

# The Peruvian Labyrinth and the Return of the Shining Path

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Over the years, many countries of Latin America have resonated, in some form or the other, with the echoes of the Cuban Revolution. The recent re-emergence of the *Sendero Luminoso* or the Shining Path in the Andean region of Peru has created tremors in the political establishment in Peru, headed by Alejandro Toledo. The slaying of two infantrymen on July 10, 2003, by the Shining Path and the recent capture of one of its top leaders has revived memories of the wide-scale bombings and massacres of the 1980s and 1990s. Notwithstanding the grand claims of having eliminated the *Sendero* (made by the successive governments in Peru), the continuing presence of the Shining Path is a poignant reminder of the maladies afflicting the Peruvian polity. Although the present *Sendero* is supposedly a much smaller group – a pale imitation of its past – its striking power is yet to be exhausted as borne out by the recent events.<sup>1</sup> Historically speaking, the Shining Path registered its presence in Peru at a moment of political transition from a military dictatorship to a civilian and democratic government. Beginning with the election of 1980, the Shining

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Path (variously describe as a guerrilla, terrorist movement) has remained part of the Peruvian political landscape. It is held responsible for the killing of nearly 60,000 Peruvians over the last two decades. No wonder, it has often been characterised as the most insurgent group in the 1980s in the continent. In fact, the Shining Path has attracted a high degree of scholarly attention on account of the nature and scale of violence and aggression it has come to stand for. By any reckoning, it seems to be one of the most extensively studied social movements in Latin America.

This paper makes a modest attempt to re-visit the Shining Path movement in the light of an ever-burgeoning secondary literature on the theme. It seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the structure and functioning of the Shining Path while contextualising it in the larger framework of developments taking place in Peru. The focus is on delineating the rural moorings, transformational ideologies and political struggles of the movement. Also, an attempt is made here to comprehend the impact of *Sendero* on the highland society of Peru.

### **The Political Economy of Violence**

The weakness of the “new democracy” was highly visible in Peru by 1980. The democratic institutions were fragile and weak and were inadequately prepared to deal with the massive insurgency begun by the Shining Path. The Peruvian transition to democracy under President Belaunde Terry witnessed hanging of dead dogs on polling stations by Shining Path members in the far-off highland regions of Peru to oppose the “re-democratic processes”. The radicalisation of civil society *vis-a-vis* the conservative process of democratisation resulted in a highly controlled, top-down conservative transition that coincided with an intense

mobilisation of increasingly militant popular sectors. The political institutions and norms that could address the demands and pressures of new social actors were missing. In general, the political parties were incapable of acting as facilitators and communicators of social change. Additionally, the traditional political parties, especially the Left, failed to effectively rise to the occasion and deal with the "new" aspirations of disconcerted populations.

The dichotomy of values and aspirations among the parties in Peru only reflected the inner wide differences existing within these parties. Those on the Left were identified with increasing interest in "continuing social reforms and limiting the power of the conservative military officers, while those on the Right sought political compromises with the military that would ensure their participation in the new civilian regime."<sup>2</sup> In the end, the transition reflected a consensus forged by the military and conservative parties. Also neither the Left nor the Right gave sufficient attention to reforming political institutions to assure that the new civilian regime could consolidate its legitimacy. Moreover, the military governments from 1968 to 1975 spoke in the language of anti-imperialism, land reform, and worker ownership that had contributed to popular mobilisations and organisations. Furthermore, the entire ideology propagated by the Left was under siege for some time. While in transition they had departed from themes of class struggle, revolution, and socialism for the virtues and problems of democracy.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of willingness to totally hand over power to the civilian authorities and move "back to the barracks" was something that the military was not ready to concede. A decree issued in October 1977 clearly stated that, "the Assembly was to serve as an arena of open political debate over the future of the country, but not to have any powers

over the military regime's policy."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the military realised that any debate on the issues of agrarian reforms, job security and industrial communities would effectively rescind a decade of their rule. Ironically, a conservative and narrowly managed transition produced a "socialist" constitution. The military was clear in its plan, which was not the initiation of a revolutionary project but to assist a transfer to civilian rule. The political order that emerged for the Constituent Assembly reflected the compromise between the military and the APRA-PPC (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance-Popular Christian Party) majority with little input from other political forces in the country. This exclusion especially of most Left groups was partly voluntary, because creating liberal democratic procedures and institutions was not their high priority. They defined political struggle in terms of need to restore and expand a process of social reforms in the country.

