Nonetheless, the importance the French Maoists assigned to the working class as the preferred subject of revolutionary politics continued the Catholic emphasis on the poor as the main object of salvation history.

The radical project of People's Politics collapsed in the late Sixties under the pressure of growing repression against the Left, and the emergence of a neoliberal order, as further evident with the economic collapse of Mexican industries and the start of the technocratic turn. These economic and political shifts intensified internal conflicts within People's Politics. Then, with the conservative turn that characterized the Catholic Church with John Paul II, Rome launched an aggressive campaign against leftwing Catholics across Latin America. The papal attack against certain types of Liberation Theology deprived the organization of the support of the progressive Catholics in Mexico, who had to defend themselves against the Hierarchy or keep a low

[3] Anonymous, *Hacia una Política Popular*, 26.

profile. During the 1980s, many People's Politics brigadistas continued working on their communities or moved into electoral politics. By the 1990s, the mass line project of participatory democracy lay in shambles, replaced by a triumphant new order of technocratic progress and market economics.

Hopefully, a historical study of People's Politics intervention in Chiapas and the experience of the Batopilas collective farm remains in the not-so-distant future. Future research on People's Politics needs to focus on women and the indigenous, the rank and file of the organization. Other areas of opportunity are the local studies of the peasant movement in the northern Mexico state of San Luis Potosí and Proletarian Line's involvement in the teachers' union dissidence in Chiapas. Finally, future researchers could work on the experience of the sons and daughters of the brigadistas. The trajectory of these red-diaper babies may open a new window to what it meant to "serve the people" at a personal level. Ultimately, any future investigation on People's Politics must follow the French Maoist dictum: "descendre de cheval pour cueillir des fleurs" (you need to get down the horse to smell the flowers).

For now, the transnational and comparative story depicted in this dissertation provides the historian with a unique lens to reflect on the importance of the Global Sixties. As I argued in this dissertation, the latter years of this era pointed to a unique moment that allowed for the possibility of Maoists and progressive Catholics joining forces while benefiting from a global moment of working-class militancy and relative tolerance for the cooperation of Marxists and Christians. The experiment ended in defeat due to Cold War dynamics and Neoliberal reform. However, it left a legacy of participatory politics, working-class empowerment, and transnational exchange of ideas and tactics. Perhaps, it was not the only correct line, but for hundreds of militants in France and Mexico, it was worthwhile to follow it.

12 APPENDIX A : SYNTHESE EN FRANÇAIS DE LA THESE

12.1 PRESENTATION GENERALE ET ARGUMENTS

Ma thèse examine la réception de la pensée Mao Zedong dans le Mexique catholique comme première étape vers une histoire transnationale et comparative de l'impact de la Révolution chinoise, avec une attention particulière à la religion dans la formation de l'un des plus grands groupes de gauche d'Amérique latine à la fin des années soixante. J'accorde une attention particulière à l'activisme politique, notamment au rôle important joué par les maoïstes dans la politique syndicale et dans la création d'un mouvement organisé de squatters dans les villes du nord du Mexique. Je m'appuie sur des sources d'histoire orale et des documents internes d'organisations maoïstes mexicaines et françaises. Ces derniers ont été influents car certains des fondateurs du maoïsme au Mexique se sont engagés politiquement à Paris au cours de la période examinée dans ma thèse. En outre, je m'appuie sur un large éventail de journaux, représentant diverses régions du Mexique, ainsi que sur des archives officielles et non officielles d'Argentine, des États-Unis, de France, du Mexique et des Pays-Bas.

À l'aide de ces diverses sources, je construis un récit à plusieurs niveaux du maoïsme et je situe le cas mexicain dans le contexte plus large du militantisme de gauche pendant les « Global Sixties » (v. 1956 - v. 1976), lorsqu'une série d'événements convergents et parfois interdépendants ont affecté l'Amérique latine après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. La montée d'une gauche radicale éprise de lutte armée, les tendances contre-culturelles de certaines élites et de certains secteurs de la classe ouvrière, la remise en question des hiérarchies traditionnelles et l'expansion de nouvelles options spirituelles se sont étendues de la fin des années cinquante jusqu'au milieu des années soixante-dix. Comme l'affirme Van Goose, cette période, et pas seulement la nouvelle gauche, est un ensemble de mouvements qui se

chevauchent les uns les autres[1].

Cette thèse examine comment et pourquoi l'image de la pratique révolutionnaire de Mao Zedong a attiré non seulement les étudiants, les paysans et les ouvriers, mais aussi les prêtres catholiques. Je soutiens que l'idée d'une politique de ligne de masse s'est superposée à des éléments progressistes de la culture catholique pour permettre ces alliances politiques. En outre, je démontre que des modèles de développement économique communs (industrialisation, migration vers les villes, troubles ruraux) expliquent l'émergence d'un « scénario » maoïste d'activisme dans les communautés rurales, d'insertion dans le syndicalisme de l'industrie métallurgique et de mobilisation des nouveaux migrants urbains. Pour ce faire, je recherche l'histoire de l'organisation Política Popular (Politique populaire) et ses interactions avec différents mouvements sociaux à travers le Mexique pendant la période la plus radicale des Global Sixties, de 1968 à 1979, lorsque les activistes de gauche ont risqué leur vie au milieu d'une campagne contre-insurrectionnelle sanglante.

En décentrant l'histoire du radicalisme étudiant au Mexique de la capitale du pays et de l'année 1968, je complique les récits trop familiers des années soixante et soixante-dix qui tendent à minimiser le rôle de l'Église catholique. Il faut noter qu'après les persécutions religieuses de la fin des années vingt, les évêques mexicains ont adopté une position réactionnaire à l'égard du libéralisme et du socialisme[2].

---

[1] Cf. Van Gosse, « A Movement of Movements : The Definition and Periodization of the New Left », dans *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, ed. Jean-Christophe Agnew et Roy Rosenzweig (Malden, MA : Blackwell Publishers, 2006).

[2] L'Église catholique mexicaine a fait face aux changements imposés par le concile Vatican II avec un sentiment de malaise et de résistance. L'Église mexicaine avait subi l'impact d'une révolution sociale et d'une guerre civile qui avait duré dix ans (1910-1921), suivie d'une persécution religieuse par la faction radicale du gouvernement postrévolutionnaire au cours des années vingt et au début des années trente. L'Église a passé les trente années suivantes à essayer de reconstruire ses capacités institutionnelles et son influence publique. Pour une interprétation de l'histoire de l'Église mexicaine et de sa relation avec les changements apportés par le concile Vatican II, je m'appuie sur Edward Larry Mayer Delappe, « La política social de la Iglesia católica en México a partir del Concilio Vaticano II : 1964-1974 » (Mémoire de

Pourtant, dans le contexte mondial des années soixante, tous les prêtres sur le terrain n'ont pas adopté cette position.

S'appuyant sur les développements théologiques et politiques des années trente et quarante, l'Église catholique a entamé dans les années soixante un processus de réforme profonde visant à moderniser sa doctrine et son fonctionnement, une mise à jour (aggiornamento)[3]. En 1959, le pape Jean XXIII a convoqué une réunion d'évêques et de cardinaux du monde entier à Rome en 1962, le concile Vatican II. Le concile a duré trois ans (1962-1965) et ses documents officiels ont mis l'accent sur la nature collective de l'Église. Par la suite, l'Église a remplacé l'idée d'une institution centrée sur la hiérarchie religieuse (pape et clergé) par le principe d'une Église composée de la somme de tous les croyants baptisés, le « peuple de Dieu[4] ». En Amérique latine, les changements apportés par le Concile ont suscité de vives réactions. Puis, en 1968, lors de sa Conférence de Medellin, le Conseil épiscopale latino-américaine (CELAM) s'est prononcé en faveur d'un changement social et politique plaçant les besoins des masses ouvrières et paysannes, les pauvres, au centre des préoccupations de l'Église[5]. À travers ces deux événements marquants, l'Église catholique a fait sa propre rencontre avec les années soixante.

En examinant le rôle important de la religion dans la formation des Global Sixties, je soutiens qu'un groupe progressiste de catholiques, petit mais influent, a joué un rôle déterminant dans l'histoire du maoïsme au Mexique. Ce faisant, j'explore l'impact que le radicalisme

---

M. A., Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977).

[3] Pour les antécédents de la « théologie de la libération » catholique en Europe, cf. Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology, First Wave (1924-1959)* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2015).

[4] Pour une étude de l'impact des réformes du concile Vatican II en Europe, cf. Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II : Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2015).

[5] Pour une analyse des événements de la conférence de Medellin, cf. Charles Antoine, *Guerre froide et Eglise catholique : l'Amérique latine* (Paris : Cerf, 2000), 231-33.

global de l'Église a eu au Mexique au-delà des figures habituelles du leadership (évêques) et de l'intelligentsia (théologiens et intellectuels). Ma recherche examine plutôt comment et pourquoi certains prêtres diocésains de Torreón, dans l'État de Coahuila au nord du pays, se sont organisés au sein du groupe Nazas-Aguanaval. En outre, elle explore les raisons pour lesquelles ces prêtres se sont engagés dans la politique militante sans abandonner leur foi et sans voir de contradiction entre une participation politique active dans la politique de gauche et leur pratique pastorale.

À travers l'histoire du maoïsme au Mexique et de ses homologues en France et en Amérique du Sud, j'introduis le global dans le national sans perdre de vue le local. Dans cet effort, je réponds aux questions suivantes : Comment les étudiants et les prêtres mexicains ont-ils été impliqués dans les réseaux transnationaux de pensée radicale de gauche ? Comment ont-ils apporté ces idées à leurs communautés ? Pourquoi ont-ils choisi le maoïsme comme voie vers la révolution socialiste au Mexique et qu'est-ce que cette histoire nous apprend sur le contexte plus large des Global Sixties ? Quelles sont les possibilités et les limites d'une stratégie qui s'appuie sur les contradictions tout en mettant l'accent sur l'unité d'action ?

L'essor et le déclin au Mexique et en Amérique latine d'une alternative de gauche non armée à la politique électorale au cours des années soixante-dix ont été occultés par l'accent mis dans les années quatre-vingt-dix sur les organisations non gouvernementales et le discours sur les droits de l'homme, ainsi que par ses effets durables. Il s'agissait d'un phénomène mondial qui avait des parallèles avec l'Europe occidentale et les évolutions nord-américaines dans le destin de la nouvelle gauche des années soixante. Mes recherches montrent comment les pratiques d'une large coalition d'étudiants, de prêtres, de paysans, de militants syndicaux et de squatters ont pris la forme d'une promotion d'une idée particulière du « peuple ». En ce sens, la rhétorique maoïste du « servir le peuple » pourrait être traduite en « création d'un peuple » et reliée aux pratiques récentes des mouvements populistes de gauche du XXI^{e} siècle.

