

A MAP OF LATIN AMERICA'S PRESENT

AN INTERVIEW WITH HÉCTOR BÉJAR



Dossier n° 49
Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research
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In the midst of the pandemic, 162 artists from 30 countries and 27 organisations contributed to the *Anti-Imperialist Poster Exhibitions*. They responded to a series of open calls to make posters that give expressions to four defining concepts of our time: capitalism, neo-liberalism, imperialism, and hybrid war. It was an experimental process, jointly organised by [Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research](#) and the [International Week of Anti-Imperialist Struggle](#). To illustrate this dossier, we highlight some work of artists from the Americas who contributed to the process.

COVER

[Túlio Carapiá](#) and [Clara Cerqueira](#) (Brazil), *Fruits of the Earth*, 2020.

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Lizzie Suarez (United States), *Abolish Neoliberalism, Resist Imperialism*, 2020.

Introduction

Four emblematic coups have now been substantially reversed: Chile (1973), Peru (1992), Honduras (2009), and Bolivia (2019). Each of these coups was driven by political forces of the far right backed by the military and by the United States government. Presidents Gabriel Boric of Chile, Xiomara Castro of Honduras, Luis Arce of Bolivia, and Pedro Castillo of Peru join a range of presidents who represent political forces of the left. Each of them fought electoral campaigns against nasty, fascistic political forces with close ties to the United States government. It was clear that Washington wanted to see these fascists in power to advance its agenda of squeezing the left across Latin America. But Arce, Castillo, Castro, and Boric emerged victorious based on broad coalitions of workers and peasants, the impoverished urban precariat, and the declining middle class. Mass mobilisations defined their electoral campaigns from the highlands of Bolivia to the Caribbean lowlands of Honduras.

The Fraying of Neoliberalism

Chile became the laboratory for neoliberal policy after the coup led by General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the socialist project of President Salvador Allende in 1973. Pinochet brought in a group of free-market economists called the Chicago Boys to hastily give US-based multinational companies the best deal possible (particularly for Chilean copper), to allow the Chilean oligarchy to have an

extended tax holiday, and to privatise most essential public services and programmes (including pensions). What enabled the Pinochet coup regime to last till 1990 was the brute force inflicted on organised labour and socialist sectors as well as reasonably high copper prices. The turn to democracy after 1990 was managed by an agreement amongst liberals called the *Concertación* not to dismantle the neoliberal project, but merely to have the army withdraw to the barracks.

The surrender of liberals to Pinochet-era policies was not simply a Chilean phenomenon. The Third World debt crisis in the 1980s and the demise of the USSR in 1991 throttled the ability even of left forces to propose any new socialist project. It was in this period that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) became an important player in Latin American politics, pushing austerity regimes upon societies that had no capacity to tolerate public sector cuts as a condition to access financing. When the IMF demanded austerity in Peru in the early 1990s, right-wing President Alberto Fujimori dismantled Congress and the judiciary and seized power (known as a self-coup). No such coup was necessary in other countries in the region, largely because liberals in these countries conceded to IMF policies without a nudge. A few months before Fujimori's self-coup, Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez adopted the IMF package with deep cuts in fuel subsidies at its heart. This package resulted in a mass uprising, the *Caracazo*, which inspired a young military officer by the name of Hugo Chávez to enter political life. The young Chávez was seized by the violence that Pérez used to discipline the population into IMF austerity.

Chávez spoke not only for the Venezuelan people when he decided to run for the presidency in 1998; his voice carried down to Patagonia and up to the Mexico-US border. He unapologetically condemned neoliberalism, which he considered to be a policy of mass starvation. Chávez's electoral victory on an anti-neoliberalism platform and his articulation of a continent-wide Bolivarian policy of unity – named after the great liberator of Spanish America Simón Bolívar – inspired a range of political forces across Latin America and the Caribbean. It is remarkable how quickly countries in the region elected left political formations in the years that followed: Haiti (2000), Argentina (2003), Brazil (2002), Uruguay (2004), Bolivia (2005), Honduras (2005), Ecuador (2006), Nicaragua (2006), Guatemala (2007), Paraguay (2008), and El Salvador (2009). Although these formations were not all as far to the left as Chávez and the Cuban Revolution, they certainly began to open new directions out of a frayed neoliberalism. The combination of the US illegal war on Iraq (2003), the global financial crisis (2007–08), and the general fragility of US global power provided the international context for the rise of what was called the Pink Tide.

A Season of Hybrid Wars

The fragility of US hegemony did not mean that the United States would allow these projects to develop without a challenge in what it has claimed as its 'backyard' since the 1823 Monroe Doctrine. The first salvo against the Pink Tide took place in Haiti, where President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was removed by a vicious coup in 2004 (he had previously experienced a US-backed coup in 1991 but

returned to power in 1994). Aristide was effectively kidnapped by the US, France, and Canada and sent off to South Africa while the authorities in the country conducted a purge of his political allies.

The US coup against Aristide was followed five years later by a coup against the Honduran presidency of the liberal Manuel Zelaya, who was violently removed from office and sent off to the Dominican Republic. These coups came alongside a quieter and harsher strategy of hybrid war, through which the United States joined forces with the right-wing oligarchy of Latin America to use economic war, diplomatic war, communication war, and a series of other hostile acts to isolate and damage their adversaries.

The techniques of hybrid warfare had already been developed against Cuba since the 1960s: attempted isolation by excluding Cuba from the Organisation of American States in 1962 (with Mexico being the holdout), suffocation of the Cuban economy by sanctions and a blockade (broken by the USSR's international solidarity), a communications war that included disparaging the country's communist leadership, and acts of overt aggression including invasions (such as the Bay of Pigs in 1961) and 638 assassination attempts against Castro. This became the template for the hybrid wars launched against Bolivia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and elsewhere with new forms of lawfare (using the legal establishment as a weapon) being deployed against the left project in Paraguay with the impeachment of President Fernando Lugo in 2012 and in Brazil with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 and the imprisonment of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2018. A self-coup in Ecuador by President Lenin Moreno in 2017 came alongside

the withdrawal of legal proceedings against US multinational oil companies and the surrender of Julian Assange to British authorities in exchange for an IMF-back credit infusion. The creation of the Lima Group in 2017 – engineered by the US and Canada – sought to undermine the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, such as through the theft of Venezuelan resources and the creation and attempted installation of fake President Juan Guaidó to challenge the legitimacy of the Venezuelan political process. The US government waged a fierce war against the people of Latin America and the Caribbean camouflaged behind the language of ‘human rights’ and ‘democracy’.

The Return of the Left

The left in Latin America has never been unitary. Older currents were greatly damaged by the dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s, with thousands of cadres and sympathisers killed and entire traditions of thought and praxis lost to new generations. What was recovered in the 1990s came out of the resilience of the Cuban Revolution, the visionary leadership of Chávez, and the new social movements that emerged in opposition to austerity and to racism (particularly against indigenous communities in the hemisphere), as well as for the expansion of social rights (notably women’s rights and the rights of sexual minorities) and for a harmonious relationship with nature. Different traditions of left thought developed, with different references of what counted as the left, including a strong current inspired by the example of the Zapatistas in Mexico and their emergence in 1994.



Hiroto Morais (Brazil), *Hybrid War Against Nossa América ('Our America')*, 2020.