The transition did not work towards reforming the authoritarian practices and institutions. The common perception that existed among the political elites was that the election of Belaunde in 1980 represented a return to normalcy, along with the predominance of conservative forces. Therefore, during the transition and the subsequent Belaunde government, very few serious efforts were made to reform the political institutions. They continued to rely on clientelist practices, and the lack of elite circulation in the political parties failed to take into account the emergence of newly mobilised sectors. Similarly, the persistence of a salient political role for the military and minimal congressional authority *vis-a-vis* the executive were strong authoritarian traits that were carried over into the new civilian regime. Substantiating on the necessity of institutions that could smoothly usher in the democracy, Carol Wise, a

critic of the state's policies, comments that the state-directed development led to certain trends and patterns that gave rise to a "political economy of violence".<sup>6</sup>

Most scholars refer to the weak political institutions, vulnerability and aloofness of the political parties especially of that of the Left, and the greater sense of political and social marginalisation experienced by people in the highland regions of Peru. Hobart A. Spalding points out that one of the major failures of the Peruvian society was its inability to deal with the frustrations and the aspirations of the young, and failed to make place for the *mestizo* youth who wanted to acquire education. As such access to universities was limited, and moreover, jobs did not materialise upon education.<sup>7</sup>

Scholars such as Susan C. Borque and Kay B. Warren also cite that in addition, there were unresolved questions such as that of ethnicity. They stress that the unresolved conflicts in Lima-highlands relations as well as the significant ethnic difference permitted a quick and dramatic rise of *Sendero* as a main actor in the political scenario of Peru.<sup>8</sup> The rise of *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru has been attributed thus to a misunderstanding between the Peruvian society and state. There are no conflictual/contradictory explanations about the emergence, ideology, functioning, implementation of *Sendero* strategies and programmes from the scholars working on Peru and the Shining Path. The economic catastrophe, the poverty, illiteracy, unemployment along with the persecution of the peasantry in the highland regions made it a hot bed of such revolutionary and guerrilla activities. Steven J. Stem adds, "Given the distant preoccupation and arcane symbolism of *Sendero*, and the participation of most of the Left in Peru's return to electoral politics and civilian government after an extended period

of military rule (1968-1980), the Maoist sect's declaration of war seemed out of step within Peruvian history".<sup>9</sup>

This was a political force that looked upon Leftists with contempt, who approached politics through compromises and coalitions. *Sendero* looked with condescension, as well, upon politics as the process of building legitimacy through "soft" means – through alliance with semi-autonomous social movements and grassroots organisations or through campaigns of discursive persuasion and mobilisation. For *Sendero's* supporters and sympathisers, the political party's mystique and intimidation lay precisely in the self-projection as a force uniquely brutal, effective, and accurate in reading the march of historical destiny. Stem also adds "*Sendero's* spread expressed the cultural marginality and ignorance of Indians, or the disposition toward outbursts of Utopian millenarianism to overturn evil."<sup>10</sup>

The political milieu in Peru of the 1980s and early 1990s presented an extreme case of historical coexistence and compression where populists, developmentalists, revolutionaries, 'dirty war' leaders, neo-liberals, and unknowns could all build a formidable presence for a time, yet quickly lose their political magic. The political congestion tested the limits of comprehension, enhanced the probability of sudden surprise twists, and added to the sensibility of crisis and uncertainty.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, *Sendero Luminoso* was the offshoot of that ideology that encouraged violence, no compromise and the philosophy of violent warfare. The Shining Path reigned terror for more than a decade and a half, having survived all odds in their war to gain total control. Most scholars focus on the lack of political, economic and social apparatus to deal with the growing aspirations of the disconcerted masses.