Les maoïstes de la Politique populaire pensaient qu'une véritable organisation « de type nouveau » ne suivait une ligne politique

correcte que lorsque ses membres avaient tissé des liens nombreux, profonds et durables avec les larges masses. Pour eux, vivre et travailler avec le peuple en utilisant la ligne de masse, ou en d'autres termes, la politique du peuple, était la seule ligne correcte[6]. Pour comprendre comment utiliser la « seule ligne correcte », cette thèse a étudié l'histoire de la Politique populaire, en traitant de l'histoire transnationale du maoïsme français et de son lien avec le Mexique de 1968.

La thèse aborde son sujet de manière thématique et chronologique. Le premier chapitre présente une biographie intellectuelle d'Adolfo Orive Bellinger, examine sa brochure *Hacia una Política Popular* (Vers une politique populaire) et présente les principales idées qui sous-tendent le maoïsme de la ligne de masse de la Politique populaire. Le chapitre 2 analyse la manière dont la Politique populaire a construit une audience significative parmi les étudiants universitaires et les a poussés dans un processus d'insertion dans les bidonvilles du nord du Mexique. Le chapitre 3 fait ensuite un détour par le monde du radicalisme catholique, un autre produit des réseaux transnationaux qui traversent l'Atlantique et se déplacent dans les Amériques. En outre, ce chapitre met l'accent sur la participation du groupe Nazas-Aguanaval à la formation de la base de soutien de la Politique populaire à La Laguna. Le chapitre 4 ramène l'attention du lecteur sur la politique en mettant l'accent sur le féminisme et explique comment les femmes ont constitué l'épine dorsale du mouvement des squatters de la Politique populaire dans les villes de Durango, Gómez Palacio, Monterrey et Torreón. Ce chapitre place les femmes au centre de l'histoire dynamique de l'organisation et de la résistance. La thèse se termine par le chapitre 5, une étude de cas sur le déplacement des militants de la Politique populaire vers l'industrie sidérurgique et leur engagement syndical. Ce dernier chapitre apporte des éléments de comparaison supplémentaires avec le phénomène français des « établissements » dans le contexte de la période de militantisme

[6] Anonyme, *Hacia una Política Popular*, (México, D.F. : Coalición de Brigadas Emiliano Zapata, 1968), 26.

syndical post-1968.

12.2 CONCLUSIONS

Les aspects globaux des années soixante ont façonné l'histoire du maoïsme. Au cours des dernières années de cette période, la Politique populaire a réussi à créer une coalition d'étudiants de la classe moyenne, de prêtres catholiques, de paysans, de squatters et d'ouvriers syndiqués. Une nouvelle génération de militants, composée de jeunes hommes et femmes, utilise les idées maoïstes développées par Adolfo Orive Bellinger dans la brochure *Hacia una Política Popular* pour organiser la vie de leurs communautés et définir l'orientation politique de leurs syndicats, brigadas (cellules) et confédérations paysannes. Ils n'étaient pas seuls. Des milliers de militants dans le monde, et notamment en France, partagent leurs idées de « servir le peuple » et « d'apprendre des masses ».

En outre, l'interprétation des idées de Mao Zedong par la Politique populaire, en particulier son insistance sur la nécessité d'écouter le peuple et son appel à vivre parmi le peuple, provenait des enseignements de Charles Bettelheim sur la Révolution culturelle chinoise. En tant qu'élève de Bettelheim, Adolfo Orive Bellinger a adopté cette interprétation démocratique de la ligne de masse et l'a promue au Mexique après son retour en 1968. Dans le contexte de l'effondrement du mouvement étudiant de 1968 au Mexique, le message « d'aller dans les masses » a fourni aux étudiants d'Adolfo une voie vers le socialisme et la défaite du PRI, un parti hégémonique qui a gouverné d'une manière répressive depuis sa fondation en 1946 jusqu'à sa défaite en 2000.

Cependant, c'est l'alliance des maoïstes avec les catholiques progressistes qui a permis à un nombre indéterminé d'activistes de tisser « des liens nombreux, profonds et durables avec les larges masses[7] ». Au lendemain du concile Vatican II (1962-1965) et de la conférence de Medellin (1968) du Conseil épiscopale latino-américaine (CELAM), un groupe restreint mais affirmé de prêtres et de

[7] Ibid.

membres d'ordres religieux a rompu avec l'anticommunisme et a entamé des relations politiques prolifiques avec les mouvements de gauche, y compris les maoïstes de la Politique populaire, qui partageaient les mêmes préoccupations. Peut-être plus efficaces que les maoïstes, ces prêtres ont créé des réseaux de solidarité plus concrets qui sont passés du local et du national à l'international, produisant des initiatives d'impact mondial, comme l'opération Synode (1971), et des mouvements mondiaux, comme l'ont démontré les Chrétiens pour le socialisme.

L'alliance politique des catholiques progressistes et des maoïstes au Mexique a donné naissance à un mouvement politique combinant un message séculier et religieux de démocratie participative, de communauté et d'anticapitalisme. Dans le cas de la Politique populaire, ses brigadistes ont croisé la route d'un groupe de prêtres diocésains de Torreón en 1972, l'équipe Nazas-Aguanaval. L'expérience n'a pas eu de parallèle en France, les organisations maoïstes ayant conservé le parti pris antireligieux de la gauche française. Néanmoins, l'importance que les maoïstes français accordaient à la classe ouvrière en tant que sujet privilégié de la politique révolutionnaire continuait l'accent mis par les catholiques sur les pauvres en tant qu'objet principal de l'histoire du salut.

Le projet radical de la Politique populaire s'est effondré à la fin des années soixante sous la pression de la répression croissante contre la gauche et de l'émergence d'un ordre néolibéral, comme en témoignent l'effondrement économique des industries mexicaines et le début du tournant technocratique. Ces changements économiques et politiques ont intensifié les conflits internes au sein de la Politique populaire. Ensuite, avec le tournant conservateur qui a caractérisé l'Église catholique avec Jean-Paul II, Rome a lancé une campagne de confrontation contre les catholiques de gauche dans toute l'Amérique latine. Cela a privé la Politique populaire du soutien des catholiques progressistes du Mexique, qui ont dû se défendre contre la hiérarchie ou faire profil bas. Au cours des années quatre-vingt, de nombreux militants de la Politique populaire ont néanmoins continué à travailler au sein de leurs communautés ou se sont lancés dans la politique électorale. Dans les années quatre-vingt-dix, le projet de démocratie participative de la ligne de masse était en ruine, remplacé par un

nouvel ordre triomphant de progrès technocratique et d'économie de marché.

Les recherches futures sur la Politique populaire doivent se concentrer sur les femmes et les indigènes, la base de l'organisation. Il faut espérer qu'une étude historique de l'intervention de la Politique populaire au Chiapas et de l'expérience de la ferme collective de Batopilas soit réalisée dans un avenir pas si lointain. Les études locales du mouvement paysan dans l'État de San Luis Potosí, au nord du Mexique, et l'implication de la Ligne prolétarienne dans la dissidence du syndicat des enseignants au Chiapas constituent d'autres domaines d'opportunité. Enfin, les futurs chercheurs pourraient travailler sur l'expérience des fils et des filles des militants. La trajectoire des fils de anciens militants maoïstes pourrait ouvrir une nouvelle fenêtre sur ce que signifie « servir le peuple » à un niveau personnel. En fin de compte, toute recherche future sur la politique du peuple doit suivre le mot d'ordre maoïste français : « descendre de cheval pour cueillir des fleurs ».

Pour l'instant, l'histoire transnationale et comparative décrite dans cette thèse offre à l'historien une perspective unique pour réfléchir à l'importance des Global Sixties. Comme je l'ai soutenu dans cette thèse, les dernières années de cette époque ont marqué un moment unique qui a permis aux maoïstes et aux catholiques progressistes d'unir leurs forces tout en bénéficiant d'un moment global de militantisme de la classe ouvrière et d'une tolérance relative pour la coopération des marxistes et des chrétiens. L'expérience s'est soldée par une défaite en raison des dynamiques de la guerre froide et des réformes néolibérales. Cependant, elle a laissé un héritage de politique participative, d'autogestion ouvrière et d'échange transnational d'idées et de tactiques. Ce n'était peut-être pas la seule ligne correcte, mais pour des centaines de militants en France et au Mexique, cela valait la peine de la suivre.

13 APPENDIX B: ABBREVIATIONS

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación (General National Archive or Nationl Archives)
CAMENA	Centro Académico de la Memoria de Nuestra América (Our America's Memory Academic Center)
CDP-Durango	Comité de Defensa Popular-Durango (Popular Defense Committee of Durango)
CELAM	Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Latin American Episcopal Conference)
CGT	Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Labor).
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDE	Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (Center for Research and Teaching in Economics)
CNC	Confederación Nacional Campesina (Peasant National Confederation)
CONAMUP	Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular (National Coordination of the Popular Urban Movement)
CTM	Confederación de Trabajadores de México (Mexico's Workers Confederation)
DFS	Dirección Federal de Seguridad (Federal Security Directorate)

FCE Fondo de Cultura Económica (Economic Culture's Fund)

HBNPC Houillères du bassin du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais (Nord and Pas-de-Calais coal mines)

IMEC Institute Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (Institute for Contemporary Publishing Archives)

IPN Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México (National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico)

ITRL Instituto Tecnológico Regional de la Laguna (La Laguna Regional Technological Institute)

JOC Juventud Obrera Católica (Young Catholic Workers).

MLN Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Movement)

OIR-LM Organización de Izquierda Revolucionaria-Línea de Masas (Revolutionary Left Organization-Mass Line)

PAN Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)

PCMLF Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France (France's Marxist-Leninist Communist Party).

PPS Partido Popular Socialista (Socialist People's Party)

PRI Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)

PT Partido del Trabajo (Partido del Trabajo)

SNTE Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Educational Workers Union)

SNTMMSRM Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalúrgicos, Siderúrgicos y Similares de la República Mexicana (National Union of Mine, Metal, Steel and Allied Workers of the Mexican Republic or Mining

	Union)
SUTERM	Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana (Mexican Republic Electrician's Union)
UEC	Union des étudiants communistes (Union of Communist Students)
UJC-ml	Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes (Union of Young Communists Marxist-Leninist)
UJED	Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango (Durango's Juárez State University)
UMAE	Unión de Mutua Ayuda Episcopal (Episcopal Mutual Help Union)
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
TABAMEX	Tabacos Mexicanos (Mexican Tobacco)

14 Archives and Collections Consulted and Cited in Notes

1. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico

   Public Versions Files:

   Fondo Gobernación. Dirección Federal de Seguridad

   Fondo Gobernación. Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales.

2. Archivo Municipal de Torreón, Torreón, Coahuila, México

Fondo Presidencia Municipal

Fotografías (1972-1979)

Dirección de Seguridad Pública

3. Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, France

Fonds Charles Bettelheim

4. The Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

   Missionary Research Library Archives:

   Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS) Records, 1971-1973.