The importance of Chávez is that he was able to bring together these various currents and bridge the political suspicions between those who favoured political activity through parties and those who favoured political activity through social movements. It was in the wake of Chávez's immense political advance in Venezuela and in the continent that other such left social formations began to emerge. The high point of the great unity between left forces in the hemisphere came at Mar del Plata (Argentina) in 2005 during the 4th Summit of the Americas, where Chávez led Latin American nations in rejecting the US-backed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). At the Anti-Summit nearby, Chávez stood with Bolivia's presidential candidate Evo Morales, Argentinian football legend Diego Maradona, and Cuban singer Silvio Rodríguez to condemn the Washington Consensus. Since Brazil, the largest economy in the region, joined with Argentina and Venezuela to oppose the FTAA, another road seemed likely.

However, with the collapse of commodity prices since 2010 and the death of Chávez in 2013, the US imperialist agenda seized an advantage. The coup against Evo Morales in 2019 was carried out in the name of 'democracy', oddly backed by liberal forces who felt comfortable standing with racist, fascist fundamentalists who – as the self-proclaimed president put it – 'dream[t] of a Bolivia free of satanic indigenous rites'. It was this sector that carried out the coup who were deemed the 'democrats' of Bolivia over the democratically elected indigenous president. By portraying Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela as the 'troika of tyranny', the United States was able to drive a wedge within the left, peeling away sections that now felt uneasy with or caved to the punitive actions dealt for being

in alliance with these revolutionary processes. The success of the hybrid war in sowing these divisions delayed the return of the left in many countries and allowed the neofascists – such as President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil – to take power. The divides remain intact, with progressive forces in Chile, Colombia, and Peru eager to distance themselves from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela using the vocabulary provided by US propaganda.

Nonetheless, the fatal impossibility of permanent austerity enabled left forces to reassemble and strike back. Morales' Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) did not collapse but resisted the coup regime with bravery, fought to hold elections during the pandemic, and returned to power in Bolivia with a majority in 2020. While the left and left-liberal forces in Honduras had been battered after the coup in 2009, they fought hard in the elections of 2013 and 2017, losing, experts say, due to widespread election fraud. Xiomara Castro, who lost in 2013, finally won in a near landslide in 2021. In Peru, a very fragile coalition gathered around the candidacy of a teachers' union leader, Pedro Castillo, who won a narrow victory against Keiko Fujimori, the right-wing candidate and the daughter of Alberto Fujimori, who conducted the self-coup in 1992. While in Bolivia the roots of the movement to build socialism are deep and have been fortified by the gains achieved under the fourteen-year leadership of Evo Morales, these roots are much shallower in Honduras and Peru. Pedro Castillo has already been largely isolated from his own movement and the agenda he has been able to advance has been decidedly modest.

Commodity prices, whose revenues had provided fuel for the Pink Tide of twenty years ago, remain low. But there is now a changed context across the region, namely a more engaged China. China's interest in expanding the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) across Latin America has provided new sources of investment and financing for development in the region. It is widely accepted in Latin America that the BRI project is an antidote to Washington's largely discredited IMF project and agenda of neoliberal austerity. With little original capital to invest in Latin America, the United States has mainly its military and diplomatic power to use against the arrival of Chinese investment. Latin America, therefore, has become a major front in the US-imposed cold war on China. In each of the region's new left projects, China will play a significant role. That is why Xiomara Castro has said that an early visit for her will be to Beijing and why Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega decided to recognise the People's Republic of China as the legitimate representative of China in the United Nations system. There is no doubt that, from Mexico to Chile, the question of Chinese investment has altered the balance of forces and will likely bring together political groups that would otherwise not tolerate each other. The US is trying to portray China as a 'dictatorship' to appeal to those sections of the progressive majorities that have already been trained to be suspicious of the Cuban and Bolivarian revolutionary projects.

In 2022, there will be crucial elections in Brazil and Colombia. In Brazil, Lula leads all the polls and is likely to return to the presidency unless sabotaged by the hybrid war – again. Lula has been significantly radicalised by the attack against him: if he wins, he will likely be less willing to compromise with Brazil's entrenched

oligarchies and will therefore likely be a firmer ally of the revolutionary processes in Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela as well as left governments elsewhere. Comments made by Lula and Dilma suggest that they seek to develop a closer relationship with China to balance the suffocating impact of US power. Colombia, an old ally of the US where violence has been used by an illiberal oligarchy to maintain power, might see the victory of the popular left candidate Gustavo Petro. Anti-austerity protests in Colombia have defined the country's politics long before the COVID-19 pandemic and will likely set the terms for the electoral campaign. If Lula and Petro win, Latin America will come closer to establishing a new regional project that is not defined by US-driven economic austerity, resource theft, and political submission.

An Empire in Decline

To grasp the dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean, we turned to Héctor Béjar, the former foreign minister in the cabinet of Peru's President Pedro Castillo. Béjar is one of the most distinguished intellectuals in the hemisphere, having written with great feeling about his country's history with special emphasis on the left and the possibilities for social change in our time.

In 1961, at the age of 26, Béjar travelled to Cuba to train as a guerrilla. The next year, he and a few of his comrades, including Javier Heraud, Julio Dagnino, Alaín Elías, and Juan Pablo Chang, formed the National Liberation Army (ELN), which sought to overthrow the wretched situation in Peru. Upon returning to Peru, he was sent

to prison and faced with the possibility of a seventeen-year sentence. In 1969, he won the Casa de las Américas prize for his classic book, *Perú 1965: Apuntes sobre una experiencia guerrillera* ('Peru 1965: Notes About a Guerrilla's Experience').

It is a measure of Béjar's great commitment to social justice and his intelligence that he was pardoned by then President Juan Velasco Alvarado in 1970 and asked by Velasco to work on a land reform agenda. The failure of Velasco's attempt to democratise Peru led Béjar and others to create the Centre of Studies for Development and Participation (CEDEP) whose journal *Socialismo y Participación* ('Socialism and Participation') Béjar edited from 1977 to 2009. This journal was a key reference not only for developments in Peru, but also across the region. Béjar summarised his work with the journal in a series of classic books, including *La revolución en la trampa* ('The Trapped Revolution'), 1976; *La Organización campesina* ('Peasant Organisation'), 1980; and *Mito y Utopía: relato alternativo del origen republicano del Perú*, ('Myth and Utopia: An Alternative Account of the Republican Origins of Peru'), 2012.

President Pedro Castillo invited Béjar to join his government as foreign minister, which he did. However, Béjar's term lasted mere weeks, beginning on 29 July 2021 and ending on 17 August 2021. The brevity of his term is best understood by the limited space for manoeuvre available to the Castillo government, which immediately came under immense pressure to remove the most respected left intellectual in Peru from his government.

José Carlos Llerena Robles, a member of La Junta and of ALBA Movimientos (Peru), spoke with Béjar about the current political situation in Latin America and the Caribbean on behalf of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research. They spoke for three days, producing a fabulous discussion about some of the issues raised in this introduction. What you will read in *A Map of Latin America's Present: An Interview with Héctor Béjar* (dossier no. 49) is an abbreviated version of that conversation.





INTERNATIONAL
WEEK OF
ANTI-IMPERIALIST
STRUGGLE

Arte: Francisco Daniel A. Moreira
www.behance.net/franciscodam
www.facebook.com/foodam
www.instagram.com/francisco.dam

Francisco Daniel (Brazil), *Wake Up, Latin America. It's Time to Rise Up!*, 2020.

Part 1: Latin America and US Imperialism

 *How would you characterise the catastrophic situation in Latin America in terms of the left and popular movements after the death of Comandante Hugo Chávez in 2013?*

Each country has its own reality; each country is unique. But I would not make a negative assessment – on the contrary. If I were right-wing, I would be worried. The PRD (Dominican Revolutionary Party) continues to govern the Dominican Republic. The Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution remain undefeated. There is Nicaragua, where the Sandinistas just won elections. You have President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in Mexico. Xiomara Castro just won in Honduras. In Chile, Gabriel Boric, a left-wing candidate who emerged from the popular movement, won. In Bolivia you have President Luis Arce, in Argentina you have President Alberto Fernández, and Barbados just proclaimed itself a republic.