## The Economic and Cultural Dynamics

To comprehend Peru's economic failures, one must have a clear understanding of the institutional, historical, social context of the last decades. The disruption of the rural subsistence economies, either as a result of demographic pressures in Peru, or because of the growing number of rural and urban youth who faced futures of poverty and social dislocation made *Sendero* "popular" and effective. Most analysts feel that *Sendero's* persistence was due to the failure of the two democratic governments to implement viable socio-economic reforms and an effective counter-insurgency strategy. A great deal of consideration has been paid to the issues like the creation of SAIS or the *Sociedades Agrícolas de Interés Social* or the Society of Agriculture of Social Interest. Also the parcelisation of land provided by the governments ultimately led to the failure of all economic programmes in the region. Two differences, both causes and consequences of state action, intensely marked the rural landscape throughout these years: the first was the privatisation processes in big associative enterprises, concerned (but not exclusively) on the coast; the second was the invasions of the SAISs, carried out by the peasant communities in the highlands.<sup>12</sup> Both were the consequences of the policy-makers' incompetence and laissez-faire attitude, and explain the increasing mobilisation of rural interest groups, including peasants.<sup>13</sup> The peasant communities and the smallholders of the highland departments were not only neglected by the agrarian reforms, but also had never had any political participation rights in the preceding decades. It has been among these producers, and in their name, that the *Sendero Luminoso* started its terrorist activities. Only then did these regions move to the centre of political (if not economic) attention.<sup>14</sup>

Faced with regimes that were totally oriented towards total liberalisation, privatisation and massive restructuring of the economies, sections of the society that have been marginalised by such changes, turned to *Sendero* with the hope of a viable alternative to the harsh social realities. The changes that had been initiated by the governments had been spurious, superficial and ineffective. The participative nature of democratic institution building was totally missing in the initial years of re-democratisation. There existed "two nations" within Peru, almost impervious to each other, co-existing in tense and distrustful enmity. Therefore, it was hardly surprising that the *Sendero* could establish its base in the rural highlands very quickly. Accordingly, some see that the movement was the last grasp of the rural peasantry on its way to defeat, abandoned by both the state and the Left.

Others see *Sendero* as an outgrowth of Leftist revolutionary groups inspired by students' trips to Cuba in the late 1960s and nurtured by the frustrations of the abandoned Sierra. Accordingly Susan C. Borque and Kay B. Warren writing in *Democracy Without Fear: The Cultural Politics of Terror in Peru* state that, one of those internal conflicts was Peru's troubled record of democratic politics and the historic failure of the democratic governments to address adequately the problems of the heavily indigenous sierra population, and its incorporation into national life on a more just and democratic basis. *Sendero* and government responses to this movement reflect the long-standing conflicts and tensions between indigenous Serrano Peru and urbanised, rapidly changing coastal Peru. *Sendero's* emergence on the national political scenes could be understood as a reflection of the unresolved conflicts in the relations between Lima and the hinterlands and the significance of ethnic difference.<sup>15</sup>



David Werlich sums up the condition of the peasantry and the Indians living in the highlands. He reflects, "discontent born out of poverty, oppression and neglect remained, and traditions of rebellion and messianism were deeply rooted in the region's folklore... Ayacucho provided fertile ground for the fanatical *Sendero Luminoso* revolutionary sect and its messianic leader, Abimael Guzman Reinoso".<sup>16</sup> Many observers although highly critical of *Sendero's* violence and particularly the repressive methods on the Indian population, sympathised with the *Sendero's* critique of existing institutions and inequalities. The attraction for *Sendero* stemmed from the fact that it offered the possibility for effective action against age-old abuses by the authorities, alongside the possibility of empowerment for youth (who survived with increasing hopelessness and helplessness). To certain highland communities, the *Sendero's* presence meant the substitution of one authoritarian structure for another. Some people in "red zones" welcomed the end of crime and violence that the *Pax-Senderista* brought and were willing to accept in exchange of limitations on personal freedom.<sup>17</sup>