5. Centre Historique Minier (CHM), Douai, France.

   Synthèse des renseignements Bassin 1971-1984

6. Centro Académico de la Memoria de Nuestra América (CA-MENA), Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México. Mexico City, Mexico.

Archivo Personal Sergio Méndez Arceo, Diócesis de Cuernavaca

7. La Contemporaine : Bibliothèque, archives, musée des mondes contemporains. Nanterre, France.

   Fonds Gauche prolétarienne

8. Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC), Caen, France

   Fonds Louis Althusser

9. Jean Sonet S.J. Library, Universidad Católica de Córdoba, Argentina.

   Colección José María "Pichi" Meisegeier, S.J.

10. Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Radboud University. Nijmegen, Netherlands.

    Archive Aktiegroep Septuagint

11. Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California.

    Eduardo Quevedo Papers

15 BIBLIOGRAPHY

15.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

Abusaid Ríos, Juan. "A la opinión pública: con relación al problema planteado por los trabajadores del Departamento de Limpieza." Desplegado, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 20 de noviembre 1972.

Almonte, Adan. "En torno al colonialismo cultural." *La Opinión* (Torreón), 26 de abril 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

Anonymous. *Combat ouvrier : Journal marxiste-léniniste Nord-Pas-de Calais-Somme*. 1969.

Anonymous. *Hacia una Política Popular*. México, D.F., Coalición de Brigadas Emiliano Zapata, 1968.

Batarse Charur, José. "Las movilizaciones populares: Paracaidistas, colonos, estudiantes, ferrocarrileros, campesinos, trabajadores del Departamento de Limpieza, etc. y la organización de la fraternidad." *La Opinión* (Torreón), May 5 1973.

———. *¡Felicidades, por otro año más de su lucha!* Gómez Palacio, Durango, 1977.

Bulbulian, Maurice. "Tierra y Libertad." 94 minutes. Monterrey, NL: National Film Board of Canada, 1978. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkEGPVK1T6I.

Cadivich, Arturo. "Cesan a 24 colectores de basura. El ayuntamiento los acusó de incumplidos." *La Opinión* (Torreón), 13 de abril 1973.

———. "¿Por qué intervino el clero en el caso de la Limpieza?" *La Opinión* (Torreón), April 17 1973.

Camara Agrícola y Ganadera de Torreón [Farmer and Ranchers, and Coahuila Camara Agrícola de San Pedro de las Colonias Guild].

"A la opinión pública." Paid annoucement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 26 1976.

Cano, Arturo. "De la sombra a las enchiladas." *La Jornada* (México, D.F.), 22 de marzo 1998, Suplemento Masiosare. http://www.jornada.unam.mx/1998/03/22/mas-enchiladas.html.

———. "Del maoísmo a Gobernación. La larga marcha de Adolfo Orive." *La Jornada* (México, D.F.), 18 de enero 1998, Suplemento Masiosare. http://www.jornada.unam.mx/1998/01/18/mas-maoismo.html.

Carbone, Alberto. "Apoyo mexicano al celibato de los sacerdotes." *El Informador. Diario Independiente* (Guadalajara, Jalisco), October 5 1971, Front page.

Cerda, Agustín, J. Natividad Fuentes, José Batarse Charur, Tobías De la Torre, Francisco Castillo, Marcelino García, Armando Sánchez*, et al.* "A la opinión pública." Paid Annoucement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), August 26 1972.

CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Council). *The Church in the Present Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council: Conclusions.* Edited by Louis Michael Colonnese. Vol. II: Latin American Bureau, Division for Latin America, Department of International Affairs, United States Catholic Conference and the General Secretariat of CELAM, 1970.

Comité Organizador Colonia Proletaria División del Norte. *Cuatro años de lucha popular, 1973-1977.* Durango de Victoria, 1977.

De Ayala, Juan. "600 campesinos del PPS bloquean carreteras en San Pedro, Coahuila." *Excelsior* (México, D.F.), October 12 1976, En los Estados.

De la Riva, Juan Antonio. "La colonia proletaria División del Norte." Durango de Victoria, Durango, 1973. 8 mm film. https://youtu.be/B2UxujFy9Jg.

De la Torre, Jesús. "¡Alto ahí!" Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón), October 10 1971.

———. "XXVIII asamblea nacional de trabajadores guadalupanos." Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón), September 12 1971.

———. "Parece un éxodo." Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), April 2 1972.

———. "¿Dos sacerdotes invaden...?" *La Opinión* (Torreón), August 30 1973.

———. "Nuestro trabajo en comunicación social." Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón), February 4 1973.

———. "Otro sacerdote asesinado y un obispo que escapó." Column, La Iglesia, promotora del hombre, *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), May 1st 1977, B, 9-B.

De Onis, Juan. "Assembly in Chile Urges Socialism." *The New York Times* (New York), May 4, 1972. https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/04/archives/assembly-in-chile-urges-socialism-group-led-by-priests-seeks.html.

Delgadillo, Jesús. "Liberan a un sacerdote, preso por invasión de tierras en Coahuila." *Excelsior* (México, D.F.), October 26 1976.

Durán, Ramón. "Veinte años de lucha de masas parte XIII El triunfo del movimiento de masas es a la vez el inicio de una futura división al interior de la dirección." Marzo, lunes 18, *El Sol de Durango* (Durango, Dgo), 18/03/ 1991.

———. "Veinte años de lucha de masas parte XIV." Marzo, viernes 22, *El Sol de Durango* (Durango, Dgo), 22/03/ 1991.

———. "Veinte años de lucha de masas parte XVII." Abril lunes 1, *El Sol de Durango* (Durango, Dgo), 01/04/ 1991.

Ehrenzweig, Héctor. "Los sofistas contemporáneos." Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 26 de abril 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

Ejidos de Compostela. "Carta abierta de los ejidos de Compostela al presidente Lic. Luis Echeverría." *El Nayar. Diario del medio día* (Tepic, Nayarit), 17 de enero 1973.

El Nayar, La Redacción. "Mitin monstruo del PRI, de apoyo a Ocegueda alcalde de Compostela." *El Nayar. Diario del medio día* (Tepic, Nayarit), 14 de febrero 1973.

El Siglo de Torreón, La Redacción. "Aclaración de Golden Stones." Note, *Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), March 25 1971.

———. "Audición de música moderna." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), March 10 1971, 13.

———. "Una audición de música de protesta." Advertisement, *El siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), March 6 1971, 6.

———. "Ejército y policía desalojaron a los "vallejistas" de locales sindicales." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 20 de diciembre 1972.

———. "La autoridad estudiará petición de los empleados de limpieza." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 17 de noviembre 1972.

———. "No hay recolección y la basura invade esta ciudad." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 19 de noviembre 1972.

———. "Protestan trabajadores de limpieza." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 18 de noviembre 1972.

———. "Quedó resuelto el problema y hoy se reanuda recolección de basura." Noticia, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 22 de noviembre 1972.

———. "Se acumula la basura y causa serio problema." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 13 de diciembre 1972.

———. "Se incrementa recolección de basura." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 02 de julio 1972.

———. "Contratan personal extra y camiones para recoger la basura." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 26 de enero 1973.

———. "Invaden terrenos 80 personas encabezadas por 2 sacerdotes." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), August 27 1973.

———. "Nueva amenaza de los empleados del Departamento de Limpieza." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 27 de marzo 1973.

———. "Otra manifestación de protesta de empleados de D. de Limpieza." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 28 de febrero 1973.

———. "Personas ajenas al Departamento de Limpieza agitan al personal." 17 de enero, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 1973.

———. "Poco más de la tercera parte de los empleados de limpieza, regresaron." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 18 de abril 1973.

Elizalde Escobedo, Eduardo. "Hay veinte colonias sin drenaje: Es un problema sanitario grave." *La Opinión* (Torreón), 22 de abril 1972, B, 1.

Equipo Dialogo. "A la opinión pública: Sentimos el deber de informar a la comunidad lagunera sobre la SUSPENSION del programa "DIALOGO" de televisión a partir del sábado 2 de abril de 1973." news release, April 10, 1973.

Films Brancaleone, and Cátedra Che Guevara. "Tras las pistas de Althusser (Entrevista a Marta Harnecker de Néstor Kohan)." In *Memoria del Futuro*, edited by Néstor Kohan, https://youtu.be/YnGdv8D55pM, 2014.

Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos Sociales y Políticos del Pasado FEMOSPP. *Informe histórico a la sociedad mexicana*. México, D.F.: PGR, 2006.

Fuentes Delgado, José L. "Capturan a presuntos homicidas de Durán Martínez." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coah.), October 21 2003. https://www.elsiglodedurango.com.mx/noticia/2003/capturan-a-presuntos-homicidas-de-duran-martinez.html.

Garza Ramos, Javier. "La memoria del obispo." Interview, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coah), December 16 2007. https://www.diocesisdetorreon.org/honraran-memoria-del-primer-obispo-de-torreon/.

Gonzalez, Emilio. "Al señor obispo Fernando Romo Gutierrez, a las distintas comunidades parroquiales de la diocesis, a todo el pueblo dela Cormarca." Manifesto, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 29 1976.

Haynes, John Earl. *Mexico City, KGB-Moscow Center Cables Cables, Decrypted by the National Security Administration's Venona Project*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011.

Hernández Navarro, Luis. "Edelmiro Maldonado, historia debida." *La Jornada* (Ciudad de México), July 28 2020, Opinion.

La Opinión, Redacción. "El mundo de los jóvenes." Editorial, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 18 de enero 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

———. "Protestan los empleados de limpieza." *La Opinión* (Torreón), 15 de febrero 1973.

———. "Se inicia el diálogo entre los colectores de basura y el alcalde." *La Opinión* (Torreón), 23 de febrero 1973.

———. "Serie de arrestos en Francisco I. Madero." *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 16 1976.

———. "Apareció el padre Batarse; no fue secuestrado." News report, *La Opinión* (Torreón), May 17 1977.

Línea Proletaria. *BATOPILAS… Trabajadores que ante la explotación despiadada han dicho BASTA*. Torreón, Coahuila, 1976.

———. *Principales aparatos y mecanismos políticos e ideológicos de los centros de trabajo, zonas y regiones*. México, Línea Proletaria, 1976.

———. *Ejido colectivo Batopilas: Un año trabajando la tierra en pie de lucha*. Torreón, Coahuila, 1977.

———. *La construcción de bases sociales obreras de apoyo*. Monclova, Línea Proletaria, 1978.

Martínez, Benigno. "Conferencia testimonial en memoria de José Batarse Charur: Participación de la Iglesia progresista en los movimientos de masas de la laguna." In *50 años de línea de masas en México*. Mexico, Saturday, July 24, 2021. https://www.facebook.com/100066014410480/videos/530708621502991/.