I think the overall situation is positive when you compare it with the situation in the 1970s, when there was a system of liquidation, of the systematic assassination of left-wing leaders, which in some ways continues in Colombia even today, and which always remains a threat. But if you compare that with the current situation, you find that the left – what we call the left in Latin America and the Caribbean – has gained tremendous headway, and what we call the

right is in a situation of tremendous popular and conscious abandonment in political terms.

Another thing, of course, is the economic system; the world still belongs to the banks. In the cultural world, the left has everything, the right has nothing. In the political world, there is a standoff. I believe that there is a profound process in Latin America, a kind of great march. So, it is difficult to make a sweeping generalisation. One must look closely and study the characteristics of each process in the region. In some places the left has had to moderate its language because it needs to win over other political strata in alliances. This is what just happened in Honduras, for example. In other places, this is not the case. But still, the region is increasingly pink.

From the Cuban Revolution in 1959 until the death of Che Guevara in 1967, the Latin American left wing had rural and urban guerrilla forces. These guerrilla groups had socialist programmes. The death of Che and, of course, the coup against Salvador Allende in 1973 marked a whole new era: an era of dictatorships, the dictatorships of Operation Condor, which was a plan to eliminate tens of thousands of activists between 1975 and 1983 that was carried out by the region's military in collaboration with the United States. There was a mass elimination of the Tupamaros in Uruguay, of the Montoneros in Argentina, and of the urban guerrillas and Carlos Marighella in Brazil. The whole process was reinvented, we could say, and a left wing typical of transitional processes emerged. This left was marked by Franco's transition to democracy in Spain and the Moncloa Pacts, which united the left with the centre to suspend strikes in the country. It was marked by the Brazilian transition

from the military dictatorship and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, which is a whole process in itself. It was marked by the Argentinean transition led by Raúl Alfonsín, which failed at first, and then it was marked by a regrouping of Peronism around the Kirchners. In Chile, it was marked by a controlled transition, the centrist coalition called the *Concertación*. This was a period in which, as I said, the left had to pay a very high price in order to gain entry into the political system after the guerrillas' military defeat.

We have not yet left that period; across Latin America, we are still marked by the Chilean *Concertación*, by the Moncloa Pacts, and by the Brazilian transition from the dictatorship. This is not only the case in Latin America – it is also the case in South Africa, for example. These are processes that agree to forget the past when the transition takes place. But, as we know, the past is never forgotten. This is the case in Spain, where the truth about the Spanish Civil War and Francoist repression is still hidden; no one dares to uncover it. There has been no truth commission in Brazil or Uruguay. The only courageous figures have been the Kirchners in Argentina, who dared to put the Argentine dictators in prison. That is an exceptional case. Pinochet died in his bed and was honoured by the *Concertación*. But that is politics, isn't it? You pay the price, and I believe that the Latin American left is paying that price. I do not mean that it should not pay the price, nor am I saying that it is a betrayal or anything like that; I mean that reality forces it to do that.

The situation as a whole is not a standoff. I believe that when one speaks of a standoff, one speaks of a static situation, and I do not believe that is the case; rather, it is a seesawing, a fairly dynamic

situation. The danger that one cannot overlook, the most significant risk in all this, is that the people begin to detest the political system in general and begin to identify the left with the political system. As a result, electoral abstention is increasing throughout Latin America. There are some exceptions, such as Honduras, but that is an exceptional situation due to the circumstances that country has lived through.¹

 *What are the challenges and threats for the popular camp that wants to carry out these necessary political, social, and cultural transformations with a revolutionary perspective? I ask this in relation to your characterisation of the new progressive wave, in which different left forces apparently privilege technical over political aspects and somewhat forego popular elements, as we have seen in Peru, Chile, and Ecuador. They end up generating a standoff with the sentiment of the people and being displaced by right-wing, neoconservative, and ultra-neoliberal alternatives.*

What we call the popular camp varies from country to country. Of course, what I know best is the popular camp in Peru, which is very similar to the one in Bolivia. There is a ‘popular bourgeoisie’. Smuggling, all the different types of trafficking, the mining industry, commerce, and micro-commerce generate enormous amounts of money that flow into the popular camp. Subsequently, this produces

1 **Translator’s note:** Twelve years after the National Party took power in the 2009 military coup, Hondurans resoundingly rejected the neoliberal system and widespread government corruption and voted in Xiomara Castro on the promise of change in 2021 with a historic turnout of 68% voter participation.

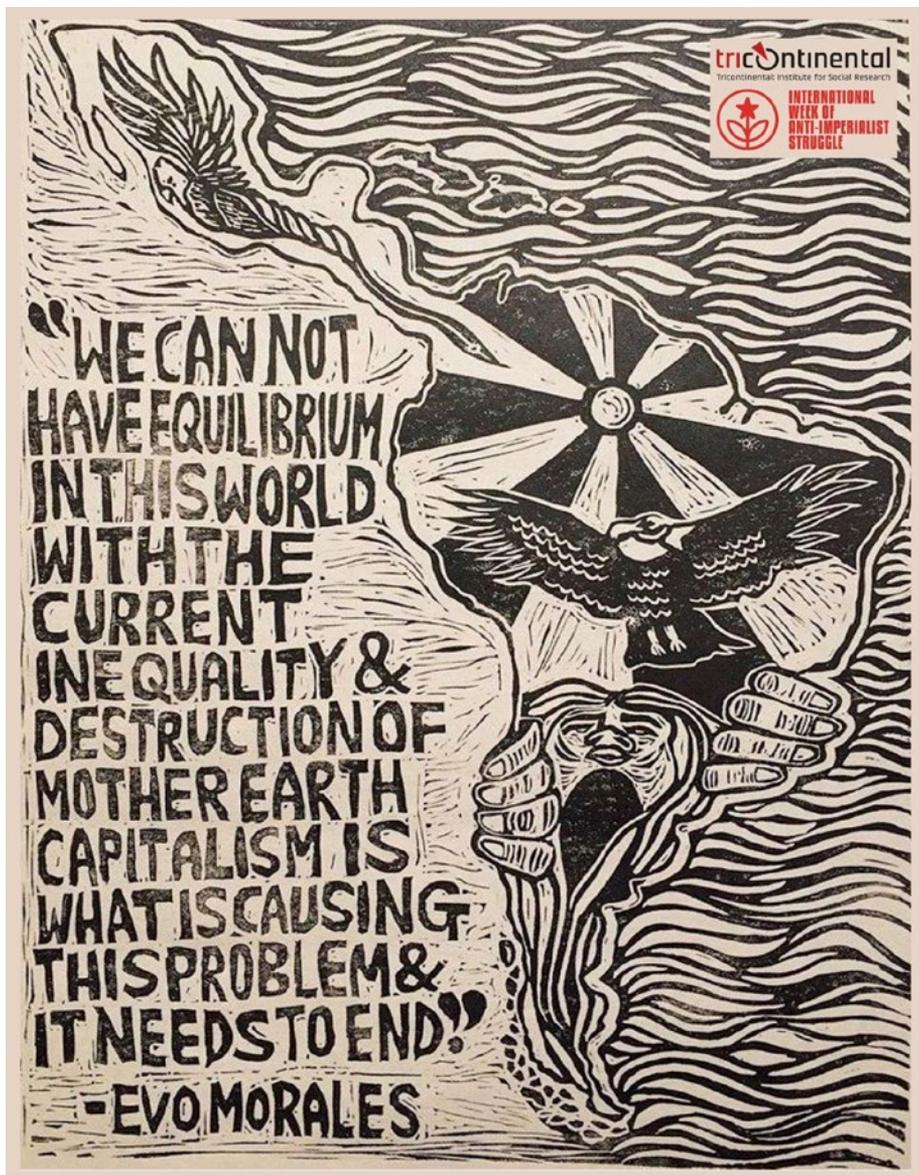
what we can call emerging bourgeoisies, or emerging mafias if you like, because all this is tainted with corruption. At the moment, it is very difficult to make a distinction between the different sectors that are part of the popular camp in countries like Peru. The popular camp ranges from sectors in extreme poverty – people who do not have enough to eat – to people who have a lot of money. This term, popular bourgeoisie, may seem contradictory, but I am trying to express something of the social reality.