## Ideology and Warfare

Discussing the origins and manifestation of the guerrilla movements in the 1960s *vis-a-vis* *Sendero*, Carlos Ivan Degregori calls the guerrillas of the 1960s the "children of progress... They were rebellious children of the continent in expansion, enveloped in a period when developmentalists, dependetistas, and orthodox Marxists shared unlimited faith in progress."<sup>18</sup> In contrast, *Sendero Luminoso*, however, made inroads into society during the Latin American so-called lost decade, as the "children of the crisis", for whom Abimael Guzman's proposal of war communism seemed appealing. War communism implied total collectivism and top-down

equalisation; it also suggested the possibility of finding an order in which the anger of the excluded and the hopeless would be directed into a violent struggle. Guzman's was an order in which everything "is born from the barrel of a gun". *Sendero Luminoso* always favoured theory over pragmatism. Its project was more an ideological and pedagogical one than a military and political one. Hence, the emphasis was on the preparation of a "guiding thought", while classical guerrilla movement in the Americas were willing to subordinate theory to practice and action.<sup>19</sup>

*Sendero* was able to be more adaptable and influential than any other such group in the past due to several factors. Their ability to modify their agenda and structure, along with the skill to absorb new followers helped them to sustain the campaign. Secondly, it targeted territorial and institutional expansion in areas where competition was the weakest, enhancing the guerillas' relative strength. Finally, *Sendero's* "success" in escalating the use of violence undermined the rules of the democratic growth in Peru. Degregori attributes its rise to: "*Sendero* is not a peasant movement but a movement of intellectuals and young people without hope."<sup>20</sup> *Sendero's* political challenge to the Peruvian state exhibits five stages, from converting the backward areas into centres of revolutionary support and generalising violence and guerrilla warfare, to laying siege of cities, causing the collapse of the state. Therefore, the Shining Path though regionally based did not restrict its activities to the original region, thereby constructing a very different set of meanings and practices to confront the state.

Abimael Guzman's ascend was the result of an ability to interchange between the "roles of a prophet and a politician" suggesting that behind the mythic prophet there always lay the politician. For Guzman, his own personal history was

interchangeable (with the dividing line being blurred) with the history of the party. At the First Plenary Session of the party in September 1987, *Sendero's* leaders endorsed the strategic shift from the protracted rural warfare to an accelerated urban-based revolution. *Sendero* employed ruthless tactics, and Guzman publicly stated that the revolution would only triumph "in a river of blood".<sup>21</sup> In an interview in 1988 to the pro-*Sendero* newspaper, *El Dairio*, Guzman ruled out any cooperation with the "reactionary" politicians of the other Left parties and charged that the existing popular organisations were "obstacles to the revolution". In their National Congress of 1988, the rise of *Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) and its activities in Lima was viewed by the *Sendero* leadership as "the principal enemy of the revolution... that must be confronted because there can be no triumph of two revolutions."<sup>22</sup>

The *Sendero's* targets were disillusioned youth, and it fed on the persisting economic crisis in the country. The fact that significant percentages of its cadres were women reflected that its internal policies were limited against sexist behaviour. The violence perpetuated by the security forces in rural areas and shantytowns also helped to swell the ranks of the recruits. The numbers of supporters also grew because it had a substantive appeal to many middle and lower class Peruvians. The attraction stemmed not only from the rhetoric of revolution, but also from the fact that *Sendero* offered the possibility of effective action against traditional abuses by authorities. It called for the empowerment of the youth, and thus some living in the *Sendero's* "liberated zones" welcomed the end of crime and violence that they brought, in exchange to limitations of personal freedom. The Shining Path saved most of its strident attacks for Leftist organisations that took part in the elections, denouncing them for abandoning the

revolutionary path. Gustavo Gorriti extensive work reflects his capacity to provide information from the *Sendero's* National Conference II, a secret document that was handwritten and privately circulated. It summarised the Shining Path's military philosophy. Accordingly, to understand "party military thought," meant to join oneself "to a single idea and single action". According to this document, Shining Path military thought was divided in two parts, before and after the beginning of the struggle. The first section begun with the "showing and sketching out the way", by Jose Carlos Mariategui, "later brought to a higher level by Comrade Gonzalo".<sup>23</sup> However it was not "enough to speak of Mariateguism... Mariategui must be interpreted through Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Comrade Gonzalo has done it, and is doing it, has made an advance."<sup>24</sup> The Guzmanian belief rested on the fact that political democracy, was subordinate to the need to impose and maintain with violence "the dictatorship of the proletariat". Marxism's true fight was not, Guzman insisted, the fight for democracy, but the struggle for dictatorship. To try and get "the people" to defend democracy was equivalent to getting the "proletariat and revolutionaries to renounce their dictatorship over the exploiters... to refuse to exclude their class enemies from democracy, and, therefore, to use their state to repress and crush any resistance."<sup>25</sup> For Guzman, a follower of Leninism and Maoism, war was a political exercise where the use of military means was integrally controlled by political objectives. Moreover, *Sendero's* practices of armed stoppages' at local and departmental levels created an atmosphere characterised by violent confrontations that made it impossible for regional movements to organise peaceful and effective protests. A number of other scholars also provide in-depth information about its ideology and implementation methods.