Medina, Juan Sebastian. "Música, enajenación y dialéctica." Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 22 de febrero 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

Moreno Mejía, Jesús. "Carta al Sínodo: Fue firmada por mil presbíteros; trece de ellos de esta ciudad." Interview, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 18 1971, 2.

Mujeres del Movimiento Urbano Popular. *Primer encuentro nacional de mujeres del Movimiento Urbano Popular, organizado por la Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular*. México: CONAMUP, 1983. https://www.proquest.com/books/iv-encuentro-de-la-coordinadoria-nacional-del/docview/2352574704/se-2.

Murillo, Miguel. "Acercamiento entre estudiantes y pueblo." Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 12 de abril 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

———. "Viet Nam del Sur." Opinión, *La Opinión* (Torreón), 18 de enero 1970, Nuestro Siglo.

Nau-Yaca. "De lo que El Siglo informó." Column, De lo que El Siglo Informó, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), August 29 1973.

Política Popular. *Experiencias de algunas brigadas de Política Popular en el sector campesino*. 1969.

———. *Cuestiones importantes sobre nuestra línea y nuestra organización*. México, Política Popular, 1976.

———. *La Guardia Popular*. Torreón, Política Popular, 1976.

———. *Un colono combativo*. Torreón, Política Popular, 1976.

Presa, Eduardo M. "Policías impiden el secuestro de camiones para limpieza urbana." *La Opinión* (Torreón), 13 de abril 1973.

Quirarte, Olga. "El pueblo paga la lucha por el poder: Conchello." *La Opinión* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 17 1976.

Romo Gutierrez, Fernando [Torreón's Bishop]. "Palabras del Obispo." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), April 16 1973.

———. "Mensaje del Obispo." *Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón Coahuila), October 24 1976.

———. "A la opinión pública [letter to the Mexican president and authorities]." Paid insertion, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), April 29 1978.

Ruelas, Miguel Angel "Sacerdote mexicano que laboró en Radio Vaticano." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), July 23 1972.

Second Vatican Council. "Chapter I General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy " In *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium solemnly promulgated by his holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963*, Documents of the Second Vatican Council. Rome, 1964.

———. "Chapter II On the People of God." In *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, on November 21, 1964*, Documents of the Second Vatican Council. Rome, November 21, 1964.

Secretariado de Cristianos por el Socialismo (Chile). *El pueblo camina ¿Y los cristianos?* Santiago de Chile, 1972.

Sínodo Episcopal de 1971. "El sacerdocio ministerial: texto definitivo aprobado por los obispos sinodales." In *El sacerdocio ministerial*. Barcelona: Centro de Pastoral Litúrgica, 2019.

Segura Gurza, Bernardo. Se envía volante. Presidencia municipal Records. Archivo Municipal de Torreón, Torreón Coahuila.

Unión Femenina-Católica Mexicana. "Ciclo de pláticas en catedral." Advertisement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), February 24 1972, Sociales y Personales.

Villarreal, F. "Demagogia clerical." Opinion article, *La Opinión* (Torreón), October 20 1971, Editorial pages.

Wong Chávez, Oscar. "La Alianza, el mayor generador de basura en nuestra ciudad." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 29 de junio 1972, A.

XHIA-TV Canal 2. "Programación para el día 15 de octubre de 1971: 13:00 Dialogo en vivo: Mesa redonda sobre la carta que trece sacerdotes torreonenses enviaron al Sínodo romano." Advertisement, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 15 1971, Avisos de Ocasión.

———. "[Programación de Canal 2] Sábado 20 de enero de 1973." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón), 19 de enero 1973.

15.2 Secondary Sources

Aboites Aguilar, Luis. El norte entre algodones: población, trabajo agrícola y optimismo en México, 1930-1970. El Colegio de México AC, 2013.

———. "La Debacle." Chap. 7 In El norte entre algodones. Población, trabajo agrícola y optimismo en México, 1930-1970. México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 2013.

———. El norte mexicano sin algodones, 1970-2010: Estancamiento, inconformidad y el violento adiós al optimismo. Ciudad de México: Colegio de México, 2018.

Abrams, Lynn. "Self." Chap. 3 In Oral History Theory, 32-52. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Acosta Zavala, Agustín. Así lo recuerdo. Torreón, Coahuila, 2015.

Aguilar Garcia, Francisco Javier, ed. Historia de la CTM, 1936-2006: el movimiento obrero y el estado mexicano. 2 vols. México, D.F.: UNAM, 2009.

Ai Camp, Roderic Crossing Swords: Politics and Religion in Mexico. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1997.

Alegre, Robert F. Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory. U of Nebraska Press, 2013.

Alexander, Robert J. International Maoism in Developing World. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999.

———. Maoism in Developed World. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001.

Althusser, Louis, Olivier Corpet, and Yann Moulier Boutang. The Future Lasts Forever: A Memoir. Translated by Richard Veasey. New York: New Press, 1993.

Álvarez, Luis Fernando. "La relación obrera México-Estados Unidos (1936-1949)." In Vicente Lombardo Toledano y los sindicatos de México y Estados Unidos, 113-44. México, D.F.: UNAM, 1995.

Angell, Alan. "La izquierda en América Latina desde c. 1920." Chap. 2 In Historia de América Latina. Política y Sociedad desde 1930, edited by Leslie Bethell, 73-131. Barcelona: Crítica-Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Anguiano, Arturo. José Revueltas: un rebelde melancólico. Ciudad de México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, DCSH/UAM-X, 2019.

Anguiano Orozco, Arturo, Guadalupe Pacheco, and Rogelio Vizcaíno. Cárdenas y la izquierda mexicana. México, D.F.: Juan Pablos Editor, 1975.

Anónimo. ¡El móndrigo! Bitácora del Consejo Nacional de Huelga. México, D.F.: Editorial Alba Roja, S.C.L., 1968.

Anonymous. Hacia una política popular. Libros UJED. 3 ed. Durango: Editorial Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango, 2006. 1968.

Arenal, Sandra. Mujeres de Tierra y Libertad. Ensayo. Monterrey, N.L.: Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes de Nuevo León-CONACULTA, 1999.

———. Vidas ásperas. Monterrey, N.L.: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2020. 1976.

Arias, Patricia, Alfonso Castillo, and Cecilia López. Radiografía de la Iglesia católica en México, 1970-1978. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1981.

Aspe Armella, María Luisa "Las repercusiones del Concilio y de la apertura de la Iglesia y de la Compañía al mundo, en la Provincia Mexicana de la Compañía de Jesús (Pulgas: julio de 1967-noviembre de 1969)." Historia y grafía, no. 29 (2007).

Ávila, Felipe, and Pedro Salmerón. Historia breve de la Revolución Mexicana. México, D.F.: INERHM-Siglo XXI, 2015.

Avitia Hernández, Antonio. "Los cincuenta y siete días de hierro, o los colgados del mito." Chap. VI In La montaña de las ilusiones. Historia del Cerro del Mercado, 43-64. México, D.F., 2003.

———. El caudillo sagrado: Historia de las rebeliones cristeras en el estado de Durango, México. 2 ed. México, D.F.: Antonio Avitia, 2005.

Azpíroz, María Elena. El campo en el México moderno: Nueve ex secretarios hablan sobre las políticas de desarrollo rural. Edited by Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos-Sextante. México, D.F., 1988.

Balibar, Étienne. "Presentation." Translated by Ben Brewster and David Fernbach. In Reading Capital. The Complete Edition, edited by Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Pierre Macherey and Jacques Rancière, 1-8. New York: Verso, 2016.

Barr-Melej, Patrick. Psychedelic Chile. Youth, Counterculture, and Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Barranco V., Bernardo. "Posiciones políticas en la historia de la Acción Católica Mexicana." In El pensamiento social de los católicos mexicanos, edited by Roberto J. Blancarte. Sección de Obras de Historia, 39-70. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996.

Barrancos, Dora. Historia mínima de los feminismos en América Latina. Historia mínima. Ciudad de México: El Colegio de México, 2020.

Bartra, Roger. Mutaciones: Autobiografía intelectual. Ciudad de México: DEBATE, 2022.

Basurto, Jorge. "El SPAUNAM." In Los movimientos sindicales en la UNAM, 93-158. México, D.F.: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales-UNAM, 1997.

Becerra, Ricardo, Pedro Salazar, and José Woldenberg. La mecánica del cambio político en México: elecciones, partidos y reformas. México, D.F.: Cal y Arena, 2000.

Beltrán Villegas, Miguel Ángel. "El MLN: historia de un recorrido hacia la unidad (México 1957-1967)." Ph. D. in Latin American Studies, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000.

Bettelheim, Charles. Révolution culturelle et organisation industrielle en Chine. Petite collection Maspero. Paris: François Maspero, 1973.

———. Class Struggles in the USSR: First Period 1917-1923. Translated by Brian Pearce. 3 vols. Vol. 1, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976.

Bettelheim, Charles, Jacques Charrière, and Hélene Marchisio, eds. La construcción del socialismo en China. 3 ed, El hombre y su tiempo. México, D.F.: ERA, 1975.

Bettelheim, Charles, and Neil G. Burton. China since Mao. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978.

Biard, Roland. "Maoisme." In Dictionnaire de l'extrême-gauche : de 1945 à nos jours, 217-24. Paris: Belfond, 1978.

———. "Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France (PCMLF)." In Dictionnaire de l'extrême-gauche : de 1945 à nos jours, 270-73. Paris: Belfond, 1978.

———. "Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes (UJCML)." In Dictionnaire de l'extrême-gauche : de 1945 à nos jours, 370-71. Paris: Belfond, 1978.

Bizberg, Ilán. La acción obrera en Las Truchas. México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1982.

———. La clase obrera mexicana. México, D.F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1986.

Blancarte, Roberto J. Historia de la Iglesia católica en México, 1929-1982. Cd. de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica-El Colegio Mexiquense, 2012.

Bondu, Dominique. "L'élaboration d'une langue commune : LIP-la GP." Les Temps Modernes 684-685, no. 3 (2015): 69-80.

Bonilla Machorro, Carlos. Caña amarga: Ingenio San Cristóbal, 1972-1973. 2 ed. México, 1981. 1975.

Bouchier, Josiane. "La paradoja de la unidad. El movimiento urbano popular y la Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular (CONAMUP)." In Movimientos sociales en México durante la década de los 80, edited by Sergio Zermeño and Jesús Aurelio Cuevas Díaz, 203-20. México, D.F.: UNAM, 1990.

Bourg, Julian. "The Red Guards of Paris: French Student Maoism of the 1960s." History of European Ideas 31, no. 4 (2005): 472-90.

Bourseiller, Christophe. Les maoïstes : La folle histoire des gardes rouges français. Paris: Points, 2008. 1996.

Bracho, Julio. "La gauche intégrée au peuple : Rétrospective sur Política Popular." Communisme, no. 83-84 (2005).