I do not think there is a single left in Latin America; rather, there are many lefts, ranging from those that one does not know whether they are really left or whether they are right-wing, centre-right, or far-left. Then there is the sphere of popular movements, which does not define itself as left-wing, but which, in practice, is on the left, and that seems to me to be the most important thing. The people of Yauri, a town in southern Peru that has seen protests against the polluting copper and gold mining industry, are probably very Catholic, conservative, and likely right-wing on points that are very costly to the left, but they are part of the left. Why? Because they protest against mining pollution. For example, if you look at the politics of the Nicaraguan left, of Sandinismo, Nicaragua is extremely conservative in terms of sexual and reproductive rights. So, I think we have to conduct a major process of political rapprochement. In the case of Peru, the masses are not left-wing. They are popular masses. Among them there are certainly people of the left, of course, but I would not define a *rondero* (a kind of peasant rural guard and President Pedro Castillo's main support base) as a man of the left, per se. When it comes to talking about marriage, he is extremely conservative and surely a devout Catholic. And there is

no way you can talk to him about abortion or racism – because there is racism on both sides.

In some parts of Peru there is a kind of anti-Lima regionalism as well; I do not know if this can be linked to the racism in Lima against the provinces. So, there are many things that intertwine and that the right wing takes advantage of at times. If they were intelligent, they would take advantage of them much more.

I think we must conduct a detached analysis of how what we call the popular movement is developing – what exactly is a popular movement and what is not. In the last few years in Peru, during the times of greatest mobilisation, there are still thousands of people who have not been mobilised. Let's not forget that Lima has ten million inhabitants and I have not yet seen a demonstration of a hundred thousand people in Lima.



[Kimberly Villafuerte Barzola](#) (United States),
Kawsachun pachamama! ('Mother Earth, We Shall Live!'), 2020.

 *How do you see this analysis of what a popular movement is – with all its diversity in the South American, Mesoamerican, and Caribbean region – to be connected to the possibility of building a continent-wide project? We can recall, for example, the legacies that remain alive of Simón Bolívar, José Faustino Sánchez Carrión, Hugo Chávez, and, recently, Evo Morales. Each of these figures spoke of a plurinational Latin America opposed to imperialism.²*

I believe that this should be promoted, of course, but it would require action on many different levels. There would have to be many movements within a movement. For example, the existing communication between the Aymara people of Peru, Bolivia, and Chile is powerful. That is an entire world in itself, where the only thing you have to do is to give it political content, because this sector has tremendous economic power and an enormous cultural identity. And this is also the case with other sectors, although not to the same extent. For example, today popular movements use the internet. In the case of the Amazonian indigenous peoples, they are globalised. So, I think it is quite easy to establish regional, Latin American, and Caribbean bodies because they already exist globally. There are global indigenous networks. They have a presence in

2 **Translator's note:** Venezuelan military and political leader Simón Bolívar (24 July 1783–17 December 1830), known as the 'Liberator of the Americas', led the independence struggle against the Spanish Empire in what are today Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Bolivia. His thought inspires Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution.

Peruvian politician José Faustino Sánchez Carrión was one of the writers of the country's first constitution following independence from Spain and a leading figure in the establishment of the republican system of government.

the United Nations. They have a voice. They have positions. Trade unions are another component; although trade union movements have been extremely weakened, there are still trade union organisations in Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, the little that remains in Peru, and so on. Then there are progressive governments, which have the São Paulo Forum and the Puebla Group. In television, teleSUR seems to me to be extremely important; it is something that must be treasured like gold and developed. We should also have a Latin American publishing house to develop Latin American thought. That is yet to be done. And then we have all the official bodies – UNASUR, CELAC, etc.³ There is a series of different bodies that can be strengthened simultaneously, each in its own field, to create a broad but multifaceted movement.

3 **Translator's note:** The Union of South American Nations (UNSAUR) was created in 2004 as an intergovernmental regional organisation.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is a regional bloc of Latin American and Caribbean states founded on 23 February 2010 at the Rio Group–Caribbean Community Unity Summit and established on 3 December 2011 with the signature of The Declaration of Caracas. It is the only regional bloc to bring together all 33 states of Latin America and the Caribbean and exclude the United States and Canada.

 *Considering your experience with the guerrilla struggle in the sixties and seventies in the heat of the Cuban Revolution, when the imperialist enemy was confronted with certain characterisations and a certain configuration, I'd like to ask you: what do you think is happening on the 'other side' today? Even though US hegemony is losing ground to the advance of China, it continues to sink its ferocious talons into Nuestra América ('Our America')⁴ and the Caribbean, and we are now seeing a kind of 'neoliberalism of war' that oscillates between drug trafficking and a war on drugs, with Colombia at its epicentre.*