## The Making of a Revolutionary Enclave

The Shining Path remained totally aloof from the decision of the rest of the political forces of the country to participate in the political process that brought in a civilian government. It abstained even though the political actors like the Left radicals opted to participate. Shining Path also remained aloof from the real process of democratisation.<sup>26</sup> The impact and the context of the Shining Path's activities were clearly visible in the highland areas. Degregori states, "Shining Path's militancy may be thus seen, in part, as a path for social mobility." Analysing the psychology of the youth in the highlands, he confirms that "the young people in the highland regions were intoxicated with this power."<sup>27</sup> Their first actions were to paint walls and set off dynamite in town, breaking the silence of the rural rights. According to Arturo (one of the young recruits), "We blew it up just to blow it up, nothing else."<sup>28</sup> Youth were inspired to join an organisation that was on the rise, prestigious, with demonstrated effectiveness, and would empower and transform them. "Shining Path had the elements of the right passage or of initiation into religious sect: the armed sect."<sup>29</sup>

Ayacucho provided the *Sendero Luminoso* with such a favourable scenario. In Ayacucho, among the ruins of bossism (*gamonalismo*), there existed small local fiefdoms of abusive mistis.<sup>30</sup> The region had relatively few peasant organisations and relatively many students. The unemployed students of peasant origins, under these circumstances, were relatively disposed to accept *Sendero* as a new patron, one that appeared more powerful than the former local authorities or state-as-patron (this was also the case of the peasantry too). It swept out the state's repressive apparatus, the police forces. The peasants' acceptance was

basically pragmatic, provided in exchange for concrete gains on the personal, familial, or communal levels.

Degregori, and others like Ponciano del Pino and Nelson Manrique demonstrate that in many locales, a mix of complicity and tolerance initially facilitated relations of coexistence, adaptation, and in some instances sympathy with the *Senderistas*.<sup>31</sup>

The rift between the peasants and the *Sendero* emerged when the latter interfered in the production processes of the former.<sup>32</sup> The Shining Path refusal to recognise the community's authority led to the first overt rebellions. In others, the youthfulness of the Shining Path authorities was upsetting the local communities. Not only did it break generational hierarchies, the "Gonzalo Thought" managed to disengage the rural youth from the tightly woven networks of kinship and community relations, their own dynamics of reciprocities, grudges, hatreds, and references in which they had been long immersed. As a result, the youthful representatives of new power were frequently dragged into inter and intra-communal disputes. Despite the highlanders' experience to structural and political violence, the hyper-ideological violence of Shining Path was still unknown to them; this violence did not play itself out according to the traditional codes. In juridical terms, the punishments that Shining Path imposed were highly out of proportion with the magnitude of the supposed crimes.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the youth, a critical link for Shining Path expansionism in countryside, remained torn between two logics and the two worlds – torn between the party orders and the party's governing logic, and the local loyalties, grudges, and family vendettas – torn between party and the market as potential avenues to achieve "progress" and social mobility.