Brown, Jonathan. "The Gusano Counterrevolution." Chap. 4 In Cuba's Revolutionary World, 102-35. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.

Buelna, Enrique M. Chicano Communists and the Struggle for Social Justice. University of Arizona Press, 2019.

Burgelin, Claude. "Entrer à l'usine, sortir de l'usine : l'impossible roman des « établis »." Les Temps Modernes 684685, no. 3 (2015): 81-95.

Buton, Philippe. "À l'assaut des usines." Chap. 8 In Histoire du gauchisme. L'héritage de Mai 68, 205-40. Paris: Perrin, 2021.

Calles Barger, Lilian. The World Come of Age: An Intellectual History of Liberation Theology. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Cárdenas, Fe Esperanza, and Vincent Redonnet. "Modernización de la empresa AHMSA en Monclova, Coahuila y su impacto sobre la población." Estudios demográficos y urbanos (1991): 677-716.

Carey, Elaine. Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico. UNM Press, 2005.

Carr, Barry. "The Fate of the Vanguard under a Revolutionary State: Marxism's Contribution to the Construction of the Great Arch." In Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico, edited by Gilbert M Joseph and Daniel Nugent, 333-38. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.

———. La izquierda mexicana a través del siglo XX. Translated by Paloma Villegas. Problemas de México. México, D.F.: Ediciones ERA, 1996. 1982.

Castañeda, Jorge G. Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War. Vintage Books, 1993.

Castillo, Heberto. "La rebelión." Proceso (Opinión), 15 de enero, 1994, 48-49.

Cavalin, Tangi, and Nathalie Viet-Depaule. "La mission ouvrière : la justification religieuse d'un déplacement à gauche (1940-1955)." Chap. 3 In À la gauche du Christ : Les chrétiens de gauche en France de 1945 à nos jours, edited by Denis Pelletier and Jean-Louis Schlegel, 110-43. Paris: Seuil, 2012.

Cedillo, Adela. El fuego y el silencio. México: Genocidio y delitos de lesa humanidad. Documentos Básicos 1968-2008. Vol. VIII, México, D.F., 2008.

Cedillo, Adela, and Ricardo Gamboa. "Interpretaciones sobre los espacios de participación política después del 10 de junio de 1971 en México." Chap. I In Violencia y sociedad. Un hito en la historia de las izquierdas en América Latina, edited by Verónica Oikión Solano and Miguel Ángel Urrego Ardilla. Morelia, Mich: Colegio de Michoacán-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas-Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2010.

Cerutti, Mario, and Araceli Almaraz, eds. Algodón en el norte de México (1920-1970) Impactos regionales de un cultivo estratégico. Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2013.

Chi, Miao, Olivier Dard, Béatrice Fleury, and Jacques Walter. La révolution culturelle en Chine et en France. Riveneuve éditions, 2017.

Chumacero, Antonio. Origen de una empresa pública. El caso de Tabacos Mexicanos. Tepic, Nayarit: Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit, 1985.

Collectif. Les Noveaux partisans: une histoire de la Gauche prolétarienne. Documents. Al Dante, 2015.

Concha Malo, Miguel, Óscar González Gari, Lino F. Salas, and Jean-Pierre Bastian. La participación de los cristianos en el proceso popular de liberación en México. Biblioteca México: Actualidad

y perspectivas. Edited by Pablo González Casanova. México, D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1986.

Condés Lara, Enrique. Los papeles secretos del 10 de junio México, D.F.: Reflexión Abierta, 2003.

———. "El maoísmo en México.". In Represión y rebelión en México. 1950-1985, 73-128. México, D.F.: BUAP-Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2009.

Conrad, Sebastian. What is Global History? : Princeton University Press, 2016.

Cook, Alexander C. Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Cristianos por el Socialismo. "Primer encuentro "Cristianos por el socialismo" -documento final-." Servir: Revista de Pastoral, June, 1972, 323-38.

Cross, William L., ed. The Culver Roll Call Yearbook from the 1953-1954 school year. Culver, IN: Culver Military Academy, 1954.

De Beauvoir, Simone. All Said and Done. Putnam Publishing Group, 1974.

De la O Holguín, José. Álvaro Ríos: El agrarista de las caravanas rojas. Durango: ICED, 2015.

Del Valle, Luis G. "Teología de la liberación en México." In El pensamiento social de los católicos mexicanos, edited by Roberto J. Blancarte, 266-301. México, D. F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996.

Denord, Francois, and Xavier Zunigo. "Révolutionnairement vôtre. Économie marxiste, militantisme intellectuel et expertise politique chez Charles Bettelheim." Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales 158 (June 2005): 8-29.

Díaz y Díaz, Martín. Ensayos sobre la propiedad. Edited by Antonio Azuela. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, 2014.

Dragostinova, Theodora K. The Cold War from the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021.

Dressen, Marnix. De l'amphi à l'établi : les étudiants maoïstes à l'usine, 1967-1989. Belin, 2000.

———. Les établis, la chaîne et le syndicat : Évolution des pratiques, mythes et croyances d'une population d'établis maoïstes 1968-1982. Monographie d'une usine Lyonnaise. Collection "Logiques Sociales". Edited by Bruno Péquignot. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000.

Eagleson, John. Christians and Socialism: Documentation of the Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America. Orbis Books, 1975.

EINCIYAN. "Joseph, l'indice des RG qui fit tomber Geismar: La Gauche prolétarienne attirait les policiers. Un complément des RG au livre." Mediapart. (April 1st 2008). Accessed October 6, 2022, https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/010408/joseph-l-indic-des-rg-qui-fit-tomber-geismar. https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/010408/joseph-l-indic-des-rg-qui-fit-tomber-geismar.

Enriquez, José Ramón, and Jorge Iñiguez. Cristianismo y marxismo: Historia de un encuentro. Serie Alternativas. México, D.F.: Editorial Posadas, 1979.

Éribon, Didier. Retours sur retour à Reims. Champs Essais. Barcelona: Flammarion, 2018.

Escobar Toledo, Saúl Alfonso. "La Tendencia Democrática del SUTERM y el Nacionalismo Revolucionario." Chap. XI In El camino obrero: Historia del sindicalismo mexicano, 1907-2017.

Sección Obras de Historia. Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2021.

———. "Una reflexión sobre el corporativismo mexicano." Chap. IX In El camino obrero: Historia del sindicalismo mexicano, 1907-2017. Sección Obras de Historia. Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2021.

Espino Armendáriz, Saúl. "Feminismo católico en México: la historia del CIDHAL y sus redes transnacionales (c. 1960-1990)." Ph. D., El Colegio de México, 2019.

Espinosa Damián, Gisela. "Feminismo popular." In Cuatro vertientes del feminismo en México. México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, 2009.

Fazio, Carlos. La cruz y el martillo. México, D.F.: Moritz/Planeta, 1987.

Fernández Christlieb, Paulina. El espartaquismo en México. México, D.F.: Ediciones "El Caballito", 1978.

Fields, A. Belden. Student Politics in France: A Study of the Union nationale des etudiants de France. Student Movements-Past and Present. Edited by Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: Basic Books, 1970.

———. Trotskyism and Maoism. Theory and Practice in France and the United States. New York: Autonomedia, 1988.

Fleet, Michael, and Brian H Smith. The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru. University of Notre Dame Press, 2015.

Fontaine, Marion "Aller au peuple ? Engagements maoïstes dans le Nord ouvrier." In La Révolution culturelle en Chine et en France, edited by Miao Chi, Olivier Dard, Béatrice Fleury, and Jacques Walter, 197-212. Paris: Rieveneuve éditions, 2017.

Frank, Robert. "Les temps de 68." In Les années 68 un monde en mouvement : Nouveaux regards sur une histoire plurielle (1962-1981), edited by Caroline Apostolopoulos, Geneviève

Dreyfus-Armand and Irène Paillard, 36-61. France : BDIC-Syllepse, 2008.

Frère, Marc, Jeannine Garot, and Françoise Wolfers. "Mexique a l'ombre des jeux." Le Point, November 1968.

Fuentes Castillo, Ricardo Yanuel. "Procesos de formación política en la militancia maoísta en México. el caso de Política Popular 1968-1979." Master in Educative Research, Universidad Autónoma de Morelos, 2020.

Fuentes, Cecilia. Mujer en Papel: Memorias inconclusas de Rita Macedo. Ciudad de México: Trece Ediciones, 2019.

Galí Boadella, Montserrat. "Música para la teología de la liberación." Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia, no. 11 (2002): 177-88.

García Jiménez, Plutarco Emilio. Memoria en el tiempo y un poco de historia. Ciudad de México: Juan Pablos Editores, 2021.

García Márquez, Enrique. "La democratización de la sección 147 del SNTMMSRM, 1976." Trabajo y Democracia, no. 104 (Julio-agosto 2009): 96.

García Rivera, Juan de Dios, María del Pilar López Sierra, Aida Mora Rodríguez, Sergio Ortíz Hernández, Carlos Armando Del Pozo Tinoco, and Beatriz Vargas Rosiles. "Bahía de Banderas: Lucha política y desarrollo regional. 1970-1984." Licenciatura en Sociología Tesis, ENEP Acatlán-UNAM, 1987.

Garza, Dionisio. "La democratización en la sección 147 (Monclova) del sindicato minero-metalúrgico." In Los sindicatos nacionales en el México contemporáneo, edited by Javier (coord) Aguilar. Los Sindicatos Nacionales, 203-26. México, D.F.: GV Editores, 1987.

Garza Elizondo, Humberto. "América Latina." In China y el Tercer Mundo. Teoría y práctica de la política exterior de Pequín, 1956-1966. Colección Centro de Estudios Internacionales, 145-202. México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1975.

Geyer, Michael, and Sheila Fitzpatrick. Beyond totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism compared. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Ghodsee, Kristen. Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War. Duke University Press, 2019.

Gilly, Adolfo. The Mexican Revolution: A New Press People's History. New Press, 2005.

Gómez Chacón, César. "Lázaro Cárdenas quiso combatir en Girón." Diario Granma. ÓRGANO OFICIAL DEL COMITÉ CENTRAL DEL PARTIDO COMUNISTA DE CUBA, no. 106. (2011). Accessed December 12, 2018, http://www.granma.cu/granmad/2011/04/16/interna/artic06.html.

Gómez Villanueva, Augusto. El campo que yo conocí: La tierra, los hombres, la política. Memorias. México, D.F.: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2015.

Gonzalez, Luis. "Paz porfírica." Chap. Liberalismo triunfante In Historia general de México, edited by Centro de Estudios Históricos, 669-585. México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 2000.

Gosse, Van. "A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left." Chap. 15 In A Companion to Post-1945 America, edited by Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, 277-302. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2006.

Grange, Dominique, and TARDI. Elise et les Nouveaux Partisans. Paris : Delcourt, 2021. Graphic Novel.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation. Translated by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Haas, Ron. "Guy Hocquenghem and the Cultural Revolution in France after May 1968." Chap. 7 In After the Deluge: New Perspectives

on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France, edited by Julian Bourg, 175-99. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004.