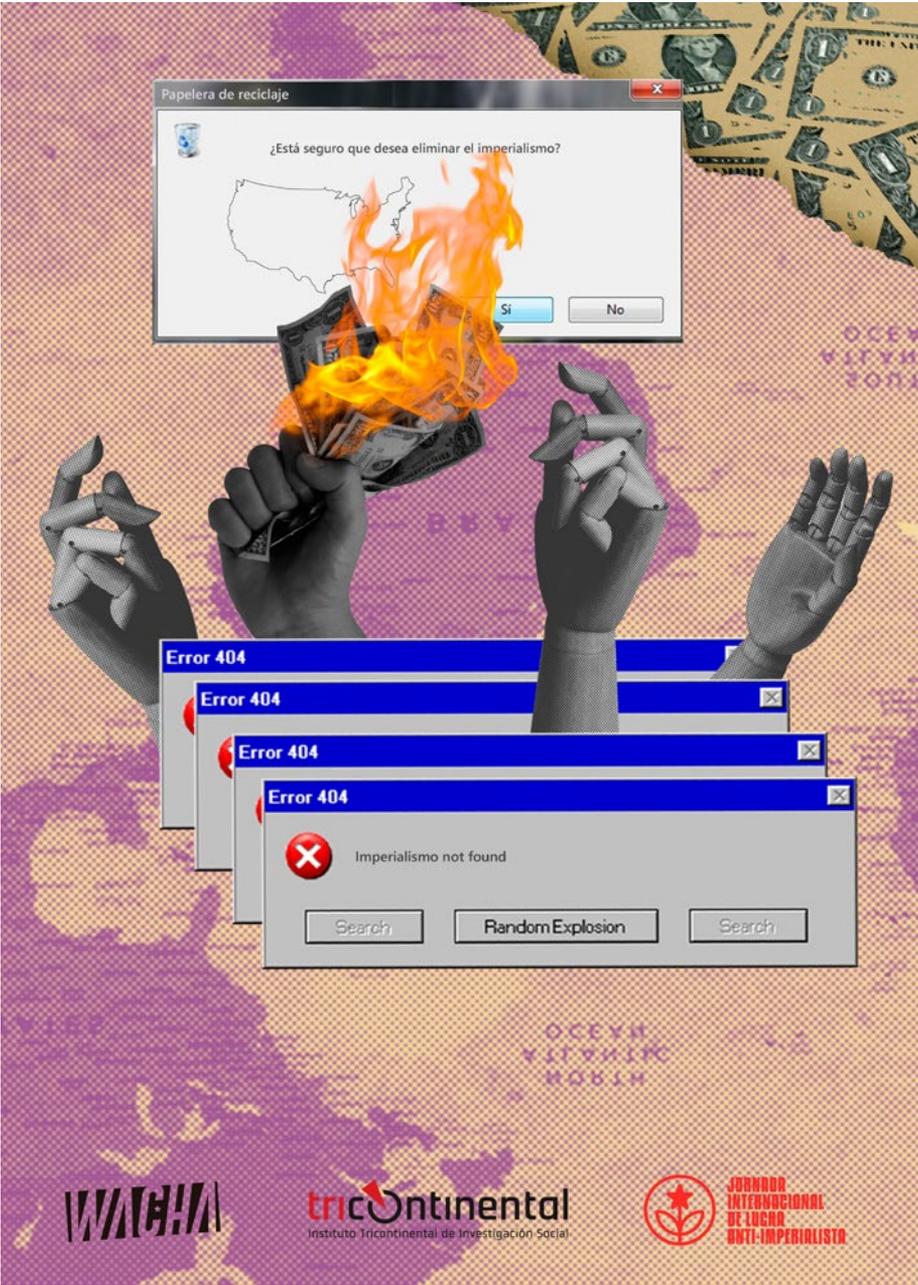
I have always thought that the best way to fight the enemy is to get to know them. Peru does not really have an international politic and neither do its left-wing forces. They do not know what is going on in Europe or what is happening in the United States, and that is unforgivable. One must know what is happening in the United States. It is a duty because the Empire is your enemy. So how can you not be familiar with it? You must get to know it, get to work there, and establish a relationship with the critical social movements that exist in the United States and that are growing.

The United States has lost importance – it is an empire in decline. US investment is no longer important in Latin America and the Caribbean. I would say that today its talons are almost exclusively

4 **Translator's note:** *Nuestra América*, or 'Our America', is a construct linked to promoting the regional integration of Central and South America and forging a Latin American identity as a project opposed to European and US cultural imperialism. The concept stems from Cuban national hero José Martí's 1981 essay of the same title.

its military, trained and educated by the might of the United States military; they are nothing more than this because the United States is not only immersed in the economic crisis, but also in an enormous political crisis. There is also a kind of standoff in the United States. Movements questioning the status quo are emerging at all levels. There is a generalised weakening of the old Democratic and Republican parties. There is a disengagement of the American people from professional politics. And that weakens the persona of what we have known as US imperialism. And, well, what happens is that we Latin Americans refuse to recognise this situation and we do not have a politic towards the United States.

The old concept of imperialism is of no use; it is of no use to repeat that the United States is imperialist and that you are anti-imperialist. What you need is to get to know the United States and see how you can isolate those groups that are still very dangerous, those that are based on US intelligence agencies and militarism. In addition, of course, the focus is no longer formal US investment, but rather informal networks, which are another important area of US intervention: the drug market and arms trafficking in Mexico. Colombia continues to be a province of the United States. It is a criminal country where social leaders are systematically murdered, and of course it is the world's leading exporter of cocaine.



Colectivo Wacha (Argentina), *Imperialismo Not Found*, 2020.

Part 2: Peru

 *How would you characterise the political situation that we are currently experiencing in Peru? In your book *Vieja crónica y mal gobierno* ('Old Chronicles and Bad Government'), you state that Peru today is the result of two hundred years of an initial and illusory independence and then a failed process of building a republic, and that we are divided into mafias and plebs.*

In Peru, a distinction must be made between society and the electoral system. Society mobilises because the dominant groups plunder Peru, especially through mining, from oil exploitation to timber exploitation. When it comes to the outside world, the Peruvian productive apparatus is dominated by monopolies. Peruvian society mobilises in opposition to this because what these monopoly groups do to carry out their activities inevitably affects the daily and productive life of Peruvian society. The moment someone poisons the water and you can no longer drink it, or you find out that your children have lead in their blood because they start to bleed from the nose or start to have psychological problems, then you resist and protest. This resistance exists within a society that is generally very passive. In that sense, I use the word pleb not in a derogatory sense but as something more or less indefinable. Social movements mobilise; in some cases they are dormant and in other cases they are effective in their resistance and protest, but they are always in a state of latency. These networks continue to exist. So, you have three elements: the plundering economic groups, the more or less

indifferent society, and the networks that mobilise within that indifferent society.

A political system is built based on this social system that is dominated by oligarchic groups. These groups – which serve the interests of economic groups such as banks and companies – are essentially the lawyers and the politicians of businesses. In this system there are ultra-conservative groups on the one hand, and, on the other, what could be called a left that is relatively indefinable. This left is headed by the most active groups, which are divided into two: on the one hand, a moderate left that can barely be distinguished from a kind of Creole social democracy or from a more or less civilised right or centre right, and, on the other hand, a *cholo*⁵, provincial, very unsophisticated left, which is a redder left. In its best moments, the Peruvian electoral left has not surpassed 30% support, which was also the case with Castillo.

The Castillo government finds it difficult to govern because it lacks political culture. It is lacking world knowledge, and it lacks management experience of the mechanisms of the state – which it has no reason to have – that have been managed by others, precisely those who have been electorally defeated. That is the current problem in Peru. But I cannot finish this description without noting

5 **Translator's note:** Cholo is a term used in parts of Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru as a synonym for *Mestizo*, specifically a person of mixed indigenous (mostly Quechua or Aymara) and European heritage. In Peru it is also used to mean an indigenous person. While the term has historically had a discriminatory and racist tone, it is becoming increasingly appropriated by some of these communities as a sign of identity and pride and is used by some political forces as representative of the common people.

that, overall, Peruvian society today is a society with very little political stature.

Peru has experienced an enormous setback since the application of the neoliberal programme in the 1990s. This has meant an impoverishment of education, an impoverishment in teaching training, a very clear impoverishment and open corruption of military sectors, generalised corruption of the country, and corruption of the state. Therefore, anyone hoping to manage the state will be met with a corrupt state, but also with a corrupt society, because when we talk about the corrupt state, we forget that corruption is always two-edged: there is the corrupted and the corruptor. So, a corrupt state means that those who manage the state are corrupt.

Peruvian business owners took control of the state a long time ago. We have had business owners as ministers and the notorious revolving door system, in which executives of big business are ministers today and company directors tomorrow. So, we cannot mention the word 'state' without adding that this is a state colonised by business, a state that has served and continues to serve these interests. So, when an outsider like Pedro Castillo arrives, obviously he is not going to be able to handle this because he has to manage some 2,500 operators of economic groups that are embedded in the main state agencies. This is the issue of today, if you ask me. I have said this a thousand times and Castillo himself said it during the electoral campaign: I insist that the only way forward is to overcome this spider's web in which Castillo has been caught up. It is simply a case of breaking through this web and reaching and activating that latent popular network and sectors. But Castillo does not want to

do that, because apparently he believes that by being on good terms with the right wing and the international right, this relationship will mean that he can survive. I think the visit of the Organisation of American States' Luis Almagro in November 2021 is very significant here. It is quite clear to me that it will be a different Castillo who survives; it will not be the Castillo of the electoral campaign.

