THE SHINING
PATH OF PERU

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THE ORIGINS AND LOGIC
OF SHINING PATH:
TWO VIEWS

RETURN TO THE PAST*

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On the night of May 17, 1980, the eve of Peru’s first presidential elections in seventeen years, a group of youths broke into the town hall in the small Andean town of Chuschi. They took ballot boxes and voting lists, and burned them in the town plaza. The incident was lost in the avalanche of election news. Over the following months, while the press reported the theft of dynamite from a few mines, isolated bombs began to go off here and there. No one paid much attention until the end of that year, when the situation acquired a folkloric if sinister dimension: Early risers in Lima began to find dead dogs hung from

traffic lights and lamp posts. They were adorned with signs that read “Deng Xiaoping, Son of a Bitch.”

The Communist Party of Peru, known as Shining Path (SL or Sendero), points to that remote May 17 as the beginning of the “People’s War.” In the years since then, Sendero has emerged as the most important armed movement in contemporary Peruvian history. No one attached much importance to the first skirmishes because in 1980 Shining Path was a small regional organization that had not played any role in the great social movements that shook the country between 1976 and 1979 and forced the military government (1968-1980) to withdraw to the barracks.

Beginnings

Sendero was born in the Andean department of Ayacucho, one of the nation’s poorest and most backward, where until midcentury bankrupt landowners persisted in the serflike exploitation of “their” Indians. Ayacuchanos, however, did not have their backs turned to the modern world; they migrated by the thousands and flocked to schools to escape their misery and oppression. Their desire for education was so great that, unlike other Andean departments, the principal social movement in Ayacucho between 1960 and 1980 was not for land but in defense of free education, which the military government tried to cut back in 1969.

Ten years earlier, in 1959, San Cristóbal de Huamanga University in Ayacucho, the only school of higher education in the region, reopened its doors. (Founded in 1677, it had been closed since 1885.) The tiny regional committee of the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) operating in Ayacucho took off soon after, when a group of professors signed up. The committee chair was a young philosophy professor named Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, today the supreme leader of Shining Path.

Soon Guzmán, together with his most faithful followers, formed a clandestine Red Faction within the PCP, which was to be the forerunner of Shining Path. In January 1964 the PCP split into a pro-Soviet faction and another that was Maoist. The Red Faction aligned itself with the latter, and in a few years it gained influence in the student federation and among the faculty. It also helped set up a municipal federation of community organizations and a People’s Defense Front, which took the lead in the massive movement in defense of free education. But in 1969 the faction suffered a double defeat that deeply affected its development.

On the one hand, in June of that year, the free education movement suffered harsh repression. The leaders of the People’s Defense Front were arrested, and the Front would never recover its former power (however, shortly after the crackdown, the government did restore free education). The other defeat came within the party. Several top leaders of the Red Faction, among them Guzmán himself, were arrested, along with the Front leadership. While Guzmán spent long months in jail, a fierce internal struggle shook the Maoist PCP. By the beginning of 1970, Guzmán had been expelled from the party, reduced to his Ayacucho stronghold, and weakened even there. It was then that the Red Faction decided to become the Communist Party of Peru — Shining Path. I began teaching at the University of Huamanga in Ayacucho during that year and had the opportunity to observe the development of Sendero firsthand.

At the same time, the military government undertook a series of reforms that began to change the face of the region and the country. The days of the Peru that, at least from Ayacucho, could still be seen as a semi-feudal nation similar to China of the 1930s were numbered. Sendero, converted by then into a party, began a quiet race against time. During the first half of the 1970s, many professors and students at the university, who made up the backbone of the new party, devoted themselves to developing a coherent and all-encompassing discourse following the strictest Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. In that sense, Sendero was moving in the opposite direction from the rest of the Peruvian left who, during the 1970s, left the universities to participate in increasingly frequent social movements.

Ideology and Strategy

Sendero compensated for its weakening impact on society by building increasingly well-organized cadres steeped in ideology. What it lost in influence among the masses, it gained in ideological rigidity and organic cohesiveness, until it became a sort of dwarf star — the kind in which matter gets so compressed it acquires a great specific weight disproportionate to its size. For that reason nobody detected it in 1980; nobody noticed that despite its small size, it had the power to affect decisively the Peruvian political scene of the 1980s. Sendero had become a classic example of a party built from the top
Denying those realities, Sendero proposed another scenario. It rejected the leading role of the masses in favor of the leading role of the party; the party decides everything. It rejected the primacy of politics in favor of the primacy of violence; violence is the essence of revolution; war is its principal task. According to Sendero, Peru was still semi-feudal and the change of government meant nothing. Fernando Belaúnde Terry, the winner of the 1980 presidential elections, represented “fascist continuism.” Faced with the impossibility of stopping time or blocking out the sun with one finger, Sendero chose to become the sun. With Mao Zedong dead and the Gang of Four defeated, Sendero proclaimed itself the beacon of world revolution, its leader the “fourth sword of Marxism,” after Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

It was a classic retreat forward. To sustain this alternative scenario required not only an act of supreme political will and enormous organizing ability, but also an ideological rigidity unprecedented in Peruvian political history. To resist the powerful currents sweeping the left nationally and internationally, Sendero turned to a fundamentalism that maximized and lionized violence. Sendero was able to pull this off because it was basically outside the movement, disconnected from the classes that participate in production, from their daily lives and their pragmatic demands.

**Explanation: Return to the Past**

Several questions remain open. Why did such a group emerge? Was it because its sympathizers had been reduced to a small political-intellectual nucleus in a region of ruined lords and rebellious serfs, a region closed off and abandoned by capitalist development yet achingly desirous of progress? How did Sendero manage to carry forth its scenario relentlessly throughout the 1980s? It is my position that as it matured, Sendero picked up the outdated characteristics of that regional society and of national political life and, in the middle of the generalized crisis of the 1980s, became the active vanguard of social and political “return to the past.”

Some consider Sendero to be a messianic or millenarian movement, rooted in Andean Indian culture. But its leadership has always been made up of *mitis* rooted in the Andean seigniorial system. If they incorporated some form of messianic or religious context, it was not due to Indian traditions but on account of what we could call an “excess of reason.” They are the last children
of the Enlightenment who, two hundred years later and isolated in the Andes, ended up converting science into religion. Given the degree of passion that Shining Path developed and unleashed, it seems strange to define it as a hyperrationalist movement, at least among the leadership. But for the top leaders of Sendero, Pascal’s phrase “The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing” should be inverted to say “Reason has its passions of which the heart knows nothing.”