Haber, Paul Lawrance. "Cárdenas, Salinas y los movimientos populares urbanos en México: el caso del Comité de Defensa Popular, "General Francisco Villa", de Durango." In Movimientos sociales en México durante la década de los 80, edited by Sergio Zermeño and Jesús Aurelio Cuevas Díaz, 221-52. México, D.F.: UNAM, 1990.

———. "The Comité de Defensa Popular de Francisco Villa de Durango." 123-71. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.

———. Power from Experience. Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, 2006.

Hage, Julien. "Vie et mort d'une librairie militante : La Joie de lire (1958-1976)." In 68, une histoire collective (1962-1981), edited by Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, 537-41. Paris, France: La Découverte, 2018.

Harcourt, Geoffrey, and Prue Kerr. Joan Robinson. Palgrave McMillan, 2009.

Harnecker, Marta. Los conceptos elementales del materialismo histórico. 65 ed.: Siglo XXI, 2007. 1969.

Hatzfeld, Nicolas. "Les établis : du projet politique à l'expérience sociale." Chap. III. 1968-1974. Changer le monde et changer sa vie In 68 une histoire collective (1962-1981), edited by Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, 550-54. Paris: La Découverte, 2014.

Hebblethwaite, Peter. The Christian-Marxist Dialogue: Beginnings, Present Status, and Beyond. United States: Paulist Press, 1977.

Hernández Rodríguez, Rogelio. Historia mínima del Partido Revolucionario Institucional. Historia mínimas. Ciudad de México: El Colegio de México, 2016.

Hernández Vélez, Salvador. El movimiento urbano popular en La Laguna 1970-1980. Torreón, Coahuila: Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, 2014.

Hervé, Hamon, and Patrick Rotman. Génération. Les années de rêve. 2 vols. Vol. 1, Paris: Seuil, 1987.

Hochschild, Arlie, and Anne Machung. The Second Shift: Working families and the revolution at home. Penguin, 2012.

Horn, Gerd-Rainer. "Left, Left, Left: The Old, the New, and the Far Left." Chap. 4 In The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976, 131-89. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

———. The spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties. Oxford University Press, USA, 2015.

———. Western European Liberation Theology, First Wave (1924-1959). New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 2008.

Hourmant, François. Les Années Mao en France : Avant, pendant et après mai 68. Odile Jacob, 2018.

Huelga, Consejo Nacional de. "El pliego petitorio." Chap. VI. 1968: El parteaguas In La transición en México: Una historia documental 1910-2010, edited by Sergio Aguayo Quezada. Obras de Política y Derecho, 162-63. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010.

Hunt, Lynn. Writing history in the global era. WW Norton & Company, 2014.

Illades, Carlos. "La nueva izquierda." In De la Social a Morena. Breve historia de la izquierda en México., 100-04. México, D.F.: JUS, 2014.

———. El marxismo en México: Una historia intelectual. Taurus, 2018.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. "Población rural y urbana." (2020). Accessed November 8, 2022, https://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/poblacion/rur_urb.aspx?tema=P.

Jaso Galván, Azucena Citlalli. "La Colonia Proletaria Rubén Jaramillo: La lucha por la tenencia de la tierra y la guerra popular prolongada (31 de marzo de 1973-enero de 1974)." Licenciatura en Historia, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011.

Jisheng, Yang. The World Turned Upside Down: A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021.

Johnson, Cecil. Communist China & Latin America, 1959-1967. Columbia University Press New York, 1970.

Karl, Rebecca E. China's Revolutions in the Modern World: A Brief Interpretive History. Verso Books, 2020.

Kessel, Patrick. Le mouvement "maoïste" en France : Textes et Documents, 1963-1968. 2 vols. Vol. 1, Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1972.

Klimke, Martin, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, Joanna Waley-Cohen, and Chen Jian. The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building. First edition. : London: Taylor and Francis, 2018.

Le Dantec, Jean-Pierre. "D'où vient l'établissement ?". Les Temps Modernes, no. 684-685 (July-October 2015): 16-23.

Legorreta Díaz, Ma. del Carmen. Religión, política y guerrilla en Las Cañadas de la Selva Lacandona. México, D.F. : Cal y Arena, 1998.

Leleu, Jérôme. "Charles Bettelheim et la planification économique à Cuba (1960-1968)." Mondes en developpement, no. 2 (2017): 103-16.

Lemus, Rafael. Breve historia de nuestro neoliberalismo: Poder y cultura en México. Ciudad de México: DEBATE, 2021.

León López, Arturo. El movimiento campesino en los Llanos de Victoria, Durango, 1970-1980. Breviarios de la Investigación. México, D.F: UAM Xochimilco, 1986.

Leonard, Aaron J, and Conor A Gallagher. "Sinking Roots and Making the Papers." Chap. 7 In Heavy Radicals-The FBI's Secret War on America's Maoists: The Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party 1968-1980: Zero Books, 2014.

Linhart, Robert. L'établi. Collection "double." Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1978.

López Aviña, Antonio. "Asistencia al Concilio Ecuménico Vaticano II." Chap. 13 In Remembranzas de un Obispo, 229-46. México, D.F.: Editorial Diana, 2001.

López Pérez, Juan. "La Organización Comunista Cajeme: una manifestación del maoísmo en México (1973-1978)." Licenciatura en Historia, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2019.

MacFarquhar, Roderick, and Michael Schoenhals. Mao's last revolution. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2006.

Macín, Raúl. Méndez Arceo, ¿político o cristiano? (Una revolución de la Iglesia). Colección Duda. Vol. 17, México, D.F.: Editorial Posada, 1972.

Mackin, Robert Sean. The Movement that Fell from the Sky? Secularization and the Structuring of Progressive Catholicism in Latin America, 1920s-1970s. University of Wisconsin--Madison, 2005.

Magne, Marcelo Gabriel. Dios está con los pobres: el Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo, prédica revolucionaria y protagonismo social, 1967-1976. Imago Mundi, 2004.

Maldonado Arenal, Sandra. "El compromiso social de Sandra Arenal Huerta." Hora Cero Nuevo León, no. 366. (May 27, 2020): 32-

33. Accessed March 26, 2023, https://issuu.com/hora-cero/docs/hc366_ok/32.

Manceaux, Michèle. Les Maos en France. France: Gallimard, 1972.

Mao Zedong. "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership, June 1, 1943." In Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, 117-22. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965.

———. Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung. Peking, PRC: Foreign Language Press, 1966.

Martín, José Pablo. El Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo: un debate argentino. Guadalupe: 1992.

Martínez Guzmán, Gabino. CDP. El Poder del Pueblo. Durango, México: Universidad Juarez del Estado de Durango, 2012.

Marván, Ignacio. "Orígenes, alcances y limitaciones de nuestro constitucionalismo social." Chap. IV. Garantías individuales y derechos sociales In Cómo hicieron la Constitución de 1917. Biblioteca mexicana, 184-200. Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica-CIDE, 2017.

Marwick, Arthur. The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c. 1974. A&C Black, 2011.

Mayer Delappe, Edward Larry. "La política social de la Iglesia Católica en México a partir del Concilio Vaticano II: 1964-1974." Maestría en historia de Hispanoamérica, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977.

McGrogan, Manus. Tout! Gauchisme, Contre-culture et Presse alternative dans l'après-mai 68. Dans le feu de l'action. Paris: L'échappée, 2018.

McLeod, Hugh. The Religious Crisis of the 1960s. Oxford University Press on Demand, 2007.

Medin, Tzvi. El sexenio alemanista: ideología y praxis política de Miguel Alemán. Problemas de México. Edited by Rubén Jiménez Ricárdez. México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1990.

Mëhilli, Elidor. From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

Mejía González, Adolfo. "México y la URSS, unidos contra el nazifascismo." Chap. III In México y la Unión Soviética en la defensa de la paz, 37-58. México: Agencia de Prensa Nóvosti, 1986.

Méndez y Berrueta, Luis Humberto, and José Othon Quiroz Trejo. "La izquierda maoísta: la línea de masas en el mundo del trabajo." Chap. 3. Entre ser y estar a la izquierda. In La continuidad corporativa en México: Sindicalismo, empresarios e izquierda, 133-49. México, D. F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco 2010.

———. "La izquierda nacionalista. De la Tendencia Democrática a la Unión Nacional de Trabajadores." Chap. 3. Entre ser y estar a la izquierda. In La continuidad corporativa en México: Sindicalismo, empresarios e izquierda, 93-103. México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco 2010.

Mendoza-Álvarez, Carlos. "La teología de la liberación en México: recepción creativa del Concilio Vaticano II." Theologica Xaveriana 64, no. 177 (2014): 157-79.

Meyer, Jean. La cristiada: La guerra de los cristeros. Vol. 1: Siglo xxi, 1994.

———. "El radicalismo rojo (1960...)." Translated by Tomás Segovia. In Historia de los cristianos en América Latina. Siglos XIX y XX., 310-27. México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1999.

———. Samuel Ruíz en San Cristóbal. México, D.F.: Tusquetes, 2000.

Miranda Chávez, Esteban. Cristianos por el Socialismo. Colección América. Concepción, Chile: Ediciones Escaparate SpA, 2020.

Mischi, Julian. Le parti des communistes : Histoire du PCF de 1920 à nos jours. Faits & Idées. Marseille: Hors d'atteinte, 2020.

Mizrahi, Yemile. From Martyrdom to Power: the Partido Acción Nacional in Mexico. Notre Dame, IN: Univerity of Notre Dame, 2003.

Moctezuma Barragán, Pedro. "La Manzana." In Ciudad lacustre: antología de cuentos y crónicas, 59-69. México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2009.

———. La Chispa. Orígenes del movimiento urbano popular en el Valle de México. México, D.F.: Fundación Rosa Luxemburgo Stiftung-Para Leer en Libertad A. C., 2012.

Moguel, Julio. Los caminos de la izquierda. México, D.F.: Juan Pablos, 1987.

———. "Venturas y desventuras de la izquierda en el espacio de la Reforma Política." Chap. II In Los caminos de la izquierda, 65-100. México, D.F.: Juan Pablos, 1987.

Mohandesi, Salar. "Thinking the Global Sixties." The Global Sixties 15, no. 1-2 (2022/07/03 2022): 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/27708888.2022.2144246.

Molina, Daniel. "Las luchas mineras en el periodo 1970-1982." In Minero-Metalúrgicos, edited by Javier (coord) Aguilar. Los sindicatos nacionales en el México contemporaneo. México, D.F.: GV Editores, 1987.

Morales Bermúdez, Jesús. Entre ásperos caminos llanos: La diócesis de San Cristóbal de Las Casas 1950-1995. Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, 2005.

Moreno Galván, Felipe de Jesús. El movimiento urbano popular en el Valle de México. UAM, 2013.