The arrival of the military increased the existent tensions. When Shining Path decided to respond in kind against the state, the mirroring of the latter's violence against the population, leading to a decisive disenchantment among young people. Strengthened by its 1988 Congress and in the midst of the worst crisis of the "old state" (this was the time when Alan Garcia's regime had become a political and economic disaster), Shining Path decided in 1989 to move from the first to the second stage. For the guerrilla army to integrate with the peasants, it needed not simply the peasant's neutrality or passive assent, but their more active support. And it was precisely on this point that *Sendero's* problems increased. Their demands amplified which battered the fragile equilibrium of "resistant adaptation" that had existed in many places. *Sendero* reacted by increasing violence against the peasantry. But all this led to the creation of *Rondos* or *Ronderos*, or "Committees of Civil Auto Defense", by 1990, when they became trapped in a kind of trench warfare against the peasants. This was their first real defeat since the war had started. Subsequently, the military then enlarged its forces by recruiting youth who were allowed to do their obligatory military service in their own communities, and distributed weapons (mostly handguns) to them – the armed forces, and the state they represented, demonstrated their hegemony in the zone. While the initial years, the war made sadly famous the names of the various communities demolished by the military – including Secce, Pucayacu, Accomarca, Umaro, Bellavista, Ccayara – by around 1988, it was Shining Path's massacres that populated the map of regional death henceforth. Despite the rise of *Rondas*, till 1990, *Sendero* documents did not include an in-depth analysis of the proliferating *Rondas*. In 1991 a Shining Path document, entitled "Let the Strategic Equilibrium Shake the Country More!" defined the *Rondas* as mechanisms of

the counter-revolutionary “low intensity warfare” employed by Fujimori, the military and Yankee imperialism.<sup>34</sup> The region of the Andes witnessed, “Violent struggles between the state and Indian organisations as well as between the military, the police, the drug lords... a vivid part of the redefinition of the political boundaries and actions.”<sup>35</sup>

Fleeing the rural areas in large numbers, peasants reported widespread abuses and even the massacre of entire villages by either the security forces or the *Senderistas*. Reports also indicated that many peasant communities that had hoped to avoid involvement in the struggle were forced to choose sides. In some districts the war had become entangled with ancient feuds between neighbouring villages.<sup>36</sup> It explains how institutional failure engendered an automatisation of the state’s coercive apparatus in the pursuit of counter-insurgency objectives in Peru, enabling the armed forces to operate militarily and virtually unfettered political and legal impunity. Additionally, from the beginning of the counter-insurgency war, the judicial system broke down in two critical areas. First, the courts and Public Ministry did not consistently investigate alleged human rights violations or enforce basic constitutional protections. Second, the judiciary also failed to assert jurisdiction over crimes committed against civilian population. Taken together, these two institutional failures assured that the armed forces enjoyed legal impunity in their conduct of the counter-insurgency war, much as the abdication of civilian administrative authority assured them of political autonomy. As a result of highly varied long-term rural processes, Peru’s political landscape had dramatically changed. An optimistic attempt to read the agrarian landscape’s future, taking into consideration its heterogeneity, indicates that peasants and rural workers, and a different kind of bourgeoisie, especially



in the highlands, were taking a lead in asserting a social project that reached beyond the state and the *Sendero Luminoso*.

Alberto Fujimori in his fight against *Sendero* led to the imposition of harsh austerity measures both economic and political. Authoritarianism of the state strengthened; it began to articulate decrees that intervened in the private spheres of the citizens' lives. The steps taken by the government and the state were referred to be necessary to deal with the unstable situation that existed within Peru, justifying the actions of the President. For instance, Fujimori was shown by Peruvian television as always associated with the task of construction and generating resources, at a time when Shining Path's message was perceived as one of total destruction. The centralisation of power was easier for Fujimori, as he was able to convince the populations about freeing them from the long war. Moreover, the existing institutions were unable to adapt themselves with the changing times, and it is little wonder that the population applauded the *Autogolpe* of 1992 despite Fujimori's virulent attacks on the Congress and the juridical system.<sup>38</sup> Fujimori's popularity increased with the *Autogolpe* as by then *Sendero* had squandered away its initial political advantages and legitimacies, and seemed unable to process the politically fatal implications of deeply "alienating practices that would spark open peasant resistance".<sup>39</sup> In addition to the destruction of life, economic resources, the geography of human settlement, the war had an extremely harsh impact on political culture and institutions. Fujimori's power to manoeuvre situations towards his own benefit made him unchallenged ruler of Peru. This is not to say that alternatively people had very few tenable substitutes to *Fujimorismo* and neo-liberalism.