The founders of Sendero form part of a long tradition of provincial elites who rose up against a system that concentrates everything in the capital, and who embraced indigenismo (glorification of Indian customs and traditions) as a reaction against the hispanismo (glorification of Hispanic customs and traditions) of the Lima upper classes. Since the 1920s, but especially since midcentury, such elites in many parts of the country have adopted Marxism, most often combining it with a reevaluation of Andean reality that links them to indigenismo. That is not the case with Sendero, whose official documents ignore the ethnic dimension or reject out of hand Andean cultural reevaluation as folklore or bourgeois manipulation.

In that sense, Sendero is the most coldly analytical of the Marxist ventures that arose in Peru during the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, its vision, one that sought to be absolutely scientific, became exceedingly emotional, offering its members a strong quasi-religious identity. One of its most important documents defines communism as:

the society of “great harmony,” the radical and definitive new society toward which 15 billion years of matter in movement — the part of eternal matter of which we know — is necessarily and irresssibly heading... A single, irreplaceable new society, without exploited or exploiters, without oppressed or oppressors, without classes, without state, without parties, without democracy, without arms, without wars.6

Sendero’s epic, then, is a cosmic one. Its leaders are intellectual warriors in the service of a most exact science that regulates the universe like a limitless cosmic ballet. They must put everything in order according to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, overcoming or destroying whatever resists its ineluctable laws. As it turns out, according to that science Peruvian society is semifeudal. Maybe Sendero’s venture would not have had to generate so much violence had it evolved in China of the 1930s, because in that semifeudal society it would not have found, for example, engineers repairing electric towers, agronomists doing rural extension work, anthropologists advising peasant federations, or foreign volunteers developing health programs. The possibility of assassinating those people would not have come up: They did not exist. The degree of violence is as great as it is, among other reasons, because Sendero had to make reality fit an idea — it must not only stop time but turn it back until the page is once again blank, and on it Sendero can then write the script the party has worked out.

**Authoritarianism Reformulated**

This is not to imply that there is no point of contact between Peru’s reality and Sendero’s vision of it. If that were the case, SL could not have been able to build up a base of support. Sendero takes up the population’s longstanding desire for progress and focuses it through the lens of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. But at the same time, it carries to an extreme the authoritarianism of the old provincial misti elites — against the grain of the principal trend in the country that is aimed, rather, at breaking misti power. A fundamental characteristic of Sendero’s activity is disregard for grass-roots organizations: peasant communities, labor unions, neighborhood associations. These are all replaced by generated organisms — that is, by the party that decides everything, just as before everything was decided by the misti lords and officials.

The best-known example is the armed strikes that have been announced since 1987 in various localities. These are not called by any union or regional front but by the party or its generated organisms. This contrasts with Sendero’s attitude regarding national strikes called by the labor movement. Between 1977 and 1988 nine general strikes took place in Peru. Millions of people took part in the July 1977 and May 1978 strikes, the most important mobilizations in contemporary Peruvian history. Sendero’s stance varied between absolute indifference and frontal opposition. In January 1988, for the first time, Sendero decided to back the ninth strike, which turned out to be quite unremarkable. Sendero’s participation was limited to very minor actions. They burned tires on the Central Highway and disrupted the rally of the General Workers Confederation in the Plaza de Mayo, shouting slogans and setting off dynamite caps. Nonetheless, on the next day, the headline in *El Diario*, the semiofficial
party mouthpiece, read “Historic Day for the Peruvian Proletariat.” Obviously it was not a historic day because of the magnitude of the strike, but because the party decided to back it, producing a kind of proletarian Pentecost that marked “a new direction for the working class, nourished for the first time by a more elevated experience of struggle.”

The point is that if, “except for power, all is illusion,” as a favorite Sendero slogan maintains, then the party, conceived as the central instrument for winning that power is the only reality. Except for the party, everything is an illusion: Society, for example, only acquires reality when the party touches it. Gods of a belligerently monotheistic religion, they do not let anyone else onto their Olympus: They must be the only force that brings order to the rural world. But in Peru, unlike China of the 1930s and despite the growing weakness of the state and of civil society amid the current crisis, those spaces where Sendero would like to be a solitary demiurge are relatively well populated with peasant organizations, unions, left parties, the progressive church, non-governmental development organizations, and the like. Sendero lashes out not only at the state but at these other actors, believing that the PCP-Shining Path should be the only one that relates to those masses, so as then, finally, to “educate them in the people’s war.”

Sendero’s leaders take on the role of traditional authoritarian teachers who believe they possess the truth and, therefore, ought to have the absolute power over their students. That is how the major Sendero documents set forth the party-mass relationship: “people’s war is a political exploit that by means of overwhelming actions hammers ideas into the minds of men...” Abimael Guzmán himself stated that

the masses have to be taught through overwhelming acts so that ideas can be pounded into them...the masses in the nation need the leadership of a Communist party; we hope with more revolutionary theory and practice, with more armed actions, with more people’s war, with more power, to reach the very heart of the class and the people and really win them over. Why? In order to serve them — that is what we want.

The language itself displays an impressive degree of willingness to use violence against the masses, who the same paragraph says are to be loved and served. This ambiguous relationship is deeply rooted in the Andean seignorial tradition. The mestizos, who make up the backbone of the party, are a group that has always considered Indians to be inferior and, even when they identified with them sentimentally, called for their liberation from servitude and sought their support to confront Lima’s westernized creole elite. Sendero’s attitude resembles that of certain indigenista intellectuals of the past who expressed the authoritarian, tortuous, violent love of the superior for the inferior, whom they sought to redeem or “protect” from the evils of the modern world. Sendero’s behavior could also be compared with that of the traditional teacher in his relationship with a student who is good, but somewhat awkward or rebellious, and has to be shown that, as the Spanish proverb puts it, La letra entra con sangre (a more explicitly pedagogical version of “Spare the rod, spoil the child”).

Deception, Domination, and Education

Why do such conceptions capture the imagination of certain circles of provincial youth? Often in Peru, in order to explain something, one has to go far back into history; in this case, back to the very beginning, to the conquest and the ambush that took place in November 1532 in Cajamarca. The Spaniards, having arrived on the scene, sent an invitation to the Inca emperor, who, curious to meet them, set out for the encounter. He entered the plaza of Cajamarca surrounded by his warriors, but found only a priest who handed him the Bible and said, “This is the word of God.” The Inca raised the book to his ear, heard no word, and disappointed, threw the Bible to the ground. The priest then shouted, “Christians, the word of God is in the dirt!” The conquest was justified. The hidden arquebuses could begin their task.