Newman, Robert P. Owen Lattimore and the Loss of China. University of California Press, 2021.

Nova Ramírez, Víctor Erwin. "Siglo XXI Editores, la revolución latinoamericana del pensamiento crítico contemporáneo." In Arnaldo Orfila, una revolución editorial latinoamericana. Cuadernos de Universidades, 67-120. Ciudad de México: UDUAL, 2022.

Olsson, Tore C. "Chapter Six: Transplanting "El Tenesí." In Agrarian Crossings, 159-90: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Olstein, Diego. "Thinking History Globally: Comparing and Connecting." Chap. 4 In Thinking History Globally, 82-97. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Orive Bellinger, Adolfo, and José Luis Torres. Poder Popular. Construcción de ciudadanía y comunidad. México, D. F.: Juan Pablos-Fundación México Social Siglo XXI, 2010.

Orive Bellinger, Adolfo. "Técnicas modernas de planeación en relación con el desarrollo integral de la Cuenca del Río Grijalva." Licenciatura en Ingeniería Civil, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963.

Orive de Alba, Adolfo. "Historia y continuidad de la política hidráulica." Tecnología y ciencias del agua, no. Ingeniería Hidráulica en México (January 1987): 29-31.

Ornelas Navarro, Carlos. Durango 70. Fracaso de una revuelta social. Durango, Dgo: UJED, 2010. 1985.

Pacheco Hinojosa, Maria Martha. La Iglesia católica en la sociedad mexicana, 1958-1973: Secretariado Social Mexicano, Conferencia de Organizaciones Nacionales. México, D.F.: Instituto Mexicano de Doctrina Social Cristiana, 2005.

Pacheco, María. "Cristianismo sí, comunismo no! Anticomunismo eclesiástico en México." Estudios de historia moderna y contemporánea de México 24, no. 024 (2002).

Palacios Moncayo, Miguel. Durango: Economía, sociedad, política y cultura. Durango: UJED, 2005.

Pastor Escobar, Raquel. "Vaticano II en el laicado mexicano: José Álvarez Icaza y la puesta en práctica del Concilio Ecuménico." Ph. D., UNAM, 2004.

Pensado, Jaime M. "Fun and Politics in Postwar Mexico." Chap. 2 In Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013.

———. Love and Despair: How Catholic Activism Shaped Politics and the Counterculture in Modern Mexico. Univ of California Press, 2023.

———. ""No More Fun and Games": From Porristas to Porros." Chap. 7 In Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013.

———. Rebel Mexico: Student unrest and authoritarian political culture during the long sixties. Stanford University Press, 2013.

———."Silencing Rebellious Priests: Rodolfo Escamilla García and the Repression of Progressive Catholicism in Cold-War Mexico." The Americas 79, no. 2 (2022): 263-89. https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2021.146.

———. "Teaching the global sixties: a perspective from Latin America." The Global Sixties 15, no. 1-2 (2022): 30-35.

Peterson, Gigi. "A Dangerous Demagogue": Containing the Influence of the Mexican Labor-Left and Its United States Allies." In American Labor and the Cold War, 245-76: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Plicher, Jeffrey M. "Tortilla Technology." Chap. 5. Replacing the Aztec Blender: The Modernization of Popular Cuisine In Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity: UNM Press, 1998.

Poniatowska, Elena. Fuerte es el silencio. Serie Crónicas. México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1980.

Proceso. "Sacerdotes comprometidos… y desterrados." Proceso: Semanario de Información y Análisis (National news), November 6, 1976.

Pu Wang. The Translatability of Revolution. BRILL, 2020.

Puertas, Pilar. "Cristianos por el socialismo en México." In Los proyectos católicos de nación en el México del siglo XX: Actores, ideologías y prácticas, edited by María Gabriela Aguirre Cristiani and Nora Pérez Rayón y Elizundia, 441-63. Ciudad de México: UAM-Xochimilco, 2020.

Puma Crespo, Jorge Ivan. "Maoists of Northern Mexico: A Short History of Política Popular-Línea Proletaria, 1969-1979." Revista Izquierdas, no. 27 (April 2016): 200-29. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-50492016000200008.

———. "Small Groups Don't Win Revolutions. Armed Struggle in the Memory of Maoist Militants of Política Popular." Latin American Perspectives 44, no. 6 (November 2017): 140-55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X17699902.

———. "The Nazas-Aguanaval Group: Radical Priests, Catholic Networks, and Maoist Politics in Northern Mexico." The Americas 79, no. 2 (2022): 291-320. https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2021.141.

Quezada, Ariana. "The Revolution in Crisis: A History of Human Rights in Mexico, 1970-1980." Ph. D., University of Oklahoma, 2016.

Ramírez Aguilar, Juan. "Movimiento sacerdotal ONIS: la Iglesia en el Perú ante las demandas de justicia social (1968-1975)." Phainomenon 13 (2014): 131-47. https://doi.org/10.33539/phai.v13i1.333.

Ramírez Sáiz, Juan Manuel. El movimiento urbano popular en México. Biblioteca México: actualidad y perspectivas. México, D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1986.

Ramminger, Michael. Éramos Iglesia… en medio del pueblo: El legado de los Cristianos por el Socialismo en Chile 1971-1973. Historia. Edited by Julio Pinto Vallejos. Santiago de Chile: LOM, 2019.

Rangel Hernández, Lucio. El virus rojo de la revolución. La guerrilla en México. El caso de la Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, 1973-1981. Morelia, Michoacan: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas Hidalgo, 2013.

Rea Rodríguez, Carlos Rafael. "El gasconismo: surgimiento de una cultura política regional." Desacatos 25, no. Septiembre-diciembre (2007): 142-62.

Restrepo, Javier Darío. La revolución de las sotanas: Golconda 25 años después. 1. ed.: Santafé de Bogotá, D.C., Colombia: Planeta, 1995.

Revueltas, José. Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza. José Revueltas. Obras Completas. Edited by Andrea Revueltas and Philippe Cheron. 24 vols. México, D.F.: ERA, 1982.

Richard, Pablo. Los cristianos y la revolución. Series Debates Nacionales, Colección Camino Abierto. Edited by M. Eliana Veas M. Santiago de Chile: Quimantú, 1973.

Richer, Philippe. La Chine et le Tiers Monde (1949-1969). Bibliothèque Historique. Paris, France : Payot, 1971.

Rico Ramirez, Roberto. El Retorno. La Unión de Colonias Populares del Valle de México (UCP-VM): sus orígenes, sus organizaciones. México, D. F.: Brigada para Leer en Libertad, 2012.

Riera Fullana, Juan. Ejido Colectivo Batopilas. Su historia. Serie Hacia una Política Popular. Ciudad de México: Creática Editorial, 2016.

Rivas Ontiveros, José René. La izquierda estudiantil en la UNAM. Organizaciones, movilizaciones y liderazgos. (1958-1972). Miguel Ángel Porrúa-UNAM-FES Aragón, 2007.

Robcis, Camille. " "China in Our Heads" Althusser, Maoism, and Structuralism." Social Text 30, no. 1 110 (2012): 51-69.

Robinson, Joan. "The Cultural Revolution in China." International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 44, no. 2 (1968): 214-27.

Rodríguez Araujo, Octavio. "El espartaquismo y el maoísmo." Chap. 2 In Las izquierdas en México. Colección Política y Sociedad. México, D.F.: Orfila, 2015.

Romero de Solís, José Miguel. El aguijón del espíritu: historia contemporánea de la Iglesia en México, 1892-1992. El Colegio de Michoacán AC, 2006.

Romero Sotelo, María Eugenia "The Origins of Economic Orthodoxy in Mexico." Chap. 6 In Economic development and global crisis: the Latin American economy in historical perspective, edited by José Luís Cardoso, Maria Cristina Marcuzzo and María Eugenia Romero Sotelo, 119-64: Routledge, 2014.

Rothwell, Matthew D. Transpacific revolutionaries: the Chinese revolution in Latin America. Vol. 10: Routledge, 2013.

Ruilova, Leonardo. China Popular en América Latina. Bogotá, Colombia: Sociedad Ediciones Internacionales 1978.

Sacerdotes para el Pueblo. "Declaración en el II Congreso Nacional de "Sacerdotes para el Pueblo" a las recientes luchas de liberación de los oprimidos en Torreón." Boletín Cristianos por el Socialismo México, May, 1973.

Salmerón, Pedro. Los carrancistas: La historia nunca contada del victorioso Ejército del Noreste. México, D.F.: Planeta, 2010.

———. 1915 México en Guerra. México, D.F.: Planeta, 2015.

Sánchez Galindo, José Augusto. "Mejoramos servicios básicos y nuevos proyectos." Chap. X. Hacia un segundo año de lucha. Traslados In La revolución de nuestras conciencias. Una historia de lucha estudiantil y popular. Gómez Palacio, Durango, 2022.

Sánchez Olvera, Alma Rosa. El feminismo mexicano ante el movimiento urbano popular: Dos experiencias de lucha de género (1970-1985). México, D.F.: UNAM-Plaza y Valdés editores, 2002.

Santiago, Javier. PMT La difícil historia 1971-1986. México, DF: Editorial Posada, 1987, 1987.

Saragoza, Alex M. "The Making of an Industrial Elite: The Political Economy of Monterrey." Chap. 2 In The Monterrey Elite and the Mexican State, 1880-1940, 31-71. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.

Saranyana, Josep-Ignasi. "I. Teologías latinoamericanistas y teología de la liberación." Chap. IV In Teología en América Latina: El Siglo de las teologías latinoamericanistas (1899-2001), edited by Josep-Ignasi Saranyana and Carmen-José Alejos Grau, 255-82. Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2002.

Sassoon, Donald. "The French Experiment." Chap. 19 In One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century, 534-71. London: I. B. Tauris, 2014.

———. "The Revival of Working-class Militancy 1960-1973." Chap. 13 In One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century, 357-82. London: I. B. Tauris, 2014.

Saucedo Lozoya, Miguel Ángel. "Prácticas y representaciones sociales de colonos urbanos y trabajadores agrícolas. El caso de la región lagunera en los años '70." Ph.D. in Sciences and Humanities for Interdisciplinary Development, Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, 2016.

Schram, Stuart R. The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Scott, Joan Wallach. "Does the Presence of Women Always Call for Gender Analysis?". Chap. 10. Some More Reflections on Gender and Politics In Gender and the Politics of History (Revised Edition). New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Secours rouge du Nord. Les mineurs accusent. Maspero, 1970.

Servín, Elisa. Ruptura y oposición: El movimiento Henriquista, 1945-1954. México, D.F.: Cal y Arena, 2001.

———. "Algunas ramas de un árbol frondoso: el cardenismo a mediados del siglo XX." Historias 69 (2008): 81-96.

Sheppard, Randall. A Persistent Revolution: History, Nationalism, and Politics in Mexico since 1968. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2016.