## **By Way of Conclusion**

*Sendero Luminoso's* challenge finally ended with the arrest of its mystic leader Guzman and his main group of advisers from a suburb of Lima. The Peruvian television showed him in very poor light and the myth of a revolutionary leader was shattered. The arrest of Guzman bolstered Fujimori's political image; not only did he emerge victorious *vis-a-vis Sendero*, but also his approaches and methods of political management drew enormous public support. Fujimori's stringent economic measures were also acceptable to the Peruvians, as for the first time in decades the Peruvian economy was on the upswing, alongside the freedom they began to enjoy liberated from the rigours and tortures of the war. Moreover, the Shining Path also split up after Guzman's confessional letters and his followers were angry at his acceptance of regret in having chosen that particular path, as well as advising his followers to join the democratic and the constitutional means to voice their grievances. Subsequently, there emerged a distinct breakaway group, the Red Path led by Leonardo Huaman and Victor Quispe Palomino pledging to take over where Guzman had left.<sup>40</sup>

The end of the "twelve-year-war" brought forth some critical issues that had to be addressed by the government. A degree of curtailment of the broad powers installed in the armed forces, a process of democratic institution building and devolution of power of the authorities at the local and the regional levels became preconditions to other significant policy changes. Although the Fujimori era lasted quite a few years after the end of the Shining Path, the traces of the latter could not be eliminated.

Notwithstanding the dissipation of the political support once enjoyed by the *Sendero*, the highlanders' political aspirations

could not be curtailed any longer. Howsoever the highlanders' disenchantment with the *Sendero's modus operandi*, they learnt their first political lessons under the tutelage of the latter. *Sendero* had unwillingly created a political linkage between the state and the rural masses, and the latter were now ready to make full use of this relationship. The high degree of political awareness among the Peruvian highlanders remains one of the lasting legacies of the *Sendero*.

Nonetheless, this is a legacy tied up with an unprecedented level of human and material costs. Peru witnessed large-scale violations of human rights under the grab of dealing with insurgency in the form of *Sendero*. It was only after 1992 that the Peruvian government undertook measures to bring about a semblance of normalcy in the war-torn highlands. However, the fear of the possible revival of the *Sendero* poses yet another political challenge to the Peruvian state. It remains to be seen how its re-emergence is negotiated by the Peruvian political class.

## End Notes

- 1 *The Hindu* (Bangalore), July 24, 2003.
- 2 Philip Mauceri. 1997. "The Transition to "Democracy" and the Failure of Institution Building", in Maxwell A. Cameron and Philip Mauceri (eds.), *The Peruvian Labyrinth: Polity, Economy and Society*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press p. 19.
- 3 For details about the Peruvian Left, see Kenneth M. Roberts. 1996. "Economic Crisis and the Demise of the Legal Left in Peru", *Comparative Politics*, vol. 29, October, pp. 69-92.
- 4 Mauceri, n. 2, p. 22.

- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 6 Carol Wise. 1997. "State Policy and Social Conflict in Peru", in Maxwell A. Cameron and Philip Mauceri (eds.), *The Peruvian Labyrinth: Polity, Economy and Society*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 71.
- 7 The lack of employment in the highlands forced many of the young people to seek alternatives outside the system, which meant a natural attraction towards the *Sendero* in order to carve out a just system. Of those convicted of terrorism, about 60 per cent were under twenty-five and many had completed secondary education and taken some university courses. Hobart A. Spalding. 1992. "Peru on the *Brink*", *Monthly Review*, vol. 43, January, pp. 33-34.
- 8 Bourque, Susan C. and Kay B. Warren. 1989. "Democracy Without Peace: The Cultural Politics of Terror in Peru", *Latin American Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 7-34.
- 9 Steve I Stern. 1998. "Beyond Enigma: An Agenda for Interpreting Shining Path and Peru, 1980-1995", in Steve J. Stern, ed., *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 1.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 3
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 5
- 12 The SAIS was a mixture of cooperative and peasant communities. It was a part of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1969 promulgated by the military government under General Velasco. Through the SAIS the highland haciendas were transformed into cooperative enterprises and administered by the state. These differentiated the highland peasantry from other peasantry, whose potential role in the SAIS was marginalised. Therefore, it was hardly surprising that when the *Sendero* entered the central highlands they first attacked the SAIS and destroyed them totally.
- 13 Christine Hunefeldt. 1997. "The Rural Landscape and

Changing Political Awareness: Enterprises, Agrarian Producers, and Peasant Communities, 1969-1994", in Maxwell A. Cameron and Philip Mauceri, eds., *The Peruvian Labyrinth: Polity, Economy and Society*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 115.