Thus emerged a society based on deception, a deception made possible, in part, by the monopoly that the rulers exercised over knowledge of the Spanish language. From that time on, the conquered peoples fluctuated between resignation and rebellion. Rebellion, in turn, fluctuated between rejection of the West — Andean culture withdrawing into itself — and appropriation of the conquerors’ instruments of domination. Both tendencies are present throughout Peruvian history, but in the twentieth century the latter predominates. Among the instruments of domination Andean people seek to appropriate, one stands out: education. To take away from the misitis their
monopoly on Spanish, on reading and writing, is equivalent to Prometheus’s feat of taking fire from the gods.

As the century advanced, the energy with which Andean peoples launched into the conquest of education was exceptional. According to the United Nations figures on access to education in Latin America, Peru moved from fourteenth place in 1960 to fourth place in 1980.11 In the seventy-odd countries that the UN considers to be at a “middle level of development,” the percentage of eighteen- to twenty-five-year-olds currently studying at the secondary level or higher rose from 17 percent in 1960 to 52 percent in 1980. In Peru it jumped from 19 percent to 76 percent. This stands out even more when compared to other vital statistics, such as infant mortality or life expectancy, in which only Bolivia and Haiti are worse off in Latin America than Peru.

But what are people seeking in education? They are of course looking for practical tools: learning to read and write and do basic arithmetic. But in addition, as children of the deceived, they are looking for truth. Several testimonies gathered in Ayacucho in 1969, immediately after the movement on behalf of free education, were highly revealing.12 A peasant leader, asked about the situation of people from his region, answered, “They need to be instructed, they need someone to give them orientation, they need courses...to see if in that way they can move forward, get out of slavery, free themselves from deception. Otherwise they will continue to be poor and exploited.”

Being educated, in short, is the equivalent of gaining freedom from deception. Another leader said about the University of Huamanga: “The university is waking us up, we are learning something new, something objective, which [the powerful] do not like; it doesn’t suit them at all because they want us to remain deceived.” Opposed to that deception would be the objective truth, to which one would gain access through education. Traditional authority, based not only on its monopoly of the means of production but also on its monopoly and manipulation of knowledge, crumbles when the dominated break up both monopolies.

But even if education has democratizing effects visible on the social level, the same does not necessarily occur on the political or cultural plane. According to the first leader just quoted, “the peasant needs to be instructed, needs someone” — implicitly from the outside — “to give him orientation.” The old hierarchical order is translated here into the relationship of teacher (urban, mestizo) to student (peasant, Indian). Mass education can come about, therefore, without substantially breaking up the authoritarianism of traditional society. The same peasant went on to say “Our highest aspiration is for the progress of rural people; that their collaborators, or rather their guides, orient them toward achieving progress — in my view, by avoiding the vices that peasants have: drinking, coca, cigarettes.”

If there is a need for a guide from the outside, there is no reason to be surprised at the appearance of a caudillo teacher such as the one who heads Sendero. The moralizing nature of SL and its punishment of adulterers and drinkers also fits the bill. Nor is there anything surprising about the rise in popularity of the most hard-line Marxist-Leninist tendencies in the nation’s universities during the 1970s. It was the children of the deceived — young people of Andean origin from the provinces — who entered the university en masse at that time. There they met up with a simplified and accessible version of a theory that defined itself as the only scientific truth and was legitimized through references to the Marxist classics — the true authorities. That science proposed a new but strictly hierarchical order where the students, upon acceding to the party and its truth, could move from the base to the peak of the social pyramid.

Conclusion

Thus, at root the revolution is perceived by Sendero militants as a means of social mobility. One participant told me: “They said, look, it’s 1981. By 1985 Ayacucho will be a liberated zone; by 1990 Peru will be an independent country. Wouldn’t you like to be a minister? Wouldn’t you like to be a military chief? Be something...In 1985 the revolution is going to triumph, and those of us who have been in the party the longest will be the bosses.”13

This great need for order and progress in a context that is still traditional points to one of the roots of Shining Path’s quasi-religious scientism, according to which “the ideology of the proletariat...is scientific, exact, all-powerful” or, as its official documents say, “all-powerful because it is true.”14 It also points to one of the roots of the personality cult and the hallowing of “Gonzalo Thought” (Guzmán’s guerrilla alias is Presidente Gonzalo): The leader—teacher is education incarnate and, therefore, truth incarnate, virtue incarnate. No other group in the Marxist tradition has placed such emphasis on the
intellectual status of its leader. On Sendero's posters Guzmán occupies the center, dressed in a suit, wearing glasses, book in hand, surrounded by masses carrying rifles and flags, with the great red sun setting behind him.

The "Andean Maoism" of Shining Path is a hybrid, woven from Maoist authoritarianism and the most authoritarian aspects of Peruvian political tradition. This philosophy resonated in the mountains of Ayacucho, but as Sendero moved into the rest of the nation, it has been obliged to exercise growing violence against a people that dares to go beyond the designs of the party and travel its own road to liberation, refusing to be a blank page and, instead, entering into history with all its complexity — and its ambiguity.
GUERRILLAS AND COCA IN THE UPPER HUALLAGA VALLEY

José E. Gonzales

Until 1937 the Upper Huallaga Valley (UHV), spreading along the banks of the Huallaga River in the departments of Huánuco and San Martín, was accessible only by long boat journeys and jungle paths. Only in 1937 did a one-lane highway reach the upper reaches of the Huallaga River, at what as to become the settlement of Tingo María. The settlers brought their traditions with them. Among them was the chaccheo, or coca leaf chewing, which farm workers in particular found useful to reduce sensations of thirst, hunger, and fatigue.

Today, over 25,000 people live in Tingo María, and the original one-lane highway has become the city's principal avenue. Outside of a half-dozen paved

*Part of this chapter is based on the author's “Perú: Sendero Luminoso en el valle de la coca,” in Diego García Sayán, ed., Coca, cocaína, narcotráfico: Laberinto en los Andes (Lima: Comisión Andina de Juristas, 1989), pp. 207-222.
streets, however, all of the city’s thoroughfares are still of dirt and only the main square displays a few substantial buildings. Were it not for a large number of bank offices and a very active and visible commercial trade, little would indicate that the city is one of Peru’s most prosperous. The regular transit of trucks with soldiers, large numbers of policemen with automatic weapons patrolling the streets, and camouflaged helicopters whirring past at treetop level are evidence of dangers that are not immediately apparent.

Between 1970 and 1980 coca plantings increased at least sixfold in the area around Tingo María, to over six thousand hectares (one hectare equals two and one-half acres). The ease of growing the coca plants in the area (three crops a year using little or no fertilizer) and the quality of the production (the varieties produced in the area, erotoxilon and novogratense, contain the highest levels of alkaloids) sparked the interest of Peruvian and Colombian traffickers. The rapid increase in demand for cocaine in the United States led them to appreciate the possibilities for increased production in the Upper Huallaga valley.