The popular movement operates among the indifferent masses. These masses are indifferent above all because they are concerned with subsistence; they have to live from day to day. To add to this, there is a small and aggressive right wing: one that is archaic, primitive, fascist. Of course, this is likely the last gasp of what remains of the old Peruvian right. Peru is a country dominated from abroad. What interests global power is Peru's minerals, and you need very few people to extract minerals. Everything else is surplus from the point of view of business owners.

Peru has tremendous culture dating back thousands of years. I continue to insist that Peru is a cultural power but a political dwarf because, politically, we are paying the price of sixty years of useless, neoliberal governments that have left us with a destroyed, limited country. Congress and the media are underdeveloped. Peru has science, Peru has technology. But what has become of creating a ministry of technology, which was a central component of Castillo's campaign? Nothing. Peru has extremely valuable people, but they are systematically pulled away from the government not only by the right, but also by the left. So, we could say that this is a government of the left, but we are stretching the definition of the word 'left'.

There is also an aggressive right wing in the country; this results in great mediocrity.

So much has been destroyed in Peru: schools have been destroyed, education has been destroyed, businesses have been destroyed. Only the mines and the agro-export companies are left. Everything else has been destroyed. What we call popular networks exist latently, but they do not have a constant, institutional life. So, in this situation, what is the only thing that is left? In my opinion, the family, which is also in crisis. But there are still extended families that function, that also go beyond the borders of Lima and Peru and link the provinces with the capital and with the rest of the world. Family networks are formed because they are based on trust. Peru is shaped by these networks, which have a mafia-like character. I do not give mafia a negative connotation – I use the word to explain the logic, the rationality of a social situation. These networks are separate from the liberal state.

The liberal state is marked by the distinction between private property and public property. But the organisation of the family does not distinguish between private property and public property, and it encroaches on public property. Both poor families and rich families encroach on public property. Rich families encroach on the state and manage it for their own benefit; poor families encroach on what they can in the street, in the squares, everywhere. There are no limits. So, in the end, this is what we call corruption. That is the root of the Peruvian state in its current configuration. The separation of the public and private does not exist in Peru; that distinction is definitively broken with in many ways. President Castillo



[Whitney Richards-Calathes](#) (Jamaica), *Different Ships, Same Destruction*, 2020.

is another example of this when he brings in his wife, his nephew, his fellow countrymen, because he trusts them. But he is not doing anything unique. That is what former President Alejandro Toledo (2001–06) did and what former President Alan García (1985–90, 2006–11) did, with the difference that they were white or *cholo*, in the case of Toledo. And what about former President Fernando Belaúnde (1963–68, 1980–85)? Look at the number of Belaúndes in Belaúnde’s government who are still working in the state. The Belaúndes are a clan. Castillo attracts attention because people are demanding from Castillo what they did not demand from previous governments.

What Aníbal Quijano called coloniality is in fact the colonial mentality, the colonised mentality, which I think we largely share.⁶ When we talk about a colonised mentality, we are talking about a mentality that stems from our dependence on Spain. We cannot only accuse those in power in Peru of this; rather, I believe that this colonised mentality encompasses a large part of Peruvian society. This is another one of the realities that we refuse to accept.

Peru is a country whose ruling classes have been extremely conservative; they have been Hispanicists to the extent that Spain was fascist, but they did not hesitate to be anti-Hispanicist during the Spanish Civil War, when Spain was a republic. Hispanism or

6 **Translator’s note:** Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (17 November 1930–31 May 2018) developed the concept of ‘coloniality of power’ to describe the power structures resulting from European colonialism. His work has influenced decolonial studies and critical theory.

anti-Hispanism effectively has a class consciousness as well, and that was later transferred to the relationship with England and then with the United States.⁷ Today, the colonised mentality has a lot to do with a series of economic and political circumstances and activities in Peru. It is linked to those who tell you, for example, that we cannot live without investors. When they talk about investors, they are not talking about Peruvian investment, because the leading investors in Peru are migrants; Peruvian migrants – those who are abroad, those who are contributing almost five billion dollars a year directly to Peruvian families – are investors. The other investors are the small-scale Peruvian entrepreneurs. And yet, when they talk about investment, they are only talking about the mining companies, which contribute the least to Peru's economy. That can be demonstrated, especially when it comes to the tax structure.

That is where a colonised mentality is manifesting itself, but that is only one aspect of it. This concept extends to many other arenas and is linked to the fact that we have inherited colonial racism from the colonial mentality; that is to say that we are now distinguishing between a white bourgeoisie and a *cholo* bourgeoisie. There is a white or whitened bourgeoisie that drives white power in Peru versus a *cholo* bourgeoisie, which is not white. That may seem a bit

7 **Translator's note:** Hispanacists are specialists in Spanish culture or, here, those who love or admire Spain. *Hispanidad*, or Hispanism, refers to a liberal conservative movement to reassert the cultural unity of Spain and Latin America based on supposed common values and cultural attitudes, especially those with political objectives. Spain's Vox party leader, Santiago Abascal, has promoted the concept of the *bispanósfera* ('Hispanosphere') as an adaptation of the concept Anglosphere, a term coined by Eurosceptic circles of British conservatism since the 1990s.

caricaturesque and unpleasant to say, but it is happening. There are a lot of things that are noticeable in restaurants, in the functioning of cities, and we have very clear racial and racist differences in education and health. Even though a *cholo* bourgeoisie with a lot of money – perhaps more money than the white bourgeoisie – has appeared, it has not managed to enter the core of the political, psychological, and media system in Peru, where the old colonialist patterns are still in force.

 *In your book, you describe the government of Velasco Alvarado (1968–75).⁸ How can we understand this unique and peculiar moment as it relates to previous governments? How does it relate to what we are experiencing now, when there are demands for a second agrarian reform (following the first reform during the Velasco years)?*

During the Velasco years, the stars aligned: the theory of Latin American dependency with Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the late 1960s and everything that we know about that theory; the Second Vatican Council (1962–65); the civil rights revolutions in the United States from the 1950s–60s; the whole European discussion that culminated in

8 **Translator's note:** Peruvian General Juan Francisco Velasco Alvarado (16 June 1910–24 December 1977) served as the president of Peru after a 1968 coup d'état against the Fernando Belaúnde government. His populist military government contrasted with other military regimes in the region, bringing major change to Peru. The reforms implemented by his government nationalised transport, communications, and electric power; limited the US economic influence in Peru; and established worker-managed cooperative on former privately owned farms.

the university revolutions of 1968; and we could go on. There was a complete questioning of capitalism then that nobody undertakes now. All of that questioned capitalism itself and I think that had a decisive influence on the armed forces. It was an extraordinary moment that occurred not only in Peru: in different ways, it was happening in Bolivia, in Argentina with the second Perón government, in Chile with Allende, in Bolivia with Juan José Torres, and in the Dominican Republic with Armando Tamayo and Juan Bosch. There was the first attempt at a revolution in Nicaragua. There had already been the Cuban Revolution before that. In short, all that, plus the popular peasant struggle in Peru, produced those seven years of Velasco. Though these years came to an end, they were nonetheless a clear exception in this two-hundred-year history. This was a process that the left did not understand. There was a lot of anti-militarism. Who could believe that the military was going to hand over power to the people? It was surprising. Who could believe that the military wanted to stage a revolution? Very few people.