- 14 Ibid., p. 121.
- 15 Borque and Warren, n. 7, pp. 13, 15.
- 16 David P. Werlich. 1984. "Peru: The Shadow of the Shining Path", *Current History*, vol. 83, no. 490, February, p. 82.
- 17 Spalding, n. 7, p. 41.
- 18 Carlos Ivan Degregori. 1997. "After the Fall of Abimael Guzman: The Limits of Sendero Luminoso", in Maxwell A. Cameron and Philip Mauceri, eds., *The Peruvian Labyrinth: Polity, Economy and Society*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 179-191.
- 19 Ibid., pp.180-181. For a detailed account of the *Sendero* functioning see Bruce M. Podobnik. 1996. "Revolutionary Terrorism in the Periphery: A Comparative Analysis of the Shining Path and the Khemer Rouge", in Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and William C. Smith (eds.), *Latin America in the World Economy*, Westport- Connecticut, pp. 169-186.
- 20 See Sandra Woy-Hazelton and William A. Hazelton. 1990. "Sendero Luminoso and the Future of Peruvian Democracy", *Third World Quarterly*, vol.12, no. 2, April, p. 122.
- 21 See Spalding, n. 7, p. 34.
- 22 Woy-Hazelton and Hazelton, n. 20, p. 26.
- 23 See Gustavo Goritti. 1999. *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru*, TheUniversity of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, pp. 231-232 .
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Quoted from *Nueva Democracia* 1, 1981, p. 22. For greater details, Ibid., pp. 126-27.

- 26 Carlos Basombrio Iglesias. 1998. "Sendero Luminoso and Human Rights: A Perverse Logic that Captured the Country", in Steve J. Stern (ed.), *Shining and Other Paths. War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 428.
- 27 Degregori, n. 18, p. 185.
- 28 For other such examples, see Carlos Ivan Degregori. 1998. "Harvesting Storms: Peasant Rondos and the Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho", in Steve J. Stern (ed.), *Shining and Other Paths. War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 130.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.
- 30 The *Misti*, or highland mestizo, was a figure signifying domination. *Mistis* mediated between cities and the Indian communities by accepting privileges from the whites in order to dominate the Indians in the past.
- 31 See Steve J. Stern. 1998. "Shining and Other Paths: The Origins, Dynamics, and the Legacies of War, 1980-1995", in Steve J. Stern (ed.), *Shining and Other Paths. War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 472.
- 32 The problems related to production emerged when *Sendero* demanded that the peasants plant only for the party and for subsistence, and proceeded to close off peasants' feds and markets. The strategy of conquering and then closing off territories, in order to block the flow of agricultural produce and thus, strangulate the cities, clashed with the peasants families' own strategies of production.
- 33 Shining Path categorised accordingly to totally alien notion of law, distant from everyday common law as well as national jurisprudence (capital punishment being almost unknown or rare for the crimes that were committed in the highlands).
- 34 Degregori, n. 28, pp. 147-149.
- 35 Hunefeldt, n. 13, p. 132.

- 36 Werlich, n. 16, p. 82.
- 37 Fujimori cashed on a tape that had been obtained by the police in 1990, which showed Abimael Guzman and high *Senderista* leaders dancing. Fujimori highlighted that the *Sendero* leader was drunk and partied where thousand of Peruvians, including Guzman's own combatants died in a war launched by the *Sendero*. See Patricia Oliart. 1998. "Alberto Fujimori: "The Man Peru Needed?", in Steve J. Stern (ed.), *Shining and Other Paths. War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 421.
- 38 About the *autogolpe* (self-coup), Maureen, n. 1, pp. 7-37 deals extensively with the state reforms, coalitions and the self-coup. On *autogolpe* also refer to Ibid., pp. 411-424; David Scott Palmer. 1996. "Fujipopulism" and Peru's Progress", *Current History*, vol. 95, no. 598, February, pp. 70-76; Susan C. Stokes. 1996. "Economic Reform and Public Opinion in Peru, 1990-1995", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 29, no. 5, October, pp. 544-565.
- 39 Stern, n. 31, p. 471.
- 40 \_\_\_\_ See n. 1.