By 1987 official figures listed the annual production of coca leaf as 28,560 metric tons,1 while agronomists responsible for compiling this data stated in interviews with the author that the actual figure was 80,000 metric tons. The same year, government officials in the UHV maintained that about 95 percent of the local economy was based on the illegal activities of drug trafficking or coca production; the balance, from such legal enterprises as a coffee and cacao cooperatives, a tea plantation, a sawmill, a palm oil plantation, and a brick factory.2 The volume of coca production not only led to rapid increases in coca paste trafficking but also created the necessary conditions for the appearance of Shining Path guerrillas in the valley.

The Maoist Guerrillas

Shining Path began its political work in the UHV in 1980.3 Several militants arrived in Puerto Pizaña and Aucayacu at that time and settled as coca growers. Two years later the buildup of the organization began with the help of several members who came from Tarapoto.4

The central government discovered the first signs of Sendero’s presence in the area during an antidrug operation organized in 1984 by a specialized 500-man police force, the Mobile Rural Patrol Unit (UMOPAR), in a joint effort with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Originally designed as an exclusively antidrug operation, it turned into an antisuervise campaign when policemen found evidence of the existence of Sendero People’s Schools in small hamlets and coca paste laboratories on the banks of the Huallaga River and detained several members of the organization. Shortly afterward, the mayor of Tingo María, Tito Jaime, who also happened to be a cocalero and the major organizer of the coca growers as well, was murdered. While initial reports pointed to drug traffickers as the killers, in light of Shining Path’s strategy it could just as easily have been a Sendero assassination to eliminate the head of an established organization that could represent the coca growers.

Shining Path has rarely claimed responsibility for its actions. In this case, however, several clues linked the murder to it. Jaime had founded the Defense and Development Front of Leóncio Prado Province, an organization that represented regional interests clearly linked to coca, and one that Sendero subsequently tried to topple and use for its own purposes. Jaime’s assassination also served as a warning for any other individual with leadership ambitions. The murder also reflected one of the constants in the Sendero strategy, opposition to any legal organization that could defy its supremacy. The subsequent systematic assassinations of local authorities in the area and in other parts of the country attest to this.

These incidents forced the government to place the area under a state of emergency starting in July 1984, with a political-military command that concentrated on repressing the guerrillas rather than on antidrug operations. Army General Julio Carbajal D’Angelo, placed in charge of the emergency zone (EMZ), did not consider drug trafficking to be the real problem for the area or for the country. He also claimed that involving the military in the fight against drugs could subject his officers and men to the temptations of easy money and corrupt his forces. Carbajal maintained that the coca business was actually beneficial for the country; it gave work to thousands of peasants and generated substantial foreign currency. During his six months in the post, Carbajal was quite successful. By dropping platoons of soldiers along the valley floor and patrolling escape routes through the mountains and along the roads, the army was able to disperse the guerrillas’ columns within three months. At the same time, General Carbajal kept UMOPAR from executing
antidrug operations, a move that gave him the support of both the local peasant growers and the traffickers.

Thus free from police action, a new coca boom permitted an increase both in crop production and in other kinds of violence. With Shining Path and UMOFAR out of the UHV, the leading drug lords were left to exercise authority over local traffickers. Carabajal and the officers under his command then applied a strategy in which many active in drug production and trafficking were used as sources for intelligence information and as local armed groups against the guerrillas.5 However, the drug lords took advantage of the temporary power vacuum to begin a terror campaign in the UHV that thoroughly frightened the population. They also began paying lower prices for the coca leaf in order to increase profits. Most of the violence was perpetrated against bodyguards and other employees of the patronos, or coca lords. Tales of such coca lords as Catalino Escalante, "the Vampire," are still passed around in the UHV heartland of Uchiza and Tocache. Escalante, as a youth of twenty, killed a local journalist in the main square of Tocache after he published a story referring to Escalante as a drug trafficker. Escalante also frequently terrorized opponents by beheading his victims and throwing their bodies into the Huallaga.

The police also contributed to the problem. In collusion with local traffickers, some policemen based in the UHV did nothing about the trafficking and actually participated in the extortion of the coca growers. These abuses of the population by the traffickers on the one hand and the police on the other generated the opening that allowed the Sendero guerrillas to regroup and begin again the process of reestablishing their influence in the valley. They were aided by the actions of President Alan García Pérez (1985-1990), who lifted the state of emergency and ordered a new wave of antidrug operations that continued until 1987. The police resumed coca crop eradication and the interdiction of drug trafficking, and in the process revived repression of the local population.

Shining Path then took advantage of what its own documents refer to as "power vacuums" and "internal contradictions." Between April and May 1986, Shining Path held the fourth plenary session of its Central Committee. There, the guerrilla leaders defined the "Topping of the Great Leap with a Golden Seal," the beginning of a "New Great Plan" in January 1987, and the organization of its first congress. The plan included the Upper Huallaga Valley as one of the main areas of concentration. At that time, from 60,000 to 300,000 families6 grew coca leaf in the Upper Huallaga; it was precisely those people, trapped between the rule of the traffickers and the corruption of the police, that Sendero addressed. The guerrillas, seeking a social base to expand its movement in the UHV, designed a strategy based on an alliance with the peasants and a modus vivendi with the coca lords. By then it was clear that the military's 1984-1985 strategy of provoking a split between the coca producers and traffickers, on the one hand, and the guerrillas, on the other, had failed.

In early 1987 Sendero guerrillas launched open attacks against police stations and organized the first of several armed strikes.9 By August guerrillas and peasants demonstrated that they could completely control the valley if they wished. They blew up two bridges and destroyed the highway through the UHV by digging ditches across it every hundred yards (273 in all between Tingo Maria and Nuevo Progreso!). This stopped traffic completely for three days, from commercial vehicles and private cars to police and military patrols. The government responded by placing the area once again under a state of emergency. It also organized a police operation that, under the guise of an antidrug effort, attempted to dismantle the guerrillas through repression and intimidation. The operation failed; its principal result was to increase the animosity of the local population against the police once again.

As 1987 drew to a close, circumstances continued to favor Sendero's UHV strategy. Cooperation in antidrug efforts between the Peruvian police and the DEA was increasing with the presence of U.S. advisors and instructors and with the use of U.S. helicopters. Coca crop eradication, once done by hand by Control and Reduction of Coca Crops (CORAH) workers transported overland, began to be carried out by crews carried to the sites by helicopters piloted by American crews with gasoline-powered weed cutters to cut down the coca bushes.10 The apparent success of the new antidrug strategy in the UHV, highly publicized by the government, gave Sendero new opportunities. During 1988 the guerrillas' actions increased both in number and in levels of violence. A second armed strike, complete with rebel ambushes, blew up six bridges and killed over fifty police and soldiers. It represented the most dramatic evidence of growing Sendero power against the government in the region. With the slogan "Against genocide and eradication," suggesting how much the crop
eradication program had alienated UHV residents, the guerrillas began to control entire towns, including Uchiza and Tocache, the largest in the valley after Tingo Maria. In those communities, the guerrilla organized the inhabitants for various activities, including teams to keep the town cleaned up; everyone participated, including bank officials! Sendero soon concluded that it had done well; it noted in July 1988 that the valley was a key arena for the “vigorous development of the popular war,” “open work with the masses,” and the “peasants war.”