Short, Philip. Mao. Biblioteca de Bolsillo. Barcelona: Crítica, 2003.

Snodgrass, Michael. Deference and Defiance in Monterrey: Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890–1950. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Soto Gómez, José Javier "Formación y organización de las colonias del movimiento urbano en una región del norte de México: 1972-1974." Artificios. Revista colombiana de estudiantes de historia, no. 22 (2023): 17-44.

Spenser, Daniela. In Combat: The Life of Lombardo Toledano. Brill, 2019.

Starcenbaum, Marcelo. "Entre Althusser y la Unidad Popular." In Marta Harnecker: La pedagogía del marxismo Buenos Aires, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2022https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewBook?id=0.

Tahir, Pervez. Making Sense of Joan Robinson on China. Springer Nature, 2019.

Thénault, Sylvie. Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne. Champs histoire. Barcelona: Flammarion, 2012.

Torres, José Luis. "El movimiento de los obreros de Altos Hornos de México en Monclova, Coahuila." In Poder Popular: Construcción de ciudadanía y comunidad, edited by José Luis Torres and Adolfo Orive Bellinger. México, D.F.: Juan Pablos, 2010.

———. "Unión Ejidal Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit." In Poder Popular: Construcción de Ciudadanía y comunidad, edited by Adolfo Orive Bellinger and José Luis Torres, 283-354. México, D.F.: Juan Pablos Editor-Fundación México Social Siglo XXI, 2010.

Trejo Delabre, Raúl. Crónica del sindicalismo en México (1976-1988). México, D.F.: Siglo XXI editores-Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales-UNAM, 1990.

Ulloa Bornemann, Alberto. Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir. Voices of Latin American Life. Edited by Arthur Schmidt. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007.

Unión de Mutua Ayuda Episcopal. Investigación regional para la planeación pastoral. México, D.F., 1966.

Universita degli studi di Trento. Centro interuniversitario per la ricerca matematica. El Catolicismo en cifras América y México. Comisión de Estadística. 2 ed.: Publicaciones de la CIRM, 1967.

Urrego, Miguel Ángel. "History of Maoism in Latin America: Between the Armed Struggle and Serving the People." Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura 44, no. 2 (2017): 111-35.

Vargas Valdés, Jesús. La Patria de la Juventud. Los estudiantes del Politécnico en 1968. Chihuahua, Chih: Nueva Vizcaya Editores, 2008.

Velázquez Vidal, Uriel. "Historia del Partido Revolucionario del Proletariado Mexicano, 1969-1974." Maestría en Historia y Etnohistoria, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2020.

Venturi, Franco. Roots of Revolution. A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960. 1952.

Vigna, Xavier. "Luttes dans la sidérurgie en 1979 : la fin de l'insubordination ouvrière." In 68 Une histoire collective (1962-1981), edited by Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, 754-57. Paris: La Découverte, 2018.

———. "Ouvriers en mouvement et mouvement ouvrier (des années 1950 aux années 1970) Une puissance en trompe l'œil ?". Chap. 5 In Histoire des ouvriers en France au XXe siècle, 240-96. Paris: Perrin, 2021.

Villarreal, Diana R., and Víctor Castañeda. Urbanización y autoconstrucción de vivienda en Monterrey. México, D.F.: Centro de Ecodesarrollo, 1986.

Woldenberg, José. Memoria de la izquierda. Cal y arena, 1998.

Wollin, Richard. The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s. Oxford: Princeton Universtiy Press, 2010.

Yaffe, Helen. "Che Guevara and the Great Debate, Past and Present." Science & Society 76, no. 1 (2012): 11-40. https://doi.org/10.1521/siso.2012.76.1.11.

Young-Hyun Jo. Sacerdotes y transformación social en Perú (1968-1975). México, D.F.: UNAM-CC y DEL, 2005.

———. "Movimiento" Sacerdotes para el Pueblo" y la Transformación Socioeclesiástica en México." Revista Iberoamericana 21, no. 1 (2010): 81-104.

Zancarini-Fournel, Michelle. "Récit : L'épicentre." In 68 Une histoire collective (1962-1981), edited by Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, 211-74. Paris: La découverte, 2018.

Zárate Ortiz, José Israel. "Las acciones y la represión de la Iglesia de los pobres en la diócesis de León, 1959-1969." B.A. in History, Universidad de Guanajuato, 2017.

Zolov, Eric. "Introduction: Latin America in the Global Sixties." The Americas 70, no. 3 (2014): 349-62.

———. The last good neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties. Duke University Press, 2020.

15.3 Oral History

Araujo de la Torre, Hugo Andrés. "Interview with Hugo Andrés Araujo de la Torre, Founder of People's Politics." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. July 30, 2014.

Arreguín, Enrique. "Telephone Conversation with Enrique Arreguín, Monclova Unionist and Proletarian Line Brigadista in Chiapas " By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. July 1st, 2020.

Castro Hernández, María Concepción, Silvestre Murillo, and Francisco Aldama Pérez. "Interview with Former People's Politics Brigadistas in La Laguna." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. September 20, 2015.

Chairez, Venancio. "Conversation with Venancio Chairez Tierra y Libertad, Torreón, Coahuila Squatter." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. August 26, 2013.

———. "Interview with Venancio Chairez, Tierra y Libertad Squatter and People's Politics Brigadista." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo and Abraham Salazar. *Ph.D. in history, University of Notre Dame*. July 1st, 2021.

Chavance, Bernard. "Conversation with Bernard Chavance, Former Charles Bettelheim's Assistant." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. December 17, 2021.

Ehrenzweig, Héctor. "Interview with Héctor Ehrenzweig, Former People's Politics Brigadista in La Laguna and Chiapas." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph.D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. July 7, 2021.

Gil, Javier. "Conversation with Javier Gil, Founder of People's Politics." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. September 30, 2013.

Gordillo, Gustavo. "Interview with Gustavo Gordillo, Former Juan N. Noyola Group Member." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. December 22, 2012.

Guevara, Roberto, and Dolores Chairez. "Interview with Roberto Guevara and his Wife Lola Chairez, Tierra y Libertad, Torreón, Coahuila Squatters." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. August 26, 2013.

Hernández Vélez, Salvador. "Interview with Salvador Hernández Vélez, Former People's Politics Brigadista in Torreón." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. August 12, 2013.

Martínez, Benigno. "Interview with Father Benigno Martínez." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. November 22, 2019.

———. "Conversation with Father Benigno Martínez." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. June 30, 2021.

Murillo, Miguel. "Conversation with Doctor Miguel Murillo, Former Student Activist in Torreón " By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph.D. in History, Notre Dame*. July 7, 2021.

Orive Bellinger, Adolfo. "Interview with Adolfo Orive Bellinger I." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. August 10, 2012.

———. "Interview with Adolfo Orive Bellinger II." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. October 18, 2012.

———. "Interview with Adolfo Orive Bellinger III." By Jorge Puma. *Ph.D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. July 16, 2018.

———. "Conversation with Adolfo Orive Bellinger II." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. January 24, 2022.

Polo. "Interview with Polo, Tierra y Libertad, Torreón, Coahuila Squatter." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo and Abraham Salazar. *Ph.D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. July 6, 2021.

Sánchez de la O, Armando "Telephone Conversation with Former Priest Armando Sánchez de la O." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History, University of Notre Dame*. November 23, 2019.

Sánchez Galindo, José Augusto. "Interview with Augusto "Guti" Sánchez Galindo, Former People's Politics Brigadista in Gómez Palacio, Durango." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. August 28, 2013.

Sánchez, Severiano. "Interview with Severiano Sanchez, IPN student activist in 1968 and brigadista of People's Politics in Local 147 of the Miner's Union in Monclova." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Ph. D. in History University of Notre Dame*. March 14, 2017.

Vargas Valdés, Jesús. "Interview with Jesús Vargas, Former People's Politics Brigadista." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. July 13, 2013.

———. "Interview with Jesús Vargas, Former People's Politics Brigadista." By Jorge Puma. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. July 12, 2013.

Vargas Valdés, Jesús, and Marcela Frías. "Interview with Jesús Vargas and Marcela Frías, Former People's Politics Brigadistas." By Jorge Ivan Puma Crespo. *Maestría en Historia Internacional CIDE*. July 13, 2013.

15.4 FIGURES

Casasola. "Miguel Alemán and Adolfo Orive de Alba in the SARH's office." México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, México, November 28 1950. Photograph. http://mediateca.inah.gob.mx/repositorio/islandora/object/fotografia%3A232679.

Culver Military Academy. "Company D Second Platoon." Culver, Indiana: Culver Military Academy, January 1954. https://cdm17320.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/Rollcall/id/1914/rec/2.

El Nayar, La Redacción, and Monsalvo. "Triunfo del Ing. Orive en la agitación política de Compostela." Tepic, Nayarit, February 19, 1973.

El Norte-Redacción. "We Did Not Come to Negotiate with the Governor, Comrades, Shouted a Female Representative of the Tierra y Libertad Popular Front." Monterrey, Nuevo León: El Norte, May 9 1980.

El Sol de Durango. "Jesús Vargas Valdés, High School Teacher and Main Instigator of the Occupation of the Old Airfield Terrains. ." Durango de Victoria, Durango: El Sol de Durango, February 10 1973.

———. "With Blankets, Wood, and Cardboard, Squatters Built the First Barracks in the Terrains of the Old Airfield." Durango, Durango, February 11 1973.

Enriquez. "En San Pedro, Coah." Cartoon, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 20 1976, Editorial Section.

———. "¿Se cayó el arbolito?" Cartoon, *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, Coahuila), October 19 1976.

Orive Bellinger, Adolfo. "Adolfo Orive Bellinger and Lázaro Cárdenas After the General Returned from his Tour to China and the Soviet Union." México, D.F., February 1959.

Presidencia Municipal de Torreón. “Priest José Batarse Charur Intervened in Favor of the Janitors.” Torreón, Coahuila: Archivo Municipal de Torreón, April 13, 1973.

———. “Torreón’s Municipal Palace after the Janitors’ Protest April 1973 “. Torreón, Coahuila: Archivo Municipal de Torreón, April 1973.

Puma Crespo, Jorge Ivan. “Nazas-Aguanaval Priest Group Expansion in the 1970s “. Ciudad de México, Google Maps, May 15, 2023.

———. “People’s Politics’ Expansion (1968-1979).” Ciudad de México, Google Maps. May 15, 2023.

———.”People’s Politics First Peasant Organization, Unión de Ejidos de Bahía De Banderas “. Ciudad de México, Accessed on May 15 2023.

Sánchez, Severiano. “Severiano Sánchez’ IPN id “. México, D.F.: Severiano Sánchez’ Personal Archive, 1969.

———. “Local 147 Demonstration in the Main Plaza “. Monclova, Coahuila: Severiano Sánchez’ Personal Archive, 1980.