Since the 1930s and even before José Carlos Mariátegui⁹, there had always been a difficult coexistence within the Peruvian left between an extremist view of reality and what could be called a moderate view of reality. This continued to be the case during the 1970s under Velasco; it gave rise to the two attitudes for and against Velasco and

9 **Translator's note:** Intellectual, journalist, activist, and philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui La Chira (14 June 1894–16 April 1930) is known as the first Peruvian intellectual to apply the Marxist model of historical materialism to the problems Peru faced and is considered to be one of twentieth century Latin America's most influential socialists. His book *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928) is still widely read today.

created a crisis in the years after his government with the emergence of *Sendero Luminoso* or Shining Path, founded in 1969. The current left, lacking interest in this issue as well as historical documentation and the desire to study history and spark a debate on this issue, has simply preferred to bury it. This is because it knows it is at a disadvantage against the right, which can make the most of any admission that the Shining Path was left-wing to say, as they are saying now, that the left as a whole is terrorist. So, it is a rather complex issue that is nevertheless ongoing.

Part of this issue is also the other side's analysis of what happened on the adversary's terrain – the army's terrain. This is connected to Peru refusing to examine its past, like those old families who sweep their family crimes under the carpet, because, in the end, both the crimes committed by the Shining Path and the crimes committed by the army are part of the same country. Those who led this affair moved between the two sides: there were Shining Path members who became soldiers and there were soldiers who became Shining Path members. The Shining Path infiltrated the army, and the army's intelligence services infiltrated the Shining Path. On what scale? We do not know, precisely because we have refused to have a real discussion on this issue. I argue that if we are really interested in examining the emotional, psychological, historical, and political roots of terrorism in Peru, this applies both to the Shining Path, to the Peruvian Armed Forces, and to Peruvian society as a whole. We also cannot ignore the fact that the Shining Path's actions were used by other sectors of Peruvian society to settle scores. A large part of the actions that appeared to be actions of the revolutionary guerrilla group Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) or Shining

Path were in fact not committed by either group. Rather, they were committed by other groups that settled scores among themselves and simply assassinated you and put a hammer and sickle on your corpse. We have not had a detailed, objective historical analysis of that either, and that is because we do not want to.

I do not believe that the left has renounced the period of armed struggle; I think that it has simply been forced to adapt to new circumstances. And we must also recognise that the armed struggle degenerated. If we briefly look at the guerrilla experience in Argentina after Che's death, for example, we will find the very contentious experience of the Montoneros, which ended in bloodshed. I do not want to get into that because it is a very complicated issue that would deserve much more documentation. I just want to say that there was an impasse, and during that impasse there was apparently no other democratic way out for the left than under Raúl Alfonsín. The same thing happened in Uruguay. So, I think that the political circumstances and the situation in Latin America forced the left to rebuild itself. And that, of course, is not done without a cost. In Peru, the cost was the Shining Path and what we mislabelled an internal armed conflict, which in reality was an internal war that implicated a sector of the left.



Greta Acosta Reyes (Cuba), *Women Who Fight*, 2020.

Part 3: Thought

 *How do you see the left in Peru and on the continent engaging in the battle over culture and in the battle of ideas? For example, this is accentuated in Cuba, where sectors of the artistic community have questioned the Cuban Revolution.*

There are two basic ideas. One is the expansion of rights, by which we mean human rights. If we say we want a democracy that is different from a democracy governed by banks and guarded by the armed forces, we are talking about a democracy in which the old liberal idea of citizenship is fulfilled. Rights are not static; they are dynamic, they grow, they are renewed over the years, and therefore they expand. Political progress is in effect the result of the expansion of rights. That is the first idea. The second idea is that we must not move backwards. However, the world has clearly regressed and is going backwards in many cases, such as with labour rights. In addition, rights should be seen as collective and not just individual.

Peru is a cultural power; it has a very ancient culture, which to a large extent is upheld today, and which has also been revived. This power is linked to many forms of collective life. Left-wing forces have done well to connect to these forms of collective life and to identify with the diverse cultural expressions of the Peruvian people and their advances in order to understand them and not only have an elitist idea of culture. There is an idea that cultured people are those who read books, write novels, or those who dance or

sing or make music – but that alone is not culture. There are forms of culture that are connected to everyday collective life. This is a very important concept, which fortunately the left has adopted and understood in recent times.

The United States is a country that plays a role as a producer of ideas of a certain kind. Through foundations that fund people like Mario Vargas Llosa, who is a member of the Mont Pelerin Society of Neoliberals, grants and international prizes are awarded to writers and intellectuals. These foundations also produce new kinds of social science. This is part of the cultural struggle.

The Cuban Revolution, as you say, has had and continues to have this strength, but in this cultural struggle it is almost natural that there should be dissidence, and the difficult thing for a revolutionary process is how you handle dissidence. So, how do you handle it? Culture is a blossom, as Mao said, so let all the flowers bloom; that is fundamentally what has to be done. In countries that are under siege, blockaded, like Cuba, there are limits. If you start to question the social system in which you live, then you come up against the limits created by the revolution itself. In our countries, this bourgeois, capitalist democracy also has limits, doesn't it? All countries have them, which is unfortunate, because I am rather fond of complete freedom of thought.

 *How do you evaluate the emergence of Vox in Spain and the use of different tools and devices of mass and popular culture to promote this fascist wave that is perhaps stronger in Europe than here in Latin America?*

I think the right wing in Europe and also in Latin America has two aspects: a retrospective view of its 'greatness' and a fear of the present. This return to 'greatness' is a reactionary vision. Viktor Orbán of Hungary talks about the great Magyar Empire. Thatcher was a precursor of these ideas; she wanted to return to the days of greatness of the British Empire. Trump talks of the great America that of course never was. The Spanish right talks of Hispanism, of the Hispanosphere. All of this has a colonialist vision. The other side of this is the fear of the foreign, especially in the case of Europeans: the fear of the Islamic, the fear of Muslims, of Islam, the fear of migrants. All of this is at work in the case of the United States and in the case of Spain as well. The ultra-right in Spain thinks it is white and evokes its abhorrence of the Moorish, of the dark-skinned. The new French movement talks about the Renaissance. The Poles of imperial Poland are no exception; there was a Polish empire that lasted only a short time but that still appeals to the distrust and resentment towards Russians. I am studying history to better understand the basis of the European and Latin American ultra-right because they also invoke history. This is above all a historical debate.

 *In Venezuela and Bolivia, it could be said that intellectuals have shown little understanding of popular processes that break with academic and intellectual moulds and of what is or is not a revolutionary process. Even in the recent case of Bolivia, they have ended up consciously or unconsciously, or rather voluntarily or involuntarily, yielding to destabilising coup strategies promoted by US imperialism and executed by local oligarchies. What is your analysis and assessment of the role of intellectuals in Latin America?*

I would say that there is great intellectual poverty on the part of the right wing. There is a lack of right-wing intellectuals everywhere, but this is much more dramatic in Peru. You cannot compare this to a time when you had Jorge Basadre; Raúl Porras, who was clearly a Hispanicist, but an intellectual; and Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, who was absolutely reactionary, but he was an intellectual who had a very broad cultural background. Today, you cannot find anything in Peru in terms of a conservative intelligentsia.