With the growing immobility of the police and the continuing passivity of local authorities, Shining Path continued to consolidate its authority and dispersed “revolutionary justice” throughout more and more of the valley, Sendero “law,” as described by a foreign priest who lives in the UHV, is one with “hyper-Christian” morals except for the death penalty as a punishment for transgressions. This “law” has two parts: cardinal rules and commands. The three cardinal rules are: (1) Obey orders; (2) Take from the masses neither a single needle nor a piece of string; (3) Turn over everything which is captured. The eight commandments are: (1) Speak courteously; (2) Pay an honest price for everything purchased; (3) Return everything borrowed; (4) Give compensation for anything broken or destroyed; (5) Do not hit or injure people; (6) Do not take farm produce; (7) Do not abuse women; (8) Do not mistreat prisoners.

These guidelines gave many peasants an order they had previously lacked. To apply its rules, Sendero formed Popular Committees, elected in every community and made up of a delegate and a subdelegate. The guerrillas also established Popular Bases, party organs consisting of a political, a military, and a logistical officer. The committees supervised community activities, from celebration of weddings, to supervision of local production, to control of sexual mores (prohibiting infidelity, prostitution, and homosexuality), and even determining on which days drinking would be permitted. The bases applied penalties, organized Popular Schools and political rallies, enlisted youth in the guerrillas’ Popular Army, gave military instruction, provided economic and military support to Shining Path’s party structure, and controlled military operations. Rules were enforced with iron-handed discipline: There were no second chances, with offenses punishable by either exile or summary execution. The popular army had, according to local and official sources, main, local, and base forces, with about three thousand armed fighters in the Main Force and about the same number in the others. In this manner, Shining Path gave the UHV population a simple, functional order and ended their previously unsettled and precarious situation.

By late 1988 Shining Path completely controlled the valley road. Every passing vehicle paid a fee at the Sendero “toll booth,” a rope put across the highway. Driving along the road, one could see extensive party graffiti on every available wall, which made clear that the guerrillas were throughout the area. At the entrance to towns such as Paraíso and Tocache, Sendero manned the control posts armed with submachine guns. Every outsider who arrived was required to show identification documents and to explain the purpose of the visit. The guerrillas decided how long the visitor could stay (sometimes less than an hour) and assigned someone to accompany the individual on foot or by motorcycle. During the visits, a “guest” could note a certain tension in the towns along with a certain tranquility among the populace not seen before Shining Path’s arrival. In one valley town, La Morada, a founder commented:

The compañerost behave well, they are well mannered and treat people courteously. They helped us get rid of the homosexuals, prostitutes, and criminals that used to gather around here. They told them to leave; those that didn’t showed up dead in the road. No town official was about to intervene. In addition they organize weekly meetings; they call the people together and we listen to lessons on politics. They taught us that we had been exploited and that now the party will support us. The best thing, though, is that now the police don’t abuse us like they used to and nobody steals a thing. You can leave your car in the middle of the road unlocked for several days, go back and actually find it completely intact.

In order to control the area, Sendero did not use the brutal methods it had been known to practice elsewhere. The support it received in the UHV was based more on SL proselytizing of selected individuals than on its efforts to gain the ideological allegiance of the masses. This made it strong but also fragile. Its support among the general population was based more on local concern for protecting and expanding coca crop and coca paste production than on the political cause of orthodox Maoism that Shining Path offered. Other potential problems the rebels had to face included corruption among Sendero militants and the possibility of a rebellion from the local coca lords.
None of these challenges turned out to be the direct cause of Shining Path’s second defeat in the valley. The unheralded arrival of an army officer, hitherto unnoticed by everyone, including the government, posed an obstacle for Sendero that it could not surmount and that may well have set back its plans by several years.

**The General and His Weapons**

During much of 1989, the guerrillas were able to continue to consolidate their control of the UHV, with the significant if unwitting help of the programs in the area against drug production and trafficking. A new base of operations for crop eradication and interdiction was constructed on the banks of the Huallaga River near the small town of Santa Lucía. In March an herbicide spray test on sixteen hectares of coca crops with Tebuthion, manufactured by Eli Lilly and known commercially as Spike, also played into Shining Path’s hands. Coca growers and traffickers were profoundly disturbed by this new threat to their livelihood. The Spike issue also was a major factor in provoking one of the worst defeats the government suffered in the valley. This was the massive Sendero attack on the Uchiza police post in which ten police and two civilians died.

The attack of March 27 continued throughout the night. Shortly after dawn on the twenty-eighth, guerrillas seized the post. The surviving policemen surrendered; while those of the lower ranks were pardoned, all the officers were executed in the main plaza. The guerrillas then raised their red flag with the hammer and sickle on the town flagpole. The guerrillas, supported by the local populace and the traffickers, not only defeated the police but also forced the resignation of Armando Villanueva, Minister of the Interior and head of the National Police.

Villanueva, one of the most respected leaders of President García’s American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) party, had recently been appointed to the position, in part because of his reputation as a hard-liner on the issue of Sendero. His reputation did not help him, however, in handling the guerrillas and the problems of his ministry. The APRA leader faced an economic budget crisis, a general lack of discipline among the police, and an incomplete understanding of the guerrilla phenomenon and its strength in the UHV. His resignation was provoked in part by the publication of the transcript of radio communication he maintained with the policemen of Uchiza who pleaded in vain for help and support for almost ten hours. Villanueva tried to get some air support but was not able to convince either the DEA at Santa Lucia or his own Peruvian Air Force to fly reinforcements to the area. Both responded that their helicopters were not equipped to fight at night and remained, like the minister, listening to the desperate pleas of the policemen throughout the battle.17

Villanueva’s resignation was also related to the responses of the local population after the attack. In several television and press interviews, the inhabitants of Uchiza talked openly of their support of the compañeros and of how the policemen deserved the punishment they had received because of their regular abuse of the citizenry.18 These statements revealed the high levels of support the guerrillas enjoyed, the total lack of coordination between the police and the military, and the utter incompetence of the government in managing the situation.

Contributing to the problem was the work of the CORAH crop eradication crews supported by U.S. funds and helicopters, which eliminated 5,130 hectares of coca plants in 1988. This effort intensified peasant hostility to the government and gave Shining Path the additional political support it wanted to further legitimate its attacks. In addition, the eradication effort was insufficient to reduce coca cultivation or production. The amount of coca paste leaving the UHV actually increased during this period, as did the total amount of land under coca cultivation. Shining Path used the opportunity to increase its harassment of the CORAH crews and the police and to channel peasant resentment into support for the Sendero guerrillas. The risk posed to the individuals and equipment performing the eradication efforts of the Peruvian and U.S. governments was sufficiently great to result in the withdrawal of the crews and the suspension of all DEA eradication, interdiction, and logistical efforts in the UHV between February and September 1989. In this context, the García government declared a state of emergency in the UHV area that included San Martin, Ucayali and Huánuco.19 This meant that the military became the administrative directors of this increasingly conflict-ridden region rather than civilian authorities with the support of the police. Lima’s concern, in other words, shifted from the drug war to the guerrilla war.
Peruvian Army Brigadier General Alberto Arciniega assumed control over this emergency zone (EMZ) in April 1989, and from his first day on the job laid forth a different view of how military strategy should be conducted in the area. He gathered Uchiza's citizens in their main plaza and ordered that the Sendero colors be struck immediately. In response to the citizens' concern that the compañeros would carry out reprisals, Arciniega responded, "if the Peruvian colors don’t fly in your plaza, I’m the one who’s going to kill you, not with knives, but with helicopters that will destroy the entire town...But if you raise Peru’s flag, you can count on my protection and support." With that initial stance, Arciniega demonstrated his authority over the area in the name of the central government and began the change in official policy that substantially shifted the equilibrium of forces in the UHV.

With the full support of the government and his superiors, Arciniega opened up two fronts in his fight against the guerrillas. Four days after his arrival, he began an intense patrol activity, directly engaging any Sendero column in his path. A day after his visit to Uchiza, he prevented the reestablishment of the police post, thereby demonstrating his objection to official abuse. He also made clear from the outset that his efforts would focus on subversion rather than on drug trafficking, which gained him immediate popular support.

The policemen arrived by truck. They told Arciniega they wanted to stay at the military base, a large house donated to the military by its owner, because the old post had been destroyed and was unusable. Arciniega, wary of their presence because of the townspeople’s distrust, told them this was impossible. When the police commander began to argue, the unexpected happened: Hundreds of Uchiza’s inhabitants spontaneously organized a meeting in front of the military base. Their representatives told Arciniega they wanted the policemen to leave. After a brief conversation with the group’s leaders, Arciniega faced the police commander and told him, "You may stay, but not at my base. You must find another place." That afternoon the police contingent returned to Tingo Maria by helicopter.

Despite what many analysts predicted, Arciniega did not behave in the normal Peruvian military manner of being concerned more with armed repression than on building political support. He seemed to realize from the beginning that the insurgent problem could be solved definitively only by gaining coca producer backing. The general found one of his major sources of support in a peasant organization that was then only a few months old. The Upper Huallaga Agrarian Cooperative had been founded in December 1988 by Mario Escudero, an ex-policeman and the son of settlers who had spent two years organizing the coca growers; by Justo Silva, the principal of one of the two local schools; and by half a dozen coca growers who filled the cooperative’s other administrative positions. Fed up with police abuse and corruption, the risks of coca cultivation, and Sendero’s political agenda, forty-two of the one-hundred-odd coca-producing communities of the UHV that formed part of the organization presented the possibilities of crop substitution as the best way out of the coca problem in their valley. They found a willing listener in Arciniega.

As their leader, Mario Escudero, said:

Coca brought money, but it also brought abuse, corruption and insecurity. Later it involved politics, like the compañeros who said they cared about us, but, I think, cared more about their cause. Given these problems, I decided to go to every community and talk with my countrymen to convince them that together we would be stronger. Substitution of new crops for coca rather than coca eradication would make Uchiza a better place for us and our children to live. It took two full years of convincing before we could put together the cooperative.

General Arciniega seemed to understand the logic of this message. He noted that it was necessary to fight the Maoist guerrillas:

but not in just any manner. It is necessary to consider that any rebel group seeks to gain the people’s support, and in the Huallaga Valley these are primarily cultivators of coca and are repressed. How can we win their support? By taking them out of their present precarious situation, that’s how. The cocalero peasants were harassed by the police and by any other official organization that happened by because they were considered to be criminals. CORAH harassed them by eradicate their crops, the police by considering that they were engaged in criminal activities...We are talking about 80 percent of the population! What we do then is to change the situation to keep the coca grower, the group which Sendero supports in order to accomplish its goals, from being subject to harassment. If we can persuade the people to join us, the war is won.
By applying this perspective, Arciniega displaced the guerrillas. He became the referee who dealt directly with conflicts among growers, traffickers, and the police and gradually made it possible to build up support among the population. The growers, now forced to choose between support for an outlaw organization or support for the military, did not think twice before throwing their lot in with Arciniega. They perceived that they had no other alternative. Arciniega’s strategy was so successful that, after a bombing by army helicopters against La Morada ordered for continued support for Shining Path, the village’s inhabitants blamed the guerrillas for a lack of protection and for their weakness against the superior firepower of the military.24

Popular support for Arciniega was a direct result of the large number of missions carried out by his men. After gathering the necessary intelligence, the military regularly struck the guerrillas in successive waves. A desperate attempt by Shining Path to recover its image of strength and to restore its declining support in the UHV occurred with the launching of a major offensive against the army in the area. According to official reports, in late June 1989, just before dawn, about one thousand guerrillas tried to attack the military base at Madre Mia. During the attack, Sendero, due to a mistake in its battle plans, ended up firing at each other in the darkness. At least fifty guerrillas died, with the army reporting only seven casualties.

During Arciniega’s seven-month command, the army claims to have carried out 320 aerial support operations, had 44 clashes with Sendero columns and inflicted, according to the general himself, 1,100 casualties among the guerrillas. Apart from official military reports, however, we have no way of knowing either if the numbers are correct or if all those killed belonged to Shining Path. Hazardous geography and physical danger impeded investigations by human rights organizations that could have clarified suspicions of illegal executions. In fact, it appears that the number of cases of “disappearances” increased during Arciniega’s command, with some fifty reported in the UHV during 1989. Early in September 1989, policemen and DEA agents based at Santa Lucia reported finding twenty bodies floating in the Huallaga River. Related reports claimed that the executions were committed by army men to elicit confessions from suspected guerrillas and to terrorize potential followers in the local population.25

It appears that Arciniega based his strategy on aggressive military action without particular regard for potential human rights implications, on promises of short-term crop substitution, and on his charismatic personality. He seems to have been extremely successful in restoring the legitimacy of the government’s presence in the UHV. By way of illustration, in his last public appearance, General Arciniega was greeted by some thirty thousand peasants who gathered in Uchiza to celebrate Armed Forces Day and cheer his assertion that the fight was against Shining Path, not the growing of coca. This enthusiasm would soon dissipate with Arciniega’s reassignment to Lima and his replacement by successive unenthusiastic, even passive military officers.