I think what we find is more of a kind of insecurity on the part of intellectuals, a lack of definition. I would argue that this is motivated by two elements. Firstly, I do not think that any intellectual likes to make mistakes, so they are reluctant to take risks and they are very insecure about the evolution of social processes. In other words, a process of change begins, and they believe – they fear – that this process will fail or become a dictatorship. Of course, this undermines an image of themselves that is very dear to them and that they intend to maintain. An intellectual's relationship with their audience is very costly to them, so they do not want, or they are

afraid, to take risks. And that means they have a very timid vision and that they also lose sight of processes. They usually become aware of processes when they have already happened; they cannot foresee them, and it is not because they do not have the ability to, but perhaps because they do not want to. Secondly, all intellectuals depend on funding. We all know that the current world funding networks for intellectual production, as well as for scientific production, depend on monopoly interests, on world power. So, if you are a man or a woman who criticises the system too much, you are not going to get grants, nor are you going to be invited to seminars or be consulted by governments. It is even possible that universities themselves will isolate you or not hire you, because right now the job stability of university professors is non-existent, and, just as there are no labour rights, there are no intellectual rights either. Under these conditions, they do not want to take risks. I see these as the fundamental reasons for the lack of analysis. But I do not want to adopt a mechanical view of the matter: there are many people who criticise legitimately and honestly, or who also have the right not to express an opinion, to wait. I am not one of those people who demand something that I know a person is not prepared to give.

In the case of Peru, it is essential to study what is happening in social movements. But we do not really have reliable studies about this. Statistics are highly manipulated in Peru and social studies are very limited, and so a large part of what one says – and I include myself in this – are assumptions, presumptions, not even hypotheses. So, you operate as if you were groping for an answer, not calculating what might be. This is an enormous deficiency that Peru has.

 *In Karl Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach, he talks about the fact that it is essential to provide the educator with political education. This is closely linked to popular movements educating the educator. How can this political education be envisaged? Perhaps the intelligentsia that is committed to supporting a process of change such as the one we are currently experiencing in Peru can take this on so that its contribution can be effective, efficient, and concrete.*

There is a mutual distrust, a mutual estrangement, that goes back a long way. Before Mariátegui, and from Mariátegui and Haya de la Torre onwards, intellectual work was separated from political work.¹⁰ That is why *Amauta*, the cultural and literacy journal founded by Mariátegui, only lasted for four years, until 1930. And that is a pity, isn't it? On the one hand, the intellectuals left, and on the other hand, the politicians left. Since politicians are busy doing politics and do not think – they think only in political terms – there is a rapid risk of the decline of the politician him or herself. And since intellectuals do not engage in politics, they do not connect with reality, and therefore their thinking becomes more or less hollow. It is a pity. And this is a tragedy for the left in Peru today.

For me, Noam Chomsky is a point of reference, as are economists who are liberals but critical of neoliberalism like Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Krugman, as well as Manuel Ugarteche and the works of

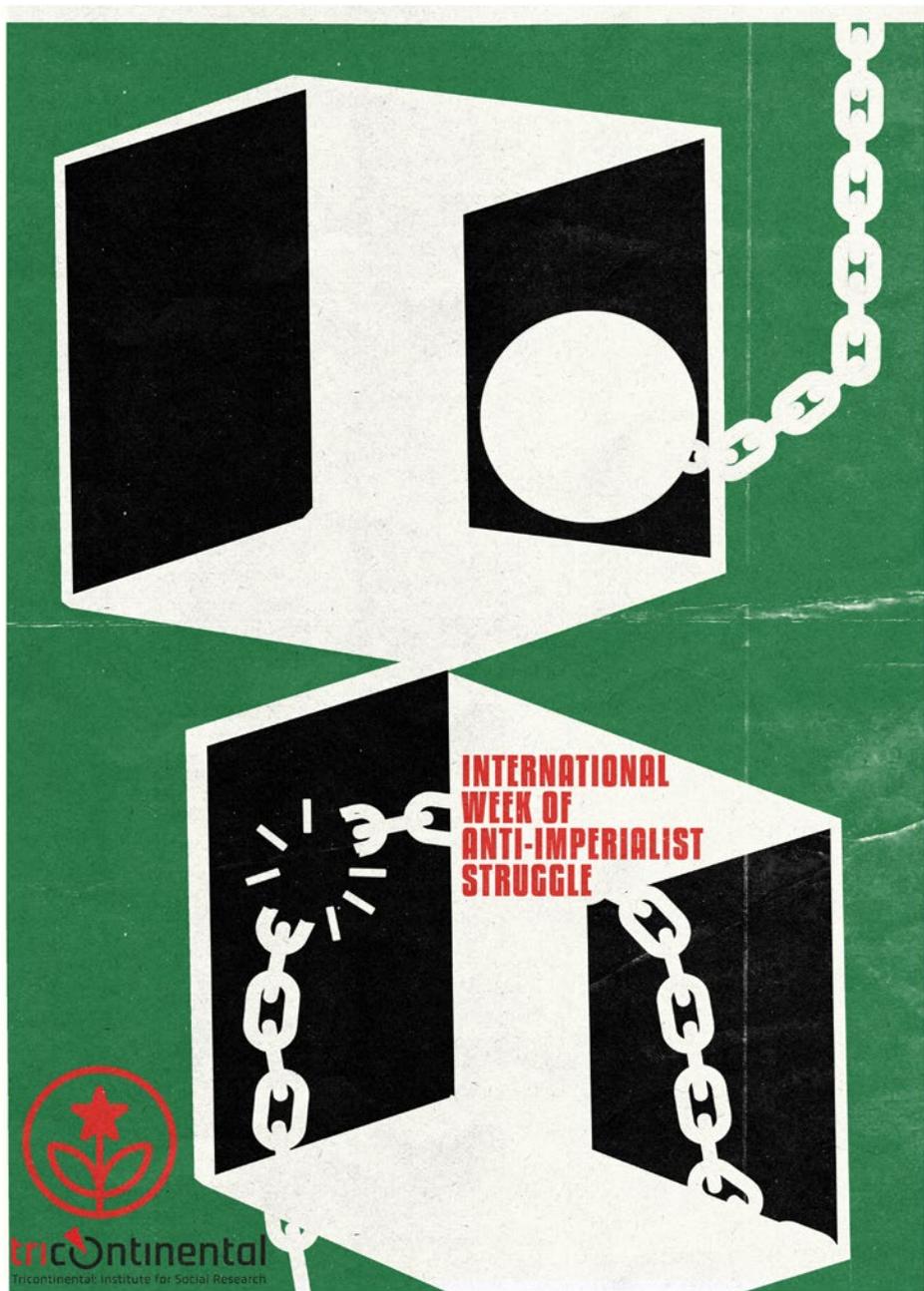
¹⁰ **Translator's note:** Víctor Haya de la Torre (1895–1979) was a Peruvian politician, philosopher, and writer who founded the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, APRA) political movement, today known as the Peruvian Aprista Party (Partido Aprista Peruano, PAP), the oldest political party in Peru.

professors at certain universities. But, unfortunately, they are written in economic language and are not accessible to the masses.

 *One of the symbols of the mobilisations to defend the vote for Pedro Castillo was the pencil, a symbol of popular culture. These pencils were made by the people, featured in posters with graphics designed by different artists and in music that also somewhat transcended Lima's leftism. There was popular music from different places. There were those who said that they had not seen such a Mariátegui-inspired process so alive in such a long time. In short, it had been a long time since culture had been so explicit in a struggle, and even less so in an electoral campaign. How did you experience that?*

Cultural production by the popular sectors has a long history in Peru. Graffiti, screen-printing, theatre groups, pop rock and hip-hop music – all that precedes Castillo. Perhaps we could even say that an electoral campaign like the one you describe is a product of that, not the other way around. It is that kind of popular cultural production that also produces a popular candidacy. Castillo struck me as an interesting phenomenon from the start. He has been a new element in traditional Peruvian politics, though there are also earlier examples of this. The popular consciousness as expressed by Castillo and by other emerging groups in Peru, such as the new popular bourgeoisie and the mafias, is a new component of the historic bloc.





Pedro Sartorio (Argentina), *Untitled*, 2020.





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