However, Arciniega’s approach was controversial and obviously was not greeted enthusiastically by all the official parties in the area. In late September 1989 Melvyn Levitsky, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics Matters, Department of State, stated before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the U.S. Senate that there were ties between Arciniega and local drug traffickers in the UHV. “Reports have ranged from taking payoffs from the traffickers so that the military could go after Sendero, to letting drug flights in, to other kinds of collusions,” Levitsky said.26 Arciniega vehemently denied the allegation and became embroiled in a journalistic confrontation with the American official. These accusations had originated among some Peruvian police officials, still smarting from the perceived affronts to which the general had subjected their institution. But in fact Arciniega did have to depend on the local population for material support for his military in addition to his strategy of winning their hearts and minds from Sendero. With the growing economic crisis in Peru (the 1989 inflation rate reached 2,700 percent), Arciniega asked the valley’s residents for support with food, transportation, and gasoline for his troops. Yet most of the resources available in the UHV came from the coca trade. So even if Arciniega was correct in his claim that the coca grower was not a trafficker, in some ways he had to ignore the traffickers since they were the only source of demand for the coca growers’ product. Thus he proved more vulnerable when attacked by those ostensibly on his side than by Shining Path itself.

The fact that Arciniega’s strategy was based on his personal involvement and ability and not on an institutional approach to the problem became clear with the change of command. Arciniega’s successor was more than cautious
opportunity to change the situation in the UHV in favor of the government was lost.

The Drug War

Within a few weeks after the announcement of the Andean Strategy by President George Bush in September 1989, the Santa Lucía base in the Upper Huallaga became fully operational. But now the drug enforcement activities launched from it emphasized interdiction rather than crop eradication. This change in approach appeared to be related to the danger involved for the eradication crews and to the continued expansion in hectarage under coca cultivation in spite of substantial previous eradication efforts. It could also have the effect, however, of redirecting the drug war toward targets less likely to enrage the growers, thereby making them less susceptible to the appeals of Shining Path.

This new combined DEA-Peruvian police forces approach joined massive efforts by the Colombian government against their own drug lords after the August 1989 assassination of leading presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán to reduce substantially drug flights from the UHV to Colombia. The result was a large coca production surplus in the valley and a dramatic drop in price, from two dollars to thirty cents per kilo of coca leaf between mid-1989 and mid-1990, a fall to well below the cost of production. For the first time it became realistic to consider crop substitution seriously.

The decline of prices has had a mixed effect on the power of Shining Path in the UHV. In its eagerness to regain the leverage lost in 1989, Sendero began to put pressure on local traffickers to pay better prices for the coca leaf in order to regain standing with the growers. Beginning in April 1990 the guerrillas tried to get better prices by concentrating the supervision of coca leaf dealing in its own local committees and bases. The controlled prices, which affected the half-dozen traqueteros who paid a lower price than the one considered fair by the guerrillas, were received in two different ways by the producers. Some claim that this made the guerrillas an obstruction to the market. As an engineer said who had worked in the area for seven years and who owns a couple of coca hectares himself: “The guerrillas act as an obstacle to a free coca market. By forcing prices up in the UHV Sendero forces the Colombian buyers to go to better markets, such as the Lower Huallaga or Bolivia. There coca prices
increase; here, they decrease.” Yet others vehemently defend the guerrillas’ position of pushing for better prices.

Alarmists by the fall in coca prices and by a fungus spreading among the coca crops in the valley, members of the cooperative increased their verbal attacks on the DEA. They claimed that the fungus was caused by herbicides even though it is actually caused by a local blight that spreads more rapidly when only a single crop is grown. About the same time, a sister organization to the cooperative, the Defense Front Against Coca Eradication in the Upper Huallaga, took a more militant stance. One of its members maintained that “We need help in the valley right away. We are tired of promises and fancy projects. We want a way out of the situation, and we want it now. If not, we are going to fight with our best weapon: coca, which we can use to flood not only the U.S., but all of Europe as well.” Another local grower in the Uchiza area put it somewhat differently:

We really want to move out of coca production because we know that it is harmful and because of all the problems it causes us. We are harassed and persecuted because we grow coca. We are carriers of corruption and abuse as well. But if we can’t count on help from our own government or from foreign aid, then our only recourse may be to get Sendero’s support.34

Shining Path took advantage of such hostile reactions to carry out attacks in Tocache and Andayacu and to harass police posts. As one Interior Ministry official noted, “With growing peasant discontent, Sendero could recover as a major force in the valley, especially when the local growers continue not to receive the economic assistance that Archiniega promised.”

Conclusion

The significance of the drug trade in Peru is intimately related to the resources it generates in an increasingly impoverished society going through its worst economic crisis in the history of the Republic. There are no reliable figures on how widespread coca cultivation is — figures range from 150,000 to 300,000 illegal hectares of coca production, with a general consensus of around 200,000. However, Peru has become the world’s largest producer of coca for cocaine — about 65 percent of the total. This production generates about $1.2 billion in foreign exchange per year — about half of legal exports.36 Estimates on employment generated directly and indirectly by coca production fall in the 300,000–400,000 range, or over 5 percent of the work force in a country with 50 to 60 percent unemployment in recent years. Thus massive antidrug operations carried out by coordinated U.S. and Peruvian efforts in the UHV, where most of Peru’s coca for export is now grown, adversely affect political and economic situations at both local and national levels.

The link between peasants and guerrillas in the UHV is primarily based on the farmers’ economic needs and Shining Path’s political needs. What strategy should be pursued to break that link? For the army, the highest priority is to stop Shining Path; for the police and the DEA, it is to halt coca paste exports. If the guerrillas are the primary target, as they were in 1984 and 1989, then drug trafficking will flourish and the peasants will support the government. If the main target is drug trafficking, then many peasants will look for help among the guerrillas.

One approach that could work is to make stopping Sendero and stopping drug trafficking both highest priority objectives.37 If drug trafficking is hit strongly and constantly, the price of the coca leaf will decrease and crop substitution becomes viable. If the guerrillas are pursued aggressively but appropriately, in terms of human rights issues, they cannot continue to build ties to the UHV peasantry; this opens up political space for democratic parties and organizations. Success of this strategy depends ultimately on substantial increases in resources, on consistency of application over several years, and on imaginative leadership at the contact points between central government and the local population that inspires confidence and trust based on appropriate action. The Alberto Fujimori government (1990–1995) has proposed actions along these lines, but they will be extremely difficult to fund, much less apply quickly and effectively, given Peru’s multiple problems.

In the meantime, it is quite likely that Shining Path will continue to see the valley as its major target of opportunity. For Sendero, the UHV represents a major component of its political strategy and the principal source of its economic resources. Estimates of Shining Path’s annual revenue range from $20 million to $100 million a year. It comes primarily from “revolutionary taxes” and control of scores of clandestine air strips used to transport coca paste to Colombia for manufacturing cocaine. As an SL leader noted, “It is very expensive to maintain a party that extends throughout the country.
Contribution [taxes] are always assigned to the organization and not to individuals.” While maintaining its subsistence and self-sufficiency philosophy for its own Long March, Shining Path did not overlook the opportunity provided by the UHV bonanza. With money from the Huallaga, the guerrillas are able to have a better organization, more support facilities, and improved hideouts. Paradoxically, the ultimate source of Sendero finances are the estimated 6 million cocaine users in the United States. A further irony is that Peru’s present foreign exchange lifeline is to exactly the same source.

In political terms, Sendero found in the UHV the power and support it had been looking for elsewhere since 1980. The guerrillas know that Peru’s continuing crisis works to their advantage. As long as the country needs the coca dollars, as long as there are coca crops, SL believes there will be corruption, repression, and discontent. Shining Path’s worst enemy, besides a truly effective government response, is an organized local population. Thus the guerrillas must fight rival popular organizations, which they attempt to do with verbal attacks — “Their leaders lie and the only way to stop oppression is through the barrel of a gun” — and physical attacks as well, such as brutally assassinating key elected authorities.

The future of Shining Path depends on the failure and collapse of the present system, so its people are doing whatever they can to bring that about. Those who believed Sendero had been defeated in the valley in 1984 underestimated the organization’s capacity to mingle with the local population, establish an underground organization, and build a strategy for action for use at an opportune future moment, as in 1988 and 1989. This suggests that as long as the core group of Sendero holds together, thanks to its ideological orthodoxy, among other things, the organization will retain the capacity to act. Actions include recruitment of Peruvians, such as the UHV peasants, who become disaffected with the continuing deficiencies of their own government and its officials and see no other alternative.

Notes
5. Operation “Bronco” was the fourth massive antidrug effort in the area. It was preceded by Operation “Cerrojo” (1976), “Verde Mar 1” (1979), and “Verde Mar 2” (1980), and was followed by Operation “Condor” in seven phases (1985-1989) and “Snowcap” (1988-1990).
6. This relationship eventually became formal. In late 1984 one of the Carusso brothers, a well-known family of traffickers formerly based in the Monzon region, was detained by the police. Among his documents an army intelligence identification card was found. This case and other information related to links between Carbajal and local traffickers forced the general and thirty-two of his officers to face trial for corruption in military courts in 1987. Apparently, the general and his men accepted money from the traffickers, thus falling into the corruption Carbajal said he wanted to avoid. The trial sentence was never disclosed.
7. The “Golden Seal” was carried out with the help of García’s government. On June 19, 1986, about three hundred inmates accused of terrorist actions were killed in cold blood by the police and the military in the Lima prisons of El Frontón and Lurigancho after a failed mutiny organized by prisoners.
9. On May 31, 1987, six policemen and four civilians died during an attack against the police post of Uchiza, the first military action carried out by Shining Path in the UHV. It marked the opening of the new front.
10. This was because the overland approach claimed the lives of thirty-two workers murdered by traffickers or guerrillas between 1983 and 1987.
13. Lucas Cachay, former president of the San Martín Defense Front, claimed, “What the growers want is protection and money. The traffickers kept telling them that the coca price was down because of overproduction. They know it is not true, but they had no one to protect them. That’s what Sendero gives them: protection.... Besides, in the area, as long as there is a lot of money, there is alcohol, laziness, and violence.... Sendero put an end to all that and made everybody work. It also closed all the discos, the whorehouses, killed the homosexuals, and expelled the prostitutes.” González, “Coca y subversión,” p. 70.
14. Various analysts saw in this strategy the possibility of a new Sendero approach. In the interview with El Diario, Guzmán indicates that the “Popular War” must go through
three stages: the “Defense Strategy” (guerrilla warfare), the “Strategic Balance” (the fight for positions or combat fronts), and the “Offensive Strategy” (general insurgency ending with the cities being taken over). According to the interview, Sendero was ready to begin the second stage. There were those who thought that the first combat fronts of to begin the second stage was the Upper Huallaga, due to its advantageous terrain and the potential this second stage as the Upper Huallaga, due to its advantageous terrain and the potential for peasant support.

15. Interview by the author in La Morada in August 1989.
16. The Santa Lucía base is considered to be the logistical center of the antinarcotics effort in the region and was built between December 1988 and September 1989 for $3 million. The helicopter is capable of landing three hundred men, it has the longest landing strip in the UHV (1,500 meters), nine helicopters, a mine field, watchtowers, and several barracks.
17. Off-the-record versions claimed that American embassy officials did not want to be involved in an antiguerilla clash and that the Peruvian Air Force could not fly its only helicopter due to a dead battery.
18. In an interview conducted in the area a few days after the attack, a local informant told the author that the reason the guerrillas attacked the post was because the policemen broke an agreement with a local band of traffickers. “The policemen were receiving money from the traffickers, so it could do business in the area, but they seized some drugs and money from the traffickers,” he said. Then the traffickers asked the policemen for help and they asked for more money. The police were fed up with the abuse of the police chief,” he said.
19. An emergency zone (EMZ) is one in which certain constitutional rights, such as freedom of assembly and movement, residence inviolability, and detention with a court order, are temporarily suspended for sixty days, a period that may be, and often is, extended. According to the 1980 Peruvian Constitution, the zones under a state of emergency are placed under the political-military control of the armed forces. Late 1980 EMZs in Peru account for almost half of the national territory and about 70 percent of the population (including Lima).
21. Interview of an army officer by the author at the base in Uchiza in 1989 and later confirmed by Interior Ministry officials.
22. Interview with the author in Lima in February 1990.
24. Version told to the author by an engineer who works in the area, later confirmed by the police. The hamlet was attacked with rockets and destroyed while its inhabitants were working in the coca fields, so there were no casualties or injuries.
25. This version was obtained by the author in the valley and was confirmed by U.S. embassy officials and members of the army who served under Arimape in 1989.
27. Interview conducted by the author in Uchiza in July 1990.